TRANSFORMING
•ART•

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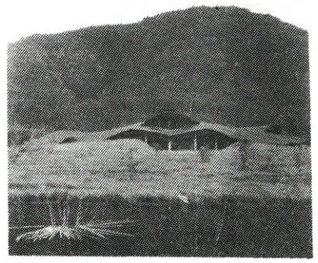
CREATIVITY • THE ARTS

•TOTAL ART•



Cover: Brambuck Living Cultural Centre, architect Gregory Burgess (see article by Malcolm McKinnon). Photo: Trevor Mein

TRANSFORMING ART

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•EDITORIAL•

The theme of the 'total work of art' has been chosen for this final issue of *Transforming Art*. The 'total work of art' has to do with the inner unity of the arts, which, as discussed in several of the articles in this issue, is a recurring idea in Western culture. In archaic culture the unity of the arts was more or less instinctive; in later times it became a conscious aspiration arising from the awareness of society's tendency to fragment, to become internally divided. Richard Wagner eloquently set forth the idea of the 'total artwork' over a century ago, and spoke of the need for "an entire rebirth of Art, which we now know only as a shadow of its genuine self; since it has quite deserted actual Life..." (preface to *Prose Works*, trans. W. Ellis). The artist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner was a prominent early twentieth-century exponent of the 'total artwork', and his work is referred to in several places on these pages. The question now (and what this issue of *Transforming Art* sets out to address) is: What meaning and potential does this idea have for culture at the turn of the second millenium?

The total work of art is at the same time a reality and a possibility; nature already 'lives in the artistic' (the idea of 'nature as art') but modern human culture is yet to realise itself as a total artwork — as, in other words, a living wholeness, a work of beauty and organic integrity. From this perspective one can see the productions of individual artists as a developmental stage towards the realisation of the total cultural artwork. On a small scale, in the context of a canvas or a poem, artists work with the same creative forces which may have a much wider application. However the idea of culture as 'total art' has an inherently dangerous aspect which the twentieth century avant-garde has already made evident. When artists conceive that they have arrived at the essence of the creative process, they feel they hold a great constructive power in their grasp — the power to create a new life and a new humanity. But this is an extraordinarily responsible position to arrive at, for it is the point where there is no turning back to the forms of the past, to the consolation of traditional values. One of the books reviewed deals with this negative aspect.

Transforming Art has gone through fourteen issues, beginning in 1986, and its stated intention was to explore ideas which don't generally find their way into magazines on the arts. In the first editorial I wrote about how the magazine would present new ways of understanding the function of art in society and, in particular, broad meanings of creativity for personal and cultural development. Each issue has endeavoured to address these questions in different ways, some focussing on particular themes — such as the last issue on 'water'. This final issue, no less than the others, deals with new ways of understanding art and creativity; the main orientation is towards our cultural future, but this is achieved partly through looking to the past in order to perceive what can become the seeds of future forms. The 'total work of art' is one such seminal idea.

Nigel Hoffmann

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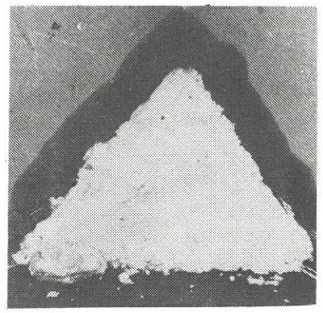


• THE TOTAL ART OF TEACHING •

INTERVIEW

An interview with ANNIKA JAENSCH & LIZ KOROBACZ

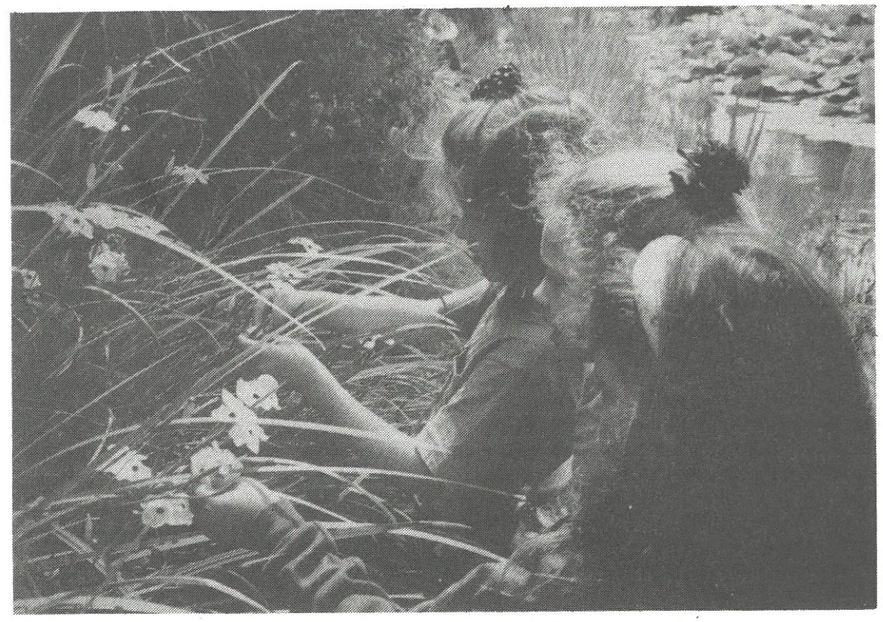
Annika Jaensch

Liz Korobacz

Annika Jaensch trained in Speech and Drama at the Goetheanum in Dornach and has performed in Europe, America and Australia. She has taught at schools for the mentally disabled, conducted creative speech classes, and for the last four years has been teaching in the high-school at Lorien Novalis Rudolf Steiner School in Sydney. Liz Korobacz has a university background in language and fine arts and has been teaching at Lorien Novalis since 1974, mainly at the kindergarten and primary levels but also in the high-school.

Transforming Art: Could you both tell me, in the first place, a little about your backgrounds and how you came to the idea of teaching as an artistic process?

Elizabeth Korobacz: I came into teaching with a wish to teach in an artistic way, not in a dry scientific way. And what I saw at the school where I am now a teacher was a very artistic environment. The first thing which struck me here was that the children are very beautiful — the looks on their faces, the particular glow and life they have. When you go into another school play-ground you don't necessarily see that. For one thing, children are in uniforms; if it's playtime it's loud and noisy and if it's in-time it's all very quiet and structured. This is going back to a visit I made to this school in



my final year at university, when I was twenty — and you are not particularly clear about things when you are that age. However, it was that experience which made me realise that my need to teach artistically could be fulfilled. And I have been working here for about twenty-three years now.

TA: By 'artistic teaching' I gather you don't mean you wanted to become a specialist teacher of art?

Elizabeth Korobacz: That's right; I mean an artistic approach to teaching altogether. I'm actually referring mainly to primary school teaching; once the children are in high school, you can teach your individual subjects artistically, with wisdom, but I think the real work of teaching as an art-form happens in primary school. When they're older you feel that you're helping to form and hone their life of ideas. Having taught in high school, as well as primary school and kindergarten, I understand that in high school you are helping out certain processes which have begun within the children, but that you're not initiating them. At the primary level you're striving to awaken artistic feelings in the whole being of the child — and when I talk about artistic feelings, I mean those feelings that tell the child that something is good, that something is truthful as well as beautiful.

TA: Do you still have that impression of the children as being beautiful and inspiring, or was that just a first impression which has long worn off through the practical necessities and difficulties of the job? It may seem to some to be a rather idealistic point of view.

Elizabeth Korobacz: No, I think that is the thing which absolutely vitalises one as a teacher. You feel that, when you are in the presence of children, you really are in the presence of wondrous works of art. And that's not an exaggeration. I just recently went to Europe for the first time and I was in the situation of being able to stand before great masterpieces and within wonderful buildings. When you go to those kinds of places you feel all kinds of pure feelings welling up, all kinds of higher feelings. I think that, if as teachers we are really sensitive to the children, every child should conjure up within us those deep and higher feelings. It's that same sense of wonder and amazement we have when contemplating how a work of art has come into being and how individual

it is— how it could be no other way than what it is. You know, people today don't even have a name for higher feelings, which is a great shame. We've lost the names, or at least hardly use them, for all kinds of experiences — veneration, wonderment, awe. We tend to associate awe, for example, only with experience when we were little — going into a church for the first time or seeing the Christmas windows in David Jones! I think that, in this country where we don't have ready access to great works of art as people do in Europe, it's very important that our educational training is an artistic training which opens sensitivities. It should be a training in which a teacher learns to be expressive with colour, to love music, poetry, speech, the purity of harmonious movement.

Certainly every human being has shadows, imperfections, but you have to learn to see beyond that, to see the beauty in the child. That is something which calls upon artistic sensitivities in the teacher. Even embittered teachers, when they encounter some children, can't help but feel veneration or love for them because of the state of grace that they seem to be in. There are many children who are much more difficult to have those feelings for, children who have a lot of anger and hurt in them, and who are doing hurtful things to other children. It's a very interesting interaction because you see the child as already a work of art, but you've also got the opportunity of enhancing and making that work of art even more life-filled, clearer. That's your medium and your artistic work as a teacher.

The other wonderful thing is the feeling that, not just the child, but the *class* is a work of art. As a teacher you are helping each individual child to become more inwardly beautiful, more inwardly truthful, more inwardly moral; but one of the most powerful ways of working with the individual is your ability to create a wholeness in the class. A class has got a strange ability to heal its members because a class is not just a group of individuals; you feel that the class has an individuality, an identity, and that you are serving it. It's like a hive of bees which is itself a being, a unity, not just a collection of bees in the same space. The being of the class comes into its own when you are working on performances or singing; then you can have a direct perception of the particular 'voice' of your class, the power which lies between the individuals.

Annika Jaensch: My experience has not been with the primary or kindergarten levels; most of my past teaching has been adult-education, in poetry and drama, and also in curative education with mentally disabled people. For the last three years I have been working in this school as a high-school class teacher. However, the creative principle of teaching is always same for me; I go into the classroom as a 'sun'. I am the centre, the focus of attention and the responsibility is with me — at least in that first moment when we're in the space together. What I try to bring about is that, in that moment, we do not experience ourselves in a private or personal way, with a self-indulgence about how our inner self is feeling. For that moment we lift ourselves out of our everyday consciousness and we have the experience that we're actually together in a space. To help that, we might form a circle — which is a cosmic form. We stand and open our consciousness to the space we're in and through that we awaken what I call the 'back-space', which is a very prosaic word for a *spiritual activity*. In this physical space a creative activity will take place for which I'm initially responsible as the teacher, while the focus is still on me as a 'sun'. However, at a point, I consciously give up my central place so that my words may serve to awaken in each student this widening consciousness — the flame in each person, the living warmth. Now, each person is a 'sun' within the circle.

TA: The way you're describing it, it's not so much that the teacher's work is creative as that the teacher and the pupil are participating in a creative process which is larger than *both*.

Annika Jaensch: Actually, the first thing you have to do in any lesson, for this creative activity to awaken, is to establish a relationship to the students. This is a struggle — and the main struggle, for me, involves *finding the right questions,* knowing what is relevant to them. So I have a lot of listening and awakening to do myself before I can go in front of a group of young people and be sure that I have something to bring that is relevant to their lives. This is where I become the student and they the teachers. What I try to bring about as a teacher is something relevant to them yet which is not *personal*, something that lives in us yet at the same time is *more* than our everyday lives and experiences. If everyone is able to be drawn within this activity, then I, the teacher, disappear. But I'm still there guiding — for education comes from *educare*, to bring forth, as with a midwife. It means to allow something to

incarnate into the world; this is the creative activity of education. And if at the end of the lesson something has been awakened which has reached beyond everyday consciousness, then all the energies flowing through us have to be brought to rest and I try to make sure that the students don't go out yapping, dancing and prancing. If we have been working with creative sound the living creative forces that move one have become active in the soul-life of the children and there is a need to become centred in that experience.

TA: Does the same thing apply now in your lessons for high school, where you are working with subject matter which doesn't directly relate to the arts? What about a lesson in chemistry or geology, for instance?

Annika Jaensch: If I teach the atmosphere to Year 9, I call that lesson 'Breathing Earth's Breath' — or I may teach a lesson on the sun and call it the 'pyrosphere'. In this case I teach from the perspective of what is scientifically known about the sun, the sun-spots and some of the chemistry which comes into it, and so on. Then I also bring in the development of human consciousness in relation to the sun, from the different cultures of the past. So we may have verses spoken, derived from those cultures and all relating to the sun. But, even if I don't move into poetry and speech in such a lesson, I work with the same principle as I described before. I start with what *I* as the teacher bring in relation to the subject, and then the question becomes — how do I get the students to become active with it? This, for me, is real teaching; it's not that you stand and talk — or at least, that's only a small part of it. How do you awaken an interest, a will and activity in the students? — these, I think, are the vital questions. One of the things I always do is have the students give a presentation to the rest of class, on what they have taken from the lesson. This could be in the form of a talk, or a poem, or it

Child taking part in kindergarten 'cicada play', Lorien Novalis School.

could even be music. It could take any form at all, for there are many ways the flame of the awakened spiritual activity can express itself.

TA: Regarding your teaching work in speech and drama; could you say something more about how the spiritual activity you are speaking of can be awakened through this medium?

Annika Jaensch: In my speech work it is the difference between the living word and the concept. The first thing to realise is that the life-giving force is carried 'on the breath'. We have the concept — and only a concept because it must be experienced — 'on the breath-stream'. The sounds — the consonants, the vowels — can only come alive through the breath because the spirit of the word is as if imprisoned in a coffin of concepts. In modern breathing, words are sounded from the top part of the chest. This breath is very shallow and it carries words which have become mere servants, which communicate 'information' and the conceptual forms of science which we have to move our thought through. Then you have another breathing which relates to our feelings, to our interest in our 'inner selves'; this breath comes from the centre of the chest. But the breath which is really healthy, which is largely lost to modern humanity, comes from much lower down; we call it the 'diaphragm breath'. This is the beautiful breath we can work with in speech so as to bring alive the sounds again.

So you can have the concept 'ocean', for instance, which is thought in the head and breathed in the upper chest. If you look at the sounds in there you have a vast '*oooooh*' expansion; and then you have the sound '*shhhhhhhh*', the racing raging of wind and wave; and then the waves lapping and murmuring onto the sand — '*nnnnnnnn*'. To make that happen, I have to awaken my imagination to the being of the ocean and see what the sounds give me and create — and oh! how much breath I need for that one word. On the other hand I can say 'ocean, ocean, ocean' any number of times without any inner activity. This is working with the sounds with an awakened spiritual activity, bringing them alive; and when we do this we find that different groups of sounds belong to different elements. You have all the sounds of the formed earth, like *b, d, k, g, t* — sounded phonetically. They're all rather rigid hard shapes and you can almost *see* them out there! Then you have sounds which belong to fire — *vvv, ffff, shhhh, sssss* — you *hear* these, they are not to be looked at. Or you have air sounds — *rrrrrr* — and water sounds — *lllll*. In this way you can discover what lives in a word and everyone can do this; I happen to be the teacher because I have been awakened to this by training. As a teacher I lead the spirit forward to be creative with the words. It requires the activity of the whole human being: you can't do it without intention, your breath, your feeling — and your will. It needs your inner activity which is warming through and through; it needs the light of your intention, your intelligence, your imagination. Light filled warmth, carried on the breath. Sounds themselves become teachers in my speech work.

TA: To what extent does your work in a particular subject depend upon the creative working of the whole school, understood as a whole entity or organism? Can you work in the creative way you describe if other teachers in the school do not understand what you are doing and support you in the way *they* are working?

"Certainly every human being has shadows, imperfections, but you have to learn to see beyond that, to see the beauty in the child. That is something which calls upon artistic sensitivities in the teacher."

Annika Jaensch: Yes, it is true that one's work does depend upon the work of others, and I do experience the school as a whole as an organism. In our school science is very strong, and for science to happen there is a need to train the capacity for clear thinking. But if you have only that side of it, it will just become intellectual and cold. You have to have it balanced with other lessons such as eurythmy, the form of movement we have at this school, as well as different forms of art. Although they are taught separately — science and art — in each lesson on science you also have a component of the artistic which runs through it as a pulse. So that in any subject that I teach — whether it be the earth's atmosphere, or atoms, or rocks — we work with the artistic and feeling relationship of the human being to that phenomenon, not just the factual knowledge about it. With too much of one thing or the other you go off to an extreme and so the problem is to find the balance. It's not as if I am in balance all the time — but it is the *striving* for balance that is important.

TA: The ability to perceive the balance — is that not itself an artistic capacity?

Annika Jaensch: The art of teaching is based upon knowledge of the human being and comes from the ancient idea of harmonisation. For instance, Chinese medicine is based on finding the balance between the Yin and the Yang, between what is too hot and what is too cold. It's the same with the Chinese martial arts which some of my pupils are learning; there is always this finding the balance in the human being. My class has studied the ancient idea of the four temperaments, and the pupils got very interested in thinking about the temperament of their own soul-life. And again, the aim is to reach a balance between the temperaments in a person.

This does not mean that balance is something static, like when two things are balanced on a scale. The balance I mean here is the movement *in between* things, the striving and flowing. So that, in the education of any individual or the class as a whole, it is not as if you simply go and find the opposite to where they are; you actually seek to *strengthen* them in their abilities. But there is a one-sidedness which may come out of that which calls for a different movement, and so we seek to find a way of touching the other pole. It means, for example, to know when it is time to be inwardly active in a quiet space or when it is time to sweep everyone out of the classroom to go canyoning, caving or on any other adventure. There are moments of inward contraction and moments of outward letting-go.

In this school we work with the three aspects of the human being — the thinking, feeling and willing parts. The education of the will is the main task of the primary school and it comes about through the development of the child's imaginative life. Whether it be art and craft, physical movement, mathematics or reading — everything becomes an activity of the imagination at the primary level, a creative doing. When the children come into the high school, that is the time when the willing is put into the activity of thinking, so that they learn to discern, to think objectively — which is something quite different from sitting down and having concepts pushed into their heads which they then try to retain. At this stage, if there is not a balance between these three aspects of the person, the will, for example, can become negative and destructive and that is when you see the intense antipathy and reactivity of teenagers. So there is a balancing of the thinking, feeling and willing at each stage of this education, in every lesson and day, but also in its overall development.

TA: Liz, could you say something about your understanding of this artistic harmonising process upon which the art of teaching rests?

Elizabeth Korobacz: When we talk about beauty, we often think about it in a very visual way. I would broaden that and talk in terms of proportions and harmonies. What, for example, makes a brilliant piece of music work; it's actually many things working together — the colours of the music, the melodies and rhythms and the spaces in between. The pauses are very important, for that's where the listener is most active and it requires an artistic sensibility to understand the activity of a pause. In teaching, an artistic sense is required to know when to *let things resound,* to feel when the children need to rest with something and when to bring it back to them again. We need to understand that, at certain times, we have to let things lie and at other times to pick them up again. That is part of the in-breathing and out-breathing of a lesson, of a day, of a whole year at school.

In primary school you have to understand the whole process of growth, what it is to be a human being, what the different transformations are which happen during a lifetime. You have to have a very good sense of the timing of things. When you are looking at a painting, timing doesn't come into it because a painting exists in space. However, with music, time is very important — also with speech and drama and it's exactly the same with how you time your day as a teacher, how you judge the momentum of a lesson and a year. It's a musical experience — it has its own coming to life and going away. Just as a great piece of music can pick you up and carry you away to different places, so a lesson should be like that. And not just a lesson, but ultimately the whole stretch you do with the children — and a primary teacher is with the same class

for seven years at this school. A lesson, a day, a year, should have this wholeness in time. You've got to have imagination and vision of where you are going, but you also need to have a musical sense of the progression of things, how one thing should follow another, how something emerges from another — the way a great piece of music works.

TA: But some might argue that there is scientific dimension to teaching, for there needs to be a precision in the way a teacher observes the specific needs and characteristics of a child, or a whole class.

Elizabeth Korobacz: I know that in the places where people are educated to be teachers, there is a certain idea that teaching could become an exact science — but it can't! Human beings do not operate in a way that can be measured and structured exactly; humans operate in a living and infinitely variable way. When I'm speaking of science I mean science the way it is at the moment, which is basically assembled from observations of how things have been. Now a teacher has to be very objective and accurate in their observations of children, they have to be observant in many ways — the way a great artist is observant. You have to notice all kinds of tiny details about the child — the way they walk, the way they speak, the way they run and hold things, how they listen to a story, how they draw and so forth. But then you take those observations and you work creatively with them. What an artist does is to make out of the parts a new whole, to allow something new to come into being. The artist has the capacity to perceive any particular thing in its wholeness. Writers are always talking about this — the epiphanies of the creative process, the moments of revelation. This is what we are always struggling with as human beings, isn't it? — to come to a creative perception of the whole. It's the higher emotions which are the transforming powers — that is what gives you the insights. The love and the interest are what makes it possible to give yourself over to clear observation; but once you have those observations, they are fired, or transformed, by feelings of reverence and you begin to perceive the children as a revelation of something greater than themselves. It is as if you are looking at humanity through the individual child.

A musical work is never just an assemblage of notes — it is a living whole. Even if the artist

Pagoda adjoining kindergarten buildings at Lorien Novalis School. Architect: David Jacobson.

portrays one leaf, if they're a true artist it will be like a whole universe. In our day and age we are working within a world of fragmentation, where everything becomes specialised and lacking the quality of wholeness. We have a great deal of information being put out into the world; for example, you can go to the Internet and get reams and reams of information about anything at all. My son was accessing it the other day for a hamburger recipe, and it just went on forever! But that's not going to help people to understand life or the world we live in. With a whole education, the aim is to try to give a universal understanding of things.

TA: Let us turn to the question of the physical environment of your teaching. How does a particular teaching environment act to support your creative work as a teacher; how can the *classroom* be the teacher? Can teaching reach the level of a real art-work unless the spaces of a building are themselves artistically created from a knowledge of the human being?

Annika Jaensch: If it is given you that you have beautiful rooms, beautiful shapes to work within, this is strengthening and helpful. If you don't, you then just have to — with your own inner activity — fill that space, lift it. You can do that by having it clear and as beautiful as possible; if it is filled with rubbish, if people haven't cared for the space, then you can't go in and create something there without making a tremendous inner effort. The space will either help and support you, or it will make it difficult. A few years ago at this school, Year 11, with the help of their class-teacher who happened to be a builder, constructed a room for their twelfth year — because up till then the school didn't have an adequate Year 12 room. It is a dream to work in there; the feeling is beautiful. This building has the shape of a hexagon, like the cell of a bee-hive. Actually the kindergarten building in this school is also made of hexagons, so that we do the full circle through the school. It was the high-school students themselves, with their teacher, who wanted this space for their final year.

Elizabeth Korobacz: If you want a good space to educate children you have to have a nice balance of window to wall, and a right proportion of roof. The roof should be high; there should be a feeling of space. The children should come into the classroom feeling that this space has many possibilities. I think it's very important that, when you start the day, or commence work on any particular subject, you have the feeling that it can go anywhere; then it can become an artistic process. For this there needs to be a harmonious feeling of spaciousness; the windows are like the out-breath of the classroom, drawing you out, as opposed to the contracting aspect created by the walls. I feel the same way about the colours of the room — that there should be a sense of creative possibility. I don't like working within a room in which the colour is fixed; if I want the children to live with a particular colour, I create that by introducing veils of coloured material. As the teacher I need to feel that the place where I am going to be active is going to give me a creative freedom.

TA: I have observed that you have a hive of bees quite near your classroom. What is the significance of the bees in relation to the overall artistic nature of your teaching?

Elizabeth Korobacz: Well, first of all I should say again that one of our ultimate goals is to awaken artistic sensibilities within the human being. This is the appreciation of harmony and beauty — the truth clothed in beauty. If artistic feelings are cultivated then a person will be able to be transformed and enriched by whatever they perceive. It gives them the possibility for inner transformation or refinement throughout their whole life. One of the ways you can do this is by helping the children to have direct experiences of the natural world, because that's where artistic sensibilities first stir in the child — in the awe of the sunrise, the beautiful sounds of the birds, the colours and scents of flowers, the light glistening on the river — all those things. It's the spark of the divine creator in every person beginning to be unfolded.

So, with the classroom, it's not just that you have walls with things on them but the fact that you have windows and space — what you have *outside* the windows is also important. We plant beautiful gardens outside and put bird feeders in them so that the children will be able to perceive birds flying down and going away, and, if they're lucky, a bird nesting. And we also have bee-hives near the classrooms. Now bees are amazing; they provide a wonderful presence! The whole primary school becomes pervaded with the aroma of sweet honey, especially in summer. It's just like a wonderful cushion, a sweet cloud around the primary classrooms. And when children smell something sweet, it creates a sympathy within them; it makes them so receptive! It's like the feeling of

going into a house and smelling freshly baked bread. Another thing is that the children learn to be around bees, and for that you have to be balanced within yourself. If you rush angrily towards a bee-hive, there is a good chance you will be stung. Similarly, if you run in fear away from a bee, you'll probably also get stung. There is a need to be accepting and even around them. The bees also help to develop one's powers of observation; the children follow them around the school and become aware of the flowering time of plants. They link the children with the cycle of the year — the time when the hive grows or contracts, when there is an abundance of honey and so on. Also, bees are a great example of cooperation, harmony and warmth, and there are wonderful stories and lessons you can teach about them. They help children learn a little bit about sacrifice, about consideration for others.

TA: You really emphasise the need for the child to be surrounded by beauty — so let's talk about what the experience of beauty means for the growing child. You've discussed the need to cultivate artistic sensibilities as a primary objective of teaching, and how the experience of nature is the first stage of this. But is the sense of beauty already in the child, or is it always relative to what the teacher and culture presents, something which is conditioned in the child?

Elizabeth Korobacz: Children definitely know what is beautiful; they are actually very artistic. People don't realise how discerning children are, how distressed they become by things which are crude, or muddled, or dirty. Beauty is a very simple thing for a child — for instance, the experience of pure colours as opposed to murky ones. I vividly remember being inwardly distressed by finger-painting when I was a child. I remember being given an unpleasant yellow, and an unpleasant blue, and then being told to mix them together with my hand. No matter what I did I couldn't create anything beautiful with it — all I could create was an ugly green. I tried very hard to put interesting thumb-prints into it, but it didn't work!

People these days have such problems with what is beautiful and what is not. But what I am talking about has nothing to do with conditioning; a child will just love a beautiful rainbow, or certain colours placed next to each other which have the richness and depth you might find in nature. If, for example, you are creating a red silk veil for a child, it's so much more beautiful for them if it's got *intensities* of red, like the intensity of colour of a rose. The children will live into that, whereas a bright bricky colour will never excite them and involve them in the same way. In an artistically harmonious environment, the child becomes bathed in sympathy, and they want to take in whatever you are giving, because it's not repelling to them. Children have an incredible power to be repulsed by things and not know why, because they live wholly within their feelings. Children also have a sense for the inner beauty of people; adolescents are much more critical of people's appearance. For small children, *who* someone is is much more important than their appearance and children can easily perceive a person's qualities of lovingness, intelligence and clarity.

It's very important to be clear that, when we are speaking about ugliness in the human being, we are not merely talking about superficial appearances. On the human level beauty is what a person is like — it's their beauty of soul. I don't think we have to be subjective about this; I believe that, if we are honest, we all know what beauty of soul is. What we seem to have lost in the world today is the ability to be objective about what is beautiful visually and what constitutes ugliness. Children are given a lot of crude and ugly things to play with and look at and there can be a kind of weird addiction to this ugliness. When I was a kindergarten teacher parents would sometimes want their child to bring their favourite toy to school — and it turned out to be some grotesque, demonic robotty thing. What we are dealing with here is the shadow nature of the child I was talking about before, the side of human nature we all carry around with us that takes a certain delight in ugliness and cruelty. This is something we cannot deny exists — but I think we have to protect the children's pure feelings, and not indulge this shadow side. This is where I believe people have lost their discernment.

TA: So, really, you are talking about the beautiful in the sense of the moral.

Elizabeth Korobacz: Yes, I believe that the truly beautiful is also moral, and that children perceive that. They perceive the morality of a person, and they love them for that. If they are surrounded by ugliness, they are also going to be stunted in the ability to hunt out the ugliness within themselves, to recognise and confront it. Because natural beauty does feed moral feelings.≈

•THE CITY AS A WORK OF ART•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by JOHN ELLISON

John Ellison has been a professional artist for some twenty years. He was the Cultural Development Officer at the Blue Mountains City Council for five years, and now conducts 'Art and Magic' workshops in the Blue Mountains.

Local govenment bureaucracies are not generally known for the priority they place upon creativity. I was well aware of this fact when I formulated the draft Cultural Plan for Blue Mountains City Council in 1992. Under the heading Basic Principles, I wrote: "The fundamental idea informing the draft Cultural Plan is that of a new city ethos emerging from the aspirations, hopes and desires of the community. This new ethos suggests that the Blue Mountains should develop a new self-image and national profile encapsulated in the phrase: "A City of the Arts". For many years the Mountains had suffered from a retrospective self-image, like an aged faded actress looking back on her past glories. What was needed was a new self-image to take it into the future, one that embraced the unique features of the local environment and community.

In 1992, as the Cultural Development Officer of the Blue Mountains City Council, I hired a violinist to promenade up and down Katoomba Street, attracting bystanders and tourists like a Pied Piper, and when he had their attention to hand out a small printed card which simply read: "Blue Mountains — City of the Arts". That was by way of seeding a new idea in the public mind.

The draft Cultural Plan defined 'the arts' in a rather unusual way: "The word 'art' in this plan will generally be used in the broad sense of 'The Art of Living'". Elsewhere in the plan I underlined the concept of 'life-enhancing exchange' as being the basis of worthwhile cultural development: "Human beings congregate into towns and cities in order to maximise the opportunities for life-enhancing exchange. What do we mean by 'exchange' in this context?... Exchange can mean a number of things, all of which come under the broad heading of culture. Exchange could be of a practical kind: going to the corner store to buy eggs and a newspaper. Or of an educational kind: school, evening college, learning the piano from a private teacher. Or exchange could be of a social nature: chinwagging in the street with a neighbour or a friend... The principle to be underlined is that people gather into towns and cities in order to bring about life-enhancing exchange, for the minimum amount of travel... Exchange in this sense is the basis of our culture. Life-enhancing exchange is the basic factor that a Cultural Plan is attempting to promote. All decisions made by the city administration should attempt to increase the opportunities for life-enhancing exchange to occur; and any changes that threaten or obliterate opportunities for exchange should be avoided at all costs".

That was the theory. The draft Cultural Plan

Winter Magic Festival parade in Katoomba with community drum

gained strong support from the local cultural community when it was released in 1993. There was a large section on the possibility of developing a cultural tourism market as opposed to the traditional mass tourism although for the most part the local tourist industry and business in general remained indifferent to these suggestions.

However in 1994 I was approached by the Katoomba Small Business Association to do something about making the traditional Yule Fest Celebration more interesting and dynamic. I thought this would be a good opportunity to test out my theories of releasing the creativity of the community. So I replied that Yule Fest as a concept was pretty well meaningless to the locals: the idea of having Santa Claus once a year was bad enough, but to have him parading around in June was to many, totally obnoxious. What was needed was something that touched the hearts and minds and deeper feelings of the locals — something they could really identify with. I suggested the idea of a Winter Magic Festival. The word 'magic' in this context could have many connotations: the 'magic' of sitting in front of a log fire, sipping a glass of port, while the fogs and mists roll past outside. Or the 'magic' of the Blue Mountains environment, with its dramatic contrasts, and Gothic connotations. Or the 'magic' of a reverence for the earth in these troubled times; or the good old-fashioned pagan magic of pre-Christian times. By leaving the word 'magic' open and undefined, and by inviting the local community to supply their own interpretation, I knew we would be likely to get a many-layered creative response. The Small Business Association decided to go with the idea, and the community responded just as I thought they would. With only a few months of planning, the one-day festival was attended by about 10,000 people and Katoomba had come alive again after many years in the doldrums. In '95 the Winter Magic Festival was repeated, this time complete with a spectacular snow storm, which saw policemen joyously throwing snowballs at people in the street.

This year, '96, the crowd was estimated to be around the 20,000 mark and it was obvious that the theme of Winter Magic was here to stay. The community had claimed the event as their own. Local school children had been preparing their costumes for months. It was the biggest fancy dress party the Mountains had ever seen. Even the local businessmen were rubbing their hands to-

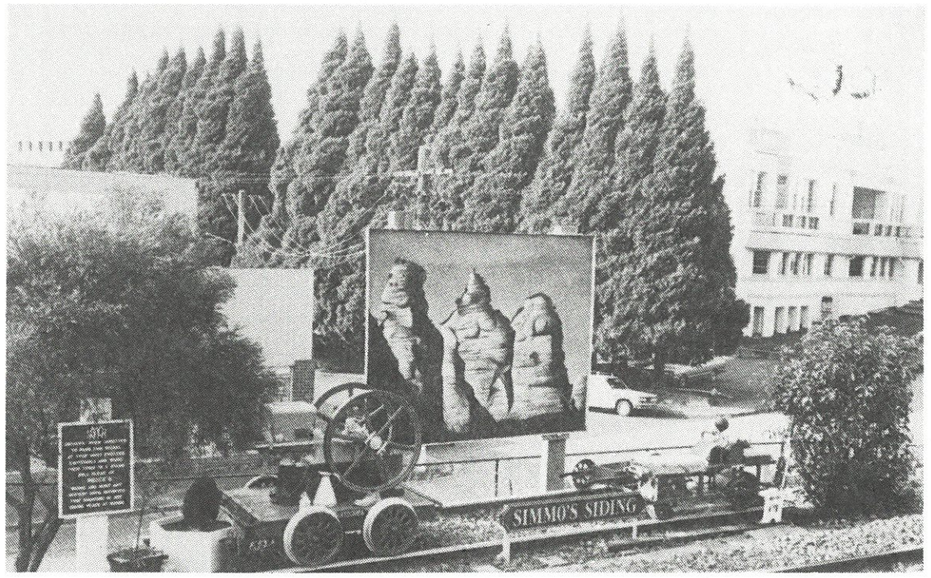
> "Human beings congregate into towns and cities in order to maximise the opportunities for life-enhancing exchange... Exchange in this sense is the basis of our culture...All decisions made by the city administration should attempt to increase the opportunities for life-enhancing exchange to occur; and any changes that threaten or obliterate opportunities for exchange should be avoided at all costs".

gether and talking about the possibility of having four seasonal festivals a year.

When the Blue Mountains was officially designated a City of the Arts by the NSW Labor Government in '95, the cultural community regarded it as fitting recognition of the groundwork that had been carried out in the previous eight years. However, others asked: "How can we call ourselves a City of the Arts, when we don't have a Regional Gallery, or even a decent performance space for our local actors and musicians?" A good question. And a hard one to answer, if you insist on defining the 'arts' in terms of the 'fine arts', or Art with big A. However if we come back to the concept of 'the art of living', and of 'life-enhancing exchange' being the basis of desirable cultural development, then we view the question in a very different way.

When I first began the job of Cultural Development Officer with the Blue Mountains City Council in 1991, I had the typical prejudice of the professional artist towards so-called 'community arts'. In fact, at the time I wondered if it was possible for the community to have any real creativity at all. I believed that you became an artist, and bolstered your own creativity, by precisely ceasing to be a member of the community, and like William Blake, forging your own unique belief system. You could only do this in isolation, by removing yourself from the dominant 'consensus reality'. Creativity is not dead in the man and woman in the street; it just needs to be given encouragement to leap forth. With the example of the Winter Magic Festival the community really demonstrated the enormous creativity that is always there, often in a state of latency, just waiting to be evoked.

In the final Cultural Plan, which is in preparation at the moment, I have a section which indicates this new belief: "Creativity — the Main Virtue. In a City of the Arts, creativity should be recognised as the main virtue to be honoured and celebrated in the community. Creativity can manifest in many different ways, and it is hoped that the designation of the Blue Mountains as a City of the Arts will encourage residents to exercise their ingenuity to create ways of making the Mountains a more beautiful and livable place..."At the second City of the Arts Forum, a member of the Katoomba Railway staff was given a Certificate of Appreciation for work that he and other staff members had carried out to beautify their work surroundings, with pot plants, murals, and the painting of old railway machinery. They had done this gratuitously, without any thought of creating community art, but in so doing have provided just one example out of many of ways that the City of the Arts can be brought alive..."To



Mural and painted machinery at Katoomba railway station

honour creativity in this way, whether it be in schools, railway stations, shops, bureaucracies, or police stations, should be an ongoing feature of the City of the Arts".

From the traditional point of view of local government this is crazy talk. However, I feel the attempt to bring a new language into Council planning documents, with explication of such notions as 'life-enhancing exchange' and 'the art of living', is probably worthwhile. It reminds bureaucrats that the city is not just a machine; we are actually planning for people who have a whole range of needs including a desire for self-expression, aesthetic enjoyment, a sense of meaning in work and in life, spiritual nourishment and self-actualisation. To my mind, the formulation of a Cultural Plan is a deliberate attempt on the part of the city administration to plan and develop those conditions best suited to satisfying the 'meta-needs' of the residents and of those who visit the region.

Though Blue Mountains Council now has two Cultural Development Officers instead of one, I believe that the main energy for cultural change will come as always from the community. While the majority of people still do not relate in any real terms to the City of the Arts designation, a significant and energetic portion of the cultural community have seized upon the new idea and are working with amazing intensity to make the concept into a reality.

The first funding round of the City of the Arts programme found grants being distributed to a variety of projects including the building of a community drum, the construction of a sculpture park at Wentworth Falls, a regional community choir festival, a series of Maori cultural workshops, the building of a kinetic sculpture, a Youth Arts festival, a book of poetry and illustrations by disabled artists, a cultural directory, Carnivale and a number of other community-based programmes. As these projects come to fruition there is a growing sense of excitement in the cultural community. The state government funded City of the Arts will only extend to the end of '97; however, members of the local cultural community believe that the Blue Mountains will remain A City of the Arts after that date and will continue to consolidate that image into the future.

The Mountains may be short on cultural venues such as the Joan Sutherland Centre; however the community continues to release the most surprising creative energies — and that is where the true 'art of living' really resides.≈

•ARTICULATE SENSES– THE TOTAL ARTWORK•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

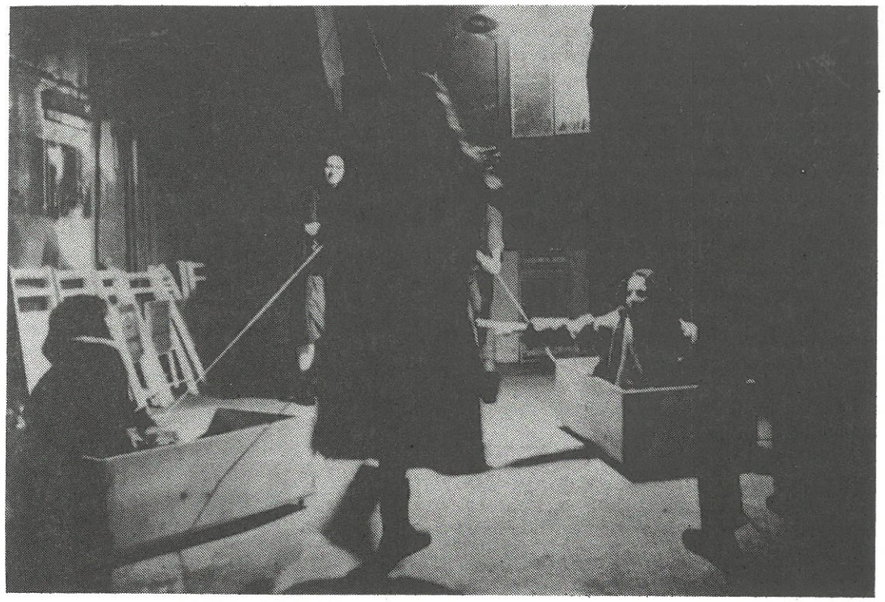
by JULIA WHITE

Julia White is a practising artist, writer and teacher currently undertaking masters research into cross-media, particularly visual arts and performance. The focus of her research is our relationship to things, explored in words, space and sound, and dance. She currently lives in Melbourne.

I visit my local shopping centre. Through the jarring of space and sound I discern attempts to create small virtual realities, imitative geographies which, through kitsch conglomerations of images and nuances of text, create new imaginary worlds or evocations of past ones.

Since time immemorial priests, artists, dance and theatre practitioners have sought to invent strategies to make shifts in our consciousness, and to make visible issues and perspectives which defy or expand commonplace understanding, by assembling various arts. Generally speaking, in prehistoric and mythic cultures, a distinction between art and religious or social life was not made. The various arts were instinctively united to create environments, either temporary or built, within which religious and cultural practices could take place. Since the Renaissance, a striving to understand the various roles of the arts and in so doing to identify clearly the characteristics of each of the senses developed a schema for the particular disciplines and a conceptual overview of their roles. In practice this has meant the separation of the arts and the development of separate fields of expertise and specialisation, enhanced by the modern emphasis on the solitary and individual character of art practice. Since the Renaissance it has been held that for art to develop as it is understood and needed by modern consciousness the artist must be in a state of highly individuated privacy, expressed by the garret, the studio, the myth of the outsider. This specialisation reached its zenith in certain aspects of modernism, in modernist striving for purity of form, originality and reduction of decorative and symbolic devices.

The multimedia or grand work is conceived as a geography wherein all aspects of perception are addressed. This total artwork is the articulation of all the senses (including the sense of concept and meaning) within a certain framework of space and time. To understand the outcome of fusing differing arts the artist or the community needs to understand either consciously or intuitively the make-up and dynamic of the human being. The interplay of our senses and subtle bodies was understood and read intuitively by mythic societies. The wealth of technical and performative



Scene from performance of *Rollers*, 1960, with Simone Forti and others.

machinery at our disposal today requires us to attend ever more sensitively to the interaction of the arts and our bodies and to renew the sensibilities of perception so easily available to older cultures. How can we build a synthesis of the arts which is sensitively perceived *and* consciously articulated? The tension between a chaotic, erotic, intuitive exploration of this field of experience and the schematic and more predictable strategies of established theatre genres has produced an uncertain but occasionally inspired, playful and genuine body of experiment this century.

Certain arts address different senses more powerfully and the experiences of the senses are themselves embedded in both our body energies and in our emotional lives. The specific arts exercise the senses in differing ways and construct differing filters and avenues of approach and effect.

The rhythms of our body energy relate closely to time and the use of time and rhythm or arhythm is a characteristic of all the arts. We experience time as short-term in the phrasings and beat of music and dance, and time as long-term in beginnings and ends to stories, beginnings and ends to performances and events. There is also cyclic time as in episodes, repetitions, annual or seasonal events, rehearings and repeated versions. Our physical and energy bodies and subsequently our emotional bodies are exercised by temporal and rhythmic arrangements. We are enlivened by mobility, movement, sequence, through pauses and recapitulations. Not only in the construction of a visual artwork but in its history we see the working of timings, in repeated viewings, in the sequence of coming to know an artwork over a period of time, over a life, over an historical period, through critical rereadings of works.

I am sitting in a darkened theatre. Before anything happens, the mere anticipation of a shift of reality, of the out-of-the-ordinary behaviour I am about to witness, thrills me. Suddenly I am transported by sound and light and timing and the presence of other human beings into a world manipulated by those who have made and designed this moment. They stumble towards keys, doors which will provoke the recognition of past moments, smells from other cultures, theatres of the past. This is magic.

Not only pauses and repetitions but the presence and absence of light shapes our consciousness powerfully. Our sense of our solidity and the solidity of the world around us melts and shifts under certain lighting conditions. Theatre and painting have long understood this tool to shifts of perception, readings of the world, transport to other realities. Our concept structures, the boundaries of our imaginative lives, are dissolved momentarily in light. We stagger, we gasp, we become vulnerable. Our ego orientation depends on our spatial perception, enhanced by light.[1] The constant interplay between the material and the immaterial world is experienced in light. The presence and absence of light is deeply integrated into our culture as a metaphor for good and evil, for the known and the unknown, what is understood and what is not, for the expansion and contraction of our soul or emotional lives.

As well there is surface. Dry, wet, translucent, opaque, rough, gilded, papery, matt, pristine, aged. Though this may be at quite a distance we nonetheless experience it as touch. The varied surfaces and textures of place and body and building and artwork and costume rub against our skin. The actual or vicarious experience of surface has an inner, body-based resonance and unites us temporarily with the material world. Inner and outer perception cohere.

Music travels, as it were, down into us, entering us and all our openings without permission. We swallow it. The sung word explores the grain of the voice and the shapings of sound in an experience which addresses us physically and emotionally before it addresses the content, whereas the content is the privilege of speech or oration which is already and always delivered with authority and in which the sensitivities and equivocations of sung material are only construed as weaknesses. Speech is the domain of concepts. The act of speech is authority. The singing voice may waver and sigh and pause lengthily but the speaking voice will not be forgiven. The timing of authority must carry conviction.[2]

A man, an itinerant, enters a village. He watches children play in the dust. By and by he approaches a child, perhaps a child with a solitary air, a mark of difference, and teaches him a trick, several tricks, an acrobatic form, a feat of daring. He takes the child by his side while he performs in the street, allowing the child to assist. The child begins his training. The chosen child, in later life, leaves the village and searches out his master to continue training in feats of endurance, skill and fearlessness as a spiritual path. The spectacles and feats used to entertain and earn their keep are based on the training of inner strengths and flexibilities. Their 'shows' are consequently an array of yogic attitudes and disciplines. In these times the laws of gravity and balance are still experienced as truly magic. All this is extant in traces in circus.

Stumbling onto the footpath of an Indian city during a Hindu Festival I am swept physically and emotionally into a microcosm of the underlying cultural geography which is Indian Hindu society. All the players are there, embodied or drawn. The gods tilt crazily from the shoulders of the bearers, lurching their way along the streets which become metaphors for the paths of the universe. A tremendous sound fills the street space as musicians blow horns or beat drums evoking the sound ethers of the cosmic spheres. The stench of the streets, the aromas of street vendors' stalls and restaurants, perfumes, attars and excreta direct one's mind to the heights and depths of human experience. Wealthy women move along the edges of the procession in billowy silks of deep crimson, gold and pink, evoking lost heavens. Beggars lie at the edges, cowled in shreds of dismal rag. Toy sellers, sweet sellers and wide-eyed children cram the street edges in ever multiplying wave edges, crinkled, sparkling, tainted, filled with promise and pathos.

In dance works sound and set are subservient to the body through which we experience balance, kinesis and the self in space. The body is particularly powerful in performance as it is ourselves, not only the representation of ourselves, and it carries all the possibility of meanings of the geography of the body as archetype. The construction of all arts, but particularly dance, calls up powerful mimetic forces and vicarious absorption of material in our physical bodies. No art does this as powerfully as dance where we experience the moving body as our own most ideal body and as our spirit traversing the dark vexing world of the theatre — and simultaneously the world.

Certain arts direct our attention more firmly outwards — architecture, costuming, sculpture, painting. Between ourselves and architecture, sculpture and painting, there is a boundary which we negotiate. We move towards or are pressed against by visual images. Then we capture and store them. We retain them encyclopaedically, bringing them forward in moments for inspiration, reassurance. They live on in our body memory as icons.

Architecture privileges the science of shape. Every culture, every epoch has met the boundaries of the human body with differently shaped spaces. These spaces are ubiquitous; there is no rest from them. One leaves the corners and chaotic surfaces of one only to blunder to the next door, the next chimney, the next arrangement of side, front and back. These shapes reveal decisively the power of abstract form and shape. Pressing in against us or breathing freely in harmony with human scale, or drowning us in dizzy foyers, these shapes are as potent in their effect on our bodies as any medicine, or alcohol.

Modernist ideals, while reductive and schematising in the hands of some practitioners, also included a revival of awareness of the total art form. Architects of the Bauhaus recognised the building as a site of fusion for the various arts. The design and decoration of the private home and public workplace were seen as opportunities for the orchestration of all the senses in one cohesive environment. It was surmised that if all the elements of such environments could be overseen and integrated then such a building would have the innate logic of the human skeleton or the natural environment. Modernist assumptions were that such environments could in certain hands trans-

Travelling down the Amalfi coast from Sorrento to Napoli one passes the rugged and mountainous scenery, that play of light and shadow, brooding dark rock and aqua ocean, which so inspired Wagner to create total artworks which would bring all the sensate pathways of nature and sublime metaphors of our response to nature into the theatre. Through music, light and narrative the complex play of ethers and elements is brought to the theatre. We integrate the gestures of nature and their workings into our own emotional and physical bodies.

Hindu festival procession with statue of *Hanuman*, the monkey god.

Joseph Beuys, *Richtkräfte*, 1974

cend symbolic and in-built social significations.

Since the 1950s, critique of such endeavours includes not only the aesthetic, sensate environment created, but also a close examination of the cultural signs and significations inherent in all built environments and thus of the way in which a society furthers its mores through any artistic collusion. We see that sense of concept and meaning is carried inherently in shape, spatial arrangement, choice of scale and texture.

Not only architecture but also poetry creates redundancies. More space is housed than is needed, more form brought to a poem than the content appears to warrant. This energy moves us towards the next sensibility, the next internal shaping — it predicts the future. Poetry, which exercises feeling exquisitely, is written from a state of excess. All this experience — what to do with it? Why, I find I have to write a poem. Unlike credit cards it does not borrow from the future but sends energy forward, to be mined again at a later date.

Alternately, costume is a nostalgia, a pursuing of forgotten places, a longing for events, scents, foliage, landscape and loved ones left behind. A rebuilding of the images of caravans, Celtic ritual, Hindu heavens, Gothic pageant. In tribal and village cultures costume is the garb nature itself tends towards. It is a restatement of the motifs of nature heightened, intensified. It confirms us in nature and nature in itself.

Music and poetry move in an inwards spiral and navigate the inner life more intensely. Music, founding itself in the rhythmic foundations of our physical bodies tunes us emotionally, playing our emotional range as if exercising some forgotten bodies. The Chinese consider that the emotions are seated in the organs which are tuned to particular sounds. Certainly sound is the most seductive of

I am in a film showing. Through the manipulation of space, sound and surface, through the collaboration of image, narrative, timing, I am drawn into the actuality of someone else's perception so powerfully that when I emerge I still hurtle down highways and through underground tunnels as though I had myself been in a fast car.

We enter an orthodox church. Old women are bent over the collection box. Immediately our frivolous and curious disposition shifts. The vault of the church is dim and the furniture not quite articulate in the gloom and press of incense but weighty and forming bulkheads in the foreground. Bent figures in the pews seem close and yet at an infinity of distance. In niches along the white washed walls stand religious figurines and icons gilded and shaped. The confessional is dark muffled wood and grill and the reliquary containing the saint's remains is darker still with the grime and patina of touching. Corpulent priests roam backwards and forwards across the raised platform of the altar. Finally, without warning, the service has begun and the people begin to speak along with the priest or to move in and out at the back doors or to engage in some mysterious private prayer. Each participates to his or her own inclination. The cantor begins his song which tilts the air obliquely and sews a thread of longing between the dense walls which have become the limits of our body, aligning all the separate parts of ourselves into a single mood. His voice sews us all together momentarily and tips us towards vertiginous spheres which rotate majestically beyond our reach. There is a pause as the devout go forward towards the white-gloved hand which proffers a wafer. Through its acceptance, the entire building and ourselves as grains within it, is experienced as becoming the body of Christ.

mediators, enabling us to trace the echo of ourselves in spheres we are normally obtuse to.

* * * *

Some modern total art events attempt to reinstate a whole, harmonious and moral structure by the balance struck between the various components. What is experienced as exterior sensation sets up interior realignment, mirrors, responses. During the Enlightenment, audiences were arranged at a distance from a spectacle and encouraged to retain a critical distance. Increasingly there is a desire to work in the round, to dissolve the hierarchical theatre structure and thereby increase the participatory experience and responsibility of the audience.

Deliberate dissonance used by artists in such works can jar the complacency of dogma and convention. Such strategies were used by the Dada cabaret artists and by Joseph Beuys and Fluxus. Such works can be subversive of our habituated mindsets causing us to stand witless at the threshold of the mysterious and to say, as we leave to go back to our houses, how vexing art is, as it presses us to the theatre of darkness that we can find no words for and which we know we love so dearly.

Recently we see attempts to reconstitute multimedia events with a relationship to the initiating community, in particular community arts and the ubiquitous festival program which appear to increase the number of people in a community participating and shaping their own cultural content. There is a tension in these projects created between the big overview we are now in command of (what is being done in N.Y., Paris and Japan) and the small specific view required to generate difference and genuine local content.

The fusion of various artworks into a whole

A scene from a Japanese *Noh* play.

In a small rural community in Japan a small boy prepares to train alongside his father to be a Noh player. To do this he will not have the quiet of long winter months of preparation as the rice farmers of the past, but will have to forgo earnings from his second job on a city construction site, or rehearse his roles when he is exhausted and worried with debt. His father teaches him his steps, small, ritualised, delicate. He is taught the characters of the masks, and their accompanying gestures. He practises the little cries and declamations which the mythic characters utter. He is shown the intricate ritual costumes which will transform him from a boy to a fisherman, from a man to an angel. As well he will train to beat the drum or blow the horn which will encourage and appease the spirits of nature. At last a year arrives when he is ready to take part. They bring him the mask, wrapped in silk.

needs to know its destination. To what end will this formidable machine be working, and in whose service? A characteristic of end-of-the-century ethos is seen in many current multimedia art and theatre works, that of sensation for the sake of sensation, an arbitrary spectacle. Virtual reality technologies are proclaimed as opening the way to exciting new possibilities for a total art work. It remains to be seen what ethos and what purpose these new developments are pressed into the service of. We need to recall that nexus between media and message so clearly understood by McCluhan: 'the media is the message'.

Authenticity and integrity in the arrangement of the arts can promote a sense of wellbeing, a powerful sense of ethos and awe. Such insightful articulation of the aesthetic field can be more than inspirational. It can be therapeutic, enabling us to resolve pressing problems of existence and expanding the articulation of our sense perceptions. The tension between the separated arts and collusions between them mirrors the shifts of consciousness of the modern world with its striving to recapture and reconcile the innate overview of earlier non-literate and intensely spiritually aware communities with another highly conceptual and man-made overview, that of the scheme, the concept, map. At the end of the 20th century we hear insistently the ambition of cultural practitioners to surrender if necessary this overview, this peering down at a global world from the height of the Empire State building and a desire to walk the streets again as a child, as an unknower, as an innocent, as a mouse who can never know the concept of the city planner but who knows the city.

By developing such tangential strategies the artist longs to cease the imitation of God and know again God's mystery intimately. No strategy will ever reproduce the simple and confident vision of mythic cultures. Such longing, however, can suffuse the clear clarity of reason with a heightened perception of the sensory field. Through such strategies we can acknowledge and explore the multiplicity of ways by which we can come, partly, imperfectly, to fathom the mysteries of existence.≈

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1.Minkowski *Lived Time*, 1970.
2. Barthes *Image Music Text*, 1984.

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[All prose pieces by Julia White]

I watch a performance artist perform with deliberation some trivial pedestrian act using the utensils of daily life. All the while a sound collage of a drip of liquid is being played in conjunction with a video image of the viscous surface of an eye flickering against its wet lid. My awareness of the mundane, of the fragile, miraculous and absurd patterns and randomness underlying all daily events and actions is heightened so that I can no longer glance in the mirror or shake my head or cut bread with quite the same dumb unself-consciousness as before.

•VILLAGE FOR THE LIVING ARTS•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by BARBARA POWELL-WEISE

Barbara Powell-Weise (b. 1927) trained initially in commercial art, and took up full-time painting in1966. Since then she has worked as a teacher (in particular of the 'veil painting' water-colour technique) and as an exhibiting painter. She has presented her work in numerous mixed and single-person exhibitions, and exhibits her work regularly at the Royal South Australian Society of Arts of which she is an honorary member. 'Village for the Living Arts Inc.", GPO Box 813, Adelaide, 5001.

THE BEGINNING

In the mid-1980s I spent a lot of time reviewing Adelaide retirement villages as potential homes for my aged parents. There seemed to be little worthwhile activity in most of them and I became acutely aware that neither I nor any of my artist friends could ever be happy in later life if we were forced to exchange our concerts, lectures, evening classes and artistic demonstrations for bingo and kitsch craft, the substitute for meaningful living most commonly offered by retirement villages.

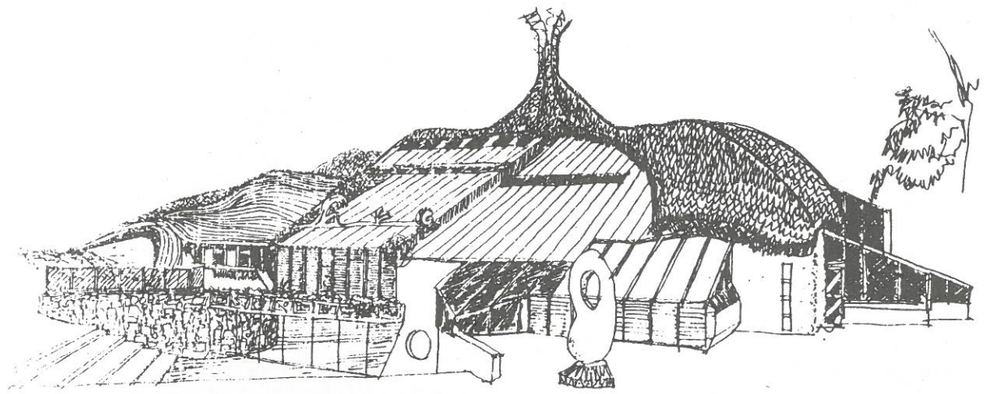
Much disturbed by such an unpalatable prospect for our 'third age', I discussed my concerns with my friends with the result that the idea of a productive village for artists of any age was born.[1] Such a village would totally eliminate the necessity of an older person uprooting themselves from familiar friends and environment and particularly from their life's work.

THE STRUGGLE

In 1987 the first discussions were held with Members of Parliament and councils regarding the acquisition of suitably zoned land. By 1990 an extended group of interested people had formed 'The Creative Persons Association'. These people have worked tirelessly in their own time, interviewing M.P.s, councillors, lawyers and relevant business people in the search for the right land, financing their efforts with meagre money.

In 1994, to provide the necessary legal basis for the eventual purchase of land, the project was incorporated and became 'The Village for the Living Arts Incorporated'. This led to a significant resolution regarding the future form of the community, a form which would tie the group together in the areas of property (joint and individual) ownership and social structure. The services of lawyers, architects and planners have been engaged and much has already been undertaken. The architects have presented an early concept sketch which has received favourable consideration by council and state government.

Over thirty sites for our Village have seriously been considered, mainly south of Adelaide. There has been great difficulty matching our requirement with zoning regulations, especially as we automatically exclude sites in areas subject to heavy crop spraying. We have now reached the point where Willunga Council sees so much value in our Village that they really want us in their area and have suggested land between Aldinga and Port Willunga, currently owned by the government.



Architect's idea sketch of building for 'Village for the Living Arts'. Architect: John Maitland

THE VISION

Our aim is to establish a village designed specifically around the particular needs of creative people from all areas of the visual and performing arts, who wish to continue their life's work for as long as possible. While meeting these needs, the practical design and functioning of the Village are themselves intended as expressions of the concept of the Village as a total work of art in its own right. Therefore it follows that such a village be environmentally balanced and ecologically sensitive, and that buildings and surroundings be harmonious and beautiful. Just as important as the emphasis on the arts would be emphases on natural farming as a means of healing the earth, and on mutually beneficial artistic and social interaction with the wider community.

It is proposed that this self-funded development will consist of up to eighty resident-owned individual dwellings of various types, flats or studios, designed to suit the special needs of that particular resident's own art form. Privacy is thus respected, while the opportunity remains available for the stimulation of companionship in a creative atmosphere. Because artists do not retire at a fixed age, the plan is to provide, when necessary, transitional living from larger to smaller dwellings, so that residents can remain active and fulfilled in their chosen environment for as long as they wish.

Any communal building or buildings would also be resident-owned. These might include, for instance, an art gallery, lecture and teaching rooms, performance space, and a shop for the sale of work produced. There are tentative plans eventually for a heated pool and a bakery which would use unsprayed organic products and would also provide light meals and afternoon teas.

Meeting the criteria of environmental balance and ecological sensitivity begins with the design of the whole area and with adoption of perma-culture and bio-dynamic farming techniques which ensure that the property is used as effectively as possible without waste or its degradation. Design will take account of land conditions, sun angles, access to central facilities and servicing, and accessibility

for any existing township and the wider community. The latest technology in energy saving and the harnessing of sun and water power will be used. Traffic movement within the Village can be greatly reduced by a cluster arrangement of dwellings, thereby minimising the number of internal roads.

The nature of the whole development opens up a number of possibilities of construction systems not normally available to private, individual situations, including the use of on-site materials such as local stone and earth, both beautiful and financially viable substances for construction. Exciting landscape can be achieved by earth mounding; the planting for beautiful walkways can be carefully chosen to minimise fire risk; attractive landscape may also include many edible plants; flowforms for purifying water might finish in ponds which will delight young and old. Quiet places for rest and recreation can be enhanced by sculpture displays and also used as intimate settings for small performances or play or poetry readings. Thus can art and practical considerations be integrated.

The bio-dynamic farm will supply as much food as the land will permit, healthy food grown in such a way as to leave the land healthy. Water for food production and re-afforestation would be at least partly provided by a natural water-recycling system involving the collection of 'grey' water in ponds and reed-planted trenches which 'treat' the water so that it is then suitable for irrigation. This would relieve demand on the fresh water supply.

Through the pace and style of modern living, especially the phenomenon of computerisation, people have lost so much of their sense of the interconnection between nature and humanity. Those individuals with some degree of awareness of this loss are questioning the way food is grown and prepared and are seeking natural remedies. However, healing the earth in our own area with carefully selected farming and conservation methods is but one aspect of the urgently necessary social and global healing with which we believe the Village for the Living Arts can help. Not only have nature and her laws been abused as a result of the weakened interconnection between man and nature, but the very sense of connectedness between human beings themselves is seriously impaired. Isolation, usually having little to do with physical proximity to other people, is a fast growing social problem with terrible and far-reaching consequences. In very many ways, what the Village proposes to offer, as a community in itself and as part of a wider community, could function as a profound counteraction to this tendency.

The plan for an integrated village will drive the physical design towards facilitating a full and valuable relationship with the existing township, in a way which is inclusive and supportive. This contrasts with the standard principle of land subdivision which promotes privacy to the point of exclusionism. The artistic activity of the Village will be extensively and systematically available to the local and wider community in the form of, for instance, all kinds of public performances both outdoor and indoor, lectures, exhibitions, poetry readings, art and craft classes and tutoring. Because Village public facilities will be available for rent by the wider community for its own creative and cultural pursuits, there will be reciprocal interchange.

There will be the encouragement and the means for young people to participate in the arts, something that is often difficult for them to initiate. As well, the Village will meet the needs of the older person, so often cut off from their work in later years. In fact, the active, fulfilled, purposeful life of the Village is likely to mean that people remain active and more mentally alert and therefore healthier and less dependent for a longer time. We are also looking at the possibility of providing holiday accommodation and tutorials and performances for interstate and overseas visitors and for country people in particular, who by definition are usually extremely culturally isolated.

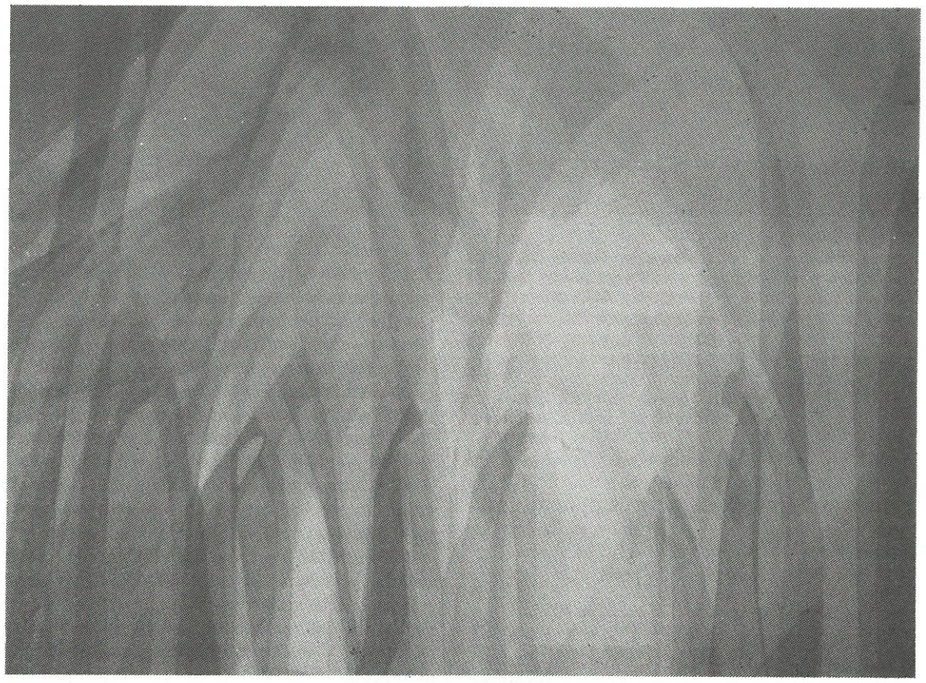
All of this, plus the Village Art and Craft Shop and the Bakery with its refreshment facilities, will mean much intermingling between residents and an extended community. It should be stressed, however, that the crucial social healing factor lies in the special community spirit which we believe will develop in this village because of the residents' common purpose, because of the effect of the beauty of the surroundings and because of the way the village will be run. It is intended to be self-governing, which implies that the residents will develop much strength and closeness through the necessary processes of conflict resolution at the same time as they support each other and are stimulated by the wealth of creativity around them.

Obviously, in a village like this, there would be tremendously valuable contributions not only to the residents and to the community as a whole but also to the arts and to tourism. The contributions to the arts and to tourism alone would justify such

a project, even eventually from an economic standpoint. However, we feel deeply that the social experiment of the Village for the Living Arts represents a new approach to living and to human relating which is urgently needed today and that this therefore would be the most important aspect of the Village's contributions. We believe that living and lifestyle in the Village for the Living Arts would be balanced in a way that would be therapeutic. The concept is unique in Australia, and perhaps even internationally; but once the reality has proved its value, it could provide a model for subsequent villages to be built anywhere in the world.≈

NOTES

1. In the first place with Vivienne Newcombe, also an exhibiting painter living in Adelaide.



Barbara Powell-Weise *Reflections in the Cathedral*, water colour on paper.

•ART & ENVIRONMENT – STORIES OF PHYSICAL & CONCEPTUAL INTEGRATION•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by MALCOLM McKINNON

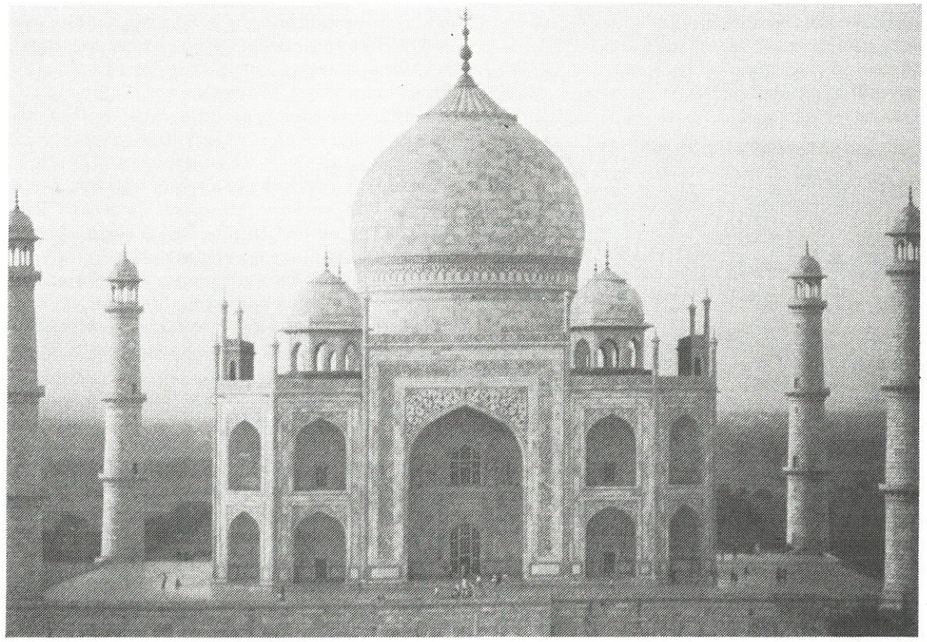
Malcolm McKinnon is a staff member of the Australia Council, the Federal Government's principal arts funding and advisory body. The Australia Council's Community, Environment, Arts & Design (CEAD) program has for the past several years supported projects involving collaboration between artists, architects and other design professionals and communities. The CEAD program functions as a catalytic strategy, promoting positive connections between art and environment.' Malcolm is also a practising visual artist who believes that good art talks and that more of it should be unconstrained by the walls of art galleries. He was born in Melbourne in 1962.

JUNIOR RECOLLECTIONS ABOUT ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Searching through my store of childhood memories, these are the built environments which were clearly constituted as icons: the Taj Mahal, the Sydney Opera House, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the Parthenon (and all of those other old rocks) on the acropolis in Athens and, perhaps a less likely candidate, the War Memorial at the end of St. Kilda Road in Melbourne. Together, these buildings and the landscapes in which they were situated represented proof of the fact that the landscape could be formed as a supreme work of art. It was their external shapes that first impressed me. They appeared in my mind's eye like objects inside souvenir snow domes, and I can recollect the cognitive adjustment I was obliged to make when I encountered them from the perspective of a moving body within a real space. There was a whole lot of new thinking that I had to do in order to assimilate the interior of the Opera House or the Taj Mahal when eventually I experienced their three-dimensional reality.

While recognising the artistic credentials of a small number of specific buildings, I don't recall any broader impulse to consider other built environments in a similar light. Tower blocks were popularly recognised as modern aesthetic abominations, houses had significance as homes or as real estate, and parks and gardens were evaluated in terms of the recreational amenities which they offered. Design was an invisible and generally disregarded phenomenon, a field of endeavour which middle-class Australians were not inclined to engage with.

The Melbourne I grew up in boasted a few notable pieces of public art. I can recall the popular scepticism which greeted the materialisation of Clement Meadmore's rusty square worm in a city



The Taj Mahal, Agra, India.

office block forecourt, a reaction which turned out to be a tame precursor to that which greeted the advent of Ron Robertson Swan's Vault a decade or so later. We all had affectionate regard for a few bronze equestrian monuments, not the least of which was a representation of Joan of Arc gesturing heroically before the columned portico of the State Library and Museum. We also liked the water-wall window at the front door of Roy Grounds' fortress-like National Gallery, especially in the summertime. This latter creation was probably not generally recognised as a work of art anyway, although we would have had to acknowledge that it was an integrated feature of the building in which it was situated. (Could it be that the fact of its unarguable integration was one of the reasons for our failure to classify it as an artwork?)

Architecture and urban design was clearly the province of professions as remote from public intervention as medicine or law. The practice of all these disciplines had an obvious impact upon our lives, but we left them to the experts. Generally, I think that we were a society which vaguely valued its built environmental heritage whilst at the time recognising that we couldn't stand in the path of progress. In recognising architecture and urban design as fields of scientific endeavour, we classified them as professions principally concerned with the manipulation of empirical data. If probed further, we would have acknowledged an inherent degree of creativity, but would tend to regard this as secondary to the engineering issues. The status of architecture as an art form may have had some basis in antiquity, but this status was not broadly recognised in relation to contemporary practice.

I was a child much interested in art, and I sought it out upon the walls of art galleries and at Rotary art shows. Generally speaking though, I wasn't looking for it as I wandered through the built environment.

To take one of the sites from my aforementioned list of childhood architectural icons, I'm recollecting a visit to Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. Aside from its thematic significance, I know that I'm aware of this particular built environment as a work of art because I pay attention to the impact of its vertical and horizontal proportions, I admire the sculptural details and

> "In recognising the complexities inherent in urban design practice, I'm hoping that we also recognise the fundamental connections between people and place..."

because, most significantly, I'm definitely cognisant of the fact that I'm wandering around within a meticulously ordered space. All of the component parts constituting this place have been located in a precise and ordered relationship to one another. As I approach the eternal flame, I'm aware of its location in relation to the landscaped grounds behind and before me and to the solid (and stolid) stone building with the golden-mean proportions. I'm in no doubt that the Shrine of Remembrance is an immaculately conceived and artfully constructed environment, a total work of art in which nothing is incidental.

MORE RECENT ENCOUNTERS WITH ARTFUL ENVIRONMENTS

Specimen site number 1:
It's a wet summer day in the year 1994 and I'm visiting Bloomfield Street in Cleveland, a coastal town near Brisbane, situated in a landscape of islands, promontories, mangroves, market gardens and new real estate development. Bloomfield Street has been the site of a design exercise in which all aspects of the built environment have been considered within a creative masterplan. It's a main street, and the town's major commercial artery, running down to the harbour at its eastern end. Ten years of research, planning and consultation have been undertaken in order to articulate local community values, patterns of usage and diverse cultural identity.

The results of this exercise are manifest in a streetscape that is rich in detail and powerfully coherent in its overall concept.[2] It's a place which invites inspection and contemplation, but also one in which physical details don't obstruct practical functions. Street plantings, signage, paved surfaces, items of street furniture and traffic control elements have all been integrated within an overall design which is stimulating, coherent and amenable on all levels. Considered as a work of art, Bloomfield Street features a poetry trail with verse inscribed in various integrated landscape features, a playground designed by a team of local sculptors from play ideas developed at children's clay workshops, a town map carved into street pavers, and locally-made mosaic tiles, banners and sculptural elements which are incorporated into garden beds, street crossings and footpaths. It's a memorable environment.

Considered within another matrix of values, the Bloomfield Street development has also prompted increased commercial and new building activity in its immediate vicinity, the development by Redland Shire Council of a cultural policy and the associated employment of community cultural development workers and the institution of an enhanced interdisciplinary and collaborative approach within other environmental planning initiatives.

Specimen site number 2:
Seen from all perspectives, the Brambuck Aboriginal Cultural Centre nestles like an organic growth, protruding unevenly from the valley floor near Halls Gap, in the heart of Victoria's Grampian ranges.[3] Resulting from a long and intensive period of consultation between its architects and its user group (an incorporated Aboriginal organisation representing the interests of five Koori communities from south-west Victoria and the Wimmera), the Brambuck Cultural Centre works on a number of levels. It supports the creative presentation of cultural heritage and natural history material in such a way that the building is an integral aspect of the display. It promotes a sense of organic order which functions as a cogent metaphor of local Aboriginal culture, both material and spiritual. It engages the imagination and, by not giving itself up to easy analysis, invites protracted consideration of its structure and of internal and external spaces.

The Cultural Centre building is inextricably connected to the landscaping which surrounds it. The landscape design incorporates the growing of bush tucker and medicine plants and allows practical interpretation of local Aboriginal culture and history.

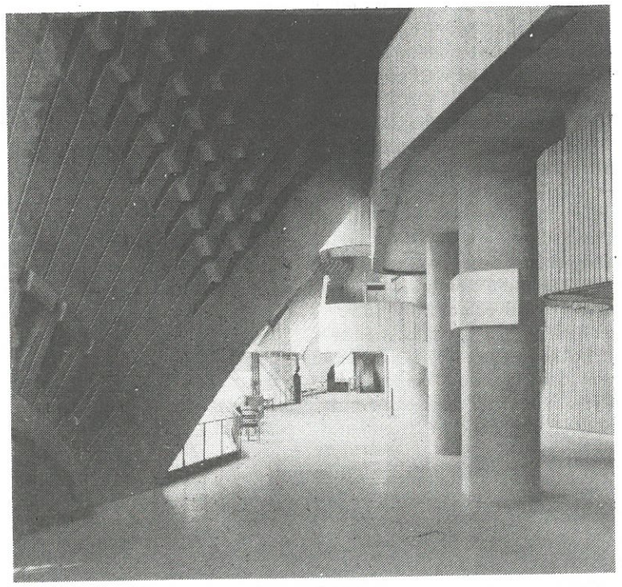
As a work of art, Brambuck achieves its difficult and delicate ambition of articulating the rich traditional culture and brutal post-colonial history of Aborigines in the Grampians as well as promoting a sense of a positive social future. On a practical and closely connected level, the Cultural Centre is attracting a large number of inquisitive visitors and supporting the development of successful small-scale cultural enterprises.

Specimen site number 3:
The Casula Powerhouse has been developed by Liverpool City Council as one of the most significant pieces of cultural and community infrastructure in western Sydney.[4] Decommissioned as a functioning powerhouse in the early seventies, the building now provides impressive evidence of the potential to recycle industrial aesthetics and functions into a creatively conceived environment which is as rich and inspiring as any purpose-built cultural facility. Wandering across Judy Watson's beautiful stained-concrete floor within the cathedral-like space of the main hall, or looking through Robyn Backen's monumental patterned window from one of several suspended mezzanine platforms, the Powerhouse projects aesthetic sensations which amplify the integral immensity and sparse beauty of the original building. As a total work of art, the Casula Powerhouse proves that even a concrete ramp for disabled access can be integrated into the clearly visible fabric of a built environment as an item of considerable beauty.

VISIONING UTOPIA

All my specimen sites illustrate the effects of a radical change in the way that public space can be

The sculptural playground in the main street of Cleveland, Brisbane, was designed in clay by local children working with four sculptors and the landscape architect. The structure is reminiscent of a dinosaur and features a freedom slide, cave and carved totems.



Side corridor of the Concert Hall in the Sydney Opera House

conceived, designed and constructed. This change profoundly alters the characteristic relationship which existed between communities and the public spaces which surrounded them when I was a junior architecture critic with average tastes.

All the sites I've mentioned owe their authorship to collaborative design teams which involve not only architects, planners and engineers but also visual artists and graphic designers, landscape designers, poets, consultative facilitators and diverse communities. Their success on every level has been dependent upon the contribution of ideas and insights from all these collaborators, and upon the outcomes from the constructive critical exchanges which occur when these agents interact.

All these places highlight an essential connection between design process and practical outcomes; namely, that the collective imagination offers a rich wellspring for creative conception and detailed materialisation, and that it requires a diverse range of skills and voices to exploit the potential benefits of this resource. To quote Melbourne-based landscape designer, Kevin Taylor, a veteran of many urban design projects involving a collaborative and multidisciplinary process:

> It is my experience that the complexities of planning and designing...environments can be more thoroughly addressed when designers, artists and communities work together. The challenge is to allow a collaborative process which will allow each person to find a place in the whole which is being created, so that the inspiration is shared and evident in the overall final outcome, and in the detailed contribution of each team member.[5]

I'd like to believe that there is now reasonably broad recognition of the fact that urban design is not a straightforward science; that it involves much more than just the application of formal techniques, and that the relevant expertise doesn't reside within any single profession. In recognising the complexities inherent in urban design practice, I'm hoping that we also recognise the fundamental connections between people and place, and the desirability of developing environments which reflect the distinctive histories, identities and aspirations of the people whose lives they affect.

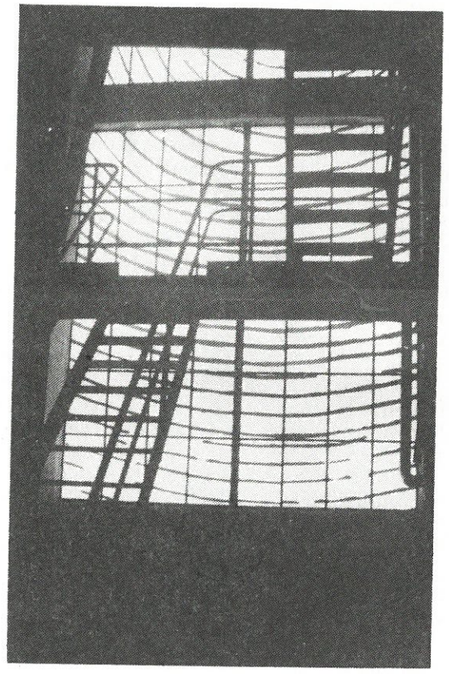
In addressing this objective, I'm hoping, finally, that we're increasingly recognising a valuable role for artists, not merely as designers and creators of beautiful objects but as interrogators of the banal and articulators of ideas which can take us beyond the obvious.≈

NOTES

1. The Australia Council recognises and promotes the major objectives of CEAD as being: to integrate art and design within public environments; to support the development of culturally expressive and stimulating environments; to highlight the links between culture, environment and place; to encourage collaboration between artists, designers and communities and to expand employment opportunities for artists.

   A comprehensive evaluation of outcomes from the CEAD program has recently been undertaken, taking into account over 350 projects which have been funded since the inception of the program in 1989. Key findings from the evaluation included: that there has been exponential employment growth for artists working in the areas of collaborative design and public art; that Australia Council grants have been an effective catalyst for significant cofunding from other sources, particularly local government and the private sector; that the CEAD program has provided an effective national model for government support of collaborative and creative approaches to urban design, and that nearly all state governments have established related funding programs.

   Additional information on the Australia Council's Community, Environment, Art & Design program is available from staff in the Community Cultural Development Fund or Visual Arts & Craft Fund on telephone 9950 9000. Detailed funding criteria are included in the Council's Grants Handbook, copies of which are available upon request.
2. The development of Bloomfield Street, Cleveland, involved collaborative creative input from John Mongard (architect) and Dixie Lambert, Dennis Magee, David Renn, Troy Robbins and Carol Roche.
3. Brambuck Aboriginal Cultural Centre was designed by Greg Burgess and Associates (architects), Ellen Jose (artist) and others.
4. The Casula Powerhouse redevelopment involved Tonkin Zulaikha (architects) and Judy Watson, Robyn Backen and Tom Strachan (artists) and others.
5. Quoted in *Places Not Spaces - Placemaking in Australia*, Winikoff (Ed.), Envirobooks, Sydney.



Robyn Bracken *Christ Knows*, window at Casula Power House. Photo: Peter Tonkin

•NATURE AS ART•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by NIGEL HOFFMANN

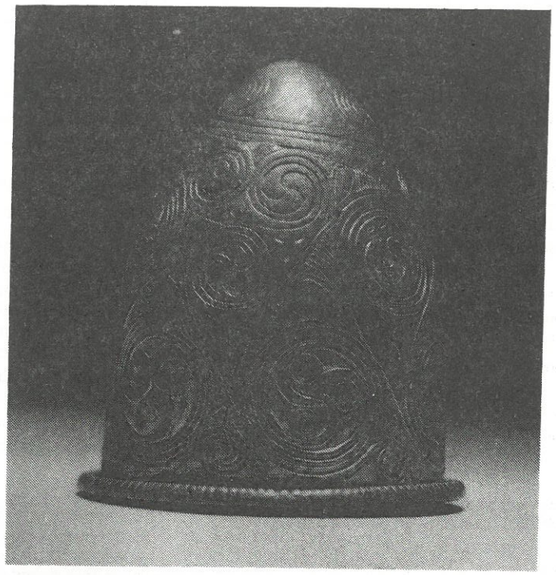
Nigel Hoffmann is the editor of *Transforming Art* magazine.

The world imaged forth as an organic whole, a world in which everything has a meaning and a place, human beings together with the beings of nature — this is one way of understanding the 'total work of art'. It is the understanding expressed in the creation myths of archaic cultures from all parts of the world, where nature is depicted as the production of divine creative Beings. This mythic consciousness, however, is not the prevailing consciousness of the contemporary world and the idea of nature as a form of art needs now to be considered afresh, in relation to the achievements and strivings of modern science and art. To be able to perceive nature as an artistic work, to learn to interpret it through an artistic sensibility which is nonetheless scientific — this is the possibility of contemporary ecological thought.

The essential question is: How can nature be considered as art when art, in present-day society, is taken solely to mean an activity and production of human beings? Here I explore the idea of 'nature as art', incorporating both traditional and contemporary ideas and focussing, in particular, on the world-view of the German poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe had a strong sense of the unity and creative power of life and this informed his work in both the arts and sciences. A number of twentieth century artists and scientists have, following Goethe's indications, helped prepare the way toward a modern realisation of the 'total work of art' as the creative partnership of nature and human culture.

NATURE AS ART

Traditionally, art was thought to have been born of nature and to carry the signs of that origin. Ancient Greek philosophy, deriving from Pythagorean sources, called the harmonious movements of the celestial orbs 'the music of the spheres' and considered this celestial 'music' to be reflected in the rhythms and proportions of all natural and musical forms. The circular movements of ancient dance have also been shown to bear a relationship to the orbits of the planets.[2] The dramatic arts, which came into being in Greece, took their form in the first place from imitation of the movements and gestures of animals — for example, the primitive ritual of the Mountain-Mother in Thrace, where the celebrants were known as *mimes*.[1] The materials and forms of sculptures and paintings, likewise, were drawn from nature; for example, the circles, spirals, curves and other motifs which are so common in archaic art. The ancient Greeks called the creative process *mimesis*, from which we derive the word 'imitate' and which relates to the original sense of *mime*. Aristotle is well known for his views on art as *mimesis*; however, for Aristotle *mimesis* did not signify the mere copying of natural forms. He meant that human beings have, in their art, the impulse of creation, the very same impulse that brings the forms of nature into being. Aristotle wrote: "Art, like nature, creates things".[3]



Celtic gilt-silver cone with spiral motifs, 8th century AD, Scotland.

When the branch of philosophy called 'aesthetics' came into being it divided into two streams — one dealing specifically with art, the other with beauty as such. Beauty was understood as the link between art and nature because beauty, in all its forms and manifestations, was considered to be the reflection of the divine in the physical world. The religious aesthetician Plotinus proposed that an artist must study the forms, harmonies and proportions of natural things and come to recognise the perfections of nature, as a stage on the spiritual path or *gnosis*. In the Christian tradition the description of the world as 'the Creation' expresses the belief that both human and non-human forms are the results of a divine creative deed. Artists in the Renaissance, such as Alberti and Leodardo da Vinci, reviving Greek aesthetic notions, attempted to decipher the creative laws of nature, to discover the symmetries and harmonious proportions which give rise to our sense of the beauty and goodness of natural things, and to introduce these laws into the production of their artworks. For these artists, the idea of 'nature's art' was not strange; it only seems strange to twentieth-century culture in which the divorce between nature and culture has become so pronounced. Only in marginal areas of modern philosophy — for example, in environmental aesthetics — is the aesthetic link between art and nature still recognised, albeit in a highly 'minimalist' and secular form.[4]

Frank Avray Wilson is a contemporary English painter and writer who has been concerned to overcome the barriers which our culture places between nature and art. Wilson does not argue that nature's art is precisely the same as human art but he does suggest that both are the realisation of nature's 'aesthetic potential', that through the evolutionary process the artistic potential of nature is progressively released and expressed. In the first place, he sees 'art in nature' expressed at the level of matter, most fundamentally in the patterns of atomic organisation

and at a somewhat higher level in crystals. Wilson writes:

> The imperturbable symmetry which characterises the integrated nature of atomic organisation must go a long way to accounting for the build-up of beautiful and aesthetically powerful shapes. Atoms come together to form molecules and these, in turn, build up into rocks and tissues. Although most crystals are simply symmetrical and owe their appeal to such simplicity, few things are more beautiful than a snow crystal or a fluorite cube.[5]

This aesthetic potential becomes far more fully realised in living creatures with their amazing variety and complexity of form. "In organic forms", Wilson goes on to say, "the simple symmetry of inorganic crystals is superseded by sculptural forms of enormous aesthetic impact". In a creature such as a bird, the artistry is not just limited to the physical form but is overtly expressed in its cry:

> A remarkable case of sheer artistic expression is found in birdsong. Undoubtedly this originated as a means of avoiding struggle by advertising territorial limits and in the breeding calls which developed over a long period of time. It has its origins in the strident noises of reptiles, but in highly evolved birds like the thrush and nightingale, true music comes into being.[6]

Wilson explains that art in nature progressively 'takes over' in the evolutionary process, another example being the patterns and colours of flowering plants. He writes that the ecological integration and intergrowing of different plants "[is] as complicated as a Persian carpet, providing a harmonic, musical, orchestral appeal in colour-play, which justifies the millions of different flower species".[7]

The human being with its artistic capacity, Wilson goes on to argue, represents an achievement of nature of a singular kind, where pure art has 'taken over' to a high degree and become the capacity for conscious creative action:

> Nature is art, and in time a humanised, creative primate had to emerge because of an inherent aesthetic potential in matter.[8]

That realisation points to a responsibility for the artist which remains obscure if we think of art as a 'merely human' capacity and remain oblivious to our part in the artistic unfolding of nature as a whole. As Wilson writes, it points to the integrative and healing possibilities of the arts, a particular task of our age which emerges in the face of "the present disintegrated and frequently hideous man-made condition". This necessitates a meeting of the arts with the sciences, and the 'total work of art', for Wilson, has the nothing less than immense task of healing the natural and human environment. Thus he writes:

> The environmental challenge, conceived as the supreme work of art, is so demanding and so complex that it can only be met by inspired vision, verve and passion, fired once again by a belief in mankind and transcendental life. Without this vision, the unavoidable and increasing human impact on the environment can but lead to ever increasing folly and desecration, which will bring in its wake an irreversible dehumanisation, until the earth will be a hell beyond present imagining.[9]

It is in the city, in particular, that he sees the possibility of this 'supreme work of art' being enacted. He writes:

> The mystically inclined architect, poet or artist, as well as the great religious visionaries such as St Augustine, have sensed a sublime reference in the concept of the city . . . The city, strange as it may sound, becomes the focus of a possible reconciliation between nature and man-made artefacts, between art, science, and technology.[10]

In Wilson's vision of a total artwork of the future,

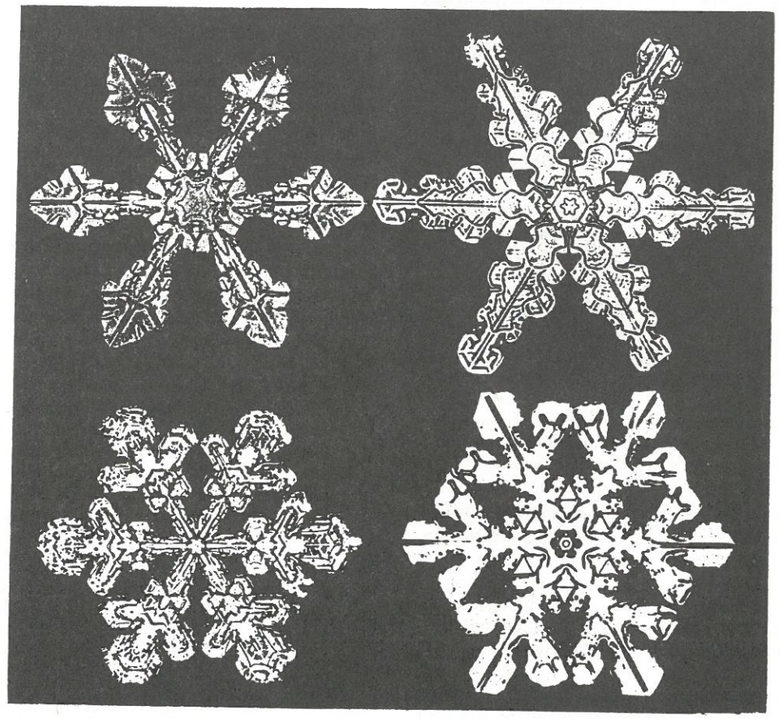
"There is a tradition in European thought which understands that creative spirit works *within* nature, immanently, and which conceives of the cosmos as an organic whole, spiritual and physical, dynamically organising itself or self-creating.

the sciences and technology find their true place in the aesthetic continuum of nature and culture.

At one point Wilson writes of his surprise at the resistance to the idea that nature is art, that the universe could be self-creative. He finds the main blockage in the belief that art must always have a human creator and the predominating Christian belief in an external Creator.[11] It is on these points that Wilson may be questioned. Certainly conventional Christian theology is traditionally dualistic in the way it divides the Creation from the Creator, not allowing that He could, in some way, be present *within* or *as* the manifest world. However, there is a tradition in European thought which understands that creative spirit works *within* nature, immanently, and which conceives of the cosmos as an organic whole, spiritual and physical, dynamically organising itself or self-creating. Aristotle was thinking that way when he spoke of the living soul of nature as the *entelechy*, the formative power within things. Just as a plant comes forth from its seed, so all things develop from a state of potentiality into actuality. The Renaissance philosopher, Giordano Bruno, wrote in his treatise *De la causa, principio et uno*:

> We call it the inner artificer because it shapes matter and figures it from within, in the same way that from within the germ or the root it causes the stem to issue forth...[12]

Bruno's view of the world was deeply religious and his sense of the unity of life required him, as with Aristotle, to conceive of creative spirit as working *within* the things of nature. Bruno states explicitly, as does the Dutch philosopher Spinoza



Snow crystals

in a later period, that the perception of the working of spirit in nature requires the development of an intuitive form of cognition — the *scientia intuitiva*.

The ideas of these thinkers had a great influence on the German *Naturphilosophie* movement, a participant in which was the poet and natural scientist Goethe. Goethe saw nature as self-creating and the divine as immanent in nature; he was instinctively drawn to the notion of nature's 'inner artist'. Nothing could have been further from his sensibility than the idea that the forms of nature arise mechanically, unintelligently and inartistically, through random mutations or some such explanation. More than anything he was opposed to the form of science which reduces the things of nature to mechanisms or 'explanations', to the scientific stance of the 'external observer'. Everything about the beauties and mysteries of nature spoke to him of an artistry of the most sublime kind which calls for a deeply reverential act of thinking in order to be genuinely understood. The science Goethe strove towards was a means of engaging with the 'living ideas' of nature rather than a process of abstracting and accumulating 'explanations' and 'theories'. Goethe understood that we need to imaginatively and intuitively *participate* in a living form if we are to realise its artistic truth, its living formative gesture or entelechy.

To say that something is alive is to say that life, or spirit, is immanent in all of its parts, holding it together as an integral form, giving it artistic integrity and coherence. Thus Goethe, as did his contemporaries in the *Naturphilosophie* movement, thought of the wholeness of the organism and the work of art in the same terms. Goethe writes that the artwork

> is a spiritual creation, in which the details, as well as the whole, are pervaded by *one* spirit, and by the breath of *one* life...[13]

For an artist like Goethe, it is on this basis that a human creative work may be considered true, beautiful and good. He writes:

> The great works of art have . . . been brought forth by human beings according to *true* and *natural* laws, just as the greatest works of nature are.[14]

Goethe was too much of a scientist to be satisfied with vague notions of the spiritual in art and nature. He wished to be able to *see* it, to cultivate the necessary organ of perception or 'eye of the spirit' which would allow him to grasp the artistic truth of organic forms. In other words, he strove toward the point where art becomes science. Just as it is possible to 'see' and interpret a painting or piece of music, so it is possible to 'see' and interpret an organic form as a 'language' of gestures, with both the sensitivity for symbolic form of an artist and the desire for exactitude of a scientist. It was Goethe who wrote:

> Who possesses science and art
> Possesses religion as well:
> Who possesses the first two not,
> O grant him religion.

Thus Goethe, out of his spiritual disposition, was orientated towards the conception of nature as a 'total artwork'. He understood that science and art spring from the one source, from the all-pervading creative power we may simply call 'life'.

ART AS SCIENCE

What is important about Goethe for the present discussion is that his efforts to develop a new 'artistic science' have borne significant fruits, especially in the last hundred years. The Austrian philosopher and artist Rudolf Steiner is one who has done a great deal, in our century, to extend and apply Goethe's artistic way of understanding nature. Steiner makes it clear that this Goethean way represents a liberation for art as much as for science; for Steiner, it is the freeing of art from the conception which has arisen in modern times that "art is something which does not necessarily belong to life, but is added to it as a kind of luxury"[15]. Steiner writes:

> [I]f we really enter the spirituality of world phenomena, we gradually transform dead abstract concepts into living, colourful, form-bearing weaving and being. Because what surrounds us lives in the artistic, mere intellectual activity can, almost unnoticed, be transformed into artistic activity...[16]

Steiner, as did Goethe, sought to cultivate a form of understanding the world which "will lead over to the genuinely artistic without losing any of its cognitional character".[17] In other words, it is not a matter of trying to understand the forms of nature using *our* artistic ideas and methods. On the contrary, it is *the artistic character of nature* which leads us to an artistic form of perception and thinking. This is the key point: nature is *already* artistic and our artistic sense resonates with the

art that is already in nature. Nature 'lives in the artistic'.

Let us consider a cow — apparently far removed from artistic and conventionally spiritual concerns.[18] We begin, as any scientist does, with observation of its physical form. We notice the exact shape of the horns, the body, the hoofs, the mouth, tail and so forth. We observe its colours, the way it moves and sounds; even the look in its eye tells us a great deal about this animal species, as it does a human individual. We take it in altogether. We might include in our account various facts, derived from conventional science, concerning its inner workings such as its special stomachs for digesting fibres. But to go beyond these facts and observations we do something which normal science never does; we strive to 'live into' these facts, to thinkingly participate in their inner gesture in precisely the way we would a piece of music — although that may seem a strange comparison. Nevertheless, the physical 'facts' or 'parts' of a cow can be perceived like the parts of a work of art — and through them can be experienced the working of a living creative 'idea'. From a participatory mode of cognition Rudolf Steiner offers this description of the essence of cow-nature:

> [Observe] a herd of cattle, lying replete and satisfied in a meadow, and . . . the process of digestion which here again comes to expression in the position of the body, in the expression of the eyes, in every movement . . . It is really marvellous to see how the animal raises its head, how in this lifting there lies the feeling that it is all heaviness, that it is not easy for a cow to lift its head . . . See a cow in the meadow disturbed in this way, we cannot but say to ourselves: this cow is amazed at its having to raise its head for anything but grazing...You cannot imagine a lion lifting its head the way the cow does. This lies in the shape of the head. And if we further observe the animal's whole form, we see that it is in fact what I may call a complete and utter digestive system! The weight of the digestion burdens the circulation to such a degree that it overwhelms everything to do with the head and breathing. The animal is all digestion.[19]

Thus an imaginative picture begins to emerge of what a cow essentially *is* as a being within the community of life on earth. Everything about the cow speaks of the gesture of the digestive process. Understood in a broader sense, the digestive process works throughout the whole of nature; it is a 'cosmic process' representing the force of creative transformation, the concentrating power whereby a material form is reduced to chaos before being creatively re-formed. This 'cosmic digestive process' is focussed, as it were, in the cow in a unique way which gives it its special role in the 'economy of earthly nature'.

In another place Steiner asks why a cow *could not* have antlers like a stag; the fact that a cow has spiralling horns, diminishing to a point, has again to do with the nature of the cow as a total digestive process.[20] In the sculptural form of the horns we can imaginatively perceive a focussing, intensifying gesture, quite opposed to the outwardly raying gesture of antlers. Artistically understood, the horns are not arbitrarily formed appendages on the cow — they are vital aspects of the total digestive-creative nature of the cow, and

"Goethe saw nature as self-creating and the divine as immanent in nature; he was instinctively drawn to the notion of nature's 'inner artist'. Nothing could have been further from his sensibility than the idea that the forms of nature arise mechanically, unintelligently and inartistically, through random mutations or some such explanation".

this is something which Steiner makes use of in his development of a new agricultural method, whereby horns are used to concentrate and increase the dynamical living powers of manure. This is an excellent example to show that we are not dealing with vague artistic visions but real perceptions, which have the power to transform whole aspects of cultural life. Other researchers, drawing from the indications of both Goethe and Steiner, have extended this artistic form of research to many other fields — for example, the study of the essential nature of water, which has led to new possibilities for water purification treatments based on water's inherent creative powers.[21] Elsewhere I have described Goethe's

Aelbert Cuyp (1629-91), *A Distant View of Dordrecht*, (detail), oil on canvas.

approach in more detail as a defined methodology using the four classical Elements, and there are several recently published books which present Goetheanism as an 'artistic science' and as a way of learning to perceive nature in its 'wholeness'.[22]

With this new conception of 'nature as art' we are not setting ourselves *above* nature, within the privileged spaces of human buildings and the artworks they contain. The experience of art becomes something much larger, much broader, more down to earth and less of a luxury which is felt to be 'added on to life'. As Steiner notes:

> In the light of ordinary bourgeois notions, bourgeois ideas of perfection, the business of digestion is the lowest of the low. Yet one is proved utterly wrong in this once a higher point of view is achieved and one sees the digestive process in the cow with the eye of the spirit. It is beautiful, it is magnificent, it is something of a tremendously spiritual nature.[23]

We are, in a sense, going right down into nature, learning how to delve into it artistically and reverentially, to find an artistic thinking which can meet the unconscious impulse of nature's 'inner artist' so that this impulse can be heightened and continued in the forms of human culture.

THE TOTAL WORK OF ART — A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The total artworks of the past, the temples and churches and other traditional works, were formed as a celebration of God's Creation, a comprehensive expression of a more or less instinctive religious feeling and way of seeing the world. The new 'total work of art', embracing nature and human culture, connects with this religiously reverential feeling for nature but brings it to a level which is in no way alien to the powers of rational comprehension cultivated by modern science. But science in itself cannot lead to it, not the materialist science which dominates contemporary education and which Goethe was struggling against even two centuries ago. Neither can art alone, if we mean by that the conventional or even avant-garde forms of music, painting, poetry and so forth. The new 'total artwork' represents an altogether new creative impulse working its way into present-day civilisation.

An image is helpful to picture the character of this new form of art. Let us bring to mind a church, a traditional form of the 'total artwork'. Within this building is the inner sanctum or *temenos*, the sacred space or Centre within; above it, reaching heavenward, is the spire or dome. The church, like the Tower of Babel of an earlier period, aspires to rise above the earth to the 'other' realm of the spirit. For a brief time, those who make their way within the context of this 'total artwork' can experience a sense of transcending their embodied selves and the earth, rising above material nature altogether which is felt to be sinful, not to be trusted, fallen. Churches are total and unified works because they are centred upon God, the One Being; all worshippers who come, through the focussing consecrating power of music and visual artworks, 'conducted' by the priest, are orientated towards that all-significant Centre.

Now let us imagine that sacred building turned inside out, as it were, so that its Centre is not just in one fixed place, but *everywhere*, at every point within nature and culture, everywhere we turn our gaze with 'the eye of the spirit'. It is said in the esoteric traditions: 'The Centre is everywhere and nowhere'. What speaks from this image of the 'total work of art' is a unity of nature and culture and a new sense of human responsibility which differentiates the traditional way from the modern. The old 'total work of art', in the form of the traditional religious building, was the context in which a community of people, as a group-soul and through priestly mediation, could experience a temporary liberation *from* nature in the spirit. The new 'total artwork' is the realisation of a free individualised human being who is able to take responsibility *for* nature, through the awakening of the organs of perception which can perceive the spirit working in all things.

Returning to Wilson's idea that the environmental challenge is the supreme work of art of the future — this certainly appears true if we take the environmental challenge to mean, not merely cleaning up the rivers, saving the forests and so forth, but putting into question the whole conventional way of understanding nature in relation to culture. This is where the possibility begins of experiencing nature as a 'total work of art', and of comprehending the task and responsibility of culture as being to learn to participate "spiritually in [nature's] creative processes",[24] as Goethe took it to be.≈

NOTES

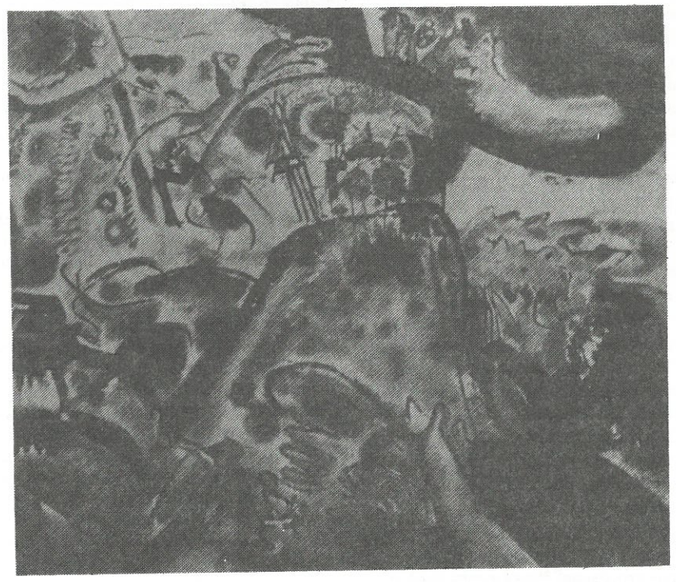
1. See J. Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, Moonraker, London, 1978, p.23.
2. See C. Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, Norton.N.Y., 1965.
3. Harrison, 1978, op.cit., pp. 108-9.
4. See for example Y. Sepänmaa, *The Beauty of the Environment*, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Helsinki, 1986.
5. F.A. Wilson, *Art as Revelation. The Role of Art in Human Existence*, Centaur, Fontwell, 1981, p. 201.
6. ibid., p. 191.
7. ibid., p. 210.
8. ibid., p. 196.
9. ibid., p. 273.
10. ibid., p. 266.
11. ibid., p. 189.
12. P.H. Michel, *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* (trans. by R.E.W. Maddison), Methuen, London, 1973, p. 90.
13. J.W. von Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann*, M. Walter Dunne, Washington & London, p. 377. Immanual Kant wrote about this relationship of organisms to artworks in his *Critique of Judgement*.
14. Quoted in R. Steiner, *Goethean Science*, Mercury Press, Spring Valley, 1988, p.101.
15. R. Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission*, Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, 1964, p. 15.
16. ibid., p.42.
17. ibid., p. 42.
18. This is not strictly true; traditional Hindu culture has a religious veneration for the cow.
19. R. Steiner, *Man as Symphony of the Creative Word*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1991, p. 19.
20. See Rudolf Steiner's lectures entitled *Agriculture*, Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Association, London, 1974, p.72.
21. See *Transforming Art*, Vol. 4 No. 2., in particular the article by John Wilkes 'The Flowform Method' and the reviews of the books by Theodor Schwenk.
22. N. Hoffmann, "Goethe's notion of 'theory'; Goethean phenomenology as a new ecological discipline", M.Sc. thesis, University of Western Sydney, 1994.
    ———, "The unity of science and art: Goethean phenomenology as a new ecological discipline" in *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, (ed. by D. Seamon), State University of New York Press, 1997, (forthcoming).
    H. Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe's Way towards a Science of Conscious Participation in Nature*, Lindisfarne Press, Hudson, 1996.
    M. Colquhoun & A. Ewald, *New Eyes for Plants*, Hawthorn Press, 1996.
23. Steiner, 1991, op. cit., p. 20.
24. J.W. von Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, Suhrkamp Publishers, N.Y., 1988, p. 31.

• THE TOTAL WORK OF ART •

THOUGHTS ON CREATING

"The beautiful and the sublime are that which immeasurably exeeds the reach of the mind and the ordinary emotions, but which is yet *experienced* directly and undeniably — the one yielding an extraordinary joy and the other an extraordinary attraction upward and inward. The beautiful yields to man the impression that nature itself is art and that great art is the discovery of the real structure of nature — the world as suffused with purpose, intelligence, meaning; an intelligence that arranges the material of reality into a harmonious plan that can be sensed only insofar as the parts of man's own inner nature are also, for a moment, working together harmoniously."

Jacob Needleman, *The Heart of Philosophy.*



Kandinsky, *Kleine Freuden*, 1913, oil on canvas.

"The great United Art-work (*Gesamt-kunstwerk*), which must gather up each branch of art to use it as a mean, and in some sense undo it for the common aim of *all*, for the unconditioned, absolute portrayal of perfected human nature — this great United Art-work [the artist] cannot picture as depending on the arbitrary purpose of some human unit, but can only conceive it as the instinctive and associate product of the Manhood of the Future . . . [A]s man is not free except through Love, neither is anything that proceeds, or is derived, from him. Freedom is the satisfaction of an imperative Need, and the highest freedom is the satisfaction of the highest need: but the highest human need is *Love* . . . Each separate faculty of man is limited by bounds: but his united, agreed, and reciprocally helping faculties — and thus his faculties in *mutual love* of one another — combine to form the self-completing, unbounded, universal faculty of men. Thus too has every *artistic* faculty of man its natural bounds, since man has not *one only Sense* but separate *Senses*; while every faculty springs from its special sense, and therefore each single faculty must find its bounds in the confines of its correlated sense. But the boundaries of the separate senses are also their joint meeting-points, those points at which they melt in one another and each agrees with each: and exactly so do the faculties that are derived from them touch one another and agree. Their confines, therefore, are removed by this agreement; but only those that love each other can agree, and 'to love' means: to acknowledge the other, and at like time to know one's self. Thus knowledge though Love is Freeom; and the freedom of man's faculties is — *All-faculty*.

Only the Art which answers to this 'all-faculty' of man is, therefore, *free*: and not the Art-*variety*, which only issues from a single human faculty. The Arts of Dance, of Tone, of Poetry, are each confined within their several bounds; in contact with these bounds each feel herself unfree, be it not that, across their common boundary, she reaches out her hand to her neighbouring art in unrestrained acknowledgement of love. The very grasping of this hand lifts her above the barrier; her full embrace, her full absorption in her sister — i.e. her own complete ascension beyond the set-up barrier — casts down the fence itself. And when every barrier has thus fallen, then are there no more *arts* and no more boundaries, but only *Art*, the universal, undivided.

It is a sorry misconception of Freedom — that of the being who would fain be free in loneliness. The impulse to loose one's self from commonalty, to be free and independent for individual self alone, can only lead to the direct antithesis of the state so arbitrarily striven after: namely to utmost lack of self-dependence. Nothing in Nature is self-dependent excepting that which has the conditionments of its selfstanding not merely in itself, but also outside of itself: for the inner are first possible by virtue of the outer. That which would separate itself must, necessarily, first have that from which to separate. He who would fain be nothing but himself, must first know what he is..."

Richard Wagner, from *Art-work of the Future* (trans. W. Ellis)

"One important aspect of Goetheanum art has to do with the striving after a reconciliation of the arts. It is not the striving after a total artwork in the external sense (such as a production in an architecturally beautiful theatre, with ceiling painting, sculptural elements, the word, music, perhaps dance, where one could say that the arts are united).

Rudolf Steiner's idea of the reconciliation of the arts is something different: the task of architecture, for example, would be for it to become musical, instead of being merely a sheath for music. Not: we play music in a room with more or less good acoustics, but: looking at architecture we feel a musical mood arise in us. When we slip into the forms of architecture we should feel music — major and minor, dynamics, etc. The forms should seem to resound. When this happens a deep noble sense of satisfaction arises: yes, the world is built out of a unity.

With speech and music on the other hand, it will depend more and more upon how much they call forth in the listener a *sculptural* impression. When a sculptor listens to speech formation, he or she feels colourful, sculptural architectural forms arising within. We are touching just there where we are responsive as sculptors. The etheric, living sculptural element arises. And there it is reconciled. . . .

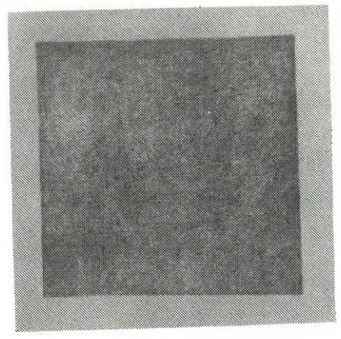
In art we have the task of forming the individual element so that it receives a higher validity and yet remains individual".

Christian Hitsch in *News from the Goetheanum*, May/June, 1996.

"*Spirit* (the creative principle) feels within itself the primitive *polarity* of the principles of male and female, active and passive, desire and resistance. The last principle, sluggish, inert, is crystallized into the immobility of materialised forms, into the *World* with all its diversive phenomema. Disunited polaritites attain in division their culminating points. Complete materialisation and differentiation — the loss of their connection with divinity (in art — the division of individual offshoots previously united and the development of each one separately). The greatest separation being attained, a yearning for union arises — the love of world for spirit, and conversely, mystical Eros. The object of disunion is reached, matter is stamped with the imprint of the creative entity and the process of dematerialisation, of reunion, begins (on the plane of the arts — the reunion of individual arts — their syntheses).

The reunion is by Scriabin's *Mystery* — the mystical act which embraces spirit and the world. This act is accomplished by a mystical union displayed in a form which is beyond our present powers of recognition. It will be universal Death and New Life, a world-cataclism, annililating the physical plane. The plane of *Mystery* is the artistic *recollection of living* through all the previous history of the Spirit: the process of materialisation by those who take part in it".

From biographical sketch of Scriabin by Yuri Engel (1915), in K.J. Peacock *Alexander Scriabin's Prometheus: Philosophy and Structure*.



Kasimir Malevich, *Basic Suprematist Element*, 1913, drawing.

"THE IDEA OF 'ARTISTIC WORK' MUST BE ABOLISHED AS A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT OF WHAT IS CREATIVE and work must be accepted as one of the functions of the living human organism in the same way as the beating of the heart or the activity of the nerve centres so that it will be afforded the same protection.

it is only the creative movement towards the liberation of man that makes him the being who holds the whole world within himself. only a creative work which fills the whole world with its energy can join us together by means of its energy components to form a collective unity like a circuit of electric current.

the first forges of the creator of the omniscient omnipotent omnific constructor of the new world must be the workshops of our art schools. when the artist leaves them he will set to work as a master-builder, as a teacher of the new alphabet and as a promoter of a world which indeed already exists in man but which man has not yet been able to perceive.

and if communism which set human labour on the throne and suprematism which raised aloft the square pennant of creativity now march forward together then in the further stages of development it is communism which will have to remain behind because suprematism — which embraces the totality of life's phenomena — will attract everyone away from the domination of work and from the domination of the intoxicated senses. it will liberate all those engaged in creative activity and make the work into a true model of perfection. this is the model we await from kasimir malevich".

El Lissitzky "Suprematism in World Reconstruction", 1920.

"Despite, or perhaps thanks to, the differences between them, there has never been a time when the arts approached each other more nearly than they do today, in this later phase of spiritual development.

In each manifestation is the seed of a striving towards the abstract, the non-material. Consciously or unconsciously they are obeying Socrates' command — Know thyself. Consciously or unconsciously artists are studying and proving their material, setting in the balance the spiritual value of those elements, with which it is their several privilege to work. And the natural result of this striving is that the various arts are drawing together. They are finding in Music the best teacher. With few exceptions music has been for some centuries the art which has devoted itself not to the reproduction of natural phenomena, but rather to the expression of the artist's soul, in musical sound . . .

This borrowing of method by one art from another, can only be truly successful when the application of the borrowed methods is not superficial but fundamental. One art must learn first how another uses its methods, so that the methods may afterwards be applied to the borrower's art from the beginning, and suitably. The artist must not forget that in him lies the power of true application of every method, but that that power must be developed . . .

And so the arts are encroaching one upon another, and from a proper use of this encroachment will rise the art that is truly monumental. Every man who steeps himself in the spiritual possibilities of his art is a valuable helper in the building of the spiritual pyramid which will some day reach to heaven. . ."

Wassily Kandinsky *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

•TRANSFORMING TOTAL ART•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by GRAHAM PONT

For thirty years Graham Pont taught in the General Studies programme at the University of New South Wales, where he is now Honorary Visiting Professor in the School of Science and Technology Studies.

Nobody seems to have tried to write a general history of total art — what Richard Wagner called the *Gesamtkunstwerk* — and any such attempt would surely be doomed to failure. Though the idea of a total art-work has a long history, extending back to the world's earliest literature, the very name and nature of this concept indicate that it belongs to an era in which the arts had already lost their primordial unity. Thus, as the biblical conception of human history begins with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, so all the literature on the unity of the arts is clearly predicated on their actual division into technical specialisms and the consequent urge to seek a reunification.

The earliest western ideas of art were embodied in the cult of the Muses, who represented the various departments of the arts considered necessary for the proper education of the Greek citizen. They were usually taught by specialists such as the music teacher, the dance master and the gymnast; but their essential unity is portrayed in the figure of Apollo, the ideal Greek, whose various virtues are displayed in the separate personalities of his accompanying choir of Muses. The form of their circle dance (*choros*) indicates the completeness or wholeness of the arts when they are finally integrated in the well-formed human being. From the ancient choral dance, which was derived from the movements of the stars, Plato took the circle as the ideal pattern of higher education — the *Encyclopaedia* or 'cycle of the sciences'. The same form was adopted for the cathedral choir, which has always retained its circular geometry and fundamental significance as the ritual centre of the church, its precise position indicated by the crossing of the transepts. This crucial point has always been the focus of the total art-work of the Christian faith; but the form and symbolism of the circle are much older than Christianity and belong to a tradition of temple design and symbolism that extends through five millennia.

The Egyptian hieroglyph for a town — a circle enclosing a St Andrew's cross (with its arms pointing to the minor directions) — reveals the common origin of temple and town as sacred sites originally defined by the round dance and often perpetuated by similar ritual forms such as circumvallation (cf. the English custom of 'beating the parish bounds'). The circle, a natural form, is clearly the original and fundamental symbol of unity, just as the circle dance is probably the oldest universal form of ritual and communal expression. The cross which divides the circle into the four

Meeting of Apollo and Zeus who is accompanied by two Muses or Hyperborean virgins. Bronze cuirass from Olympia, c. 650. BC.

quarters (e.g., of a camp or city) was superimposed later, probably as a result of the 'neolithic' or agricultural revolution which necessitated the subdivision of the human habitat into a rectilinear grid suitable for ploughing, animal husbandry and townplanning. But the perfect rationality of the circle and cross hieroglyph as a mandala of sacred and civic edifices indicates not only a widespread understanding of the built environment as a unified work of art but also demonstrates the high antiquity of this concept. Already at the dawn of civilisation, temple and city had been formalised according to the same sacred geometry; but, while the imposing physical remains of Mesopotamia and Egypt show how the cities of the dead and of the living became the most magnificent works of human art, they preserve relatively little of the perishable performing arts (the music, poetry, ceremony, ritual etc.) that were and still are an essential part of the total work of art.

The ephemeral nature of the performing arts results not only from the perishability of the human frame but also from the difficulty of creating complete and accurate records of its manifold capabilities and achievements. Dance is one of the oldest arts and its origins are lost in remote prehistory; but it was only during the last three hundred years that the art of choreography has enabled the preservation of dance patterns in graphic form. The invention of writing, about five thousand years ago, enabled the spoken word to be placed on more or less permanent record; but that record was very incomplete (and the reader usually knew the text by heart anyway) until the Greeks perfected full syllabic literacy about 400BC. Even so, the history (that is, the written record) of the performing arts, documents only the last few minutes of the human year, and most of our prehistory must remain a hazy subject of inference from physical remains and pure speculation.

Despite the absence of reliable records, it is fairly clear that the phenomenon (though hardly the concept) of total art is prehistoric in origin. The Australian Corroboree is one of the oldest surviving ceremonial traditions in the world but, as it involves mainly the performing arts and does not require permanent structures or artefacts, little remains as durable evidence of its character and

antiquity which have mostly to be gleaned today from its brief historic period of just over two centuries. But the beauty and majesty of ceremonial sites such as Uluru ('Ayer's Rock') and the continental scale of the Aboriginal song-lines leave no doubt as to the profound cultural significance of the Corroboree and similar rituals. That significance eluded the early explorers who were unable to agree on a name for what they saw of such a complex and esoteric institution and they finally adopted their own version of a local Aboriginal expression which has now become standard throughout Australia. The significance and the importance of the Corroboree still elude most modern Australians who fail to recognise it as the indigenous total art of this country, the *original Australian opera*. That tragic misunderstanding and neglect have been exacerbated by the lack of a single decent book on an institution of which all Australians should be proud.

'Opera' is the Italian term that has been used during the last four centuries to refer to the neoclassical attempt to reunify the arts of Europe in a kind of post-Christian, secular art-form modelled on what little was then known of ancient Greek musical drama. Though seriously challenged today by new forms of mass media and electronic spectacle, the *opera in musica* remains the most prestigious synthesis of the performing arts and, in the best examples, of the constructive arts too. Wagner established his new style of romantic music drama within the greater *Gesamtkunstwerk* of Bayreuth, with its purpose-built theatre in a palatial garden setting. But this was only following the very ancient tradition of princely palaces, country houses and villas, where the performing arts were celebrated along with the constructive arts as part of a grand synthesis, the greatest modern example of which was the palace of Versailles under Louis XIV. Here the production of operas, ballets and other spectacles was only incidental to the never-ending pageant of courtly life enacted in a vast garden space which seemed to stretch to the horizon.

Well-schooled in classical philosophy and aesthetics, Louis realised the total art-work of Versailles in accordance with the still vital doctrines of the Pythagorean/Platonic tradition, which not only conceived the palace as a microcosm of world harmony but deliberately formed the ethos of its arts on musical ideals. Palace and garden were constructed in the 'grand manner', that is, with a geometrical form and system of proportions that reflected those of the cosmos itself (as understood in pre-Newtonian terms); and there the performing arts, through which the ideals of French nobility were expressed (both in courtly ceremony and its dramatic imitation on the stage) were cultivated anew and perfected in a novel synthesis of classical traditions and modern French manners. So successful was Louis in creating and codifying this new ethos that the result profoundly influenced courtly life and official culture throughout Europe and came to be known universally as the style of 'Louis Quatorze'.

One of Louis' innovations was a kind of *opera gastronomica* in which the king and his ladies dined in an open-air theatre on dishes served balletically to the accompaniment of specially composed music. Thus the emerging genius of French cuisine was admitted to the circle of the Muses — something unthinkable in ancient Greece and still novel when the great French gastronomer Brillat-Savarin created Gasterea, as the tenth Muse. The cult of Gasterea, which is the highlight of Brillat-Savarin's *Physiology of Taste* (1825), is explicitly designed as a post-revolutionary communion celebrating the science of gastronomy and the art of gourmandism in a year-long festival and liturgy — a total art-work which radically adapts the forms of Christian architecture, music, liturgy etc. to the ethos of a new secular and scientific society (see Meditation XXX, 'Bouquet').

The background philosophy shared by Renaissance Italy and Baroque France was also influential in the art and philosophy of other European countries as they rose to greatness. Just as the Italians adapted the cult of the Muses to the new spirit of the Renaissance in the creation of opera, so the French in their turn at first imbibed and then modified the Italian music drama to form their own magnificent style of opera and ballet. The Italian and the French became the two formative schools of modern European taste and their influence was dominant in the arts until the English- and German-speaking civilisations began to challenge them during the 18th century.

Like France, England at first tried to imitate the Italian opera and it also took much from French models. But the Italian opera, though still cultivated in England, has always been an expensive art for an elite minority, whereas the neoclassical ideal of a morally serious music drama led to the creation of oratorio. Having tried for most of his career to impose the Italian opera on London audiences, Handel accidentally discovered a new form of music drama which was still neoclassical in

inspiration but took its ethos from the language and stories of the *Holy Bible*, particularly the Old Testament, in the authorised translation of James I. Similarly, Mozart spent most of his career writing Italian operas before he finally produced a masterpiece in the German style, *The Magic Flute*, which in effect marked the beginning of German national opera.

Through the unparalleled success of *Messiah*, the oratorio became not just the serious music drama of England but finally a mass culture that is still flourishing today. Just as Lully had created and codified the new French ethos in his lyric tragedies, so Handel — an admirer and imitator of Lully — reformed the musical arts into a new synthesis more suitable to the genius and character of his adopted country, England. In both cases, the unequalled popularity of their works in their

"The significance and the importance of the Corroboree still elude most modern Australians who fail to recognise it as the indigenous total art of this country, the *original Australian opera*".

respective countries showed conclusively that these composers had rediscovered what the Greeks meant by 'ethos' — that ideal character, both individual and social, which is communicated and expressed by the musical arts and is accepted as the basis of moral and aesthetic education through the arts. In other words, Lully gallicised the Muses and Handel anglicised them: their works were recognised as culturally authentic masterpieces and became canonic in their society. An important difference here is that, whereas Lully's courtly extravaganzas were funded by a royal purse, Handel was an independent entrepreneur who, though enjoying some official support, made and lost fortunes in the free market. Thus Handel enjoys the rare distinction of being the first composer of 'high art' music whose works proved to be viable in the marketplace — and they remain so even today.

In his opera *West Side Story* (1957) Leonard Bernstein created something comparable for American — and, specifically, New York society. His successful adaptation of the Romeo and Juliet story to the street gangs of Manhattan breathes an authentic ethos to which any American can relate. Here the perennial theme of strife and resolution is treated in a way that is particularly relevant to the conflicts of a multicultural society and the problem of creating an artistic ethos acceptable to all the ethnic groups concerned. In trying to formulate the ethos of his ideal city-state, Plato boldly confronted a similar problem in proposing to create a new mode for the musical arts — a political, moral and musical compromise which would incorporate something of both his native Dorian traditions as well as the foreign Phrygian style. His approach to the problem of harmonising the native and introduced arts might contain some valuable hints for modern Australia.

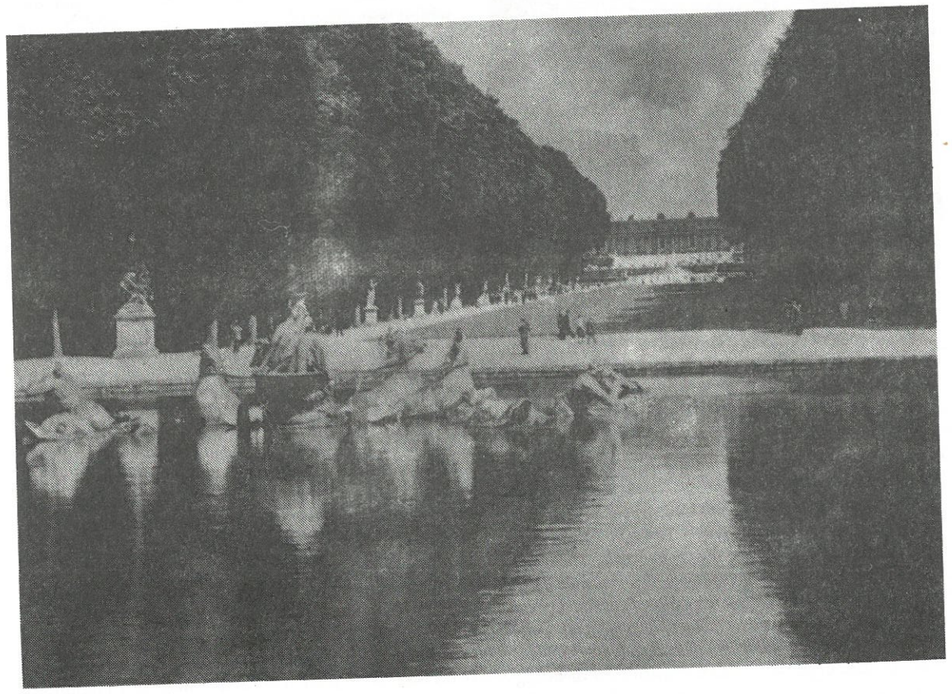
The last course I developed at the University of New South Wales was 'The Arts in Australia' which was offered as part of the General Studies elective programme (1993-5). In the lectures I argued that the imminence of the Sydney Olympic Games in the year 2000 and the likely advent of an Australian Republic soon afterwards would, for the first time, compel Australians to confront two questions: first, which of the arts express or are likely to express the actual or ideal Australian ethos; and, secondly, what are the priorities among these arts? Is there or is there likely to be a distinctively Australian *system, hierarchy or classification of the arts*? If so, which arts are the most important, politically, socially, educationally, economically, and so on? In other words, I argued that these forthcoming cultural and political events will raise once again the old problem of ethos in the arts — if only to determine the priorities of government funding.

Apart from their general ignorance of the arts in Australia, which was not surprising, most students had difficulty with the key issues of the course and many were even reluctant to entertain them seriously — even though they admitted that the questions were perfectly valid and practically relevant. This reluctance, I believe, was not entirely due to student ignorance and apathy but to a widespread disinclination among Australians in general to take on issues which had previously been decided by our colonial masters. In colonial times guidance on these matters was readily available from British and, later, American precedents. But, in a society contemplating re-

publican status, the problems of ethos in the arts cannot be so easily avoided: we must now take responsibility for our own destiny.

As well as the difficulty of having to think in a generalist, unstructured and transdisciplinary way about a subject that fell into no neat academic category, the students' problems were compounded by a lack of a standard textbook, with all the answers, and often by assumptions and ideas acquired through limited education in or contact with particular arts. They were completely unprepared to address the arts of Australia *as a whole*, to consider their general character and interrelationships, and — hardest of all — to speculate on the possibility of their ideal unification in a form of total art that might be recognisably Australian. They found it very difficult to imagine what it would be like having to advise the Prime Minister or the Premier on what should be done to open and close the Olympic Games, for instance, or to celebrate the creation of the Australian Republic. But these are exactly the questions that must be addressed and resolved by the year 2000, or soon after, if Australia is to appear on the world stage as a mature nation worthy of independent status and recognition.

At the beginning of the course, students were asked to nominate what they thought was the most important art in Australia: none came up with the obvious answer — *House and Garden*. The privately owned suburban house and its leafy surrounding garden is the total art-work of the ordinary Australian, who spends most of his available time and money acquiring, improving, enjoying and showing off his principal asset. But, while the Italians sometimes refer to the house as the 'woman's opera', Australians seem to have cultivated their domestic arts in a kind of theoretical void — unaware, for example, that our garden suburbs and cities have been influential



The Pool of Apollo, Palace of Versailles.

models worldwide. Only as our garden suburbs have started to disappear under the pressures of urban expansion and 'consolidation' are their virtues and special character being finally recognised and belatedly defended by inadequate conservation legislation. If Plato were to look for signs of the authentic Australian ethos, he would surely find many of them in the characteristic forms, gestures and accents of suburbia.

But while Australians have a well-developed understanding of the house and garden as a fully designed entity, they have shown little awareness of the city as a work of art. Until recently, civic design, official ceremonial and public celebration were left to governments and bureaucrats who mostly adhered to the approved colonial forms and rarely considered their efforts as works of art. But since ancient times the city, whether sacred or secular, has long been considered the greatest of all art-works and the Festive City the greatest of all spectacles. In the festival of Gasterea, Brillat-Savarin envisaged the entire populace enjoying the city as one great dining room. Clearly anticipating modern mass culture, he recognised that good food, drink and entertainment could be the common bond and animating spirit of a public as much as a private celebration. And he also realised the economic importance of such large-scale entertainments, again anticipating the role of festivals in the modern tourist industry.

But if Australians were suddenly to view their cities and suburbs as unified works of art and try to define their peculiar ethos as a subject worthy of the highest cultivation, refinement and creative expression — with the aim of making them the ideal place for young Australians to grow up in — what might happen?

The most likely response, of course, would be to grab something quickly off the nearest overseas shelf and end up with a Darling Harbour — a visual, financial, cultural, ecological and planning disaster left after the hasty advice of a visiting American 'expert'. Here was a unique opportunity created by a State Premier who did more for the public face of inner Sydney than anyone in living memory. But nothing can be said in favour of the result so far, except that the site remains close to the city centre and all the transport connections, and the potential is there for better things to come. To imagine alternative possibilities: Judy Messer, the well-known Sydney bush gardener and ecological activist, suggested that the whole site should have been returned to its original harbourside landscape. A surprisingly simple idea and perfectly feasible, given Sydney's unique technology of bush regeneration and its confident school of landscape design. The result would have been a great urban park and conservation area right at the city centre — a much-needed lung for the polluted air, a recreation centre of endless potential and a unique expression of the Australian ethos.

But to achieve such an *ecological* work of art at the time would have meant the virtual demolition of Sydney's colonial ideology, political economy, state bureaucracy and its architectural and planning establishment. There were, in any case, too many fingers in the pie — not to mention skeletons in the cupboard. But the resulting fiasco highlights a fundamental problem of the total art-work in a democratic state. With an absolute monarch like Louis XIV or Napeoleon it was possible to create a Versailles or a modern Paris, but can unanimity and cohesion ever be achieved within the structure and forms of a democratic city or state and a free, multicultural society?

To this very large question, I would like to sketch briefly some possible answers. Short of a nuclear holocaust, there is no hope of giving Sydney a unified plan like Canberra — and, in my opinion, no need to. Despite the best efforts of its designers, the ceremonial centre of Canberra is more like a city of the dead than one for the living. Its derivative monumentality is a failure, its expensive rhetoric is pompous, laboured and unconvincing. The best part of Canberra is the site itself — and that was a compromise choice — and the best building, as the late Sir Paul Hasluck wisely pointed out, was there before the planners and architects got to work: it is an original Australian shearing shed which still manages to evoke the genuine pastoral ethos of the old station on which Canberra was built, Duntroon.

But in contemplating the possibilities of Canberra or Sydney as a total work of Australian art, we immediately recognise the fact that our characteristic form of suburban life is the most natural and popular mode of living in this country: the lifestyle we feel most comfortable with, the one we lavish most of our resources on, is that of the bungalow. The European aristocracy made the rural *villa* a work of art, in the best cases, of total art (see, e.g., James S. Ackerman, *The Villa; Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, 1990). But more ordinary people all over the world have made the *bungalow*, or suburban villa, their work of art (see Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow*; *The Production of a Global Culture*, 1984/95). The bungalow —

what Australians usually mean by a 'house' — is without doubt a major artistic genre in this country and one that expresses many of the characteristic values and attitudes, that is, the ethos of its inhabitants. So, unlike the authoritarian societies of the past, when despots made monuments to themselves in great cities, modern democrats have replaced the slums and hovels of the poor, as well as the palaces of their oppressors, with middle-class bungalows boasting every modern convenience. These include telephones, televisions, faxes and computers with immediate access to international communications — to a technology which might soon render the old official, ceremonial and commercial centres obsolete. Thus, while envisaging an Australian form of civic art, we might have to look to our distinctive suburbs, rather than our derivative city centres, for a viable locus and mode of artistic creation, technological invention and cultural expression.

Contrary to the static, rigid and antiquated planning of central Canberra — a pale imitation of the autocratic city — we might look to its ever-proliferating garden suburbs and the loose plan of interconnected regional centres as the real Australian art-work. Sydney and Canberra are virtually identical in this respect — except that the more centralised control of Canberra has resulted in a certain dullness and lack of diversity. In anarchic Sydney, where no single authority holds sway, there is vitality and genuine cultural diversity — indeed a richly cosmopolitan society that is hardly equalled anywhere else in the world. The authentic regional diversity of our cities and suburbs might well provide an appropriate model for the structure of our civic festivities too: not the single song-and-dance of the autocratic chorus but a diverse polychoral or multicultural celebration — not the unison hymn of pseudo-solidarity that is our present national anthem but a free association of sympathising *cori spezzati*, all doing their own macaronic Waltzing Matildas. . .

But the advent of the Games and the Republic remind us that, whereas ordinary family life is best lived in the privacy of the suburbs, there are times of communal, civic and national importance which must bring the people together to share in a public celebration. On such important occasions not everyone will be content to watch the proceedings on television: real participation is still occasionally necessary for the proper functioning of democracy, although the problem of finding adequate venues becomes more and more difficult. On these occasions the populace traditionally comes together at

"We might have to look to our distinctive suburbs, rather than our derivative city centres, for a viable locus and mode of artistic creation, technological invention and cultural expression".

the great cultural foci, the temples, palaces, town halls, amphitheatres, squares, parks and parade grounds of the cities — to those formal spaces and edifices which represent the pinnacle of civic art. As Joseph Rykwert has pointed out in *The Idea of a City* (1976), the cities of the old world were ritually endowed with their ceremonial centres — a city by definition had its original focus or sacred centre, often at the crossing of the main axes, and grew outwards from this heartspace — but what hope is there for the great sprawling grid of cities like Los Angeles and Sydney? Must they abandon any pretence to becoming integral works of art and be condemned forever to anonymous, mechanical and random expansion?

My only clue to answering this question is the emergence of a new era in science, technology, politics, economics — and, inevitably, in art too. In the *Age of Ecology* a new rationality is emerging to challenge the endless exploitation and destruction of nature. One of the fundamental principles of ecology is the limited carrying capacity of any niche or habitat. The random development of the mechanistic urban sprawl might well give way to an ecologically managed urban form which will rationally adjust its population and political economy to the sustainable carrying capacity of the environment. Perhaps this is already happening to our cities and suburbs — with the sad result that young and poor people are being priced out of the best of both. Perhaps the historic distinction between city and suburb, between urban and suburban life, will dissolve as even the largest metropolis comes to be seen as only a suburb of the World City, whose celebrations are mainly events of the global communication system. But even in this vast 'Ecumenopolis', as foreseen by Constantin Doxiadis, human beings will still occupy their particular niche, even if it

stretches from Sydney to London, and those niches will be designed, managed and beautified by the new art and science of *ecotechnology*. The demand for a 'Green Games' in Sydney is symptomatic of this revolutionary development — and it will be a great pity if that enlightened vision succumbs to the vested interests of the old order.

But, whatever happens with the Sydney Games or the new Republic, it is certain that on these great international occasions, Sydney and Australia will be on the World Stage. Billions of people will then come to know us by the quality of our culture and civilisation. Not just the theatrics of the official celebrations but the whole of our society will be under scrutiny. The way we then present ourselves to the world will unavoidably be a revealing test of our taste, style and imagination; our scientific ingenuity, invention and technological sophistication; our social, moral and political values; our education, culture and quality of life. Whether or not we see it that way, our critics will judge us and our society as a whole and sometimes they will find a peculiar wholeness or a distinctive cultural organism that is undeniably Australian. Sometimes what they see will be accidental and unplanned, perhaps even unnoticed by the locals themselves. Sometimes it will be the result of a deliberate exercise, whether in honest art or cynical media manipulation; but rarely if ever will our guests encounter a total work of art in Australia, unless they happen to be invited home.

In 1973, I published an article on the possibility of creating a total art-work at the historic, ceremonial and artistic centre of Sydney — the space embracing the Domain, Botanical Gardens, Opera House and the beautiful harbour they all overlook ('The Perfection of Opera; an Ecology of Art in Australia', *Con Brio* 1, March 1973, pp.30-40). Foreseeing the need to redefine the function of Government House and reorganise the Conservatorium of Music — both issues now confronting the State Government — I advocated the creation of a new coordinating body, a NSW Fine Arts Commission, which would be charged with the duty of creating a total art-work from the already unequalled advantages of the most historic site in Australia — the birthplace of antipodean civilisation and the heart of its oldest and greatest city, the seat of Government, the site of the Sydney Opera House, our first farm and vineyard, and the principal tourist destination in the country.

Here I envisaged a democratic *Grand Opera* — not just another musical or theatrical work, but a grand ecological synthesis of 'the Opera in the Garden, the Garden in the City, the City in the Landscape'. The Fine Arts Commission would, in effect, become the democratic equivalent of the old aristocratic patrons: on behalf of the government and people of New South Wales, it would assume ultimate responsibility for the integration and management of the Domain and the Botanic Gardens, Government House, the Conservatorium and the Opera House and, in particular, for directing the talents and energies of the people and the resources of this state towards realising an Australian version of the total art-work — the Festive City. At the core of this proposal was the Conservatorium, reformed as a New South Wales University of the Fine Arts:

> At a stroke of a pen, the NSW Government could create, now, the finest university in Australia, with the most beautiful campus in the world. How many other universities could boast of such amenities? Five minutes' walk to a magnificent library for staff and students; ten minutes to a good art gallery; ten minutes to the Opera House, symbol of the students' aspirations and gateway to their careers. In addition to all this, we already have the chancellery of the new university, the State Office Block, right on the site. And for staff and visiting artists, the Government could easily acquire residential accommodation in the Astor, Macquarie Street [then going at bargain prices!]: this would offer excellent opportunities for international stars of the Opera to give master classes at the Conservatorium after breakfast. There would be no problem of accommodating extra students at this new university, because the Government already owns so much space in the area, for example... the magnificently-restored Colonial Secretary's Office, opposite the Conservatorium. If new rooms are required — for example — workshops, laboratories, or computer centres — then these could be conveniently included in the redevelopment of the Parliament House complex, behind the Public Library. And for a superb residential college, what better than the old Sydney Hospital, at the head of Martin Place? The list of facilities already there is almost endless... three railway stations; an overseas shipping terminal at the bottom of the hill, and an international airport twenty minutes' drive away; an expressway at the doorstep; and excellent bus, taxi, ferry, and hydrofoil services right at hand.

Needless to say, some of these opportunities are now lost. But the idea of transforming the Conservatorium into a new university has already been partly, if unsatisfactorily, realised and that unhappy organisation must obviously be reconstituted at a future date. I also anticipated the inevitable redeployment of Government House in the republican era: here is a magnificent edifice and landscape garden that will not only continue their role as the most important ceremonial centre in the state but also offer wonderful opportunities for imaginative development. In a recent letter to the Premier, I suggested the possibility of re-creating Government House as the democratic and republican equivalent of the old palace or villa, as an academy of the arts in general, providing accommodation and meeting places for a regular programme of visiting fellows — rather along the lines of the Humanities Research Centre at the National University, but with a much broader scope. No one will deny that the state rooms on the ground floor of Government House should, like the name, be retained for their unique historic and heritage values; but the existing complex also includes a lot of other residential space and outbuildings that could be used to accommodate a *centre of excellence* dedicated, like academies of the Old World, to the pursuit of perfection in all the arts, crafts, sciences and technologies — indeed, to any innovatory project that might appear feasible and worthy of support. However, I particularly urged that this new university should place a strong emphasis on true *liberal education* — another foresight that has been confirmed by the radical downgrading or virtual abandonment of general education by our commercially-oriented academics (who appear to have completely forgotten that the liberal arts were once *arts* or, in modern terms, fundamental technologies of a free society).

The essential point of my proposal was the rational integration and imaginative redevelopment of existing opportunities, facilities and resources into a world-class centre of creative excellence, situated in an incomparable landscape and dedicated to the improvement and perfection of the Australian spirit and character. No civilised Australian could deny the need for such an organisation — at least for a more imaginative and cost-effective utilisation of the state's invaluable portfolio of assets here. No one could underestimate the difficulties facing such a venture, which would have to include the task of finding a relevant educational vision for a demoralised Conservatorium or of bringing a philosophically bankrupt Australian opera to accept the educational, moral and political responsibilities of the publicly-funded performing arts. All this, which might well tax the courage, vision and energy of a Louis XIV or a Thomas Jefferson, would have to be undertaken by the most effective democratic equivalent — a powerful consortium of truly Australian talent.

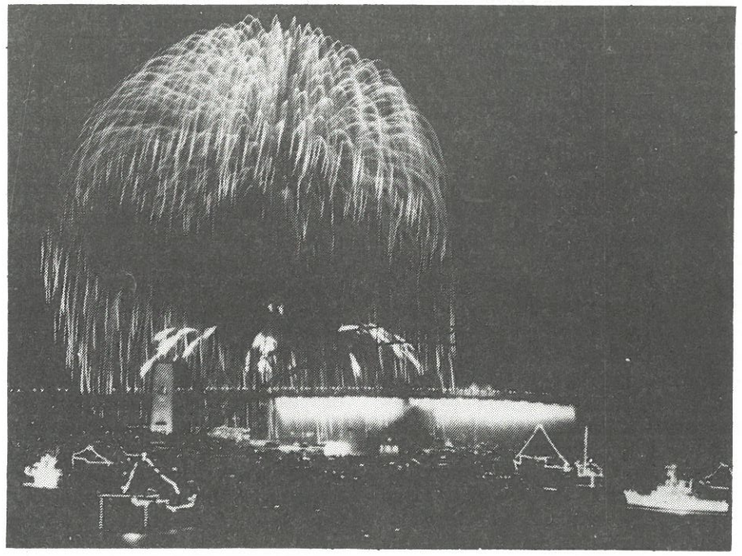
Thus the Domain, an old ceremonial site, would rightly become the site of new and appropriate Corroboree in the Third Millennium. In the article, I briefly explored the possibilities of the ceremonial and festive celebrations that might be suitable for a new republic, in particular, the ideal character of an Australian total art-work — a *Gesamtkunstwerk* in Wagner's narrower sense, a truly Australian Opera or, more relevantly, a modern, *multicultural Corroboree*.

Much of what I proposed has already been achieved, especially through the efforts of my colleague Nicholas Bonham who was responsible for the design and direction of the spectacular conclusion to the Sydney bicentennial celebrations of Australia Day, 1988. Heroically overcoming every technical and bureaucratic obstacle, he invoked a vast *regatta* — the obvious festive mode for a Venice or a Sydney — which was shared on land by a mass picnic or barbecue of BYO onlookers, linked around the great arena of Port Jackson by FM radio. To the accompaniment of specially chosen music on the radio, the festive city was treated to the greatest pyrotechnical display ever seen in Australia, using for the first time the Harbour Bridge as an unforgettable centrepiece. Unlike all previous pyrotechnics in the country, this superbly artistic display was historically researched, philosophically informed and creatively designed — and the breathtaking result was crowned by that final apocalyptic image of the Harbour Bridge dissolved in elemental fire. That image stunned every onlooker and went right around the world. Later that year, the same image was ingeniously re-created by Nicholas Bonham in a culinary microcosm, as a *pièce montée* of interior fireworks at the opening ceremony of the Fourth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. Thus, the bicentennial year, it may fairly be concluded, inaugurated a new era of post-colonial art in Australia.

Whether the festivities of the Sydney Olympic Games will reach this standard of quality, sophistication, originality and appropriateness remains to be seen. The opening ceremony of the Atlanta Games threw down a formidable challenge with a grand, multi-choral and classically styled ballet which would have surely impressed Louis XIV. But he would not have been impressed at all by what the television cameras failed to reveal — the hypocrisy of a stage event which was crowded with black artists but observed by an audience in which blacks were conspicuously out-numbered. And, being an American festival, no thought whatsoever was given to the art of food — though a chorus of fast-food chefs and cashiers, or a buffo entr'acte of Ronald McDonalds, might well have enlivened proceedings.

An Australian Olympic festivity, like any other Corroboree, should also be a celebration of Australian food — an authentic *opera gastronomica* which does due justice to our newly-won position as a gastronomically inventive country, a world leader in fine cookery as well as wine production and connoisseurship, and a vitally important source of pure foods and waters. Like the Corroboree of old, the grand Australian opera should be a splendid open-air event — a mass re-enactment of that familiar rite, that family communion which is observed in every suburban backyard, the *barbecue* (it is a great pity that the equivalent Australian term *boree log* has fallen out of use). Just as the element of fire regularly animates the Australian bush, so the Australian people might well renew their covenant with each other and with Nature itself in a multicultural celebration of the world's oldest cuisine: around the campfire all Australians — all cultures — meet as equals. A grand Olympic Barbecue around the Harbour, organised by the very considerable talents of the Australian Symposium of Gastronomy, would be much cheaper and infinitely better — as well as politically sound and morally right — than unceremoniously inflicting on ourselves the kind of industrial garbage with which the spectators at Atlanta were insulted.

Civilisation is the life and art of the city; and, since the city itself is now in transformation worldwide, the art of the city and of the suburb must necessarily change also. So too must education, morals and manners, sport, leisure and entertainment, the opera, the theatre and all the festive arts. But, to transform the idea of total art — to renew the timeless Corroboree in the age of Ecology — we must first understand who we are and where and how we live.≈



Fireworks over Sydney Harbour bridge, Sydney bicentennial celebrations, 1988.

•CONTEMPORARY ART, JOSEPH BEUYS & THE SECOND GOETHEANUM•

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by MARION BRIGGS

Marion Briggs (b. 1948) lives in Sussex, England and works as a visual artist and with social form and finance. She has edited a publication on the same theme as this article, entitled *Joseph Beuys: His Art and Rudolf Steiner*, available from Mulberry House, 16 Hoathly Hill, West Hoathly, West Sussex, Great Britain, RH19 4SJ, price UK £4.50 + postage.

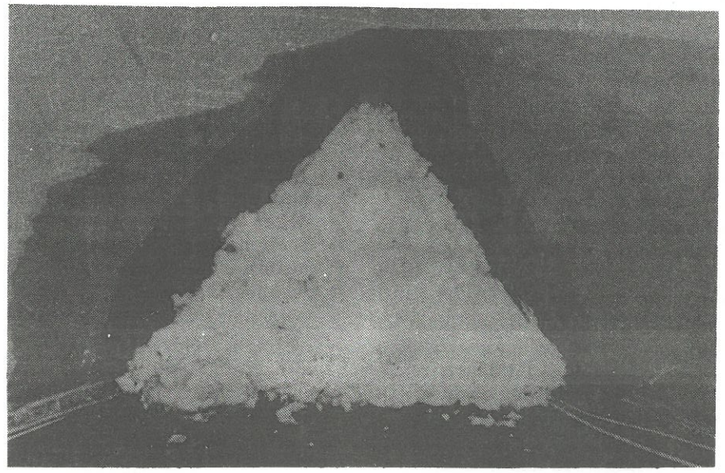
In this article I focus on the work of Joseph Beuys, examine the art forms that he used (including his extended concept of art) and show how these can be understood in terms of Rudolf Steiner's second Goetheanum and related social form, which is a transformation of Steiner's 'Threefold Social Order'.

Beuys was born in 1921 in Cleves, an enclave of Germany in Holland which had Celtic origins. He was fascinated with natural science and explored nature even as a boy. During the war he became a Luftwaffe pilot and was shot down over the Crimea in 1942, and almost died. He was revived through the care of Tartar tribespeople who enveloped him in fat and felt. After the war he studied sculpture with Ewald Mataré and anthroposophy with Max Benirchke.[1] Beuys went to the Goetheanum for the first time in 1952 and discovered Steiner as artist. He was impressed by the honesty of Steiner's sketches. Shortly after, he went through a profound, suicidal depression but at the same time was working with Steiner's sketches *Sunrise* and *Sunset*. Out of this he constructed his theory of sculpture and of social sculpture; it was at this point that 'Beuys became Beuys'.

The nature and use of materials was of great importance to him. He had an alchemical relationship to matter, being interested in the subtle transformations of substance. Through fat, felt, copper and other materials he developed a language with which to convey spiritual truths. Beuys saw it as his task to gradually sweep away people's mistrust of the spiritual. He used different art forms related to the forms of Conceptual Art which artists developed in the 60s and which include the dematerialisation of the art object, analytical and theoretical art, political art, works using earth and body, environmental art, different forms of spiritual works and the analysis of media (materials).

Beuys developed his sculpture in the direction of installation. He made use of found objects (Art Povera) and used objects which continue to change over time; for example, in one of his 'fat corners', fat in a cardboard box gradually soaked into more of the cardboard (Process Art). An important aspect of his art was to engage the viewer as a part of the work itself, and also to encourage change in the way an audience sees the world or each other (as in Performance Art, including Fluxus, where the audience's active participation was called for).

Each of Beuys's works arose as a manifestation of basic spiritual truths, which he spoke of increasingly openly, referring to the 'Mysteries', where the deepest secrets of life are revealed. His blackboard drawings were a form he used for conveying the concepts he worked with. He was concerned with the sacramental nature of everyday life — 'life as art' — and with the unfolding creative potential of the individual, for example in *The Warm Time Machine in the World Economy*, where he gives the idea of the developing of human potential over time on a world scale, the notion that



Joseph Beuys, *Fat corner*, 1960.

true capital is the untapped creativity of every human being — 'art is capital'.

In addition, he extended the concept of art to include the forming of the social structure — 'social sculpture'. To this end he established the following social and political organisations:

> The Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research in which are discussed the questions of the time covering all aspects of life, including economy, politics, religion, art, medicine, as a 'permanent conference'. Members of the Free International University are still active in many parts of the world. This was derived from:
>
> The Organisation for Direct Democracy which he also called the 'Threefold Social Order' after Steiner. This organisation advocated decision by referendum as an alternative to the party system of democracy.
>
> A Theory of Money, which placed money as a means of disposing rights to material, social and spiritual needs.
>
> The Green movement and the German Green Party, which he co-founded, as a political expression of the need to wake up to environmental problems.

The roots of metaspiritual Conceptual Art, according to Misko Suvakovic, artist and modern art historian, "lie in the alternative youth revolt in the mid-sixties, the spiritual and symbolic potential of early avant-garde art, the political radicalism of ecological action and the reconstruction and simulation of Occidental and Oriental esoteric systems (Zen, early Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Alchemy, Theosophy, Anthroposophy)". He postulates that the European line of metaspiritual conceptualisation is determined by:

a. *"steps into the world of nature"* — this is realised in environmental art, in the works of artists such as Richard Long and David Nash.

b. *"work possessing bodily and spiritual potential of ritual micro-existence"* — this includes forms of performance art where awareness of the present moment is heightened through the enactment of movements — the use of the body or speech or sounds so that 'micro-existence' (everyday life) becomes a reflection of higher philosophical or existential awareness. For example, Yoko Ono gave instructions: "Draw an imaginary map — go walking on an actual street according to the map" (1970).

c. *"the synthetic construction of symbolism and existential world systems of art and culture"* — here the 'idea', 'concept', mythology or world-view is expressed; for example, using ritualistic

acts such as Hermann Nitsch's *Ritual and Blood* (1962) or Joan Jonas's *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* (1972).

Suvakovic then gives an interesting construction of the relationship of the various art forms in the development of environmental art, which I have summarised as follows:

sculpture brought to its spatial, phenomenological limits transforms into . . .

installation the structuring of space by allocating and distributing objects and by manipulating their relationships to each other. The concept of installation introduces sculpture into the architectural space, transforming it into sculptural artwork.

environment occurs when an installation becomes the totality surrounding object and being; that is,the constructed and the living world.

a viewer

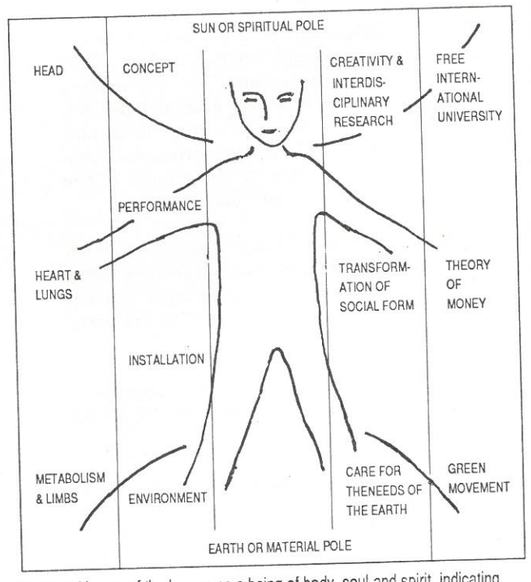
a) views the sculpture from the outside as an object

b) views the construction-assemblage-installation from both inside and outside, moving through not only with his view, but also his body, achieving performance

c) is surrounded in an environment with the totality of the state of affairs of the natural and artificial worlds, whose physical, existential and spiritual constituent is in fact the viewer himself.

Now, observing the second Goetheanum, we see that it can be understood in terms of Misko Suvakovic's description:

> The building stands in space as a sculptural form. It is possible to walk around it, view it from the outside. The sculptural element has entered into the architectural space (in contrast to the first building, which was an architectural structure with sculpted walls; now the structure itself has been sculpted). It can be viewed both from inside and outside, as a sculptural artwork.
>
> Within the building, people meet and interact, talk, eat, view and participate in stage performances, workshops, seminars, in different spaces and rooms. With the aid of artistic forms and colour (not completed) and the ambience of the building it is possible to develop a heightened sense of each encounter and an opening up to the secrets of existence. The first Goetheanum building, which was begun in 1913 and destroyed by fire on the last day of 1922, enclosed an inner space for the performance of Steiner's mystery dramas and lectures on anthroposophy. The second building, designed at Christmas 1923 and opened in 1928, describes an inner and outer space. (Steiner worked on a model for the outside of the building and was not able to give directions for the interior design before his death in 1925. The interior is still incomplete).
>
> By observing in particular the west front of the building it is possible to experience, through the architectural gesture, an outward curving movement which, if extended in imagination, embraces the whole earth with its 'totality of natural and artificial worlds'.
>
> The environment of the building consists of the material, social and spiritual elements of the



Archetypal image of the human as a being of body, soul and spirit, indicating Beuys' integrated artistic forms.

> world, which is a reflection of the image of the viewer, as a human being with body, soul and spirit. The involvement of the viewer with the building creatively and as a journey of spiritual discovery is 'performance' in the widest sense of the word. The mystery drama now takes place on the world stage as an enhancement of everyday experience. The individual wakes up to their place in the community of humanity, their responsibility towards the earth and their place in the cosmic order of things.

At the beginning of the century, the Bauhaus and the second Goetheanum were related in their attempt to produce a total artwork through the integration of architecture, sculpture and painting. Contemporary art also moves towards a total work of art; artists since the sixties have worked on different aspects of this project carrying them to an extreme and leading, on the one hand, to a deeper involvement with the materials of art and on the other to a search for the 'idea' or 'concept' behind the work of art. Through Beuys, and others, these forms have been worked with to bring about an integration, adding the environmental and social dimensions.

Beuys's integration moves from the 'idea' or 'archetypal picture' of the human being and society, through performance, installation and environment, to art as an activity in transforming social life, art which everyone can participate in — "every human being is an artist" he declared. His forms involve an engagement with the issues of today, challenging assumptions, leading to a more enlightened understanding which prompts further action to change the world. He worked with the invisible, the essence, the process of art, concepts, feelings, experiences of substance, inner processes, relation to our surroundings, and with the notion of responsibility. He wanted to offer hope and a means of bringing, human warmth and positive action into our social life. He was concerned with the cultivating of spiritual awareness and the need for renewal as we move into the new millennium through:

> — the awakening of our individual creative potential as the means of bringing about a new culture by humanity
>
> — the renewal of social life through the awareness of forces at work in Nature as forces which are also at work in the forming of human community
>
> — the redemption of matter through an engagement of the human spirit in the transformation of the earth.

These steps correspond, in reverse order, to Suvakovic's three characteristics of Conceptual Art (however, where many artists looked back at old forms of culture — for example, ancient ritual — Beuys looked forward to a new form of cultural development). In this sense he relates to the three areas elaborated by Rudolf Steiner:

> — the awakening of spiritual faculties (spiritual development) in order to further the development of human culture
>
> — awareness of the spiritual forces at work in human relationships (knowledge of karma)
>
> — concern for the earth (mankind as the custodian of the Earth).

Rudolf Steiner anticipated the growing need for an integration of these three areas of transformation in the way he conceived the second Goetheanum and its accompanying social form as a total work of art. Joseph Beuys found a way of manifesting this out of his own experience, and has shown a way for others to do the same. His art is of the second Goetheanum. ≈

NOTES

[1]Anthroposophy was founded by Rudolf Steiner and he described it in 1924 as "a path of insight which allows the spiritual in the human being to be guided to the spiritual in the cosmos".

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• THE GOETHEANUM IN DORNACH AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTEGRATION OF THE ARTS •

THE UNITY OF THE ARTS

by WILLY ROTZLER

Willy Rotzler (b. 1917) was curator of the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zürich, after which he became an eminent Swiss art critic and writer. He has written numerous books and articles on the arts, including: *Constructive Concepts: History of Constructive Art from Cubism to the Present* (1977) and *Photography as Artistic Experiment: From Fox Talbot to Moholy-Nagy* (c1976). The following article first appeared in German, in the architecture journal *Werk* 47, 1960. Translated by Hilde Stossel for *Transforming Art* and printed with permission.

The postulate of 'integration of the arts', the 'total work of art', was born of a longing for what had been lost. It does not demand anything new, something that has never been seen before; rather the restoration and repetition of something that had once existed. Always, when this postulate is put forward, works or epochs of the past are cited as examples: the Greek temple, the Gothic cathedral, churches and castles of the Baroque. Whenever the question is raised as to what period or reason might have caused the 'disintegration' of the arts, the 19th century invariably emerges as the villain.

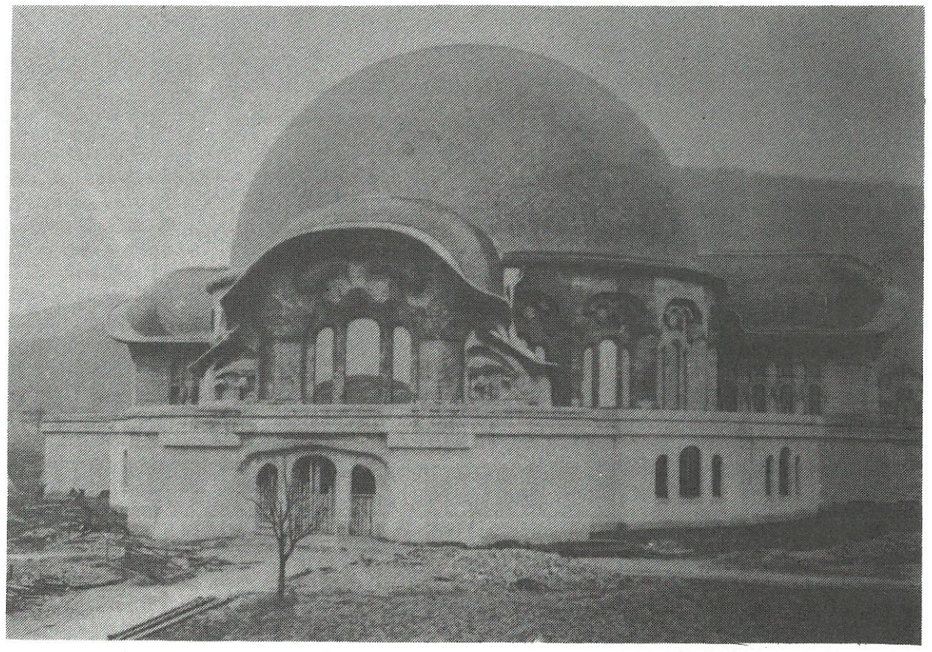
It is obvious that there are peaks of 'disintegration' in the various strongly intermeshed phases of the historicism of the 19th century, as there will be in an age in which great emphasis is placed on individualism. Of this the great innovators were already aware when they distanced themselves from that age in which mere additions of heterogenous stylistic elements took the place of style. From a deep insight into the prevailing stylistic undergrowth, a demand arose at the time for a 'new style'. There was an opinion that a style should be found that encompassed all artistic expressions: from traditional 'liberal' art to 'applied' art (which would be restored to equal status once more) to the 'technical' arts — studied already by Semper. This view went even further, including in the desired style, technical features of civil and mechanical engineering on the one hand, on the other fashion, elements of clothing, styles of human movement, gesture and mime — 'life-style' in general. Many pioneers at the turn of the century believed, with some justification, that only a 'new human being' would be capable of devising a 'new style'. Style was again felt to be the connecting link, the integrating force which could be the basis for every expression of the age.

Mostly not articulated but sometimes clearly formulated, the long-range aim at the turn of the century, of all efforts directed towards a new style, was the 'total work of art'. The young Henry van de Velde was, in 1895, the first to formulate in his 'Aperçus de vue d'une synthèse d'arts' the thought of the individual art forms working together, by demanding a 'synthesis' of the arts. This thought permeates his own work as much as it does his programmatic literature. In his "Fundamental Explanations" to the "Layman's Sermon" (1902) he says:

> Only works, irrespective of their kind, whose individual components are in harmony, give the impression of being unalterable, thereby creating an incomparable emotional experience in those who are susceptible to it. They alone allow us the privilege of feeling eternity and of enjoying all that is unchanging and bright.

In these remarks it was already perceptible what subsequently became increasingly clear whenever the postulate of integration of the arts was raised and a 'total work of art' demanded. To begin with, it is always architecture which, as a framework for integration experiments, is shouldered with having decisive significance. The various building projects of the time lent themselves, to very differing degrees, to endeavours to create a 'total work of art': residential and industrial buildings, building serving transport, administration and even education, offer fewer possibilities than buildings designed for cultural and spiritual life or worship. In Van de Velde's statement the unspoken spiritual element resonates particularly strongly.

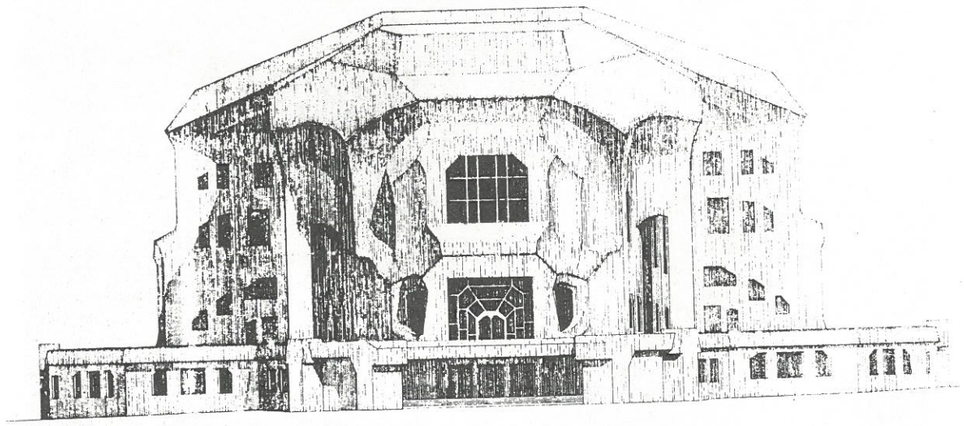
It is in buildings of the latter kind that the most extensive, comprehensive experiments with the integration of the arts and with the 'total work of art' have been made: van de Velde's Werkbund theatre in Cologne of 1914, Antonio Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, perhaps also the experiments of Hans Poelzig, such as the interior



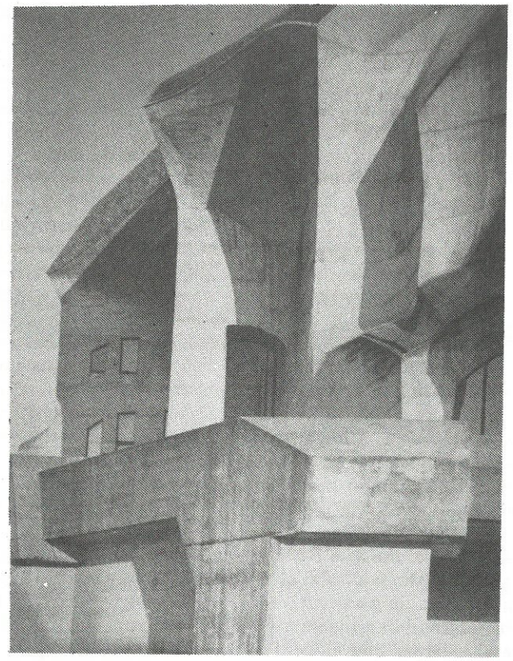
View of the first Goetheanum showing main entrance

of the Berlin playhouse of 1918/19. And this is exactly where the efforts of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), founder of Anthroposophy and architect of the first and second Goetheanums in Dornach belong. In these buildings, in particular, it is possible to recognise that certain spiritual qualifications, a certain philosophy of life, are helpful in approaching a 'total work of art'; but equally important is the dedication of the building to a specific purpose — namely, as a place of contemplation or of experiences shared by a tightly-knit spiritually like-minded community, a place of worship in the broadest sense.

But even if one has no connection with Anthroposophy, meaning 'wisdom of the human being' or 'spiritual science' — as Rudolf Steiner called his teaching — consideration of the Goetheanums will make it obvious that certain spiritual qualifications had a decisive influence on the creative architectural concept. The basis of this is, ultimately, a 'knowing' of spiritual supersensible worlds, a knowledge — basically accessible by anyone — that is acquired through 'spiritual beholding'. Through systematic spiritual training, through concentration, contemplation and meditation, followers can attain knowledge of these higher worlds. The Goetheanum as a conference centre and as a place for artistic manifestations, is the centre of a kind of Anthroposophical university. An important branch of artistic activity is 'eurythmy', an expressive art that concentrates on ensouled movement. The recited word is combined with dance-like movements that follow their own 'law'. Steiner's teaching encompassed all forms of art: theatre (performance of Goethe's *Faust* etc.), dance and music and in particular painting, sculpting and architecture. In the choice of costumes (influenced by antiquity) for stage, community activities and everyday life, as well as in special aspects of nutrition, hygiene and 'life-style' generally, there is an echo of Art Nouveau. Functionally the Goetheanums were intended to be places for theatre and assembly, the centres of a community dedicated to cultural and spiritual life. Their ground-plan and interior were designed to conform to the purpose intended, but also to the artistic style advocated by the Anthroposophical move-



Pen drawing of the main entrance front of the second Goetheanum



Second Goetheanum, view of north side from the west.

ment. To the outsider this Anthroposophical style appears to be derived unequivocally from Art Nouveau and, at the same time, to be a specific form of Expressionism.

The first Goetheanum was built under a less than lucky star. Begun in 1913, this crafted timber structure, resting on a massive stone base and topped by a dome-shaped roof, was totally destroyed by fire on New Year's night, 1922/23, soon after the celebration marking the completion of the interior. In its place the present building was erected between the years 1924 and 1928, again designed by Rudolf Steiner and executed in reinforced concrete. The ground-plan of the first Goetheanum showed an overall space consisting of two circles of unequal size, intersecting one another (for theatre and auditorium) while the exterior presented a strange sight, with its two main cupolas of different sizes joined together, and the three closed, semi-cupola-like projections for entrances and administration melting into the main body. Worthy of note in this building was the early attempt to approach the building as a whole, as one would a monumental sculpture. From a distance the building, with its dome-shaped elements, might have been reminiscent of certain early Christian cupola-topped churches of Syria, where the sculptural elements also played an important part, as is often the case with this type of building.

Close up the first Goetheanum showed the tendency, typical of Art Nouveau, to blur all boundaries between structural elements and their integration into the overall form. The sculptural language indicated a development of the irrational organic Art Nouveau forms, as much as the flowing, streaming shapes, resolved here with more conviction into faceted planes that come together sharply and acquire an expressive character. It would be worth investigating to what extent this sculptural language was influenced directly or indirectly by the work of the Swiss sculptor Hermann Obrist (1863-1927), an almost exact contemporary of Rudolf Steiner. Moreover, the way the structural units and elements of stacked timber were cut and dressed corresponded

exactly to the technique of Expressionist wood-carvings: taking the axe to the block of wood and cutting meaningful planes directly from the material. One could say, with slight exaggeration, that the first Goetheanum was a massive wooden body built up in layers and glued together, with exterior and interior given their ultimate form after the manner of a wood-carving. Manifesting itself as a large sculptural wood-carving, it was the visible reflection of Steiner's concept of a 'soul space' in human beings themselves, in which spiritual processes take place. The Goetheanum was intended to be the materialisation, the incarnation, so to speak, of the 'soul space'. It should be added — and this is absolutely part of the realisation of such a vision — that Steiner himself worked with his pupils and staff on this project, acting as a hands-on builder and sculptor. The idea of the church masons' guilds of the Middle Ages thereby found its modern parallel.

Work on the second Goetheanum began in 1924, with reinforced concrete as the material chosen. On the face of it this might have been attributed to the catastrophe of the fire. But the deciding factor was probably the malleability of the concrete. While the first building was cut from wood, the wood in the second building, ingeniously assembled into expressive forms, now served as panelling for the irrational non-structural and therefore all the more surprising poured concrete. To a much larger extent than in the first building, Steiner's architectural concept was realised in the second one through his choice of building material. He created a powerful edifice, looking from afar like a monumental, expressively abstract sculpture in poured concrete. It appears as a monolith, put by human hands into the landscape as a response to the foothills of the Jura mountains with their cascading limestone walls, in particular to the Gempenstollen-group formation.

Seen as a true architecture, this massive, irrational structure does not fit into the history of architecture of the second and third decades of our century. This building which, because of its heavily brooding aspect, one could be tempted to call bunker-like and resembling the fortifications of the Second World War, no doubt has a precursor in the Art Nouveau buildings which occasionally show a tendency to become richly-faceted monumental sculptures. However, the second Goetheanum goes far beyond this. Expressing, as it does, certain philosophic-ideological aspirations and, at the same time, the creative concepts of a strong, unconventional personality, it stands quite outside the general development of architecture and art, a unique case within the formal world of Art Nouveau and 'symbolic expressionism'.[1]

But the second Goetheanum is a unique case also inasmuch as the idea of the 'total work of art' has been realised with rare power and purity. Exterior and interior were conceived as one. The building is a large, richly articulated sculpture, within which each element (also having its practical function: windows, doors, heaters etc.) has completely given up its own independence. This incorporation to the extent of total fusion, this integration, does not only apply to the structural elements themselves, but also to the least of details. Items, usually ordered by the architect from a catalogue, such as ornamental fittings for example, were crafted in the in-house workshop, always with the whole in mind. The integration includes other arts as well, especially painting, appearing here as an abstract-expressionist treatment of the windows.

And part of the total picture is the fact that the completeness of the project, its succinct style, only reaches its full potential when it fulfils its function as assembly and performance space of the Anthroposophical Society; when a community with a common approach to life (and sometimes dressed alike) attends a play that in spirit, scenic presentation, creation of movement, speech technique and costumes, also expresses a willingness to embrace this style. The experience of this perfect unity communicates itself — up to a point at least — to the outsider too, for whom this world is strange and perhaps even anachronistic.

The second Goetheanum builds a bridge from the demands at the turn of the century for a synthesis of the arts, to our age with the renewed postulate of integrated arts. It poses the question as to what extent such a postulate can be realised by an individual, at the drawing board as it were: conversely, to what extent a certain spiritual (even ideological) climate is required and to what extent a community is necessary for whom the 'total work of art' has significance as their spiritual centre. Le Corbusier's construction of Ronchamp is another response to the question.≈

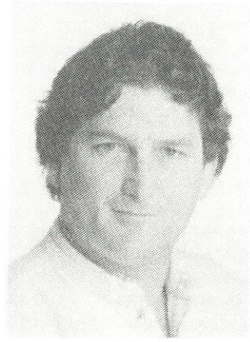
NOTES

1. In the narrower field of sculpture I should like to draw attention to certain parallels — apart from Obrist — with the futurists, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Archipenko, the forgotten Rudolf Belling, perhaps also with Zadkine.

•THE INNER ART— THE CREATION OF HUMAN LIFE & DESTINY•

INTERVIEW

An interview with YEHUDA TAGAR



Yehuda Tagar has studied and worked in the fields of human care, education, counselling and therapy in Israel — his country of origin — England and Australia for the past 19 years. He is a counsellor and Philophonetics-Counselling practitioner at the Melbourne Therapy Centre, and is the founder and director of the Persephone College of Philophonetics in Melbourne and Western Australia. Philophonetics is a modality of expression-therapy and artistic creation, created by Yehuda, which draws on Psychosophy — Rudolf Steiner's approach to human development, medicine, humanistic psychology and the arts.

Transforming Art: Could you describe the relationship of 'pure art' to your therapeutic work? To begin with, could you talk about how your current work evolved out of your first experiences with drama?

Yehuda Tagar: I see human art, 'pure art', as a laboratory for the creation of human destiny. It is practising, on a small scale, what in time will become our full responsibility, which is to take conscious charge of the Creation that is left in our hands. Everybody can be an artist — at least to the extent of shaping one's destiny. When I first met drama as a possibility for me, when I realised its power — for my own transformation and for what it can do for an audience — this was a turning point in my life. Suddenly it hit me that I can take a piece of life and determine the beginning, the middle and the end, and all in between; that I can practise the human story which I'm normally only a part of, in such a way that the story I create is a part of *me*. That means moving from seeing myself as just a part of the world around me — and very often feeling lost in it — to taking responsibility for a piece of the human story and saying "I'm in charge of that one"; of going right into the heart of it.

I look at the world altogether, the Creation, as a work of art, even though we do not see the artist. We see *through* the Creation to the Creator. And I think the creation of the human being in a certain way crowns Creation and takes it further. In my conception of art I combine the notion of artistic art and craft art; the highest artistic skill one can

Chorus in *Agamemnon* in a contemporary production of *The Oresteia.*

imagine is manifest in the creation of the human being. But the human being is an unfinished work of art whereas other creatures in the other kingdoms of nature, when left to themselves, remain essentially the same. It would seem that the final stroke of the artist who created us — conceived theologically or just imaginatively — is to leave in us the impulse to complete that work. I think it is obvious that we are the most dynamic element in Creation at this stage of evolution and that it's unique to the human being that the work is not finished. What is radically new on this planet is what *we* bring into it — a lot of it by way of destruction, and some of it by way of renewal. We are the active agent of change in Creation now, and in that there is a great deal of chaos.

Some of us are trying to take this inevitable process of change consciously. And in taking it consciously one of the approaches is to say of the human being: "Our life is a continuation of Creation; the artist is invested in us". We are the *product* of an artistic process in which all the elements of nature are involved, but at the same time it would seem that the Creator has left with us not only the canvas, the paint and the brush, but also the hand which paints. We are now holding this Creation in our hands. In great moments of awakening we realise that *we are doing it*, that we are not just recipients or victims of events, but that we are creating our own lives. At those moments it is possible to begin to take responsibility for our lives and to recognise that we have done it to ourselves, that we continue to do it, that we can change it if we choose to.

I think that we are always creating things in our lives for which we don't take full responsibility. We tend to stumble into the results of what we've created unconsciously. So, I think it's primarily a question of consciousness rather than a difference of what we actually do. In 'pure art' we're practising a form of conscious creation and for that reason 'pure art' is the forerunner of a broader human art. Eventually, I think, the difference will resolve: consciousness will expand and responsibility for what we do will expand — although the change is very, very slow. If I think of myself as an evolving human being, I'd like, before my time to go comes, to look at a day in my life and call it a work of art, from morning to night. I've come to a point where I consider my workshops, therapeutic sessions and lectures — which involve intense human interactions — as works of art. This is my poetry now; I am, so to speak, a midwife of human development. There was a time when I wouldn't have called a workshop a work of art, and I'm sure many people don't call workshops works of art. I

can say it now because this is where I practise my artistry, where I take responsibility for the space and time. I know one person who could truly say that the way he runs his electrical parts factory in Melbourne is reaching the level of a work of art — the way he described it, I agree with him.

TA: Obviously the idea of responsibility is vital to your conception of this broader work of art.

YT: Responsibility is a key word for me — to take responsibility for my creation. I don't think ever in human history there was so much talk about taking responsibility for one's actions. At the same time, never before have we been so conscious about how non-responsible we are for our actions. But then, we were never left alone to decide the actions in the first place. So there is further criticism of ourselves and further awareness, but there is also more responsibility.

All healing and therapy is, in my view, only preparation for the major act — which is *creation*. It's turning around and saying: "I'm not going to take this life as if it is dumped on me, or I'm dumped into it", but to take responsibility for my bit of creation, for my piece of earth, for my piece of body — for my canvas and my studio — and to own the fact that *I am a creator*. And, yes — it's true that we are only developing this ability. Some of what I've done I may be ashamed of, some of it looks a bit like a cave-drawing. Artists commonly look back to earlier periods of their work and are not proud of it; even Goethe preferred that his earlier poetry was not published. They look back at earlier work and it almost seems to have been done by someone else — because they have moved on. So it is with a human life; we can take it as creation that has gone before and turn around and say: "All this was just practice, and now I have reached a point in my biography when I can take responsibility on a higher level". Then, either one takes the same materials of life and renews them, or one takes new materials and creates a new reality. For example, when moving into new relationships, people very often have the optimism that now they can create their lives afresh. And when one has a new child, one takes the bedroom of the child to come and creates that environment in a way that will be an upgrading of the environment one has had as a child oneself. When I ask groups whether they would parent a child the way they were parented, about one in fifty raise their hands. There is always this determination that we are going to do it differently. In this way I think a family can become a work of art, the bedroom of a child can become a work of art, the garden can become a work of art, approaching a vocation can become a work of art.

TA: Does this not perhaps stretch the idea of the work of art too far? One of the current criticisms of the broad use of the word 'art' is that it dilutes the meaning of the word so far that it no longer has any strength. Art has traditionally meant something very specific — the creation of significant material forms 'out of nothing', the bringing into being of a painting, sculpture or piece of music which has intense significance for people. Perhaps you had better say exactly what you mean by 'art'.

YT: It's actually quite hard to define. For me, art is taking the raw materials that nature provides and finding within these materials the potential to embody a reality that is conceived, not from nature, but from what is not created yet, from the human spirit. To take a spiritual and a soul potential and to manifest this through materials which nature provides, is, in my view, to take Creation further — and that is a work of art. We can also create works of ugliness, technological works which destroy and cut us off from the spirit; we then enter the controversial area of what is beautiful and what is not. I believe that there are potentials that are hovering around us and within us, which seek manifestation through us. "From the treasure of the heart the mouth doth speak" as it says in St. Matthew. If you look at the Lord's Prayer, there is a point where you say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" — and that means you are accepting Creation so far, and naming it properly. But then you say: "Thy kingdom come" and by this you mean a kingdom which is not completely here. Some kingdoms are here — the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms — but obviously there are other kingdoms to come. The kingdom of heaven is to come through human beings, and working consciously towards it is a work of art. That, of course, is a very broad statement. Some of it is called art, some of it is called human relationships, some of it is called vocation, some of it is called environmental work. But beyond all these particulars, it is all *creation*.

When creation happens, the materials become transparent to something else. What happens then is like an echo in the heights of what was wrought in the depths; the word becomes the flesh, if you wish, and that is a revelation. If the work becomes something beyond the personal it will have value for all time, for all humanity, even if it is a temporal

art like performance. It's like a service for the evolution of humanity. There are many points in my workshop and teaching work when I can *touch* this transparency. At those moments I know that everything that has been physically brought together has been uplifted to another level where we become transparent to something else that is dawning on us, so to speak. I compare it to the transition from coal to diamond. There's nothing chemically different between coal and diamond; the difference is that light can be revealed through the diamond and not through the coal. If an artist had the task of transforming coal into diamonds, with all the skill in the world it could not be said that the artist has created the light. The light is still a revelation. The shaping of the diamond could be the work of the artist, requiring special tools and techniques, but eventually, when light shines through it, the most arrogant of artists could not claim to be the creator of the meaning that the work has for others. The light shines through it and that's the revelation — but conditions have to be created for it.

TA: Many artists talk about this sense of being like an agent for something greater than themselves, don't they? Goethe, for one, spoke of the 'daemonic spirit' or 'genius' as this higher creative being which takes over in the artistic process.

YT: Yes, this is how one can explain the incredible, solemn, single-mindedness and aloneness of an artist. Because in fact they are not alone. The deaf Beethoven, at the end of his life composing the Four Quartets which nobody could appreciate at the time — he is not alone. And the lonely Michelangelo who doesn't even bother to come down from the scaffolding to exchange anything with human beings — he is not alone. And Mozart dying with the last notes of the Requiem — he is not alone. They are not alone because they have become accepted into a brotherhood — sisterhood — of higher beings. One is honoured or knighted into a higher order; one becomes a partner in a broader world of creation. And it doesn't matter if the work is published; it doesn't matter if the work is not appreciated. Of course that is important on one level — we want it to be appreciated by people. But something is achieved even regardless of human appreciation if it is done with the love for the deed itself.

TA: I would like you to clarify something: when you speak of the broader work of art as the creating of

Michelangelo, Last Judgement (detail), Sistene Chapel.

human destiny you mean, I gather, working with the contents of the human consciousness. How do you actually work with such materials, the contents of the psyche, which are so impalpable, so ungraspable?

YT: The substance of the human psyche is what Shakespeare was referring to when he wrote in *The Tempest*: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, And our little life is rounded with a sleep". Some might say that this is very beautiful poetry, which it is; I would say that it is beautiful and *true* — we *are* such stuff as dreams are made of. The psyche is made of a fine substance which is pure vibration. In the physical world we mould the material which is external to us, but in the psyche it is not like that. In the case of the psyche it is the same substance which is creating and being

"The sounds of human speech provide us with tools for expressing the contents of the psyche, and then also for intervention in and for changing its inner patterns."

created. I draw pictures on the canvas of my own being and I am the one who is the result of my activity all the time. It is me who is the drawer and me who is the drawn, and it's also me who is the substance used for that; I am the painter, the colour and the canvas as regards the human psyche. In German it is *Seele*, which is a little bit broader than what we mean by psyche. It's a bit more connected to the body on the one hand and the spirit on the other.

If the work of creation is the actual human development — which for me it is — then the substance of that work is purely the human soul. For this kind of creative work we have to come to what I call 'the literacy of human experience'. Just as we are at a total loss in the world of literature without having the alphabet, or in fixing a car or using a computer without the proper tools and terms, so one is at a loss regarding the unconscious psyche which is controlling oneself, unless one is psyche-literate or 'experience literate'. It's a peculiar thing that our bodies, which are designed for our life on earth, are very similar to what they were ten thousand years ago. However our psyche is incredibly different. We're still physically designed to look forward and be conscious of what is in front of us, and there was a time when the design was perfectly suited to our purposes. However, with regard to the psyche, most of what's going on is behind us and so we cannot con*front* it. I claim that most of the dynamics which really influence my life, my strengths, my weaknesses, my desires, my hopes, my aspirations, my fears, my joys — all of this is not exactly in front of me. Neither does it speak English. I don't think fear speaks English, nor hope, nor frustration and desire. I don't think love speaks English. When we try to do it in English, it amounts to second-hand translations.

My research has been devoted to the phenomenology of the human psyche and my years of observation led me eventually to classifying eight aspects of experience which can become a language for experience and can communicate to my consciousness without compromising itself. What led me to this was experiments with sound that I carried out in my sound laboratory. I conducted my sound laboratory, in the first place, in order to crack what Rudolf Steiner meant by his indication — "the sounds of human speech can become the new tools for the new drama" — because he didn't really say how to do it. He also said that the conditions were not right for it, that it was for future generations — he said this in 1924. Basically he advised: play with the sounds of human speech, muck about with them, try them, taste them and imagine them, until it becomes instinctive in you to know and to be able to access the forces working behind them. He said that the sounds of human speech are echoes of the fundamental elements of the life-body, that the life-body or etheric body is made of the sounds.

TA: Could you explain what you mean by life-body?

YT: The life-body is not visible to the physical eye, it is not visible to any of the five physical senses, but it is visible to the sense of Imagination, a sense that can evolve in everyone. Through our budding imaginative capacity we are all able to sense the inner dynamics of the life-body. My research shows that it becomes pretty normal for people to do this; it's just that we don't respect it enough. Now, this

life-body corresponds to the vegetation around us for plants have a body of living formative forces which is entirely unconscious, asleep as it were. Humans have a life-body which is the plant inside us, but it is a *human* plant. It is the plant raised to a higher level, incorporating and supporting life-processes not found in the plant — including warmth which is the basis for human feeling and cognition. The plant in the human being is the sleep kingdom; it is the seat of all human experience because all experience is stored in the life-body as unconscious memory. Steiner predicted that towards the end of the twentieth century it would start to wake up and that it would be released from the physical body more and more.

The life-body, as the body of formative forces in humans and other living beings, can be compared to the echo chamber of a piano in which sounds resonate. In the life-body the whole universe resounds — the vowels are emanations of planets, and the consonants are emanations of constellations — and this resonance we can discover, can access, through the sounds of human speech. Steiner spoke of these fundamental formative gestures of sound as the arms of the universal creative Word and of 'Sound-Feeling' as the main path for us to access them and to make them conscious. These sounds or formative gestures we don't hear physically — they resound inwardly and can be pictured with the imaginative sense.

I speak about the imagination as something which is very different from phantasy. Imagination and phantasy are really opposites, although in the English Thesaurus they are listed as synonyms. The imagination should be given the credit for being a tool of knowledge, for penetrating beyond the facade of the appearance of things into their deeper reality. Phantasy is about shifting the mind from what is there to what isn't there. I'm sitting in a particular place with a particular person and I phantasise about being in another place with another person. It is taking me away from something which is real to something which isn't real. I claim that imagination should be used as the opposite of that; namely, penetrating, with the power of imaginative thought into the reality in front of me, so I can see much more of its reality than that which meets the eyes. We can wake up this power of imagination, and I don't know of any other tool that can do it so directly, so self-evidently, so penetratingly, as the sounds of human speech — that is the common denominator of a new science on the one hand, and a new art on the other.

TA: When you speak about the sounds of human speech I gather you are not referring to any particular language?

YT: The sounds of human speech are essentially universal. At the heart of this new understanding of the life-body as a body of universal resonance is a new understanding of the universal character of the particular sounds of language. This is the Mother-Tongue, the language we normally leave behind in the 'babbling' phase of our development but which we can re-awaken. Take for instance, the word 'tree'. We normally take it for granted that it designates those tall, branchy things standing around, as though it were just a common agreement to designate them in this way. But truly, it is more than just a common agreement. A very particular experience, a picture, lives in the form of this word. The form is not arbitrarily made up; it arises naturally from a particular way of observing that which we call in English, a 'tree'. The word can be explored, just like a work of art can — and a lot will be found through such an exploration. It may reveal, for instance, the way in which that phenomenon is looked at in the English language which is very different to the way in which the German language looks at the same object. The German experience of that phenomenon needs another form for its expression: it uses the form 'Baum'.

Yet another level of understanding awaits in the study of the single sounds of that word and their particular significance. The sound 'T' is an expression of a range of very specific experiences. One has to experiment with the sound 'T' in order to become conscious of it: one has to sense it, to feel it, to act it, to play with it, and then the sound 'T' will be able to reveal its various characteristics. It will appear to be pointy, tight, penetrating, tough, strong, ticklish, touching, targeting. It will make sense then why a word like 'tree' starts with 'T', while a word like 'post', ends with it: the first starts from its strong grip in the ground and ends in its freer movement in the air above, expressed by the 'R' of 'tree'; the second comes into the ground from above, gets stuck in the ground, where it stays at rest. Likewise, in Hebrew, to take a language whose source is very far from English, the word for cutting a tree is 'Karat' — the tree whirls in the air before it falls to the ground, where it stays at rest. On the other hand the word for blowing a trumpet is Hebrew, 'Truah' — the air is accumulated, static, in the lungs before it bursts into the mouthpiece of the trumpet where, in its channelled release, it

creates a sound. The reasons for the choice and the positioning of 'T' in these words are the same in both languages. They will be found, in relation to 'T', in any other language as well. For the differences between words chosen to name the same phenomena in different languages there are characteristic cultural reasons. But beyond these cultural differences, there lies the universal human experience of the single sounds and the choice of a particular sound for the expression of a particular experience is of a universal nature. It takes more than this short explanation to substantiate this statement scientifically, but everyone can experiment with it, for themselves. Single sounds are being experienced in a similar way by different cultures, not because of an international agreement about it, but because these sounds, by their very nature, beyond all our differences, are universal-human ones. It's the same with our human shape which is universal in its nature, beyond our racial colours and personal physiognomies.

TA: So how does this understanding of human speech become the basis for your therapeutic art?

YT: If I speak the sounds of human speech one by one to people, it resounds within the life-body, and it brings up a whole range of memories and experiences which are seated there. This for me is a phenomenological reality now, it's not anything I merely believe. About fourteen years ago I took it as a hypothesis, a guideline for a laboratory; now I know that every sound of human speech resounds within a whole range of human experiences, and with 'Philophonetics', which is what I have called the work based on this sound research — meaning, basically, 'love of sounds', 'relationship of sound', 'relationship to sound', 'conscious relationship with human experience' — we can wake up to the whole gamut of our experience. Initially I was aiming to discover the new tools for acting, but then I realised it was much deeper than that, that it was a powerful tool of healing. It's like waking up to the workshop of nature, an ongoing workshop which is happening in our life-body. The life-body is between the physical body — with all the influences that it absorbs from the physical world — and the soul, the body of emotions, whose dynamics imprint themselves on the life-body all the time. So it's like the ham in the sandwich; it is pressed between body and soul, and in many ways compromised by both. In our modern life it is being debilitated in many ways. With sounds and movement, which are the components of the life-body, it can be re-enlivened. But in order to re-enliven it, we must first contact it and that contact needs to take place through expression.

Everyone is talking about the new information revolution, but when I hear the word 'information' I hear the noise of the passing moment — I am tired of information. For me, the new step is not information, it is more *ex*formation — 'out-formation', expression. The formative activities within us are

ETERNITY

I am a member of my own eternity
Now, and for all times
And all these moments which I thought
Are passing, ending, dropping and therefore
Are not eternal —
Are,
Now and forever,
Resounding growing points on the tips of
The branches of my ever being
Tree of eternity
And they do count, and are not passing
But are full members, inwardly connected
To I
Who am the end of the world as I know it
And the beginning of the world as I be it
Now and for all times to come
From ever to ever, now included
Always
And to acknowledge the eternal dignity
Of this being-moment
Now
Has the sweet smell of the good green fields of
Homecoming
As I return
Be turned
In-turn
To
From
Eternity.

Yehuda Tagar, Melbourne, 1995.

witness to all that is worth knowing, and if we want to know it, it is found by expressing it. The universe is inside, everyone is a replica of it; in everyone's soul and body is somewhere a replica of the whole, and with a devoted observation of every part the whole will manifest into our awareness. The sounds of human speech provide us with tools for expressing the contents of the psyche, and then also for intervention in and for changing its inner patterns. By using sounds we are moving from the manifestation of realities to the creation of reality. Using Philophonetics, we can trace every human expression, every human experience, into the depths of it, the origin of it — with a sound. We can express just about every aspect of experience with a sound.

TA: Could you expand a little on the techniques of this work, in particular on what you mean by sounds as creative tools?

YT: If we don't have tools, we stop at the level of intention. When it comes to the actual technique, the manifestation or embodiment — then we need tools. We need Vulcan, if you wish — the god who was the craftsman. I was saying that the language, the 'literacy of experience', is what can make us practical artists in the field of the psyche — either for self-development or for other works of art. Through using the right tools it is possible to bring the contents of the psyche from behind consciousness into the front of consciousness. In what I am calling Philophonetics, there are four languages of creation, four languages of experience through which I can help my client or student — or my actor for that matter — to get in touch with every content that to start with lives behind his or her consciousness.

When we take into account the subtle bodies of the human being, when we recognise that there's more behind mind and physical body than meets the eye, then we arrive at the following conclusion: that every activity, every inner experience which I have gone through, leaves a trace, a ripple in the water of my being. This can be sensed; I can use my sensibility to get in touch with these echoes in my body. This is the first tool — I can sense in the body what is happening in the soul. Once I sense it I can move into the first mode of expression and I can gesture, with my hands and with the rest of my body, forms which express directly this inner sensation and make them much more conscious, more in front of me. Having done that, pictures emerge — my visual ability is released by gesturing and I can think in pictures without them being there physically. We can verify our experiences by entering in gesture into those pictures and we can acquire perception of what otherwise is invisible. This capturing the dynamics of the subtle bodies through inner vision — what Steiner called Imagination — is the third tool. And the fourth tool is the sound; the sounds spoken from the outside or from inside 'resound' or echo within the patterns of one's experience, simulating them with amazing precision.

TA: Are you saying that someone working with Philophonetics, in a group situation for instance, is actually involved in an artistic activity? Isn't such therapeutic experience more like expressing or releasing something rather than creating something new, which is the essential thing about art?

YT: Every artist has to go through a period of apprenticeship — of acquisition of tools from the old masters, of practising applications in the old way, before doing something new with it. So if you look at the early pictures of Raphaelo, they are not all that impressive. And the same applies for personal development; in the Philophonetics way of doing it, we encourage people to take the materials of life with which they are constructed *as they are,* and to give them a 'dramatic look'. By that I mean: we take a piece of life, whatever it is, and look at it so well that its reality shines through — that is the essence of drama as I understand it. This goes beyond the division of beautiful and not-beautiful things; there's nothing very beautiful about the play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* on the face of it. Such a work of dramatic art does the dramatic deed of showing truth to an unavoidable intensity. As I see it, truth and beauty are connected; beauty is that which reveals its inside out, ugliness is that which covers and lies. So that, in the depths of our consciousness, we know that revealing truth is beautiful, covering it is ugly, even if it looks nice. My definition of art is a phenomenon which, the more you look into it, the more you find in it; it is art because there is truth to be found in it, and in non-art, the more you look the less you find. Taking all this as the background I say: we have to go through an apprenticeship, and the apprenticeship has to do with being a student of creation. That goes for scientists, for people who look into nature from outside; it also goes for people who are scientists of the inside. And so in Philophonetics we help people to appreciate, dramatically, the situation in life which they present to

the councillor *as it is*; to the extent that they can write the play, and reveal the truth of it, and replay it consciously. But it's all rehearsal. It's exactly the same as going to a violin teacher and playing scales, refining the placement of the fingers and the holding of the bow. Nobody would say that in the music lesson you are expected to produce great works of art.

This work is teaching people to be students of experience. We say: "In experience, creation is invested in you". All human experience is like a storage of what has happened so far. We show people the way to read within their own experience — the movements, the sounds, the gestures — which are internal and therefore unconscious. We make it conscious by exploring it, to start with, without attempting to change it. In exploring it we gain the alphabet: how movement manifests experience, how sound is embodied experience, what are the configurations of gestures which create our physiognomy and our self-image. We take experience and read it with the tools of sensing sounds, gestures and visualisations. These tools actually come from theatre because, as I mentioned, Philophonetics was actually a method of training people to become actors before it became a method of healing. Actually it still is a theatre training technique, but we have simply translated it into the art of living.

The second level of working with Philophonetics is always following your wish, which is expressed even before we do the action-explorations. The wish could be: "I want to be free of these patterns, I want to be able to laugh with my child, to be able to stop destroying the potential between me and my partner, to be able to manifest my creativity, to be able to find my direction in life, to be able to manifest my inner being outside, without a distortion". We go and study the situation as it is, study the blocks, read the psyche so that we are able to depict the drama as it is. Up to this level it is a dramatic art; Philophonetics is like a series of unperformed plays and for the group that is beholding it, it is a highly dramatic, powerful internal 'script' — and very well formed, too.

But this is only the beginning, in which we acquire the basic tools with which to address experience. What happens afterwards is that we train people to be playwrights. Then we ask: "This is a play that was written unconsciously; how do you consciously *want* it to be"? We encourage people to close their eyes and 'see' the internal dynamics of how it is and we may manifest that in movement, drawing, painting or sculpting. Those modalities then enhance the ability to imagine how we want it to be. It is connecting the visualisation to one's beneficent forces within, to the father I never had, to the mother I never had, to God Almighty who left me alone when I was twelve! People imagine it — and then they step into this position and become these figures; they practise the roles. They learn, for instance, to take care of the inner child with the power of the adult they now have. This is the practising — and the performing is going and putting their child to sleep in a new way at home. *The performing is life itself!* The role of imagination in Philophonetics is enormous, just as it is in creating and performing a play; the director has to imagine scenes before he can perform them. We simply acknowledge that life is a drama, and we provide life with a backstage to rehearse it — but our main aim is to reach expression in life which is creative. We move from information into exformation. This is not the knowledge of the tourist passing through the views; it's the knowledge of the farmer who is taking care of a foal, of the father who is taking care of a family. It is the artistic challenge of manifesting the spirit through matter.

TA: You mentioned before that Steiner had stated, when he presented his indications for a new drama in 1924, that conditions were not right for it. Do you think that conditions are now right for it?

YT: I think the conditions are very right. Steiner, in his final lectures on drama, said that in the more distant past when drama was really alive, it was always at the cutting edge of human consciousness. He showed, for instance, how at the time when personal conscience was dawning upon humanity as a new capacity of soul, it became named for the first time through the play *Oresteia* by Aeschylus in ancient Greece. He said that when we restore the spiritual dimension to drama through the art of speech and movement, and through the awareness of our own soul-life, it will again become the cutting edge of consciousness. That's what attracted me to this; that an artist can play at the cutting edge of human consciousness.

My interpretation is that there is a need for two conditions in order to follow this path of inner revelation as the starting point of outer revelation: one is to have respect for oneself, because people were just not prepared to trust themselves in the past. Steiner was saying this even before Hitler, Mussolini, Mao-Tse Tung and McCarthy, let alone all the gurus of spiritual movements. He said that

the time of following a leader is over if we are to discover new sources of inspiration, new revelations from the inside. With the technology of sound, you have an experience and you find a sensing of it and a gesturing of it which can be verified phenomenologically, by yourself. Unless we develop respect for subjective experiences, as having objectivity of their own, unless we develop the life of the imagination as the starting point for exploring objective realities, we will not be able to start this artistic work. And the teacher cannot communicate these instructions in any dogmatic way but only as encouragement for a person's own creativity. People need their freedom if they are to become creators; they must trust themselves as sources in order to take up this path. The art of Eurythmy and the way it is traditionally being taught must change drastically in order to accommodate these developments, if it is to be truly relevant as a form of art for the twenty-first century and beyond.

That's the first condition. The second condition is a bit more subtle and it has to do with the fact that people were a lot more 'dense' in the early part of this century, and by density I mean literally dense. There has now been a loosening up of the subtle bodies and the result is that we become much more exposed to influences from outside and from our own psyche. We become much more vulnerable, much more exposed to the chaos of our own psyche, but at the same time there are new opportunities for perception and people can visualise pictures of inner realities in a way that they couldn't before. I work with people and they are able to see the sounds, just like seeing the grass is green and the sky is blue — they are seeing invisible sounds. This ability to see inner realities is new for people in general, and it will transform medicine and art completely. We are much more capable of waking up, now, to the dynamics of formative forces which can only be perceived by Imagination. This is the second condition and the reason why the new drama couldn't be operating in the twenties. It is because the imagination didn't have a firm foundation then and people had to work very hard to get what every child and adult can now see very easily.

TA: Finally, could you say something more about how the conventional arts are incorporated into your therapeutic work?

YT: As I was saying, all our therapy is just the preparation for the really creative act. And what I call 'true human speaking' goes beyond therapeutic work; through the phases of Philophonetics one comes to a true speaking, from inside out. This is a very broad sense of the word 'speaking': we create new worlds through true speaking, but to do that we have to learn the alphabet.

Such 'speaking' works, in the broader sense, through all the arts. The gestures of sound extend to dramatic movement as well as dance; posture and gesture incorporates sculpting; visualisation extends to all the visual and plastic arts; sound itself extends into music and poetry which is where sound is the carrier of meaning. To pass through the basic level of our Philophonetics training, you have to accomplish five workshops in expressive arts — drama, music, painting, sculpting and movement— and we have teachers who specialise in these arts but who also use Philophonetics for the development of their art. For example, our music teacher is also using all the tools of Philophonetics at the university level to enliven music, to expand the experience and inner hearing for music and conducting students. Similarly, our drama teachers work with the expansion of imagination, using the sounds as basic elements for characterisation and for the vocabulary of the actor and in the creation of dramatic works. There is this movement to and fro, between the personal developmental and the artistic, one enlivening the other. We move, from the therapeutic, the clearing and the releasing, into acquisition of the tools which allow us to explore how the forms of experience were made; *then* we take wings into forms which were never made. We become practitioners, colleagues, co-creators in the great artistic work of taking creation further through fulfilling our true human potential.≈

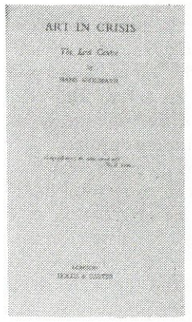
"Speak, O human,
And you shall reveal through yourself
The coming-into-being of worlds.

The coming-into-being of worlds
Reveals itself through you
O human
When you Speak"

Rudolf Steiner

REVIEWS

Note: The books presented in this section are not being reviewed in the usual sense; that is, in the form of a critical assessment. They are being 'reviewed' in the more literal sense of being examined again, being reconsidered. Hence they are not necessarily new titles. The purpose here is to bring to attention books which are especially relevant to the theme of this issue, and are, in the opinion of the reviewer, worthy of being introduced to wider circles of readership. This is also the reason why these reviews are primarily in the form of summaries. The intention is simply to indicate the book's content and possible value (critical appraisal is left to those who find their way to the actual books).



ART IN CRISIS: THE LOST CENTRE
by Hans Sedlmayer
Henry Regney Company, Chicago, 1958. 266 pages.

The second part of the title of the book is the key to the author's subject — the 'centre' is the spiritual centre of culture which maintains all forms of culture as a healthy coherence. He writes as one who has tried to understand modern culture as a loss of the sense of the spirit and takes his inspiration from Yeats' line: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold. . . ". Sedlmayer approaches his task with the utmost gravity; he sees himself as a diagnostician of a perilous sickness in Western culture and seeks both the diagnosis and remedy through its forms of art. One of the major symptoms he identifies is the falling apart of the forms of art, the loss of the traditional 'total work of art'.

The modern art which some people relish for its diversity, its power to shock and fascinate, this author sees as a kind of illness within human culture, and he brings to bear a powerful argument to make his point. This is not an argument which would find much favour within neo-avant-garde or post-modernist circles and it is true that, even since the book was written, people have come to take a lot more for granted the strange forms of modern art. Nevertheless Sedlmayer's argument still demands a hearing, for it represents a perspective on the tendencies of Western culture which might play a determining role in that culture's future.

What Sedlmayer wishes to establish beyond doubt is that "our dream of autonomous man was a disaster, a thing that could only end by destroying us . . . " (p.253) and he finds everywhere in modern art the signs of aspiration towards the 'autonomous man', towards a humanity freed from tradition, from natural laws, from God. The result, he predicts, is the destruction of both mankind and nature. The arts, he observes, have shut themselves off from one another, just as humanity has shut itself off from "the knowledge that we are creatures of God" (p. 253). He calls this "the withering of the old composite works of art" (p.11), the early Christian and Gothic churches and castles and palaces of the 14th and 15th centuries which were created, he writes, with the self-assurance of a spiritual centre and which the art of the 17th and 18th centuries sought to stylistically emulate but could not genuinely reproduce. By the time of the twentieth century the essential meaning of such composite works was almost entirely lost.

The author sets about a diagnosis using his extensive knowledge of the history of European art (at the time of writing he was Professor of Art at the University of Munich). He critically examines, decade by decade, the most significant works of art since the French Revolution and thereby comes

to his conclusions about what Western culture has became attracted by and devoted to (in place of an aesthetic devotion to the Creator, the mark of the Middle Ages). He observes the following trends (which are worth reproducing almost in full):

1. The establishment of 'pure' spheres in art as well as science. The breakdown of the old composite artwork is paralleled in the fragmentation of science into different departments of knowledge, "so that the significance of each in relation to the whole is lost" (p.148).

2. The progressive driving asunder of all aspects of culture into opposites (polarisation). Related to the previous trend; he points out how modern buildings "divide themselves off from nature with a crystalline sharpness and dissociate themselves from their environment as never before" (p.148). In political terms, he writes how "extreme individualism and extreme collectivism contrive in equal measure to put both personality and community into dissolution" (p.149). Moderation, the desire to unite opposites, is decried as "as a manifestation of the lukewarm".

3. A hankering after the inorganic. He observes the obsession with metallic and synthetic materials replacing organic substances and writes of "the increasing petrification of life", or, as he also calls it, its "increasing metallisation" (p. 149). This is part of a 'decomposition process', the breakdown of the old composite works of art.

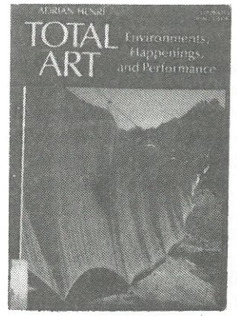
4. Detachment from solid earth. By this the author seems to be meaning the alienation and rootlessness of people in modern cities, as well as physical manifestations such as sky-scrapers, which strive to leave behind any intimate and healthy connection with the earth.

5. A tendency to be attracted by the lower rather than the higher. Sedlmayer writes: "Our age, like our art, is powerfully attracted towards the unconscious, towards the dark and the sinister, the primitive and archetypal, and towards all that pertains to the submerged part of the soul. This means that the artist becomes convinced that the true domain of poetic and artistic creation begins "where reason only hesitantly begins to tread" (p. 150). Here he has in mind avant-garde movements like Surrealism (which, he notes, should rightly be called Sub-realism). Dali himself spoke of the aim of Surrealism as the "systemisation of confusion"; before Dali, Goya, Daumier and others were working in related directions. A more up-to-date version of Sedlmayer's book would undoubtedly have to include many modern horror and violence movies and the associated rock culture imagery. He calls it 'descent into chaos', an encounter with meaninglessness, with the nightmarish fear on the border of madness, where "form disintegrates, becomes fluid and chaotic" (p.136).

6. A tendency to give inferior status to man. By this he means the tendency of "identifying man wholly with his animal nature" (p.151). Nietzsche, for example, defined man as an animal that is sick. He refers to the modern psychology of the unconscious which reduces all human actions, even the most noble kind, to primal or sexual instincts. The author writes: "Even the thinking of ordinary men ... today likes to see the springs of all human action in the sexual, economic or political fields" (p.151).

7. The abolition of the distinction between top and bottom. The author writes: "Both in buildings and in paintings, the large number of forms which can be stood upon their head is evidence that the feeling of difference between top and bottom is tending to disappear" (p.152). He sees it in the tendency to lose the distinction between the higher and lower aspects of human nature: "The modern use of the word 'irrational' as a particularly fashionable piece of semantic coinage — implies a complete obliteration of the difference between the sub-rational and the super-rational" (p.152). This is connected to the loss of the sense of the spiritual; so that, again, an actual 'Sub-realism' becomes conceived of as a 'Surrealism', as something high and worthy in human culture.

Sedlmayer by no means considers the disease, which he refers to as a "total disturbance of the human being", as originating in the twentieth century, but regards its modern manifestation as an extreme form of a tendency that has been developing since the end of the 18th century. Dire as he perceives the plight of Western culture, he does not end the book on a pessimistic note. He sensed, at the time of writing, that a kind of limit had been reached, a turning point, even if the future direction the Western world had not been resolved. Sedlmayer writes: "Beyond this limit it is difficult to imagine anything except one of two things — total catastrophe or the beginnings of regeneration" (p.207). The book appears as somewhat dated in that his examples come from the art of the 1950s and before, and plainly, a great deal has happened in art and culture since then. However, this leaves it for us, the readers, to decide whether the tendencies he observes have continued and worsened, whether we have taken a further step towards catastrophe or towards the possibility of regeneration.



TOTAL ART: ENVIRONMENTS, HAPPENINGS, AND PERFORMANCE
by Adrian Henri
Oxford University Press, New York, 1974. 216 pages.

The author of this book is not primarily concerned with the past traditions of the total artwork and with the philosophical and aesthetic ideas which stand behind them. This is not an scholarly text but rather an illustrated survey of developments of the avant-garde towards a new form of total art. Henri considers that the total artwork is something of the future, which at the time of writing was only at an early stage in the process of being formed.

Henri does, however, commence with a brief historical run-down of art forms which are precursors of modern Environments and Happenings. He is not interested in the architectural 'total artworks' of history — the temples, churches and palaces — but in street works such as the medieval pageants and the 'triumphs' which were designed by Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci. Such street-works incorporated music, costume, and mobile constructions on floats — true composite artworks. Why street-works interest Henri — also primitive dance, for the same reason — is that such forms of art did not appeal to the intellect so much as to the imagination; they were 'total experiences' (on the contrary, he find most architecture to be highly rational in conception and experience). In modern times he finds the same impulse in the aims of the Symbolists, "who came to see argument, reason, even representation, as incidentals; they wanted to appeal to reactions and impulses that were profound, irrational, unaccountable, impossible to express directly" (p.10). He finds this quality also in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) of Richard Wagner, the music-drama, which "sets out to dominate, even overwhelm, flooding the spectator/hearer with sensory impressions of different kinds. It is not meant as information but as experience" (p.10).

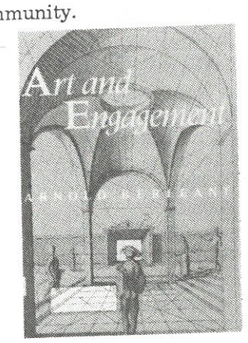
By way of these examples Henri makes it clear what he believes is so interesting and significant about the Environments and Happenings of the modern period of art (which were prepared for by the 'de-rationalising' influence of movements such as Symbolism, Surrealism and Dadaism). Environments and Happenings, Henri feels, stand as something distinct in the development of twentieth century art in their desire to totally surround and involve the spectator with the work of the artist. Many of the early twentieth-century avant-garde movements had an element of the 'Environment' or 'Happening'; for example, the street walks of the Russian Constructivists and Suprematists; similarly the Dadaist 'visits and excursions', where groups of people were taken around parts of Paris — also the staging of mock trials. Later, artists all over the world started to conceive works in which the spectator was involved in the work— here Henri refers to artists such as Cristo, Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, Allan Kaprow, Yves Klein and many others, and he provides photographic reproductions of a number of their works.

At the end of his book Henri writes:

> Whatever the next development in the visual arts may be, it seems certain that the museum, and the private collection of handmade masterpieces, will be increasingly irrelevant to a generation of artists who have returned to a far older traditional of social integration and interaction (p.185).

This statement, made by the author the early 1970s, has not really been borne out; the avant-garde continues to depend upon the art galleries for the validation of its artistic activities — and the painting has made a strong comeback. The Happenings and Environments have not simply melted into the happenings and environments of everyday experience; they have not become an accepted part of life for a whole community, as with the street festivals and 'triumphs' of old, but have remained specialised and often highly intellectualised and aesthetised concerns. Henri is certainly justified in pointing to the strong tendency of avant-garde art of the first half of the twentieth century to take on the character of participatory performance. However he is perhaps not so justified in comparing such works to the

traditional 'total artwork', for the vital components are missing. Modern Happenings and Environments have nothing of the *meaning* which stands behind the traditional festivals, the religious celebratory atmosphere (be it ecstatic or grave), which made them occasions of such beauty and richness and a continuing inspiration for a whole community.



ART AND ENGAGEMENT
Arnold Berleant
Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1991. 255 pages.

In an earlier book, *The Aesthetic Field*, Berleant set forth as the main theme which he develops further in the present work the notion of the 'aesthetic field' as "a homogenous field of experienceable forces", where the art object, the perceiver, the artist and the performer are combined or related in a way not usually recognised. What he is pointing to, in other words, is that art does not merely reside in the object but in the total field of aesthetic experience. The problem the author has with traditional aesthetics, as with much modern philosophy, is that it is conceived in terms of dualisms. Here he is thinking, in particular, of the duality of subject and object and of the assumed cognitive primacy of science, the objectivity of knowledge which he calls "tendentious and obstructive" (p. xiii). He writes:

> Aesthetic engagement challenges this entire tradition. It claims continuity rather than separation, contextual relevance rather than objectivity, historical pluralism rather than certainty, ontological parity rather than priority. (p.xiii:)

As a musician as well as philosopher he is well positioned to approach this subject, not just theoretically, but in terms of actual instances in the arts which demonstrate his thesis.

To clarify Berleant's theme a little further: he speaks of 'participatory aesthetics', and to the "dynamic unity of artistic experience". These are his expressions for what forces itself upon us through the experience of the arts; the arts engage us, provoke us into movement or action, making us adjust our imagination and vision. The experience of the arts, when made conscious and articulated in this way, acts to contradict and put into question the fundamental premises of modern scientific thought — which is that consciousness is separated from an external world. Art challenges the idea of so-called 'objective knowledge'. This premise tends to determine our conventional relationship with the arts which, as Berleant writes, are mostly channelled along certain courses and kept within fixed domains — galleries, concert halls, theatres. The latter function not only keeps the arts separate from other aspects of culture, but also restricts the full force of the art and our openness to alternative artistic modes. Berleant shows how the conception of 'aesthetic unity' has gradually taken hold in modern aesthetic thinking — through the ideas of philosophers such as Bergson and Merleau-Ponty; but also in art itself, for example in Impressionist painting where the object dissolves into light and atmosphere, and in the more recent phenomenon of film which demands the deep engagement of the spectator. He gives many other examples from all the arts; for instance, the Happening:

> While a passing artistic phase, Happenings both exemplified the new perceptual aesthetic and influenced the movements that followed. The Happenings not only synthesised all the elements of the aesthetic field into a single creative activity but deliberately drew its themes and materials from the ongoing course of ordinary life and from industrial objects and activities. The audience became a part of the world as the spectators were drawn into the action and forced to respond to a new environment, to a strange adventure, to a parody of customary things and events. (p. 40)

He sees the same participatory impulse already at work in Dadaism, Surrealism, Pop Art and in architecture in general which by its nature requires the activities of human beings to complete it.

Berleant discusses architecture, literature, music and dance — in each case detailing how each creates the aesthetic field uniquely and brings about the engagement of the spectator and the unity of experience. With regard to dance, he

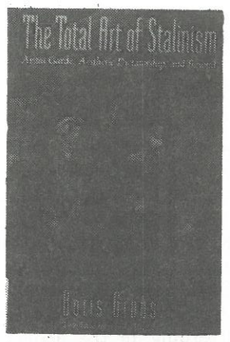
makes a telling point:

> Although there is a performance factor in all the arts, dance is the exemplary art of performance. It fuses the creative and responsive activities of aesthetic perception in a work that exists only in and for that process. Performance and appreciation in dance join, not in reflecting the origination of a human world, not in reenacting the original act of creation, but in the very process of generating such a world. In accomplishing this, dance extends the human from its most fundamental to its most inclusive, from body to cosmos. Dance embodies this communal act of origination in a process in which everyone may participate and with an ardour that can become almost religious. At this point art approaches the divine (p. 172).

The last chapter Berleant devotes to "cinematic reality", the extraordinary capacity of film to bring about a participatory experience. He writes:

> Film is not the grand synthesis of the arts that Wagner intended the music drama to be. It does not achieve the ideal of the artists of the Vienna Secession, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a work that combines architecture, design, painting, sculpture, and even music. The cinematic art is rather a complex union of features and elements, some garnered from other, older arts, others generated out of film's own needs, the inventiveness of its creators, and the technology of our age. These form an artistic synthesis that, through the extraordinary ability of film to shape the condition and contents of perceptual actuality, is able to constitute worlds in all their rich ambiguity of location, scope, and meaning. The cinematic sphere is so comprehensive, so persuasive, and so powerful that it easily displaces the apparent reality of everyday life and seduces us into entering its own domain as silent yet active participants. When it succeeds in drawing us fully into its perceptual universe, film becomes an art of total engagement (p. 189).

All in all, Berleant, through drawing on his resources both as an artist and as a philosopher, is able to make a powerful case for the conception of the 'aesthetic field' as a modern manifestation of 'total work of art'. The main difference between this and traditional forms of art is that the latter were conceived dualistically, in terms of the separation of artist, artwork and spectator, paralleling the inherent dualisms within the scientific understanding of knowledge which have had a destructive outcome for modern life.



THE TOTAL ART OF STALINISM: AVANT-GARDE, AESTHETIC DICTATORSHIP, AND BEYOND
by Boris Groys,
Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1992. 126 pages.

This essay draws a clear connection between the central concerns of the twentieth century avant-garde and the leftist politics in Russia which led to the rise of Stalinism. Groys sees at the heart of avant-garde ideology the notion of 'the artist as demiurge', creator of a new world, a new humanity, a new utopia beyond history. He writes:

> In Russia as elsewhere, the art of the classical avant-garde is too complex a phenomenon to be wholly embraced by a single formula; but it does not seem an extreme simplification to define its basic spirit in terms of the demand that art move from representing to transforming the world (p.14).

This was the cultural movement, in the spirit of Nietzschian nihilism, that considered the traditional idea of God — as the sole creator of the world — to be dead, and that the artist must attain to the divine in a totally new way. The avant-garde embraced the notion that the artist was no longer a mere imitator of God's creation, but a 'world creator', endowed with demiurgic power. Groys goes on to say:

> Traditional artists who aspire to re-create various aspects of Nature can set themselves limited goals, since to them Nature is already a completed whole, and thus any fragment of it is also potentially complete and whole. Avant-garde artists, on the other hand, to whom the external world has become a black chaos, must create an entirely new world, so that their artistic projects are necessarily total and boundless. To realise this project, therefore, artists must have absolute power over the world —above all total political power that will allow them to

enlist all humanity or at least the population of a single country in this task.

Groys is primarily concerned with the Russian avant-garde, with the artists who were focussed on what they saw as the nihilistic destruction of tradition and the idea that God "was murdered by modern technologised humanity" (p.14). Instead of an existing order they saw "an infinity of possibilities in which everything given, realised, and inherited might at any moment dissolve without a trace" (p.14). The Russian Suprematists' view was that matter as such is nothing, and may be totally restructured according to the artist's creative imagination. In this the Russian avant-gardists were in harmony with the Surrealists; both disavowed the cognitive functions of art, both considered that all thought is directed by subconscious stimuli and that the world is not given as something established but is merely material for free artistic construction. These artists believed that by crossing the boundaries of the world through their art they could discover the laws that govern cosmic and social forces and attain a sort of magical power over the world. Such was the programme of Constructivism and Suprematism of Malevich, Rodchenko and Khlebnikov. In Russia the aims of the avant-garde became uniquely aesthetico-political because the destruction of the October Revolution seemed like a confirmation of these artists' ideological aspirations. Malevich and Khlebnikov were not interested in the contemplative but in the 'engineering function' of the artist's will; this idea joined with politics under Stalinism as a programme for the total remaking of society as a unitary artistic expression.

Groys makes it clear that, while these Russian artists saw their work solely in terms of the transformation of everyday life, their art was aesthetised in the West with its museum and art-gallery culture. In truth, he writes, the Russian avant-gardists had highly dictatorial ambitions; in their writings they were constantly expounding on the relationship between politics and aesthetics; they were the main instigators of the proposition that

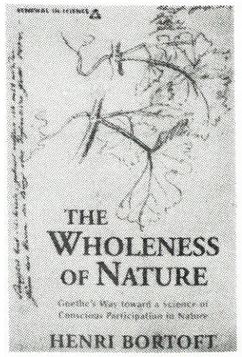
> communism be built as a total work of art that would organise life itself according to a unitary plan. (p. 23)

The author goes on to detail the stages of this process — the rise of Stalinism, the assumption of Stalin himself as the grand artist-demiurge, the conclusion of Stalinism and the work of artists in the post-Stalinist era. At one point he cites a leading theoretician, Boris Arvatov, who also saw art as an internally organised, self-contained whole, a machine for the transformation of the world. However, for Arvatov and for the later stages of Stalinism, art had none of Malevich's cosmic dimension; art was now seen as a social reality, controlled by political forces — in particular, the Communist party. The artist was still seen to be vital, but only as a worker who realised someone else's vision — that of the grand demiurge which was Stalin himself. In 1932, as part of Stalin's five year plan, he disbanded all artist groups and liquidated the art market so that all artists were now working as organs of the Party.

This book does a lot to point out the dangers of the idea of the 'total work of art' when taken on by a nihilistic avant-garde ideology which has convinced itself that there is no such thing as scientific truth, as the established or divinely created world, and that nature is merely the material for a total creation which depends only upon the will of the artist. Groys shows how such ideas readily — given the right circumstances — conjoin with politics to aspire towards a total transformation which is believed will transcend history and enter a mythologised utopian reality, a 'new world and a new humanity'. Such observations as the following are most illuminating:

> Loyal and well-known Communists suddenly turned out to be monsters capable of demoniacal, spontaneous, and unprovoked malice and violence. They incarnated the other, destructive side of the avant-garde, whose passion for negating the past to clear the way for the new was as absolute as the creative energy it devoted to its artistic project. (p. 61)

Groys finds the post-modern enterprise, while no longer 'constructivist' but now proposing the deconstruction and relativising of all creative efforts, to be nothing other than the avant-garde in a new form, "a new attempt to leave history and enter the eternal extrahistorical play of codes".



THE WHOLENESS OF NATURE: GOETHE'S WAY TOWARD A SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION IN NATURE
by Henri Bortoft,
Lindisfarne Press, Hudson,1996. 416 pp.

The relevance of this book to a magazine on art can be gleaned from one of the footnotes. Here the author states:

> The characteristic of [the artistic genius] is that it can embody the nonsensible in the sensible, so that the nonsensible manifests directly as appearance...we cannot preclude the possibility that a work of art could embody the unity of a plant, but we can say that this cannot be depicted by sensory representation, e.g., by a colour slide (p. 384).

Now, such an idea would not appear as too strange if the subject of the book was aesthetic philosophy; what is unusual is to find the idea in a book on natural science. But this is no usual book; it is attempting to show the pathway towards an altogether 'new' form of science — new in one sense, but actually based upon the methods of Goethe which themselves have their roots in much earlier periods of European culture. Its connection to the work of Goethe is the other reason why this book is relevant to *Transforming Art* (see 'Nature as Art' in this issue). Goethe approached the study of the natural world out of his sense of the unity of science and art — and to talk about 'the wholeness of nature' is the same thing as talking about 'the wholeness of human culture'. Unity or wholeness, as Goethe understood it, is the life-principle which both creates and relates nature and culture.

Bortoft is addressing the question of a science of the 'wholeness of nature' primarily from out of his background in the philosophy of science — hence the mention of art only as a footnote. However this footnote says a great deal about the place of artistic work within this new science. Bortoft occupies himself throughout most of the book with attempting to clarify what is the authentic meaning of 'wholeness'. He goes to great trouble, in terms of Goethe's thinking in relationship to the ideas of modern philosophers, to explain what he means by a *holistic* as opposed to an *analytical* (or intellectual) way of seeing the world, the latter being the way of conventional science. Bortoft shows that, without the cultivation of a holistic or participatory way of seeing, the world remains entirely one-dimensional to understanding. Goethe had spoken about 'seeing' the unity of the plant, and Bortoft explores in detail what this 'unity' actually is. He makes it clear that unity does not appear if we stand back and take an overview of the phenomenon (the conventional sense of what it means to seek unity within diversity). Nor does it appear to the rational mind as an abstract idea, 'beyond' the plant, in the conventional sense of a Platonic archetype. The unity *is* the plant phenomenon, but it is only grasped when 'seen' in a particular way — that is to say, through a seeing which consciously participates in the plant's living formative dynamic. Bortoft writes:

> [W]e can show a picture of a particular plant, but we cannot show a picture of the unity of the plant. This is something we *see* but cannot depict. (p.247)

This is where Bortoft adds the footnote relating to the genius of art; the work of the artist within this 'science of conscious participation in nature' is thus revealed to be of profound significance. Another book could be written, probably by someone else coming from a more artistic background, with that footnote as its seed.

Bortoft ends the book by asserting that this new science of the wholeness of nature is not emerging from outside science, but represents the transformation of science itself. This transformation occurs as science realises that a science of *qualities* is possible (beyond conventional quantitative science) and Goethe's striving, as Bortoft makes clear, was towards such a science of qualities. Art is generally understood as the aspect of the human mind which deals with qualities as opposed to quantities, but we should not jump to the conclusion that Goethe's way merely represents a new attempt to integrate science with art. Bortoft's statement — that this new science represents the transformation of *science* — needs to be closely examined. If there is an artistic dimension to this science, it emerges *out of science itself*.

N.H.