

THE EMOTIVE QUALITIES OF LIGHT
AS A PRIME FACTOR IN ARTISTIC
EXPRESSION

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Dissertation R.B. BROOKS.

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Amongst all the objects of perception light is the one that arouses the greatest desire.

Liber de Intelligentiis.

What we do possess to-day as 'art' a faked music, filled with exotic and showcard effects, that every ten years or so concocts out of the form-wealth of millenia some new "style" which is no style at all since everyone does as he pleases. A lying plastic that steals from Assyria, Egypt and Mexico indifferently. Yet this and only this, the taste of the "man of the world" can be accepted as the expression and sign of the age. Everything else, everything that sticks to old ideals is for provincial consumption.

OSWALD SPENGLER.

This is the year 1965 - nearly fifty years since Oswald Spengler published "The Decline of the West." The paragraph I have quoted by way of justification for this dissertation is in turn a justification of the fact that Spengler is as valid today as he was in 1918.

Painting today is still "faked" and filled, more so than ever, with "exotic and showcard effects" and perhaps it is because of the truth and accuracy inherent in Spengler that he has been so undermined and almost completely ignored as a writer on Art. In the literature I have had access to, I have found very little mention of Spengler or his beliefs, and yet as I see it, if there is anything to be considered about Art, it is this belief of Spengler's that Art is no longer a necessary or valid means of expression and that the Art School of today should be abolished.

As a student writing a dissertation I belong to an Art School and over the past five years have had some dealings with that fantastic complexity called Art History and other complexities called aesthetics, Methods and Technique, Philosophy and appreciation of Art. In fact, together with the practical painting

and drawing, all the subjects which make up the substance of an Art School.

Art Schools, however, like other institutions must move with the times and adjust their curriculums to best satisfy the needs of the present day - in other words they must usually become corrupt and my attention has been drawn to the fantastic metamorphosis taking place in Britain today and obviously spreading throughout the world. These are facts which any art student should be concerned with.

At the outset, is it worthwhile to attend an Art School, and will the training received there provide for a suitable vocation? Now in the new metamorphosed schools training will be provided for a vocation, but the fact is that neither the training nor the vocation will concern itself with Art. In most cases the student will leave as an industrial designer.

It is not my intention to reason with this metamorphosis but only to point out the fact that what Spengler advocated fifty years ago is now only consciously manifesting itself - the Art School is definitely being abolished.

This country has both Schools of Fine Art and Technical Colleges, the former usually within the body of a University. Such is the institution I belong to. And here I must make the point that is important both to the reason for this dissertation and the content of it. The Art School to which I owe my training is still an Art School in the old sense of the word. By that I mean that it still concerns itself with the old ideal of Fine Art - that it does not train industrial designers but students of Art and that it has no concern for vocation other than Art and the teaching of Art, and for these reasons this school is rapidly becoming unique. Most Art Schools in this country, and I would suggest generally, have a hybrid quality about them. Half-rejecting the past constants of Art and half-concerned with the latest and in most cases, not so latest technical developments.

As a result the Art of this country is permeated with too/^{much}indecisiveness, particularly amongst the student products of Universities. They are neither totally committed to the technical demands of the age nor to the constants of Art evident in the past. The

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modern art student meets neither the requirements of Art nor the requirements of the age. This dissertation then hopes to meet the requirements of Art, for in meeting them, it can meet the requirements of 1965.

The subject of emotive light is not an original one and I do not make any claim to it being so. It is part and parcel of a training in old ideals and it is to this training that I am chiefly indebted for the content of this dissertation. My other sources derive from Spengler and the type of him, not from the British Journal of Aesthetics. My main concern is to substantiate the constancy of emotive light in artistic expression. To show that man's relation to the cosmos, to his light world is a factor in all art and that emotive light contains within itself the essence of this relationship. It is the rediscovery of what is constant that has always justified and perpetuated art and as a result can continue to renew and give life to an art student today. For the work today lacks this awareness of a constant, of something which is both in and beyond the present and finite, just as it lacks the belief in something greater than itself. Old ideals do not change. It

is we who change and it is up to us to rediscover,
not to be nostalgic about the past.

A BASIS FOR EMOTIVE LIGHT
(PREHISTORY EGYPT GREECE AND PERSIA)

Light was emotive for primeval man who returned from his solar world into the darkness of the cave in order to create, but millenniums later, for the impressionist painter who left the darkness of his studio to loose himself in a haze of light, it was no longer emotive. Primeval man was unconsciously aware of the power of light. It is the simplest and yet most all embracing entity that we know. Primeval man in seeing a fire unconsciously linked the warmth of the fire with his vision of it and the smell of an animal was immediately connected to his sight of it. To see was at the same time to feel. Light was a total experience. It is difficult to imagine what emotion must have been bound up with this early man's vision of the sky-world and the power the various lights of the sky had over him. This man could see with the whole of his body and for him there must have been a great mystery in both the day and

the night.

Inherent in artists since has been this emotion for light and with it a vision bound up with all the senses of the body, having and retaining a power and sensitivity of sight far beyond that of ordinary men. Light is the basis of an artist's emotion, for it is the source from which all his experiences derive and when light is no longer emotive then art has gone to reside elsewhere. These are the facts which I hope to justify. Spengler has shown how man in order to think had to separate his sensations from his understanding. Because an artist's understanding, however, has remained irrevocably bound up with his sensations, he has in this sense, remained prehistoric, but history has of course proved that when necessary an artist has been more than capable of thought. Since the beginning it has remained for the artist to be indifferent to any purified cerebral vision, any system of sight, in fact to anything which is without life and consequently without feeling, and it is a light of feeling that I am concerned with.

Rock paintings were worked at and experienced by the flickering light of a torch. Placed in most

cases in the deepest recesses of the cave their life and movement can only be truly apparent under the uncertain and suggestive light of the torch - sometimes picking out sharply an outline and othertimes flaring up to reveal the whole world of the cave. Primeval man placed a living animal on a living rock wall. For him things were not separate - the world was continuous and unbounded. The rock surface flows in and around the forms incised upon it. Here is a total unity and it is enough to say that this art at once reveals the density and darkness of forms and the world they inhabit.

The outline is dominant throughout primeval art but it is an outline which is incised into or painted onto a living rock and is in no way separate from it. This is an effort which both distinguishes and unifies. The great symbol of this art, the animal, was depicted as a total reality encompassing at once all the characteristics of its species and in its entirety related to the all embracing surface of the cave. This complete unity could only be the result of profound experience assimilated outside of the cave in life and

transformed inside of the cave in mystery. The vision of Prehistoric Art is constant - Each man renewing for himself both the life of the forms and the life within himself. Because he is uncluttered in his approach to any surface and because his vision is not rationalized to a single viewpoint, primeval man can place his figures on the ceiling or the floor of the cave, and thus is always involved with the continuity of the world and the forms within it. A prime factor of prehistoric art, an art for which light is emotive, is its concern with a total reality.

It remained for the classical Greek statue to be the first sculpture to stand isolated, occupying no other world than one of self adulation, and it remained for Greek Art to be the first to express fragmentation and disunity. Significant to prehistory is the fact that the small carvings were meant to be held in the hand, to be seen as well as felt. These carvings have no base and are not free standing and sculpture in the round, because of its essential separateness and disunity, had no place in this art. The high relief of Greece is essentially sculpture in the round.

The form moves away from the surface whereas the relief of Prehistory remains integrated within the rock. Incised, the blackness of the line varies with the living light of the torch.

As I see it, the light of Greece is basically unemotive. The sky and its movement - the life of light - had no meaning for the Greek. Apollo is the Sun God but he remains human. Egypt with its religion of life and its religion of the sun, retained all the constants of Prehistory. Greece retained more of them. Born to a bright world of light Greek art accepts light unconditionally without seeing the mystery of it, only a clear finite brightness. Ruskin was right in giving the designation "School of Light" to Greek art for it knows no darkness and the anonymous discreet light of day ends in the total blackness of night. All men have to accept darkness and some are able to face up to it and to see the reality and necessity of night, others in ignoring it live in fear and Greece being unaware of light feared the darkness, and Greek art, small, refined, limited and developing very little, presupposes laziness and attendant with it, fear. The Egyptian soul essentially brave

has its temple orientated to the sun, so that the darkness of the interior can be penetrated by light in order to bring the God of the Temple to life.

The bas-reliefs of these temples, standing out strongly in the sunlight, affirm in a living language instinctive life. Men are intermingled with the animals of the Oasis and River and the animal retains its prehistoric sacredness. The magical reality of this Art, testifies to its concern with life and the living, and emotive light is inherent in any art which makes a reality magical. Egyptian art needs no explanation. In mystery it found simplicity, in renewal it found life.

A canon of proportions existed for both Egypt and Greece. Much has been made of, and significance seen in the Greek canon, but very little in the Egyptian. The reason being perhaps, that the Egyptian canon is religious and simple and therefore unobvious whilst the Greek canon is aesthetic and complex and therefore very obvious. The Egyptian reconstructed and renewed life - the Greek imitated and evaded life. The Polyclitan canon was used to obtain the objective proportions of the normal human being, and Greek sculpture was

characteristically one of clay rather than rock. Clay can be delicately modelled to shatter light into a thousand nuances of shade. This is a light which is non-committal, anonymous and reasonable. The living light of Egypt defined form precisely and confidently and in seeking after form this art sought after light. Greece in accepting light evaded form. Egyptian art is masculine, magical and supremely religious; Greek art, neither masculine nor feminine but implicitly neutral, is civic and purely visual. Egypt affirms emotive light through its concern with form - Greece denies it through its evasion of form. Light does not penetrate into a Greek Temple, it is passively or unemotionally accepted by it, and effects of light rather than a strong totality of form result. Light caresses but does not define. The fluting of columns and triglyphs, the alternation of voids and solids and the sculptured metopes are all effects of light, not the definition of form. The sole purpose of the polychromy applied to all the adornments of the temple was to emphasize the main sections of the building; and the refinements of proportion and delicate adjustment of the main lines of the building to counteract effects of perspective and foreshortening was done pre-eminently

to suit the vision, and indicated the Greek concern for an aesthetic ideal rather than a living reality. Fragmented, concentrating on the parts rather than the whole, the form of the temple disappears beneath the visual effects of embellishment. With Greece vision is no longer sensed, it is totally optical.

Greek art develops from an anonymous, religious art to a secular, individual art. It introduces the concept of artistic freedom, and novelty replaces reality. The geometrical synthesis of the Early Dorian vases develops finally into a play with illusion, and although no examples exist of Classical Greek painting it needs very little imagination to envisage its content. Painters were praised for their technical competence in rendering effects such as the transparency of water in a glass bowl, and it is apparent that Greek artists were well versed in the technicalities of tone, perspective, light and shade. Apollodorus's shadow painting was prevalent at the time of Plato and he significantly regarded this art as being inferior, neglecting as it did "the whole for the shadow". Landscape was the main feature of Alexandrian art and out of this Rome perfected and developed the art of trompe l'oeil -

the prime expression of deception.

From this I am certain that Greek painting had no dealings with emotive light and if the paintings of Pompeii and Herculaneum are any indication of the painting of Greece then the uninformed virtuosity of the two landscapes I have seen and the isolated and fragmentary nature of the figure paintings certainly strengthen this view. The still life paintings, perhaps closest to the Greek school, are by far the best.

With the advent of Greece the reign of the great animal gods of Egypt and Prehistory was over and with it the belief in the powers and forces inherent in the natural world. The Gods became human and the animal fades entirely out of Greek Art taking with it all that is irrational and instinctive in life. The Art of Greece like its religion was stripped of all its emotional elements. Taking the middle path it desired only to be acceptable.

Prehistory, Egypt and Greece stand for what emotive light is, and what it is not. The Gods of Prehistory and Egypt are in the land as well as the sky and as a result this is art which can stand up to investigation

giving something more each time it is looked at, and can stand as a foil for any propaganda of Art History. Much has been written on the Art of Greece especially since it is regarded as the basis of Western Painting, but reinvestigation of it and the recurring affirmations of Art History have only served to further reveal its obvious limitations. A South African art student of necessity must formulate his opinions on past art through the medium of Art History and literature and the mannerism of photographic reproduction. Apart from one idea of Corot and one of El Greco in Johannesburg, two of Gaspard Poussin in Cape Town and one in Kimberley and apart from the rock paintings, the reality of the past does not exist.

The Classical tradition of Rome was at once weakened by its contact with the East, and there is a definite new will to form in the late Roman works, with an illogical use of frontal and profile views of beasts, men and Gods, which is a definite rejection of the Greek Spirit. The mystical sects of Kybele, Isis and Mithras were in opposition to the State Religion. The young Persian religion of Mithra and the Bull - the god of light and the beast of blood and potency -

brought with it a return to the irrational and emotive in art. Mithras, a pre-Zoroastrian deity, was the great God of light and the eternal opponent of darkness. The ceremonies of Mithra dramatized darkness and light and were held in the inner space of new domed buildings. Previously worship was conducted outside the Greek temple and the reliefs which depicted the deities of these mystery religions no longer reveal the isolation of the Greek figures. These figures live in a new kind of deep space which was partly created by cast shadows. These carvings prefigure those on Gothic and Romanesque porches and are definitely the first forms of medieval art.

Persian Dualism, the belief in the eternal struggle between the two irreconcilable powers of light and darkness, between Ohrmazd the God of Light and Ahriman the God of Darkness was a factor in direct contrast to the Greek desire for reason and harmony. Iranian Mazdaism divided the Universe into two powers of light and darkness and the Achmaenian religion was a continuation of the Prehistoric cult of fire introduced by the Aryans. The Persian scale which was vast and true to Imperial power was unrelated to the small, human scale of Greece. Persia had maintained the animal tradition of Egypt and Prehistory and through its link

with Byzantium, the tradition was to continue in Medieval art with the beasts of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture.

A JUSTIFICATION OF EMOTIVE LIGHT
(BYZANTINE ROMANESQUE AND GOTHIC)

"The essential form of things is light, which clothes matter; the more intense the light, the more perfect the substance"

Vincent of Beauvais (c.1250)

Byzantium had the new faith and will to form to link the old world of Rome and the expansive feeling of the Persians for colour gold and light, into the Spatial cosmology which is the Byzantine Church. Rome contained all the elements of this art, the arch and dome, the wall and floor mosaic and Persia gave to its central idea the magical sense of reality. From the fifth century onwards Persian forms are present in Byzantine painting. The philosopher of Byzantium is Plotinus who embodied in his writings the concepts of this art. He wrote of "a reality grasped at a single glance" and for him the approach to knowledge was not analytical but was obtained instinctively and completely by direct and spontaneous perception of the transcendent essence of all things. He greatly influenced Dionysius the Aeropagite who wrote "The Celestial Hierachy" and whose

writing interprets the domed Church as an image of the Cosmos.

The Byzantine Church is as completely involved in the expression of its religion as is the Egyptian Temple. As well as being an image of the Cosmos the Church magically identified its various parts with the Holy Places of the life of Christ and at the same time symbolised the Christian year. The Byzantine Church projects downwards and the images on the curved walls of the vaults and cupolas enclose a complete and unified space, and like the rock paintings on cave walls, Byzantine Mosaics can only properly be realised in the light and space for which they are created. Space is not depicted, it is made use of. The images were shaped to meet the particular conditions under which they were to be seen. The Byzantine Church has no direct light, it permeates throughout the whole interior of mosaic and mystery. Transformed, the light achieves a life of brilliance and glow and is no longer alien. Light and space which fills and is part of the life of the interior form of a building, is here a prime factor of expression, as it is in all great architecture.

The dome, glowing with its heavenly light, is the brightest part of the building and with its emotional value of height and remoteness contains the image furthest from the vision - that of Christ Pantocrator. Here the tones are the lightest and the colours are the immaterial white and gold. The images of Christ in the Dome, and the Virgin Mary on the wall of the apse also have the strongest contrasts, specifically for clarity and expressiveness at a great distance. The modelling is not continuous and graded, but committed to form through the definite differences of colour, light and tone. In clearness of form the Byzantine artist sought to preserve the reality and holiness of the image, and again the renewal of constant forms, as in Egyptian Art, never became a systemized and life denying practise. It remained fundamentally artistic and formal.

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Below the dome, the ^{next} Zone of the Church was called the Festival or Evangelic cycle, and was known to the people as the Holy Land and had stronger colours. The lowest Zone of the Church called the third or Terrestrial cycle of the Saints, had dark and heavy colours,

the deep blues and greens of the world. Light and colour unify in the powerful ambience of the interior and the will to form is apparent everywhere. The space of Renaissance art recedes - here the figures belong to the space in front of them having an immediacy which illusionism can never have. The reality of the mosaic, its emotive qualities and relation to the whole cosmology of the Church, is a prime expression both of form and the belief inherent in that form. The Byzantine image had to be and was the magical counterpart of its prototype, either the Holy Person or event portrayed. The fact of Byzantine Art is that it did not depict, it was a magic reality.

For Plato the closest expression of the Ideal goal of being was the sun, and this connection between light and spiritual beauty developed with Neo-Platonism into the Medieval Metaphysics of light, which saw light as the essence of reality and a symbol of God. Everything created by God was a light of His light and having light each created thing partook of the Divine Being. Plotinus, who founded Neo-Platonism equated God with light, and it was he who was to influence Christian thinking from the third century onwards. In Dionysius

the Aeropagite, his follower, the fusion was made between the doctrines of Plotinus and the beliefs of Christianity. By him, God was called "the father of lights" and Christ, "the first Radiance". It was in translations of this man's work by John the Scot that Suger Abbot of St. Denis gained the justification for his attitude towards life and art. Suger, called the father of the French Monarchy which climaxed with Louis XIV, was a powerful man, both in the history of France and the history of Art, and he was as much concerned with the development of his country as with that of his Abbey. His enemies were people who had "no regard for either the King of the Franks or the King of the Universe", and the first form in Gothic Art was in the new chevet and basilica of St. Denis. Suger believed that the omnipotent God was to be worshiped in a materially perfect Church.

Both Dionysius the Aeropagite and John the Scot describe the ascent from the material to the immaterial world - the complete hierarchy from the brightest plane of existence to the most material one, and the connection is established between this hierarchy and the hierarchy of light. All things are material lights of different kinds and degree which mirror the Divine light of the Godhead. Here light is the transcendent essence

of all things and Suger delights in the "levelness of the many coloured stones ... in the beauty of the house of God" existing in a strange region which is neither of the slime of the earth nor in the purity of heaven. And he described the change in his own building when the new glass choir replaced the dark Carolingian apse, as "Bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light". Medieval light metaphysics had a profound effect on Augustine, Bonaventura, Erigena and St. Francis, and on the Judaic and Arabic philosophies of the ninth to the eleventh centuries which influenced early scholasticism. The Neo-Platonic theory of light was again prevalent in High Scholasticism from the end of the Twelfth century and at the beginnings of Gothic Art. Just as the writings of Plotinus are an expression of the form of Byzantine Art, so High Scholasticism exhibits the form of Gothic Art - the organic surface of the Church belies its rational content. The living light which penetrates into the Gothic Cathedral, illuminates, expresses and gives form to the architectural mass, and is itself transformed by the coloured constructions of the stain glass windows. A religious art requires that all aspects of life should

be integrated and unified within it. The Gothic cathedral embodied the whole of Christian knowledge, theological, moral, natural, historical and scholastic. It synthesized all the major motifs handed down to it. The Gothic cathedral is exclusive in its use of the rib vault, and throughout the Church nothing differs in kind. The exterior both explains and is completely integrated with the interior, and the great compound column is in itself a total expression of the whole superstructure of the church. Each overhead rib flows into and becomes part of the form of the compound pier. The high Gothic Church grew out of reconciliation, each Church working to a greater clarity and simplicity of forms and without exception, each Church was orientated to the rising and setting sun. The foundations were so disposed as to lie exactly to the east, that part of the sky in which the sun rises at the equinox. Out of this orientation comes the significance attached to each part of the Church. The cold and darkness of the northern region is consecrated to the Old Testament. The warm sunlit southern region belongs to the New Testament. The sunset lights up the Western facade which depicts the Last Judgment and the twilight of world history.

The Romanesque Church is essentially a Church of gloom. Its vaults are a variety of Western and Eastern forms and the springing of the heavy barrel vault over the nave is supported by quadrant vaults which prevent much light from passing into the interior. Romanesque art retained its ties to the Mediterranean tradition and found its form in Southern France and is essentially sculptural. Within it, is contained the late Roman sculpture as well as the blood and spirit of the Barbarians, and through both it continues with the legendary beast. This sculpture is supremely religious and dynamic and more realised than the later Gothic sculpture, which, as it developed tended to separate itself from the context of the building. Romanesque sculpture belongs to, and is part of the frame of the building. As form it belongs within the frame of capitals, tympanums and friezes. The fact of Romanesque sculpture is that it is integrated within the wall which it defines, and in turn, is defined by. This is no superficial ornament - one looks to Greece for adornment, to Romanesque for expression.

The contrasts of light are strong and defining in

this sculpture. The figures move out strongly to the light from a darkness which is not penetrated by it. Immediate and organic these forms live in the light, whereas the Gothic forms are more passive.

Like the difference between a man who loses his form by lying in the sun and being enveloped by it, and the man who gains his form by walking into the sun and standing out against it.

Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic art justify a belief in the transcendent emotive qualities inherent in light. St. Thomas calls the beautiful "the shining forth of the form of a thing", and words for light like - claritas, splendor, resplendentia, fulgor, lux, lumen, illumino, lucidas, illustro - are as prevalent as words for form in Medieval writings. Light and form are unified because light is the finest and most excellent of elements and form is the end to which all art aspires. Light as a tangible thing, a thing of form, also contains within itself qualities which are not form, lying beyond the finite world, and light in expressing the material, also expressed the immaterial aspects of form. From this can be gained some idea of what Delacroix meant when he said that art should express "something

beyond the finite", and that statement is, in reality, a justification of emotive light.

ASPECTS OF EMOTIVE LIGHT IN WESTERN
PAINTING

With the Renaissance the essence of Medieval light was replaced by the effect of phenomenal light. The destruction and fragmentation of light stands for the destruction of man's belief in God. What was once a religious secret became a fashionable effect. What came from the inside of a man because of his belief in what was outside of him, what emerged spontaneously, from training and a sensory origin, became the object of formula and definition.

As a fact, emotive light can counter all the fiction of light so prevalent in Western Painting. Romanesque murals and illuminations made a fact of the sky - a committed expression which sees no difference between the form of the figures or the form of the sky, the colours of both being precise and emphatic.

Medieval art is one of facts. It tolerates no

indecisiveness - a hill is a hill and a figure a figure, and both are totally expressed with no evasive half statements. This art seeks to explain and clarify, and involved in life it had to manifest the forms assumed by life and this it did in a decisive and potent way. Art as an expression of life's significance was regarded as an element of life itself, and not as a separate entity and again, when the concern is for the whole, light was not regarded as an isolated factor - it was the fundamental form of matter. The "nobilitas," a God created order of rank and the hierarchical integration of the Divine being with the elements of fire, air, water and earth is constructed by the degree of their tangible light content. The surface waters of the ocean, still filled with light, are nobler than those in the darkness below. The active qualities of light in shining metals and sparkling precious stones give them a higher nobility than things less receptive to light, like ordinary rock - It takes fire to transform ashes and sand into glass - so that medieval light as well as being a manifestation of the life and forms of the world was also the prime manifestation of God. It was at once a spiritual and a material reality, and this is the significance

of light in the solar windows, in the jewels, the gold size of illumination and the colours of painting. A significance which Western Art retained having its roots in these forms.

It remained for the West to slowly separate the spiritual and irrational qualities of light from its material qualities. Because Medieval light was the Divine Emanation of God, and thus all embracing and archetypal it was never obscured by shadow, or humanised by it. The shadow stands for a fragmentation of light. A history of the shadow could be written from the bodily shadow of Giotto, to the cast shadows of Conrad Witz, and finally to the total shadow of Caravaggio. It would of course be a technical history and a factor of Western painting is that it did come to regard light as a purely technical thing, and in doing so lost the instinctive and emotive values in light.

Giotto's Gothic concern for life and Byzantine concern for form, was manifest in the space of his sky and the reality of his figures. In light and shadow he saw form. The shadow of Masaccio is

stronger, the corporeal shadow deeper. The transition from light to dark tones and variations in light, the values of relief according to the angle at which light falls upon it, are all manifest in his work. But for Masaccio and his predecessor this is not a calculation of the effect of light on form. That can be left to Apollodorus, or a Roman mosaic, or a trompe l'oeil painting. It is rather a concern for the realization of form, and this consideration is purely artistic and formal. It is bound up with the totality of art, not a consideration of light. When Cennino Cennini in his Treatise on Painting writes "when you draw, place yourself in a temperate light. Following the light from whatever side it may come, set shadows off against the relief" he is writing on the effects of light, but when he said "as your guide and compass take the light of the sun, that of your eye and that of your hand" then he is talking about art. There is a world of difference between a Roman mosaic, which calculates the effects of light on form, and a Byzantine mosaic, which expresses form through light. Any artist should be able to deal purely with the effects of light, in other

words to paint a trompe l'oeil but never does it become his total concern.

The sky under which Simone Martine's Guidoriccio da Fogliano rides, has more light and space within it, than the formal consideration of these factors in the depth perspectives of Pompeii and Herculaneum. No Greek could ever have painted such an expressively blue sky, and the reason for this is not that blue as a colour was something the Greeks were unaware of, it strongly appears in temple decoration, but because they had no feeling for the sky either as a formal thing, or as an emotive thing. And Simone Martini's sky is both - as expansive and as boundless as the gold backgrounds of Sienese Art. The light expression of Piero della Francesca is more obvious and telling than his perspective and it is the light which reveals possibilities, not the perspective. This sense of atmosphere, of clear light, is again achieved by Corot in the celestial worlds he painted in the Ille de France.

In his "Book of Painting" Leonardo pursued exhaustively all the various manifestations of light phenomenon, and characteristic in his work and writing is the

shadow as a negative principle, a factor which culminates in Caravaggio and spreads blackness throughout painting. ... "and since darkness is nothing but the absence of light it follows that when light, its cause, is suppressed entirely, the effect or perception of the colours and shapes of bodies also ceases". The Venetians and all the great colourists have belied this fact. In this darkness of Leonardo there is no mystery, only obscurity, and basically chiaroscuro in its compromise between light and dark is a negative factor. It is something which can in Leonardo's words be called "neither bright nor dark, but that shares in a certain measure brightness and darkness"; and here is what Ruskin says about chiaroscurists: "Many of them paint but always with some effort and pain. Leonardo is the type of them; but the entire Dutch School consists of them, laboriously painting without essential genius for colour".

And characteristically there is much of Dutch painting in the Renaissance. "The adoration of the Magi" in its black and gold completeness is not a far remove from Rembrandt who blended black and gold

to get a certain sought of brown. Leonardo like the other two exclusively High Renaissance painters was pre-eminently a thinker and as a result his vision is more optical than instinctive. The minute modulations of light which comprise his sfumato technique are more a denial of light than an assertion of it, and similarly, more a negation of form than a positive statement of it. Michelangelo is nearest to Classical Greece in that light had no emotive qualities for him. He placed his figures in an even, non-committal light in much the same way as a Greek statue was placed. He thought to leave light to the Flemish "with their delight in showing actual stuffs" and his strong criticism of Flemish painters could well have been returned by them to his work as being all reason, all art, all rhythm, all proportion and all decoration.

Light, of course, is a factor in all painting, and on dealing with aspects of Emotive light in painting from the preceding basis and justification, I am looking for light which is positive and therefore emotive, and its contrast passive light, which is unemotive and negative. Beccafumi called himself a

luminist, and indeed his painting plays with light. Of all the mannerists he was the one most concerned with the effects of light, but it remains a coloured sfumato bound to patches of light which divide the picture up into fragments, much like a cubist painting, and perhaps it is significant that Cambiasso, another luminist made cubistic drawings of fighting men. Mannerist light is intellectual, unnecessary and unspontaneous. Off-blues and greens stand for the form of the sky, but are not related to light in any way. Light when it is used, is used for refined and original effects and not for expression. The candlelit scene with its bizarre and rare effect became a definite subject, mostly to bring about a play of light, and it needed a visionary like Georges de La Tour to transfigure and express and give necessary form to this light. Tintoretto worked by candlelight but his strong emotive light, a real conquest of the sky, had nothing to do with the soft diffused light of the candle.

Caravaggio shows the conscious path of light across a picture. This light dominates because form is lost, distorted and distended by it. El Greco

uses light, but is never dominated by it. Caravaggio places it above everything else. He does not define form, he defines the play of light. Isolated, light becomes a conscious thing, a precious quality to be exploited, and the material, soulless light of Vermeer, is the ultimate result of this. The rational world was enough for Vermeer and in the unemotive darkness of Caravaggio the Dutch, a people with no fear for the night, found the substance which was to dominate their painting. Optical and material, the light of Leonardo and Vermeer was easily adapted into the Dutch scheme of things. Van Eycks' light, like that of Leonardo, is softly diffused and feminine, seen not experienced, describing not expressing, it exists, hybrid, somewhere between the clear religious Gothic light and the material darkness of Caravaggio. Quentin Massys was the first to display the reasoned light of Leonardo and after that it never really left Dutch painting. The fires which Bosch created have nothing to do with this, neither does the cosmic expressions of Bruegel. Here light, emotive and expressive, is at once a part of the order and totality of a painting. The School of Utrecht at the beginning

of the seventeenth century introduced the new art of Caravaggio into Holland and Terbrugghen and Honthorst, with their fragmented candlelight, link Caravaggio to Vermeer. Like photographic plates these artists accept light unconditionally. It is the sole justification and content of their pictures. These ramifications of light in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries do not belong to emotive light in painting. It remains for the Spanish painters to really express darkness, because it is innate to their temperament, and not a factor for obscurity and calculated distortion of form.

Spain, with its roots in the medieval past and the Arab world, retained an art which was pre-eminently religious, and a feeling for darkness which was manifest in the harsh dramatic background of Spain. The deep shadow and strong light of the bull fight arena, linked within one continuous form, is but one expression of this. Ribera, Zurbaran and Goya can with darkness and light express the depths and mystery of the Spanish soul. The darkness of Ribera and Goya is one of blood and suffering, that of Zurbaran religious and ascetic. The Spanish baroque, dark and dramatic and heavy with

form is radically different to the Baroque of Italy and the rest of Europe. In Spanish art, light and its qualities of darkness stand for an exact rendering of emotion. Etching, the best black and white medium, is made simple and precise by Goya.

Equally sparing of darkness is the Genoan Magnasco who continued the tradition of Salvator Rosa. Here light is inserted into the darkness, and Piranesi too, knew how to be dark without being black. His huge interiors are set in a darkness which does not obscure and is emotive in the extreme.

These days through photographic reproduction Western painting can be seen as some sought of a whole, and seen in this way it becomes obvious that darkness characterizes a lot of it and critically not a darkness of night, but one of day. And a case in point is Rembrandt's "Night Watch", which even after the cleaning away of its nocturnal dirt is still a picture of essential darkness set in the day. Rembrandt is an obvious choice because he is the most venerated of Western painters and characteristically one of the darkest of painters, and he stands

at the head of all the gloom of Western painting. And prevalent, is this belief that emotive qualities of light necessarily belong to an exaggerated darkness. Ruskin in comparing the light of Veronese and Turner to that of Rembrandt shows the essential unreality of Rembrandt's light and that what is more easily obtained and what is more superficially impressive than the natural scale of Veronese and Turner, is the seeking of a force of light by means of an exaggerated darkness, and this blackness is a characteristic of Western Painting.

The Romantic painters of the nineteenth century concerned with nature saw the reality of darkness. In the fantastic worlds of John Martin, darkness is bound up with a tremendous expression of power and vastness, of the heaving forces of the world, and every painting by Caspar David Friedrich is a testimony to the emotive powers of light. Hercules Seghers, whose fanatic concern with nature brought an awareness of its discords, knew the reality of shadow in landscape, van Ruisdael too, was able to manifest light and its emotive qualities within the form of

a landscape.

The German painters, Altdorfer and Elsheimer, could paint the realities of both day and night. Altdorfer's cave-like skies are directly linked with the expression of his pictures. The key to his dynamic animism is the cosmic sunset of "The Battle of Arbelo." Elsheimer retained the Germanic affinity for light and he gave form to the emotive qualities of night. In the "Rest on the Flight to Egypt" the light of the moon and the stars connects with the glow of lamp and fire. Grunewald expressed the radiance of all lights, solar, lunar, terrestrial and heavenly, and Cranach formed the clear blue sky of the north. Purser's watercolours and his engravings are attuned to northern light and life, and not the Renaissance.

Bitumen, which was used for the painting of shadow and blackness from the late sixteenth century in the west, was a destructive element, ruining many paintings. This was perhaps significant and Pliny gives one of the reasons for the use of Bitumen in Greek painting when he wrote that Appelles covered

his pictures with a thin layer of bitumen, in order to prevent the brightness of the colours from offending the eye. English painting was particularly prolific in its use of bitumen as well as its use of darkness, but John Crome's "Moonlight over the Yare" is concerned with the reality of evening, a factor inherent in the late afternoon landscapes of Richard Wilson, and very few have sensed night more than Samuel Palmer did. George Stubbs was aware of light as he was of horses, and he expressed the reality of both. The interest of Joseph Wright of Derby in problems of light both artificial and real, was due to his own scientific temperament and concerned with essentials. It was thus much more authentic than the candlelight effects of Dutch painting so prolific in England at the time. Of all aspects of form, light is the most easily abused.

Ruskin countered the "Greek School of light" with the "Gothic School of Colour". The first essentially the school of Chiaroscuro and clay, the second essentially the school of crystal, and he saw the Venetian painters as deriving from and belonging to

both these schools. "The great splendour of the Venetian School arises from their having seen and held from the beginning this great fact that shadow is as much colour as light, often more." The spirit of Byzantine prevailed in Venice whose art was always to be concerned with the brilliance and glow of matter, and whose means of expression was the unity of form, light and colour. The medium with the highest light content, oil paint, was best suited to their means of expression. Giovanni Bellini contains, from his earliest work, all the elements of Venetian painting. Expression given to light is characteristic in all his work, and his forms are inseparable from the emotional quality of the day. Small things, like the white of clothing, contain within them all the colours of the sky, but as with all painters who feel and understand the emotive qualities of light, Bellini is not all light. It creates and is part of the whole. The Venetian painters favoured the evening when there is little difference between the shadows and the light. In the shadow of Titian and Giorgione is the greatest colour. Every shadow is a light, and every light a shadow of a greater light. Delacroix and Ruben knew this. - It is something

which is realised by every great colourist whose work contains at once the brightest of lights and the darkest of colours. Contained within this tremendous range of light and colour is an equally tremendous range of expression. In landscape colour bound up with light is the greatest source of expression and Ruskin, easily the most convincing writer on landscape, has this to say about Turner. "Turner like all great colourists is distinguished not more for his power of dazzling and overwhelming the eye with intensity of effect, than for his power of doing so by the use of subdued and gentle means. - There is no man living more cautious and sparing in use of colour than Turner." Justifying the mystery of Turner, which was often seen as being mere indecision and incompleteness, he said "Excellence of the highest kind without obscurity cannot exist ... the very definiteness of Turner's knowledge adds to the mystery of his pictures." The light of Turner was not a light which dissolves "all matter into its own qualities, the colours of the prism." He gave form to the uncertainty and perpetual changes of light and his method is best explained by himself.

"I did not paint it to be understood, but I wished to show what such a scene was like." And here another artist, equally concerned with the phenomena of light, not a painter but a writer and philosopher, must be mentioned.

Goethe, like Turner, was concerned with the body of his works and wished them to be understood and appreciated as a whole. The phenomena of light attracted him above all others and his early poems use everywhere the symbols of light and darkness, whilst his old age was characterized by this prime polarity. For him, light was the highest sensory manifestation of the Divine. "If I am asked whether it is in my nature to revere the sun, then I say again : absolutely! For it is likewise a revelation of the highest good, and the mightiest one that it is allowed. I worship in it the light and generating power of God, whereby alone we live, weave and are, and all plants and animals with us." Newton's assertion that white light was composed of the colours of the spectrum was against all Goethe's beliefs. For him colours arrive out of the opposition of darkness and brightness "from a disunity which strives for reunion." For Goethe,

the painter explores nature in order to bring forth something spiritually organic, and to give his work of art a content and a form whereby it appears "at once natural and supernatural". Goethe believed in observation and man's own senses and distrusted all instruments. The white light of Newton which recognizes no darkness needs the mediator of the prism to be understood - it is beyond the normal vision of the eye. And Newton's colour wheel, Ostwald's colour tables Chevreul's colour theories are all the objects of physics not observation. They formulate the new light of the Impressionists in which unbroken spectrum colours are placed side by side. Selection is made by the spectrum, not the artist. Intuitive vision has been replaced by the reason of physics.

In a thesis "On light in Painting" Wolfgang Schoene submits the statement that "we can distinguish among three or four kinds of illuminating light in painting of the fifteenth to the seventeenth century". He divides light up into four categories; natural, artificial, sacred and indifferent, and arrives at what he calls "readable" light which he again divides up into sections according to source. For him these

possibilities determine the history of pictorial light in modern painting. Schoene's approach is analytical, and thus has no dealings with emotive light, and if any of these categories can be used for it, it would be called indifferent. The light of Ruben's landscape does not ask to be read, neither does the expressive light of ^aBaroque ceiling ask to be analyzed. The light in a Poussin or Claude painting does not stand out as an isolated factor to be appreciated by itself. It remains for the system of Schoene or any other categorization of light to apply only when dealing with painting which concerns itself with light and with light only. Emotive qualities of light are a prime factor in artistic expression for the very reason that they lie in expression, and not in analysis. The light of Grunewald cannot be described as "Religious, a halo or something similar." All haloes are not necessarily emotive. It is the forming and transforming qualities of the solar stain glass windows that make them into prime examples of Artistic Expression. The stream of light from the lamp in Goya's "Third of May 1808" is not an effect of light, but a factor

of expression.

The analytical Impressionists began the death of light in the Twentieth Century. Painting, in no longer looking for form, no longer looked for light, and, in rejecting light, painting became musical. Music is the only form which has its means beyond the light world. Kandinsky and his kind tried after "improvisations" and "harmonies" and the colour organ was invented to play electrical colours onto a screen.

But some men chose to remain painters and not to become musicians - men like Rouault and Kokoschka who preferred to live under what Spengler calls the steely tyranny of light. Otherwise the only other manifestations of light have been the neon strips of Pop-art-advertisement and the electric light bulb in Picasso's Guernica.

KOKOSCHKA

"But when I painted the 'Dent du Midi', I was fortunate, just as I was with Lotte Frangois. I painted the landscape in the same colours as the portrait, warm and light, but what a light there is

in that snowscape! The impressionists wouldn't have been able to do such a thing, they have an altogether different idea of light - how the eye is struck by sunbeams and reflections while here it is sensibility on which light impinges, it's a spiritual light, a light as of the morning, the morning of life. Only there can one feel light like that. With this landscape, and this portrait of a woman, I staked out my conquest of painting. A light was kindled for me."

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