

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF EROTICISM IN TWENTIETH
CENTURY WESTERN PAINTING

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"Not when truth is dirty, but when it is shallow,
does the enlightened man dislike to wade into its
waters".

- Nietzsche -

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay eroticism will be examined as it appears in some twentieth century representational styles. The decision to concentrate on the representational styles is based on the fact that eroticism is by nature incompatible with the non-representational or non-objective movements in art. This incompatibility is rooted in the knowledge that eroticism is intrinsically and fundamentally a human experience and could therefore find expression only in an art which is concerned with human experience, i.e. experiences which refer to man, his nature and his relation to Nature. It would be oversimplified and grossly inaccurate to equate the non-representational with the abstract, abstraction being an element present in all art to a greater or lesser degree. However, when abstraction has reached the stage where it can define its aims, as, in the words of Kandinsky, "widening the separation between the domain of art and the domain of Nature", (Lake & Maillard: A Dictionary of Modern Painting, p. 1) then it may also approach the realm of the non-representational. When Michel Seupher states, "I call abstract art all art that does not recall or evoke reality", (Lake & Maillard: A Dictionary of Modern Painting, p. 136) abstract and non-representational art becomes fused into an inseparable unity. Erotic expression will then be incompatible with this degree of abstraction.

Abstract art as a stylistic movement is interpreted as being concerned with the formal structure of a work of art and is further understood to exist when the "absence of any

other form of sensible reality compels us to regard it purely as painting and nothing else, and to judge it according to values that have nothing to do with representation or with the imitation or reproduction of some other thing". (Seupher: Dictionary of Abstract Art, p.7). This approach is suggestive of an involvement with matter rather than man. Erotic impressions made by such non-representational, non-objective or abstract work, intent on destroying ties with the natural world, could consequently only be accidental.

Lippard's argument for a totally abstract eroticism to which the "visually sophisticated" (Battcock: Minimal Art, p. 210) will have access, fails to convince, since she founds her objection to figurative art on the idea that figurative erotica is "stylistically trite and outdated". (Battcock: Minimal Art, p. 210) The "fashionable" or the "outdated" hardly enter as artistic criteria in judging art, neither does style nor technique. The fact that few figurative artists of the present can penetrate beyond the illustrative is probably more closely bound up with shortcomings in the artist than in the figurative subject matter.

Considering the aims of abstract art, it could be logical to assume that totally abstract eroticism can only exist in a totally abstract world governed by abstractions, experiencing in the abstract only. Since eroticism is a human experience and human experiences are integrated into the natural realistic world from which the totally abstract is alienating itself, the human experience cannot be logically understood in terms of the totally abstract or the non-figurative, neither can it manifest itself through the non-

figurative. Freudian associations of form, such as the sphere and the circle, tower-shapes and other phallic-forms, can suggest erotic connotations, but the force which changes an abstract form into a meaningful erotic symbol or image has its roots in the real world experience, i.e. the figurative world. To conclude my motivations for the choice of the representational or figurative works and for excluding the non-figurative or non-objective, or, what for the purpose of this essay would be called the abstract, I would like to turn to Unamuno, whose criticism of rationalist thinking may well be applied to a totally abstract eroticism:

"..... for the rationalist takes away our fever by taking our life, and promises us instead of a concrete, an abstract immortality, as if the hunger for immortality that consumes us, were an abstract and not a concrete hunger". (De Unamuno: The Tragic Sense of Life, p. 119). And finally Unamuno's quotation of Giovanni Battista Vico's words : "with so many abstractions of which all languages are full though the phrase 'Dame Nature' may be on our lips, there is nothing in our minds that corresponds with it, our minds being occupied with the false, the non-existent". (De Unamuno: The Tragic Sense of Life, p. 148).

PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The question now arises as to what eroticism is. Realising that it is as obscure and indefinable as Man himself, an attempt will be made to arrive at a working definition and description of this often explored concept.

Apart from being interesting, it could be of value to trace the historical origin of the usage of the term eroticism. Eroticness, a modern term derived from the Greek noun EROS, meaning LOVE, has been significant in philosophical thought since early Greek times, although, as a manifestation it has been with man since the beginning of time. The popular association of sexual pleasure with eroticism was originally only one of the many facets understood by the term, and then only one of the lowest manifestations of eros. (It would be interesting to observe to what extent sexuality has become important in the twentieth century's popular usage of the term. By way of example, I quote this statement contained in a letter written to me by Anthony Berlant in January, 1970: "I think that Andy's (Warhol) definition of eroticism as anything that gets you hot, is as good as any".)

To the Platonic philosophers eros was one of the most powerful and unruly human impulses. Plato in both Phaedrus and the Simposium speaks of a "frenzy that, spreading from the body, infects the spirit with malignant humours" (De Rougemont: Passion and Society, p. 61); it was also the centre of human endeavour, a fundamental all-engrossing creative force, responsible for establishing relationships between things. It was the "feeling for earth and reality" (Plato: Simposium, p.16);

the centre of human existence, the search for the Beautiful and the Perfect, for unity and wholeness. Aristophanes claims in the Simposium that the origin of eros is to be found in the primordial separation of the sexes, when man, created from adama, the earth, was divided into man and woman, into isj and isja. Since then eros has manifested itself as the human urge for oneness, for a completeness which exists in the unity of the sexes: "Love is simply the desire and pursuit of the complete". (Plato: Simposium, p. 51.)

Love, also understood as the urge for what is good and beautiful, or as the hunger for perfection, was seen as an upward journey on which the scala amoris indicated the various forms of love, from the lowest or grossly sexual, to the highest, i.e. the love for wisdom and learning through which the mystical life is attained. Socrates explains in the Simposium how the lowest form can become the ground in which the highest form, the love of Pure Beauty, can germinate, since "what attracts man to the beloved, is beauty". (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p. 92) The Platonic conclusion was that love is in essence the love of beauty and that that beauty is nothing material; it is an ideal - "a transport of the soul, a madness and supreme sanity both". (De Rougemont: Passion & Society, p. 61) Love for Plato was the only bridge between the realm of the material and the realm of the ideal; between the particular and the universal.

Other philosophers interpreted eros differently. To Homer it meant love or desire. Hesiod in his Theogony saw it as one of the three primordial gods: Chaos the oldest, Earth, and lastly, Eros, the youngest of the three to whom he attributed the power to destroy reason. To Sophocles love was

"unconquerable, destructive, roaming over the sea and among the dwellers of the wilderness". (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, p. 89)

It was a fatal force, responsible for Antigone's tragedy; a force which could turn virtue into vice.

Euripides expressed the hopelessness and defencelessness of man against the power of love, showing that whether man surrenders to love or refuses to surrender, he is doomed.

Phaedre became the prototype of a woman ruined by eros.

Euripides's philosophy postulates a struggle or conflict in man - a conflict between the rational and the irrational, the foolish and the wise, the controllable and the uncontrollable. This struggle between the two forces is further illustrated by Empedocles who maintained that love was one of the two universal forces - strife being the other - that explains the course of cosmic history. The cosmos is held in tension between love and strife. Creation occurs when love is in control. The elements form compounds which develop into complex units and eventually animate beings. During strife, a period of war and all its attendant destructive evils, the elements are decomposed again.

Love as a creative force also appears in the Christian philosophy in which the Creator is understood as loving his creation and the creation is understood as a love-act of God. Christian love appears as a bond between God and man, and although the relationship is supposedly a non-sexual one, that of father and child, the language communicating mystical experience is often similar to that expressing sexual ecstasy. It is then not unusual to find that the artist's conception of mystical ecstasy could be confused in appearance with the carnal experience. Examples of this can be found in the

treatment of themes such as the ecstasy of Saint Theresa, the mystical weddings of various saints and the Song of Solomon, themes which are essentially erotic. In Bataille's study, Eroticism, Marie Bonaparte quotes from St Theresa's account of her mystical experiences: "In his hand I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afired with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be contented with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it - indeed a great share. So sweet are the colloquies of love which pass between the soul and God that if anyone thinks I am lying, I beseech God, in His goodness, to give him the same experience". (Bataille: Eroticism, p. 224)

In Greek mythology, on the other hand, this mystic relationship between god and mortal does not exist. There is no other form of love between god and human than sexual love, which was, according to the philosophers, but one example of the universal power of union. (Prometheus was the exception when he stole fire from the gods for man - a selfless, non-sexual act of love).

Greek philosophers might have placed eroticism in the sphere of the spirit and the ideal, yet Greek life showed a very different approach mythologically and practically. Greek vase paintings, reliefs on oil lamps, sculptured wall

plaques, phallic monuments in Delos and elsewhere, evidence their uninhibited enjoyment and acceptance of the erotic. Athenaeus's description of one such Dionysiac festival is quoted by Jean Marcade as including "a chariot bearing a golden phallus one hundred and twenty cubits long, all covered with engravings and hung with gilded streamers, with a golden star six cubits in circumference at the end." (Marcade: Eros Kalos, p. 85) This celebration of sexual life developed into regular orgies, for example during the Dionysian and Priapian festivals. In Rome cruelty and sadism became a particular feature of the Priapic, Phallic and Bacchic feasts, resulting in the permanent ban of the Bacchanalia in 186 B.C.

Despite the difference in the application of the philosophical and practical approaches to eroticism, neither the philosophers nor the masses enjoying their own brand of eroticism, saw reason to expel the other form from their understanding of the concept. Christianity was the first and, to date, the only religion to ban sexual activity performed out of wedlock, and initially preferred it to be engaged in only with procreation as its aim. As Christianity gained momentum, women who up until then had gradually gained some status and rights, for example the right to property, were relegated to a subservient position. St Paul was particularly active in this field.

With the neo-Platonists there came a return to the search for an ideal love, an ideal beauty. Woman, the same woman who had hardly any rights, became the embodiment of this ideal. In Christianity it was the Blessed Virgin. Idealised as a superior being, pure and ethereal, woman was regarded as being above all carnal feeling.

This ideal, remote state was the atmosphere in which courtly love and the troubadours existed. Love was distant and the lady hardly obtainable. The art and literature of this period often encompassed both the ideal, near-disembodied philosophical and mystical eroticism and the strongly physical or sexual parallel. Erotic subject-matter, taken from pagan myths, the apocrapha, Biblical stories, provided opportunities for erotic artistic expression - Leda and the swan, Susanna and the Elders, St John and St Sebastian, Adam and Eve, and other subjects allowed for paintings of sensuous nudes and semi-nudes. In Dante's Divine Comedy profane love develops into divine or sacred love.

From the Renaissance onwards, eroticism continued on two levels : Philosophers, moralists and dogmatists contemplated the innermost nature and implications of love, while the masses enjoyed the innermost pleasures of love. For an 18th century Schopenhauer love meant the "will-to-live." For the Don Juans and Casanovas love was the reason-to-live as well as the way-to-live, of which the latter was also the clergy's interpretation of love. However, it seems that by the time of the rediscovery of the pleasures of love, Christianity had already sown the seeds of intolerance and incompatibility between the different levels on which eroticism manifested itself. In the 16th century the Council of Trent reaffirmed the celibacy of the clergy and took steps against pornography by outlawing the nude in the arts.

Ironically the Age of Gallantry, which Montesquieu had called "a light and delicate pretension of love", (Tabori: Pictorial History of Love, p. 204) presaged dawn to a Europe in a moral morass, the aristocracy setting the downhill pace.

In an age of excessive lasciviousness, aristocratic women openly joined prostitutes in theatres in search of amorous adventure.

The Empress Maria Theresa, the mother of sixteen children, was a woman of high moral standard. (She was a fitting prototype for Queen Victoria.) Her attempt to curb Viennese immorality by creating the anti-vice squad, the Keuscheitscommission, failed miserably and created immoralities of a different, non-sexual nature. Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia was the first to install a state mistress during this period; the Marquis de Sade in France, who survived until almost the end of Napoleon's rule, made his cruel and violent contributions to the love life of this time. In England women were sold publicly together with barrels of wine, asses and heads of cabbage. Materialism, in the form of dowries and the selling of females, had entered the erotic scene, together with a political appreciation of the assets of love - political security was the reason for many an aristocratic marriage. In the wake of this materialistic attitude followed the reaction of 19th century romanticism. Not unlike the love of the troubadours who were attracted to the beloved and inspired by the sheer distance between them, the German romantics were animated by the unattainability of the beloved. In France Victor Hugo's passionate dramas, Lamartine's sweet elegies and Chateaubriand's rather bloodless lovers, enthralled society. French Romantic painting showed a warm spirited approach to the erotic subject, for example the love and warmth with which Delacroix approached the nude in his painting.

In England perhaps the most hypocritically puritan of

all her eras had dawned - the Victorian Age, which forced many an aristocrat across the channel to the love centres of the world, Vienna, Paris and Munich. Any reference to sexuality was taboo. Zola and Dumas were banned; Defoe and Shakespeare were censored. Piano legs were covered, and homosexuals were prosecuted. The Victorian Age became sex-ridden, spewing forth prostitutes, brothels and pornography. Sex had gone underground and Victorian writers became masters of sublimation. The more relaxed atmosphere of the Edwardian Age produced one of the first noteworthy British writers on sexual suppression: Havelock Ellis, in his Man and Woman, 1894, attempted to convince society that sex was neither sordid nor shameful.

However, the most influential exponent of theories on sexuality in the 19th century was Freud, who, during the latter half of the century developed his psycho-analytic theories, tracing sexuality to the beginnings of man's consciousness. He interpreted sexuality in terms of the life instinct, i.e. eros. In this respect he resembles Schopenhauer in his interpretation of love as "the will-to-live". However, Freud's strongest influence on the psychology and philosophy of love only came in the 20th century, which, in contrast to the 19th century's sex-ridden age, became the age of sexual liberation.

In the last two decades of the 19th century the so-called "Decadent" painters, drawing from the pre-Raphaelite, Art Nouveau and Symbolist movements, established eroticism as a central, but sublimated theme in their art. Under the cloak of the legendary, the mythological, the spiritual, and the mystical, the symbolical, the dream and the psychological

(here Freud's interpretation of the dream had a marked influence) and the macabre, 19th century eroticism, in revolt against puritan oppression and industrialized society, manifested itself. Some of the most interesting painters and graphic artists of the Victorian era belong to this group: Gustav Moreau, Odilon Redon, de Chavaunes, Gustav Klimt, F. Kupka, Max Klinger, Burne-Jones, Beardsley, Sartoria, Toorop and Rosetti, and the Belgian Rops, with his strong sense of the ironical and the cynical. It was Moreau and Rosetti who introduced into Europe a new vogue for that mysterious Renaissance beauty, the Mona Lisa, who was regarded as the complete woman, strangely suggesting an unfathomable knowledge of all aspects of man's existence. Klimt's Judith, representing a beautiful, yet by no means uninitiated young girl, Khnopff's A blue Wing, and Burne-Jones's The Vampire, are reminiscent of the woman who has gained knowledge, but in the process has lost her innocence. The latter painting, which inspired Rudyard Kipling's poem, The Vampire, later provided this theme for the stage and screen where Theda Bara became the vampire woman who drained man of love, not blood.

Another type of beauty made popular by these artists was the Botticelli-type, and the funereal romantically-consumptive Bea-Beatrix type, a creation of Dante Gabriel Rosetti's of his beloved Elizabeth Siddal.

While the artists of Europe were creating their semi-spiritual erotic images, America was creating the first of its synthetic idols, the Gibson Girl. The Gibson Girl was the creation of Charles Dana Gibson, then the most popular graphic artist in the United States. With her hour-glass and mono-bosom figure, stylised into a standard form by Gibson Girl

foundation wear, she was a humourless, sexless and anti-feminine creation, the first of the competitors of man, which later influenced the suffragette movement.

The first years of the 20th century until the Great War of 1914 were philosophically, socially, psychologically and aesthetically still in the 19th century. Those characteristics which came to distinguish the 20th century, only appeared after the greatest massacre in all human history, World War I.

At the end of the 19th century two art movements were running parallel into the 20th century - Impressionism and the styles which took their inspiration from these artists, and Symbolism with its strong Art Noveau ties. The Impressionists' approach was modern and essentially 20th century, while Symbolism was spiritually still in the centuries of the past. The Impressionists had already adjusted themselves to their rationalistic and industrialized milieu; the Symbolists, on the other hand, were still expressing erotic fantasies in terms of myths and legends, influenced by Feuerbach's and Novalis's writings, and Wagner's passionate music. As Freud stripped sexuality of its romance, so the Impressionists, through their choice and treatment of subject matter, demythologized it: Hercules and the call of the Sirens could become Boating at Argenteuil; Venus, the Three Graces and Aphrodite became nudes in the garden, the park, the bedroom or the brothel.

From this era comes the fluffily painted, yet robust, sensual and buxom nudes of Renoir, who resembles Rubens in his obvious delight in the flesh. Durngat quotes Renoir as

having said: "Never trust a man who does not get excited at the sight of a pretty breast", (Durgnat: Eros in the Cinema, p. 10) and Richard Friedenthal in Letters of the Great Artists Blake to Pollock, p. 139, mentions that Renoir, while painting Madame Sert (he painted her eighteen times), begged her to pull down the top of her dress, saying "Lower, lower, I implore you - why for heaven's sake don't you show your bosom? - it's a crime". A Renoir nude thus often appears as a female undressed by Renoir's brush. His enjoyment of the sensuality of his model tends to impart further a feeling of intimacy, conducive to the creation of an erotic atmosphere, for example, Nude in the Sun, (1900) and Bathers, (1890).

This characteristic appears even stronger in the work of the younger painter, Pierre Bonnard. Bonnard's painting was very much a private concern, independent of the trends of the time. His subject matter was always intimately related to family life. Bonnard shows a preference for subjects on the brink of change, this often adding to the erotic content of his work. A foot would be pushed into the corner of a canvas (possibly the artist's foot) as if moving towards the bath in which a nude girl is lying. (La Femme au Bain, 1933) In another painting a girl is taking off her dress, creating a continuity between the clothed and disguised state and the naked state to follow. Whereas Renoir was enjoying the titillation of the flesh, one could say that Bonnard was expressing an unself-conscious ability to love.

THE 20TH CENTURY

If culture is expressive of civilization, as René Huyghe maintains, and man's approach to and expression of eroticism is a component of the sum total of the civilizations to which he belongs, then the culture of the 20th century will certainly be an expression of 20th century civilization's attitude to the erotic.

In the pre-World War I Vienna of Freud, a number of Austrian painters were struggling with the problem of eroticism. One of these was Klimt, a Jugendstil exponent and therefore influenced by the Symbolist Art Nouveau tradition. Although he made use of both contemporary and mythological subjects, for example his Kiss (1907-1908), Danaë (1911), and Jurisprudence (destroyed in 1945 by the S.S.), the end product was always poetic and para-real, neither particular nor contemporary as were the works of the Impressionists.

The problem of the erotic and sexual was further explored by Egon Schiele, particularly as revealed in his 1910-1911 drawings. These drawings, despite certain obvious similarities, show Schiele to be decidedly different from Klimt. He replaces Klimt's lyrical and poetic qualities with a hard, brittle and cynically analytic approach. Lautrec's brothel scenes and prostitutes, represented by Lautrec's characteristic menacing directness, are recalled in these drawings. The frankness with which Schiele approached the subject in these drawings, landed him in jail on a charge of producing immoral works of art.

Schiele's drawings were close in character to the intensely emotional work done by the Expressionists of the first quarter of the century: Munch, Nolde, Ensor, Kirchner, Meidner, Mueller, and, particularly after the war, Kokoschka, Dix, Beckmann and Grosz. These painters used the human figure in its erotic placement to express both a criticism of society and their personal attitude towards and understanding of the concept. They were already familiar with Freud's writings, and some of them, for example Munch, showed a particular interest in the psychology of man and his relation to the erotic. Arve Moen (Edward Munch Woman and Eros, p. 41) states: "In its entirety Munch's work represents a tremendous extension of Man's emotional recognition of himself". Love appeared to him as a terrible and threatening power, for example in Jealousy. He reveals himself in a passionate love-hate relationship with woman, who, as a vampire, triumphs over man. However, his expression of the vampire-man relationship is very different from that of Burne-Jones whose work lacks the mortal anguish found in Munch's work. Under various titles, such as The Murder and The Death of Marat, he shows a lifeless male figure stretched out on a bed over which a female, alive with sexual desire, triumphs. He often depicted man captured in the mass of a female's long hair, as for example in Liberation I and II in which he is bound by her hair (probably Eva Mudocci's.)

Kirchner, the aggressive critic of mundane city life, was haunted by the energetic strength of athletes' bodies, and above all, by the eroticism of the nude female body. Nolde, in violent and uncrompromising style, puts across the

repulsion and vulgarity of complete abandonment to sensuousness and lust (Life of Maria Aegyptiaca). Equally violent and passionate is Kokoschka when, for example, characterising the age-old conflict between man and woman (Murder Hope of Woman), he expressed it in terms of sexual violence. In his painting, The Bride of the Wind (1914), he unites man and woman in love and, mythologising them, made them the unleashed forces of nature itself. He thus expresses both conflict and separateness, unity and oneness in the sexual relationship.

Max Beckmann's concept of love is that it is an act of violence. This he portrayed in paintings showing murder, showing man as the helpless wreckage in the power of the female. Eroticism or the temptation of the flesh is to Beckmann an all too real act of fate. The sharp-pointed knife, spear or dagger, which is according to Lucy Smith a Freudian phallic symbol, and according to Jung a solar power (Jung: Symbols of Transformation, p. 359) is often present in his paintings depicting the male-female relationship, for example City of Brass, The Argonauts, Brother and Sister, and Carnival in Paris. Other rather obvious erotic symbols which appear in Beckmann's work are candles, flutes and fish. Beckmann, in both his subject matter and his use of symbols and forms, also shows an identification of sexuality and love with destruction rather than creation, therefore, according to what the Greeks professed, as an act of war and violence.

Otto Mueller was one of the few expressionists who conceived of love as a happy state. His figures are often the immature and almost sexless figures of young adolescents. They are equally often shown in relationships which suggest

homosexuality or lesbianism. However, the painter reveals the situation without criticism, making it appear as natural as his young gypsy couples out in nature.

In Paris, Matisse, Rouault and Picasso were also employing the female nude figure in their work. Matisse was working in the chronologically older, Fauve style, while Rouault was involved in a particular and personalised form of expressionism. Picasso, in the throes of his cubist epoch, was nevertheless simultaneously producing work in an expressionistic and realistic style.

Matisse's work shows a preoccupation with the female nude form, both for its sensuous beauty and as a decorative element in his work. The very fact that he so often painted the nude is evidence of his appreciation of this art form. His choice of pose, his sensuously curving line and arrangement of the body masses, are further proof of his implicit erotic awareness. This understanding is best revealed in his line drawings, lithographs and earlier paintings (for example, Reclining Odalisque), while most of his later paintings show a different approach. In paintings such as Gold Fish (1914) and Girl with a White Dress, the possible erotic qualities of the figure are secondary. She is objectified and depersonalised in order to function as a decorative and compositional element in the painting. Thus the figure loses its warmth and personality, and, therefore, its possibility as an object with erotic stimulus. She becomes equal in value to a goldfish tank or a yellow Victorian chair; she becomes an object in his particular repertoire of objects which are to be painted in Fauve colours or decorative style, rather than a subject in which case an emphasis of values pertaining to

WOMAN rather than to PAINTING, is understood.

Like Matisse, Rouault was also a student of Moreau. But unlike Matisse, Rouault subjectified the woman of his paintings, making her a central motif in his critical comment on the immorality of his contemporary society. He uses her in the image of the prostitute, the debased woman, a product of Man without God. She is almost unreal in her ugliness - certainly when compared with Lautrec's prostitutes - a vision of old and horribly misused flesh, the personification of sin. Her degradation lies in the role society has allocated her; in what society has made of her, not in the artist's attitude towards her. He is attacking the morality for which she stands, but he sees her as a being, worthy of his Christian pity and charity.

(Picasso will be discussed later on in this essay).

Humanity in general and artists in particular were profoundly stirred by the events of the First World War. After 1918, political, social and moral changes were prevalent. The suffragette movement, advocating woman's rights and the equality of the sexes, gained new impetus. It was hardly possible to relegate woman to her former position of social, political, economic and sexual muteness. She had experienced war, she had filled the man's place in his absence, she had stood at his side and helped him fight what was essentially his war. This contributed to the creation of the new morality and approach to love. In England alone, there was a surplus of approximately two million unattached women; at the same time there was a general movement towards banning indiscriminate prostitution. These two factors gave impetus to the erotic

emancipation of women.

The arts followed this pattern. In the cinema, prior to the war, the concern was for the boosting of working-class morality. The sex symbol had not yet been born - only suggested in the person of Theda Bara and her imitators, who popularised sex for the public. In 1913 the producers of prostitution and white-slave films discovered the sales value of sex. The working-class then had to be converted to the box-office pleasures of sex. The war helped the producers in their profitable task. This resulted in a tolerance towards divorce and unorthodox love.

In the United States of America it was the time of the flapper - the looser moral codes allowing petting, the leaving off of corsets, short dresses and stockings rolled down below the knee. Suffragettes tied bandeaus around their chests to flatten their breasts for a more boyish look (Hemingway's Brett Ashley in The Sun also Rises). Woman now smoked and drank in public places, and at the same time she started to don heavy make-up, formerly a sign of low class prostitution - all symptomatic of the desire for freedom (cf. Snaith, p. 52-64). Homosexuality and lesbianism themes, previously only occasionally touched upon (for example, Courbet's Sleep, 1866) were openly brought to the attention of the public (as in Radclyffe Hall's book, The Well of Loneliness).

Post-war erotic literature followed two main avenues: there was the popular sentimental pot-boiler in which the spinster is always lamenting the fact that she had not yielded to her fiancé's pleas, before he went back to the front where, inevitably, he was killed. On the other hand, serious

writers were following a revolutionary course based on the ideal of sexual liberation. In the forefront were writers like David Herbert and D. H. Lawrence.

In a period of political upheaval, violence and destruction, Lawrence tried to educate society into understanding that "We Need one Another" (the title of one of his essays of the time). He had to break down sexual taboos, seen as significant also to social barriers. To Lawrence, love was the answer: "Passionate love, not willed or mentally controlled love - the product of a crippled society - but a love that would burn out shame and all other hampering elements". (Moore: Sex, Literature and Censorship, p. 8) In order to liberate love, he found it necessary to liberate the word, in particular the four-letter word with its strong taboo. This he tried to achieve in both his novels and his essays: for example, his novel, Lady Chatterly's Lover, and an essay, "Introduction to Pansies", in which he states that the result of taboos, particularly taboos of things which are basically innocent, "is insanity... especially mob insanity, mass insanity... the fearful danger that threatens our civilization". (Lawrence, p. 57)

A further development in the literature of the day was frantic pursuit of novelty. Sentimentality was replaced by a selfconscious casualness and matter-of-factness. Fidelity and conventional morals were similarly treated. Love was handled with almost unscrupulous materialism by writers such as Sinclair Lewis (Elmer Gantry, 1927), John O'Hara, who showed particular interest in the Jewish milieu, and Hemingway of whom it has been said that there are no WOMEN in his books, only men and brutal beings, who "move from the kiss to the kill with only the barest suggestion of copulation between".

(Fiedler: Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 295).

One of his most successful literary characters, Brett Ashley, (The Sun also Rises, 1926) is presented as the Lilith of the twenties - the traditional vixen with a goddess-like power of attraction and destruction; albeit a modern goddess, wearing her bobbed hair like a symbol of emancipation and boyishness. However, behind the casual and unsentimental treatment of love, often lies a sentimental treatment of innocence and unorthodox sex (A Farewell to Arms). These writers, including Scott Fitzgerald, who treated love as being a yearning and frustration, all congregated in Paris, the intellectual Mecca of the 1920s.

In Paris, Surrealism, already introduced as a term by Appolinaire in 1917, was launched as a movement and was for the first time formally organized after André Breton's Manifesto in 1924. The members, who up to 1922 had still belonged to the Dadaist movement, broke away from Dada after the failure of the "Congress for the Determination of Directives and the Defense of the Modern Spirit". Aragon, Breton, Eluard and Peret were the major artists involved. Initially the movement, which was concerned with communistically inspired socio-political changes, was primarily a literary one but it soon developed into a concentration on painting.

Through the discoveries of Einstein, Heisenberg, Broglie and Freud, new directions in thought followed; a new concept of the world, of Man and Matter, was brought about. Freudian theories concerning the supremacy of the subconscious, with particular reference to the importance of eroticism, were most influential with regard to the development of the movement. Appropos Freud's revelations regarding the im-

portance of fantasies, dreams, hallucinations, and his theory of the subconscious (that part of man's being which teems with complexes, fixations with erotic implications, father fixations, Oedipus complexes and anal eroticisms, for example), the Surrealists involved themselves in a psycho-analytic-orientated art. Sexual repressions, guilt complexes, sexual fulfilment, castration, onanism, fetishism, exhibitionism, sodomy, voyeurism - all these found outlets in this art movement which carried psychoanalyses to the point of introducing techniques like automatic writing, and the use of Freud's principle of the spontaneous association of ideas. Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams, The Psychology of Everyday Life and Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious, were sources of inspiration for the Surrealists. The resulting value of the work done in this group, rested more strongly in the psychological release the work afforded them than in its inherent aesthetic properties.

Love and humour were two central themes in surrealist painting. The former, however, was the interest which inspired their best paintings and graphics. Works of a high standard of originality and imagination were produced: Max Ernst's major works, for example, his 'collage novel', La Femme 100 têtes, a group of 149 collages, often showing elements and objects in strange and disturbing relationships and juxtapositions, and paintings such as The Robbing of the Bride (1939), and Napoleon in the Wilderness (1947). Although these surrealists advocated liberated love (as their defence of Charlie Chaplin's love-life and their serious appraisal of the writings of the Marquis de Sade show), this did not include an enthusiasm for promiscuity. Breton quotes, for

example, both Engels and Freud in support of his argument for monogamy, and in Arcane 17 he defends "love in the form of an exclusive passion". (Nadeau: A History of Surrealism, p. 24) Passionate love for one woman over a long period was regarded as the most certain way of freeing desire or imagination. And the liberation of the imagination, as completely as their mentor, LaFontaine, had done, in describing his Englishman hero ("he is as handsome ... as the fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella"), was their great aim. Breton states in his manifesto of 1924: "To reduce the imagination to slavery, even by what is crudely called happiness, is to avoid all one finds, deep within oneself, of supreme justice". (Nadeau: A History of Surrealism, p. 88) Thus, both Freud's sexual theories and their own advocating of monogamous love, inspired their approach to Woman. They brought her back into poetry - a mythical, superior, almost sacred being, the embodiment of the graces of goddesses. The love poems of Aragon to his wife Elsa, Eluard's to his wife Gala, and Breton's love poem, Free Union, to his wife, are examples of the Surrealists' re-discovery of that almost forgotten myth, WOMAN.

As mythology was the means through which eroticism was expressed in Renaissance art, surrealism was the means for erotic expression in a form more or less acceptable to public taste after 1924. (An exception to this was Wilhelm Freddie's banned exhibition of 1930).

Some of the most important Surrealists using the erotic idiom were undoubtedly Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, André Masson, Paul Delvaux, and later, Hans Bellmer, Svanberg, Ernst

Fuchs, Leonor Fini, and Wilhelm Freddie.

The female nude has always featured prominently in the paintings of Dali. He often places his nudes in context with phallic forms (Young Virgin Autosodomised by her own Chastity, 1954), or in the spaceless void by which his paintings are often haunted, or in association with the unexpected. Sometimes strange objects are incorporated in the anatomy of the figure (drawers in the body of the woman in both his paintings of the Burning Giraffe and in The City of Drawers, 1936). In his painting called Mae West (1934-36), her facial features (the mouth, nose and gold-framed eyes which depict two landscapes) become part of the interior of the building. Her images are broken down and recomposed in monstrous relation and dimension. A soft world of cruelties, nightmares and unusual associations, often propped up on irrationally thin or enormous and malformed crutches, is revealed (Sleep, 1937, and Soft construction with boiled beans: Premonition of civil war, 1936). His writings echo his paintings in his attitude towards the erotic, and his concept of the beautiful when he states: "Beauty shall be convulsive or nothing.... Beauty shall be edible or nothing". (Dali, p. 45). His association with eroticism and painting is further illustrated in Fifty Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship when he advises abstinence during the period of inspiration, whereas in Diary of a Genius, p. 36, his sensual approach to painting is expressed in his words that "sleeping and painting make ... [him] ... slaver with pleasure". During the early first artistic period in which Dali was completely under the influence of Freudian writings, his paintings and drawings were of the most obviously

erotic nature in content, but often of a poor standard, because his erotic awareness drove him to draw erotic parts in a near caricature manner, for example, the nipples and penis in his drawing of masturbation (1932).

Dali's obsession with the erotically bizarre is further obvious in his summary of his relationship to the Surrealists in Diary of a Genius, p. 22: "I had understood that the point was to transcribe thought spontaneously without any rational, aesthetic or moral checks Blood they allowed me. I could add a bit of shit. But shit on its own was not allowed. I was authorized to represent the sexual organs, but not anal fantasies. Any anus was taken in very bad part. They did not like anuses! I tried to trick them by giving them lots of anuses, carefully dissimulated, and preferably Machiavellian ones. If I constructed a Surrealistic object in which no fantasy of this type appeared, the symbolic functioning of this object would be anal. I opposed pure and passive automatism with the active impulse of my famous method of paranoiac-critical analysis".

Whereas Dali's work seems perverted in the way objects or parts of objects are separated, reassembled and juxtaposed, Leonor Fini's is perverted in its preoccupation with ambiguous relationships, especially lesbianism. Examples of these are her illustrations for d'Histoire d'Or. Her obsession with unorthodox sexual activities, for example, line drawings showing the act of fellatio and her illustrations of De Sade's works are further examples of this bent. Where the male features in her work, his role is hardly more than that of a "supporting character". (Kronhausen: Art & Artists, p. 75)

In André Masson's illustrations for The Golden Ass by Apuleius, the old Greek vase-paintings are recalled in the scenes of intercourse between man and beast. However, he avoids the literal realism of the Greeks, abstracting and fusing the figures in a surreal manner. His Le Pianoteur, a painting of a piano making love to a nude woman, is a violent, in parts cubistically painted, reassemblage of recognisable piano and human parts. In his Fights of Fishes, the undisguised cruelty of the fishes becomes erotic in suggestion. Masson, the superior artist, is not concerned with the manifestation of frustrations and perversities as one suspects with Fini (the latter a point on which Kronhausen expressed the opposite opinion). He is more concerned with the basic drama of existence, with love, sexuality and eroticism - suffering, moving, cruelty, are equally important factors in the understanding of man and animal.

In Belgium the Surrealist painter, René Magritte, was reshaping limbs into strange erotic forms, embracing and relaxing together (Entrate, 1928). In others he distanced the forms and changed them into amorphous shapes, but again with emphasis on erotic areas, as in Les Ideas de l'Acroate. In others he transforms parts, as in The Rape (1934), in which he replaced the eyes with breasts, the nose with the navel and the mouth with the sexual parts. In Gigantic Days he shows man and woman in an obviously sexual struggle, but fuses them into one body. Sometimes he isolates areas and, as in The Repression, he places it in a frame which follows the curves of the waist and hips; or he infuses the inanimate with a life of its own, stressing the erotic implication, for example, Philosophy in the Boudoir.

Magritte's countryman, Paul Delvaux, regularly exhibited with the Surrealists, although he never joined them officially, and produced erotic paintings of a less violent nature. He painted nude females and allowed formally dressed men to join them in a weird dream-like setting, where they move past one another and through dark streets and interiors in a state of oblivion. The dream quality of his work is emphasised by his stressing of perspective and his successful combination of both modern and antique beauty, as in The Echo, The Hands, and Iron Age.

The Surrealists did not only use the free association of objects to express the erotic presence in the subconscious. They also used symbols, both conscious and unconscious ones. Of these Freud said: "The dreamer has at his command a symbolic mode of expression of which he knows nothing and does not even recognise in his waking life". (Freud: Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis, p. 139) He found deliberate, conscious symbolism exemplified in Christian theology, as for example, Christ's passion and Christ generally symbolised in the image of the Cross. Conscious and unconscious symbols are often used together, for example the candle, as an allusion to Christ as the Light of the World (conscious symbol). When the candle stands in a candle holder, however, Freud sees it as a reference to Jesus in Mary's womb (unconscious symbol).

In surrealism this mixture of conscious and unconscious symbols was naturally an important method of revealing the unconscious, and loosening the imagination. In Delvaux's Girls at the water's edge, the combination of young girls and

a large expanse of water, gives an easy Freudian interpretation to the role of the water - to Freud it signified birth. The room in which they are placed would be the womb, while the doors would refer to the orifices of the sexual organs.

In other paintings, blossoms and flowers are taken to indicate the female sex organs and virginity. Consequently the loss of petals, or literal deflowerment, means the loss of virginity. In Magritte's drawings of a rose pierced by a dagger, the violent nature of the sexual act is recalled. In Blow through the heart, the same dagger appears as an oversized and threatening thorn.

Keys, another frequently-used symbol, are found in Leger's work, for example, Mona Lisa with Keys. On its own the key would be meaningless, but in context, placed next to the female figure, it takes on a deeper psychological significance.

Other sexual symbols are : rings, targets (for example in the work of pop artists, Jasper Johns and Richard Lindner), feet and shoes. The shoe is the symbol for the vulva, and the high heel for the phallus. In a water colour of 1923, Hans Bellmer juxtaposed two female figures and the heel of a shoe, linking them in an undeniably sexual relationship. Toes showing through a shoe, in a Magritte painting, have already been mentioned.

As significant of the erotic as the theme of flight (Freud's essay on Leonardo, to wit) is the act of sliding and falling, or the idea of figures walking up a staircase.

(Duchamp's famous Nude descending a Staircase) Max Ernst

shows in Woman with 100 heads (1929), particularly in the graphic called Daylight robbery or: When you are in need any port will do, two figures closely intertwined, falling down from a cab into a street - a frank intercourse scene.

Freud said of ties : "A tie, being an object which hangs down and is not worn by woman, is clearly a male symbol". (Kahmen: p. 17) This is illustrated in Domenico Gnole's Man: back and front view, in which the spectator's eye is drawn directly to the tie, which points downward to the next object of importance, the gusset between the legs. Similar to the prehistoric female figurines, no heads or limbs are indicated, only the presence of the virile and masculine part of the man's body. Wood, pipes (for example, in Magritte's work), noses (the phallic character of noses is evident in the work of Schröder Sonnenstern and Picasso), stopcocks and hoses (for example, Klapcheck's The Sexbomb and her escort) are further examples of symbols of this kind.

Francis Picabia, who had an obsession with machines, (a point well illustrated by the fact that he owned twenty-seven cars at one stage), saw in the machine the "Daughter born of no mother" (Von Cabanne: Erotiek in der Kunst, p. 151). She was the robot woman, the woman without a history, who came to life through desire. His mechanised love or love machine was seen as a question mark to natural and non-mechanised sexuality.

Duchamp, on the other hand, who also employed the machine in his work, perceived of love in a very different spirit. To him eroticism was the deepest and truest of all feelings in his work: "I believe completely in the erotic..."

she is genuinely the right means with which to bring things to light which normally live in darkness and which do not necessarily belong to the erotic... Seriousness is a very dangerous thing. The only serious thing which I can accept, is the erotic". (Von Cabanne: Erotiek in der Kunst, p. 152)

Leger in his painting, Big Julie, 1945, which appeared as an episode in Hans Richter's film, Dreams that Money can Buy, further acclaims the importance of the machine as a sexual symbol. In Austria, the members of the Viennese School (Erich Bauer, Ernst Fuchs, Rudolf Hauser, Wolfgang Hutter, and Anton Lehmden) continued after World War II in a form of Surrealism. In their depiction of the empty and bizarre qualities of modern society, they made use of a free association of symbols and objects in a similar manner to the uninhibited way in which the Surrealists used symbols. An example is Ernst Fuch's painting, Metamorphoses of the Flesh, (1949) in which male sexual parts, hands, heads, emaciated bodies and skulls are combined into a macabre erotic composition. Sexual symbols are often fused with religious symbols (Hebrew, Old and New Testament, as well as those from the Cabala.) This allowed Fuchs to create a form of erotic religious work.

The West German artist, Thomas Haefner expressed the idea of sex as a central life force in strange compositions in which humans, animals, insects, organic matter as well as the inorganic, are fused and re-created into nightmarish and Bosch-like creatures. Although not regarded as a Surrealist, the emphasis of images born from the subconscious links him with the Surrealist group. In his exploring of the

subconscious realms of the mind, he exposes, like Bosch, the secret predicaments and desires of man. This tendency is connected with his intention of throwing light upon modern society with its pomp, its loneliness, its violence, materialism and inhumanities.

In his satire, Brave New World, Aldous Huxley saw the stage reached where sex is encouraged as fun and as a tension and aggression release, without recognition being given to the emotions involved in the sexual situation. The present-day theatre sexual themes (Hair and Oh! Calcutta, and certain Warhol films, for example) seem to confirm Huxley's prophetic view. In Eros and Civilization, Herbert Marcuse expresses the rational socio-political view involving the usage of man's erotic drive, released from its cultural bondage, as a revolutionary power. It is these forms of rational functionalism in the erotic, that the German artist Hans Bellmer opposes in his work.

Bellmer is concerned with the emotional aspects of eroticism, that is, in the revelation of eroticism as an act of union. He therefore fuses male and female parts into irrational new beings. He shows their union to be complete, suggesting that neither the female nor the male can afterwards return to her or his prior state of separate being. Particularly in his post-war work he records woman seen from the man's point of view, as a projection of the phallus (cf. Lyle, Art and Artists, p. 22-25) which he shows incorporated into the anatomy of the female's body. Bellmer juxtaposes, superimposes, and connects limbs in an irrational manner and reveals man, through his X-ray method of drawing both the outside and

inside of the body simultaneously, as the victim of a convulsive hunger for that primordial unity which he believes to be attained through the sexual act, or which can ultimately, perhaps, be found in death.

By way of concluding the discussion of the erotic awareness in Surrealism, it is necessary to mention the work done by some of the younger German artists from the Hamburg School : Paul Wunderlich, and Hcrst Janssen have both produced erotic work in the cader of the surrealistic, but with a strong expressionistic slant to it. In the 1960 lithographs Wunderlich shows sex as a purely genital power. He uses the human figure in various depictions of sexual intercourse which are descriptive of lust and perversions. Unlike the Pop ideal of exploiting the distasteful, vulgar and kitsch for its own sake, unlike the Surrealists who combine objects and ideas freely in order to plunge more deeply into the subconscious, Wunderlich presents both the distasteful and the unreal as a comment and a form of protest. In this aspect of his work he can be associated with expressionists such as Beckmann and Grosz.

A number of names have been excluded from those discussed among the Surrealists but, as it is felt that the main aspects have been covered, it is now possible to continue with the last movement to be investigated for the erotic content of its work - Pop Art.

Woman and eroticism have always been irrevocably linked together. Through the ages, from early prehistoric and primitive cultures, through peasant cultures to the present, her image in art has reflected a cultural attitude to eroticism. Her changed face is, therefore, also the changed face of a system of values where eroticism is concerned. Thus as cultures changed, woman appeared different in the art of the time: She changed from being faceless in prehistoric art, fertile and childbearing, the Great Mother Goddess, a symbol of continuity and rhythm in man's life, to an ideally proportioned, logically composed and mathematically related compilation of anatomical parts, with the suggestion of feminine mystery and soul added in classical art. Although artists such as Rubens and later, Renoir, attempted to restore to her her old earthiness, they failed and rendered her only fleshy, not earthy.

Gradually the old earth woman was stripped and endowed with new values and associations, until she had become a study in mood and atmosphere, anatomy and psychology, and worse still, simply a formal compositional element in a painting. In modern times she has been degraded to the lowest position she has ever occupied in the arts - lower than that of prostitution in which she still maintained part of her original role in relation to man. Since Monsieur Citroën had discovered the effect of a goodlooking woman next to the shining bonnet of his latest automobile (he was the first motor manufacturer to employ this sales-technique), modern woman is still to be found on the crest of the commercial wave (afterwards smoking her Cameo cigarettes). She became

the fragmented symbol for good teeth, the comfort of General Electric Appliances or a stereophonic record player, to mention some of the associations she recalls. Since woman has been placed with the products of consumer society as the attracting agent, she has in fact become secondary to those goods which her pretty face and provocative figure is trying to sell.

It is in this climate then, amongst the soup cans, hamburgers and soap powder boxes, that the Pop artists found her - a worthy subject for their consumer society art.

The term "Pop Art" was first coined by Lawrence Alloway in 1954-1955 to describe the activities of the young members of the Independents' Group who met at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. It then referred to the "commercial, mass circulation arts - photo-advertising, automobile styling, Hollywood films and science fiction - arts which had the same relation to painting, sculpture, theatre and literature that pop music had to the music of the concert hall". (Compton: Pop Art, p. 12)

Already in the first years of the century Marcel Duchamp, the Dadaists and other artists, such as Bacon, Murphy and Davis, had shown the validity in art of both the actual consumer culture-objects and their representation. Thus Duchamp displayed his urinal and Underwood typewriter (Fountain, 1917, and Traveller's Item, 1917). By exhibiting these objects together with other 'high art' objects, completely out of context, he tried to focus the attention on these articles as art objects. Bacon, whose influence was strongly felt in British Pop, turned to popular and functional photographs

taken from the book, Positioning in Radiography (1939), an encyclopaedic reference manual by Kathleen Clara Clark, to a movie still taken from Eisenstein's film Battleship Potemkin and to the series of action photographs showing the different positions of the human figure in motion (for example, two men wrestling, which he turned into Two nude men on a bed, 1953). In 1947 Kurt Schwitters used comic strip figures for his collage, Für Käte. The cartoon-strip became a popular subject and stylistic reference in Pop art.

Thus the older and established artists and styles had already prepared the way for Pop artists to turn to the mass-produced objects, to the light entertainment world and to a form of mass communication for their own particular iconography. However, they left it to Pop to present these often vulgar and kitsch objects as the natural and logical choice of artists working in a mass consumers' milieu. These objects were, therefore, usually presented as a statement of fact, without critical comment or deeper meaning, despite its often surrealist slant. The latter is noticeable in the Happenings of Oldenburg, the isolation and enlargement of single objects, for example, Oldenburg's edibles, and in the strange combination of objects, for example, Mel Ramos's Virnaburger.

Pop art was born twice in England, in 1954 and again in 1957, and independently in America, where two distinct schools exist: the hard core, tough and uncompromising New York Group (Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselman, James Rosenquist, and Claes Oldenburg) and the West Coast Group, which displays a more surrealist approach (Edward Kienholz, William Tunberg, John Wesley, Jess Collins, whose altered sets of comic pictures "single out the homo-erotics of the original material"

[Lippard: Pop Art, p. 1447, Mel Ramos, Wayne Thiebauld and Anthony Berlant). In Europe Pop appeared mainly as subject matter and technique, since in idea a different attitude is often adopted: Pop paintings are then often presented with an underlying intellectual thought or boosted with socio-political intentions. In the latter instance it has become the preferred style of the violently revolutionary avant garde artists of Europe.

(1) EROTICISM IN BRITISH POP ART

No attempt will be made to define the Pop movement. Nevertheless, it is accepted that should an attempt at definition be made, it will have to be particularly flexible in order to accommodate the wide variety of work done in this tradition. However, the concern here is to show that Pop art is reconcilable with the erotic idiom, and that the erotic is an important component of the work of artists such as Hamilton, Blake, Phillips, Jones, Kitaj, and Hockney.

Richard Hamilton is usually regarded as more of a progenitor of Pop than a Pop artist proper. Finch calls him the "undercover agent for various new tendencies in the art world" (Finch: Image as Language, p. 19) and further "a key figure in the rise of Pop Art" (ibid). For the latter reason then it is necessary to look at some of his work.

In the collage Just what is it that makes to-day's home so different, so appealing? from the exhibition This is Tomorrow (1956), a blatantly sexual female nude and muscular semi-nude male are expected to contain the erotic stimulus which the unclad human body usually implies. The eroticism, however, is destroyed by the coolness, detachment and

depersonalization of these figures. The male figure, for example, suggests a human frame covered by the result of a course in body building. The female, making an overtly erotic gesture (touching her naked breast), has a petrified and commercial quality, reminiscent of cardboard dummies in furniture displays. Although in reasonable proximity, the two figures are untouched by each other or their middle-class commercial environment - a factor which, in this instance aids in destroying the intimacy implicit in eroticism. Linked with this, is the impression created that these figures, no less than the television set or the tin of ham on the table, are individually the products of not only a consumer society, but of a line of manufacturers.

In the painting, Hommage à Chrysler Corp, Hamilton exploits the motor-advertising method of presenting cars and sex symbols together. (Lucy-Smith: Eroticism in Western Art, p. 265, calls the high powered sports car "a phallic symbol of a technological age"). Hamilton shows the sex symbol in the elliptical rendering of the "exquisite Form Bra diagram ... and the Voluptua's lips". (Finch: Images in Art, p. 25). He admits to associating the idea with Marinetti's statement that "A racing car ... is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace". (Compton: Pop Art, p. 160)

In other works Hamilton explored the juxtapositioning of sex, architecture and car-styling (Hers is a lush situation). Here it is the lips of Sophia Loren above the image of pressed steel, on which the erotic quality of the work relies. Hamilton mentioned that he tried to caricature the blatant sexuality of the advertisement from which the painting was derived, in the bulbous thrusting and deflating forms. In She

he centered the eroticism around the two symbolically used images - the hot toaster (sexy) and the cold refrigerator (prim) - of the American housewife.

In the My Marilyn photo-representation, the eroticism is not created by Hamilton, but by the sensuous image captured by the photographer and the contrasting vicious and savage destruction of the marks Monroe used to cross some of them out. Pin-Up, again, is an exploration of the Girlie Magazine images. He shows all the expected elements and forms - swollen breasts, fetishist bra, pants, stockings and spike-heeled shoes. To this he added a skin tone to emphasize the impact of the flesh.

From this can be deducted that the eroticism in Hamilton's work is created through the association of forms and elements taken from an erotic iconography (for example, fetish objects taken from the advertising columns), or through the employment of the mass-understood, supposedly erotic personalities, body builders, Girlie Magazine and Playboy types, who are presented with a detachment which leaves them with as little erotic power as a slimming machine. Another method used is to simply present erotic and sensual photographs of a sex symbol like Monroe.

Hamilton's statement: "Fine Art is the medium in which I work; the mass media is often the content of the painting", (Finch: Image as Language, p. 35) could well be applied to other Pop artists such as Blake, Kitaj, Self, Jones and Phillips.

Peter Blake, (born 1932) bases his work on either meticulous draughtsmanship, or the collection and combination

of photographs, postcards, toys and buttons. Like Hamilton, Blake makes use of the Girlie Magazine personages. (Pin-Up Girl, 1965) He differs from Hamilton in the sense that he humanises them, whereas Hamilton depersonalises and dehumanises them. Robert Melville has remarked that Blake "finds human warmth where others find only cliché and exploitations". (Finch: Image as Language, p. 71) Pop personalities like Presley and the Beatles, for example, gain in character and human depth and dimension in the hands of Blake. He lends his models and characters a touch of romanticism and nostalgia, even those most brashly contemporary. Of Presley Cohn had said: "Always, he came back to sex. In earlier generations singers might carry great sex appeal, but they'd have to cloak it under the trappings of romanticism, they'd never spell anything out. By contrast, Elvis was blatant. When those axis hips got moving, there was no more pretence about moonlight and hand holding, it was hard physical fact". (Cohn: Pop from the Beginning, p. 25) Yet Blake added to this image his particular sense of near-Edwardian heroism. Compton remarks: "The people in Blake's paintings are projected by him as real, whether they are the pop and film stars everybody knows, or the strippers and wrestlers of his own phantasy". (Compton: Pop Art, p. 61)

Marilyn Monroe ("For the filmgoers she has become the personification of sex and her 'vital statistics' are the ideal of two continents" - Garland in The Changing Face of Beauty, p. 218) was popularly exploited in this art of the time for the erotic impulse she projected as sex symbol of the fifties. Photographs were the main source of information to those artists who depicted her. In these photographs she is presented

with particular warmth and human appeal. She became the embodiment of the post-war restoration of femininity (for example, the return of the bosom); a fusion of vibrating sex appeal, child-like innocence and war-time nostalgia. (The latter was heightened by her early death, after which paintings in a stream of sentimental, elegiac after-thoughts followed). All these characteristics considered, it is understandable that she could appear human and personal, in the midst of the brashness and vulgarities of her environment - a fact which was conducive to her imparting of erotic sensation in paintings in which she was used.

In Peter Phillips's painting, M.M., for example, Monroe is part of a sensual blur of flesh. In For Men Only Starring B.B. and M.M., 1961, the contrast between the Monroe image and the glamour-posed semi-nude of his Custom Painting No. 2 could hardly be more blatant. The latter is the hard, foam-rubber and mechanical-bride-type, the image which is supposed to "'customise' the other (images) : the girl makes the car sexy, the car makes the girl smooth and glossy". (Compton: Pop Art, p. 6-) In other paintings Phillips combines sexy pin-up girls with pinball machines and lettering, motorcars and motorcycles.

Very much different to Phillips in his use of consumer objects is Allen Jones (born 1937). The main bulk of his work is concerned with eroticism. As early as 1962 eroticism appeared in a decorative form (Bikini Baby). In the bus-paintings of the same time (started 1961) eroticism appears in accidental form, for example, a couple in an embrace, seen through a bus window. Subsequently eroticism has become more pronounced in his work, for example in paintings showing

the female thigh and groin (1964, "prolonged, unzipped stretches of girl" [Lippard: Pop Art, p. 64]), hermaphrodite fusion of male and female, fetishist spike-heeled shoes and tightly stockinged legs sometimes on checker-board steps, which, according to Freud, implicates sexual intercourse (cf. Kahmen: Eroticism in Contemporary Art, p. 17). The head with a tie under it, which often recurs in Jones's paintings, he has called "a phallic totem image". (Lippard: Pop Art, p. 64).

In 1963, Jones developed the hermaphrodite theme in paintings such as Dance with the Head and the Legs, and Drama. The strength of these paintings probably lies in the tension created by the ambiguities presented - the very fact of their dealing with such a theme as the hermaphrodite is sexually ambiguous. These paintings do not seem to refer to the transvestite, but are concerned with a mingled balance of maleness and femaleness which is vigorously and definitely sexual.

In other compositions (for example, Female Spear, and Sheer Magic, which show a fetish shoe in front of a spiral, recalling a target; You Dare, and Evening Incandescence) Hollywood lingerie catalogues (for example, Little Annie Fannie) and pin-ups of Vargas and George Petty are recalled in the extreme modelling of the legs in their tight-fitting hose. In an article, (Allen Jones: The Potent Image, Studio International, July/August, 1967) Ira Licht states: "Tightly contained, but bursting with colour and energy, the legs - never meant for walking - are erotic instruments bodily stepping out of the artist's fantasy into our space".

As can be seen from these pictures, Jones seldom presents the whole figure. One of the few works containing full figures is his lithograph, Icarus. The work shows the figure of a falling man (one of the vehicles Jones uses for conveying his erotic intentions, was speed and motion, exemplified in his buses, aeroplanes, parachutists and falling men) together with four girlie figures. These latter figures were taken from a Mexican mail-order catalogue for erotic clothing, English foundation garment advertisements and American girlie magazines. The sadism evoked by the image of the Mexican catalogue girl holding a whip in her hand, is undeniable.

In 1965, Jones became involved in three-dimensional free-standing images. In one of these, made of plexiglass and rope, a hermaphrodite figure is created. At the top of the painted skirt the rope emerges as the spine of the figure, and beneath the skirt, as a semi-erect penis. In his sculpture of 1969 (The Table) Jones created a life-size female doll which he used as the support for a glass table top, banal, uncompromising and tough in its sexuality, and not unlike his lithographs of muscular female James Bond types.

Concluding this short discussion of Jones's erotic work, and referring to particular paintings, such as You Dare, in which the stockinged legs emerge from the very high-heeled shoes to disappear under a short mini-skirt, it would be apt to quote Finch's observations on the mini-skirt as communicator :

"It may be argued that the mini-skirt - in the engineering of which Britain played the leading role - is a classic example of the Gestalt object. To me, however, it seems a particularly neat and successful piece of communications technology. The

artful combination of occlusion and revelation it exploits, translates the female presence into a delightful sequence of coded messages - information which, while sometimes fictional, always contains the promise of physical resolution. Where this physical resolution is attained, the technology of communication is abandoned in favour of a Gestalt". (Finch: Image as Language, p. 157).

Another British Pop artist who should be mentioned is David Hockney, who explores in his work the feelings of discomfort, dislocation and alienation which exists in man's relationship with his environment and other human beings. Tarzana, for example, shows a boy drawn from life, lying on his bed in a semi-nude state and in strange isolation from his bedroom, which appears impersonal and hardly better than an interior from a cheap do-it-yourself manual. In Two Friends, 1963, and in the illustrations for Cavafy's poems, Hockney explores homosexual love as experienced in the twentieth century, and then predominantly in an urban setting. During 1963, he showed two embryonic figures involved in a mutual act of fellatio. Carnivorous teeth are shown in their gigantic mouths, and their sexual organs, through some display of Hockney humour, are replaced by toothpaste tubes carrying a well-known brand name.

His work seems to hinge on the personal - not only in the exploration of homosexuality, but also in his exposing of the "Games Theory of art, an analogy for the games people play in private or social relationships, and the conventions they observe to present the distance and prevent contact". (Harrison: Studio International, January, 1968).

In his earlier paintings, for example, Dolly Boy, Hockney showed some influence of both Bacon and Kitaj, the latter being known for his multiple graphic and pictorial techniques.

Kitaj is also known for making extensive use of photographic imagery and combining recent photographic innovations with a fundamentally traditional approach in the arts. As can be expected, eroticism appears as part of his reasonably conventional subject matter, put across with excellent craftsmanship, for example in Where the railroad leaves the sea, 1964. Volker Kahmen points out that it is not accidental that Kitaj places the salt cellars and wine glass in such obvious relationship. He interprets it as unconscious phallic symbols (cf. Kahmen: Eroticism in Contemporary Art, p. 19). The Ohio Gang, 1964, shows a more direct erotic approach: Not only does Kitaj employ the nude and semi-nude figures, but he stresses the eroticism of the work by a subtle juxtapositioning, contrasting and isolation. The contrast is noticeable, for instance, between the young and virginal nude girl and the debased looking prostitute and equally hardened gangster on the verge of touching the young girl's knee. A certain amount of tension is created by this gesture - it depicts the second between the moving towards the object and the actual touching of the object, comparable to Michelangelo's God reaching out to touch the sleeping Adam. Erotic suggestion is further found in the isolation of areas of flesh, for example, the black undergarments isolating the white skin of the breasts around the nipples.

Thus it is seen that Kitaj, traditional in his

approach to painting as a fine art, puts across the eroticism in his work mainly through the use of contrasts and isolation. (The latter is also illustrated in his An Urban Old Man, in which the man's crotch is isolated and therefore emphasised, by the two red and green bars).

Colin Self has been showing an interest in the disguised appearance of things normally suppressed by society, for example: He seems fascinated by the conscious exploitation of the sublimated eroticism of advertising art and, furthermore, in the erotic parallels found in machine parts, consumer and other objects. Here his drawings of cinema interiors and Chesterfield settees are examples of his interest.

In conclusion the erotic presence in British Pop art can be observed as the employment of an erotic iconography and subject range, with traces of nostalgia and romanticism as of the war years, and the application of a sex symbol repertoire particularly and specifically relevant to the fifties.

(2) EROTICISM IN AMERICAN POP ART

American Pop Art, which developed independently from British Pop, was influenced by the preceding generation of abstract artists in the sense that it came as a revolt against that art movement on the one hand, and on the other hand, through the fact that it found some points of agreement which corresponded to their own needs. An example is the abstract artists' complete disregard for conventional fine art techniques, subject matter and norms. In this respect De Kooning's Women series, for example, Woman on a Sign, could be regarded as a meeting point between the two styles.

These canvases, painted during the 1950s when De Kooning was embarking on a semi-realistical style, were aimed at satirizing the American woman. She is presented as a raw-nerved, carnivorous, vulgar-laughing, goggle-eyed, often knock-kneed and completely de-idealised grotesque creature. Even Marilyn Monroe, although less vicious than his anonymous women, does not escape the satire of De Kooning. This latter painting was exhibited in January, 1968, at the Pop-conscious Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, as part of the exhibition, Homage to Marilyn Monroe. "Monroes" by such well-known artists as Paolozzi, Dali, Joseph Cornell, Oldenburg and the photographer Bert Stein, who took the famous photographs which Hamilton used, were displayed. This exhibition which was part of the manifestation of Monroe cult, which has had some influence on Pop subject matter, was remarked upon by Emmerich: "..... while it does not compare to the cult of the Virgin in other countries, [it] is still a source of considerable serious discussion ... It has been used to make a case for modern mythology, for a new iconography in modern painting, and for the view of modern culture that regards film stars as victims of the masses, doomed to self-destruction because they have been understood". (Emmerich: Studio International, New York Commentary, p. 92).

From these fine art monster-breasted Barbarellas and Vampirellas of De Kooning, one can turn to the American women painted by Larry Rivers. More realistically done and far less vicious are, for example, his nude paintings of Birdie, his Mother-in-law. However, Rivers comes closer to the Pop ideal in his mechanized Lampman Loves it construction of cut-out models in an intercourse scene between a black man and a robot.

The heads and genital areas can be lit up by depressing a button. River's rather sensational paintings of nudes with the anatomies indicated in writing on the paintings were, like his nude paintings of recognisable family and friends, considered as objectional for their candour and "stylistic insubordination" (Hunter: Larry Rivers, p. 13). For his participation in an exhibition of erotica, he was named "avant garde's standup comic" (Ibid, p. 12). Although Rivers uses the same imagery as the Pop artists, he differs from them in his approach as a re-creator, rather than a duplicator.

The initiators of Pop in America were probably Rauschenberg and Johns. Both these artists, although not as preoccupied with the erotic as Jones, Lindner or Wesselman, have allowed for the erotic in their work. In Rauschenberg's work it appears in the form of old masters' nudes (for example, Rubens and Velazquez), collaged onto his paintings, as in Barge. In this painting three images are placed one above the other: a lorry, Velazquez's Rokeby Venus, and a fly-over road junction. This strange juxtapositioning in which the female nude is placed, is reminiscent of surrealist erotic symbolism. The Pop quality present in this work is the combination of an old master's painting and the vulgarities of contemporary commercial life.

In the work of Johns it is manifested symbolically as targets, and modelled faces showing the oral area. These sculptures are placed above the target.

An artist who is very much part of Pop is Lindner in his subject preference ("Macy's my Louvre" says Lindner - Kudielka: Germany the New Objectivity, Studio International, February, 1969). Yet he is removed from them in his formal

approach to composition, and in his tendency to comment through his art. "In him one finds the social aggression of Grosz as well as the ironic exaggeration of Saul Steinberg; the remote objectivity of the New Realism and the calm masterly pictorial sense of the Surrealists". (Dienst: Richard Lindner, p. 55).

Lindner, exclusively a painter of the human figure, exaggerates the desires of man until they become a frenzy and anxiety. Thus sexual desire becomes a grotesque display of lust (Mechanical Brides). He shows monumental figures encased in harness-like costumes, much like the illustrations from Jalade-Lafond's Considerations sur les hernies abdomales (1822), showing appliances for the treatment of masturbation (cf. Comfort: The Anxiety Makers, illustration 5). The faces of his women are provocatively sensual with much too large and much too red mouths set in pale and lustful faces. (Napoloen Still Life and NO!) Their identities seem concealed, like a row of dummies - different in appearance, but with a basic shared and similar identity. (Disneyland, 42nd Street, and Ice). In these paintings he shows the American woman as assertive, domineering, a creature of unusual and devouring appetites. Her erotic impact is distinctly amazone and despite the emphasis of breasts and pubic areas, she often appears as being hard, masculine and mechanical. Lindner's themes all involve the relationship man-woman. Woman is then represented in a more intense manner, often as the representation of an idol, for example the portrait on the theme of Marilyn Monroe, showing her in the colours of death. Dienst summarised Lindner's art, saying: "Lindner's work is characterised by fetishism, eroticism, projection of image in

the context of his time, and commitment to - and reflection on - city life and its phenomena ... The paintings bring together the bourgeoisie and urban extroversion" (Dienst: Richard Lindner, p. xxi).

In the catalogue of his exhibition in Stockholm Andy Warhol stated: "The reason I'm painting this way is because I want to be a machine". Such a statement catering for the impersonal, therefore unfeeling, mass qualities, must of necessity be destructive for the personalism which is a necessary component of the erotic. Such, then, is the nature of Warhol's work: Where the content is suggestive of the erotic, it is depersonalised and mass produced. Warhol subsequently presents sex symbols (Elvis Presley with his gun - the aggressive male; Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor and scenes like The Kiss, 1965) in a repetitive and mechanical manner. He emphasises erotic zones, for example, the mouths printed in the most garish colours. Yet, he ruins the potential eroticism through the mechanical and impersonal printing of it. Parker Tyler, in his discussion of Warhol as film maker, remarks: "Boredom is an essential ingredient of Warholism". (Tyler: Sex, Psyche, Etcetera in the Film, p. 15). Boredom is another factor negating eroticism. It would seem, therefore, that although Warhol uses eroticism as an idea, his approach and presentation of the subject destroy it, de-erotize it.

In Roy Lichtenstein's work the erotic reference is found in the superficial eroticism of the popular comic strip romance. It is partly lodged in the pictorial presentation of the subject, and partly in the accompanying reference to the cartoon story. This story is often by implication of

the sentimental and popularly appealing type, for example, Hopeless, 1963. In Step-on-can with legs he shows the isolated foot in a pointed, high-heeled shoe. What would have become an intensely erotic object in the work of Jones, now appears as nothing more than what the title of the painting states. This effect is created by the same depersonalization of the subject as Warhol's work, although the working process is different. Here erotic impact is replaced by erotic reference, without erotic dimension: Whether he uses Disney's Micky Mouse or characters from the romantic comics (Good Morning Darling), the effect is erotically equally undisturbing.

Tom Wesselman, best known for his Great American Nudes which he first exhibited in 1960, replied to some questions on the erotic content of his work: "Eroticism was incidental - a certain proportion of my work was somewhat erotic as a certain proportion of the whole of life ..."
(Letter to the author, 21st June, 1969).

Painting his nudes in clean, flat, bright colours (influenced by Matisse), and using the sinuous line reminiscent of Modigliani, Wesselman gradually simplified his painting, and incorporated (since 1962-64) real objects in the compositions. These nudes were often flat and faceless (Great American Nude, no. 54). In this painting a nude is seen sprawling on a bed in a back room, whilst the front room shows real objects for furniture. Tape-recorded street sounds are played from behind the window.

Thrusting breasts and open mouths often dominate these paintings, but the mouth, like Wesselman's Daffodils, is an obvious allusion to the female sexual organ. In



Great American Nude 91, for example, he treats the mouth, tongue, nipples and genitalia in similar manner, identifying them with one another. While Wesselman is also involved in the aesthetics of the vulgar and also shows it as it relates to traditional problems of composition and spacial balance, (compare Lichtenstein) the undertone of his work is sensual, and Lichtenstein's not. Wesselman's experience of the nude is undeniably erotic. He emphasises the sensual, for example in the form and lines prevalent in his compositions. Objectively, indeed, is his work yet more potently erotic than Lichtenstein, who is merely stating that the story of the painting could become erotic, but its potential has been cooled down.

Wesselman, regarded as the "classicist" amongst the Pop artists, has done much to reinstate the nude as subject for serious modern art. His paintings contain mostly nudes and semi-nudes, or parts of nudes, for example, his Bedroom Painting, and others showing lips, with suggestively dangling cigarettes. In one of these paintings, Wesselman allowed the canvas edge to follow the outline of the image (compare Magritte).

Wesselman's work has recently reached the scale where collages or assemblages cannot any longer be incorporated into the work. This has forced him to return to drawing and painting as medium. Although he is now concerned with painting as a fine art, his nudes are regarded as being of the most vulgar and offensive in the Pop scene. In recent works, Great American Nude no. 38 and 128 he has moved toward a form of 'high-art-pornography' in which he is trying to "replace traditional - and obvious - sexual symbolism with the real

thing squarely confronted" (Compton: Pop Art, p. 120). Yet in another letter, received from Wesselman in January, 1970, he defends his art against the onslaught of pornography, saying: "I believe pornography exists if we have a sense of its definition (I couldn't possibly define it) but I feel compelled to say as a painter, that of course it does not exist - in my painting nothing is pornographic because I'm making paintings, not simply pictorialization ... As to pornography in general, I can't think in those terms - just in terms of sex and sex involvement".

In James Rosenquist's work eroticism is manifested in paintings such as Playgirl and Pushbutton. In the former it is the girlie magazine, full-breasted torso which gives reference to the erotic. In Pushbutton it is the tension created by the tactile quality of isolated legs, ankles and hands on the point of touching each other. Rosenquist often uses body details (mostly faces and hands) in extreme close-up.

Claes Oldenburg has been outspoken on the subject of eroticism. He has, for instance, suggested the replacement of the Lord Nelson statue with a phallic monument. In 1959 he made his phallic Ray Gun and in 1967 he started a series of erotically-inspired figure drawings (Colossal fagend, dream state). This drawing shows the erotic dream of a woman in ecstasy, standing before a colossal phallic cigarette-tip. Oldenburg's main work, however, is his soft sculptures in which he exploits the contrast in hardnesses - hard substances appear soft and vice versa (Four Soft Dormeyer Mixers). Quite often these shapes then resemble erotic objects, A Giant Soft Swedish Light Switch, which shows female associations in that

it has forms resembling a round belly and two hanging breasts.

Oldenburg is also associated with the New York Happenings (for example Injun) in which sex is strongly emphasised in the physical participation of the audience, a factor which distinguishes the Happening from ordinary theatre. Oldenburg writes: "Those who care for the world at this time tend to undress and go naked rather than in armour. I don't find anything metallic suited to this sensibility". (Compton, Pop Art, p. 112). Thus he creates his soft human sculptures which "carries a sexual meaning at the core of the revolutionary concern of his work" (Ibid). Oldenburg is mentioned together with those sexual radicals, Reich and Marcuse, as one who sees in sex and its repression the greatest threat for the middle class worker.

On the West Coast, where the Kama Sutra is used for life-class poses at some art schools, two important Pop painters particularly are using the erotic idiom : Wayne Thiebault and Mel Ramos, whilst Kienholz (Back-seat Dodge), Segal (Lovers on a Bed) and Berlant are the most important representatives of eroticism in Pop sculpture.

Thiebault is known for his paintings of cakes and edibles, in which he often paints each object as seen from the front. This technique he also applies to his paintings of the human figure (Girl Eating Ice-cream). There seems to be no interaction between the various objects, for example between ice-cream and girl. Thiebault's drawing and use of paint is more painterly than, for example, Wesselman's or Ramos's (Leda and the Pelican). His subjects are often nudes in the same category as those from the traditional nude figure

paintings. (Nude Back View, 1969) The model is always contemporary, despite his conventional treatment of the figure.

Ramos's females in contrast, are slick and commercial. He often poses them together with ordinary commercial objects (Lucky Strike and Virnaburger), or with some exotic animal or bird (Red Kangaroo, Gorilla, and Leda and the Pelican). In some instances these animals have a similar erotic function as the monsters of the horror film - it provides a contrast, an exciting and erotically stimulating element of wildness, coupled with the implication of danger. These animals suggest these possibilities through their presence and not through being presented as a threat, and are usually placed in such a manner as to hide the sexual parts of the models. Yet rather than hide it, it serves as emphasis. Ramos's best work parodies sex as a selling agent, particularly as it appears on advertising calendars. The eroticism of his work, although inspired by the general commercial use and abuse of it, is conventional and ironical.

(3) EROTICISM IN EUROPEAN POP ART

In Europe erotic Pop appears as part of the work of such artists as Mimmo Rotella, who made a series of collages of Marilyn Monroe - the paper on which her photograph was printed was ripped to pieces when collaged; Martial Raysse who uses the smart Mediterranean jet-set girls as models. Bathing beauties (Last Summer) share his canvases with old masters' nudes, vulgarised as photographic models (Made in Japan). He is the only member of the original group who is related in both his technique and iconography to the Anglo-American Pop group.

Related to Raysse in his interest in the old masters, is Jacquet, who also produces series of paintings after famous compositions, for example, Picnic, which is a reconstruction in modern clothes of Manet's original composition. Both Dino Buzzati and Valerio Adami adopted a cartoon style through which they communicate their sadistic erotic images. (Buzzati's illustrations from Metro 12, February, 1967). As previously remarked, many of the European Pop paintings have a socio-political or socio-cultural message underlying the Pop images.

Durgnat remarked that two characteristics stand out in the "erotic pathology of admass- ... a cool glossy, perfectionism; and females so dynamic as to be subtly phallic" (Durgnat: From Mechanical Brides to Rubber Women, Art and Artists, August, 1970). The eroticism of these personalities is superficial and undynamic. It is the eroticism of the substitute rather than the real - a logical consequence of creating artificial, rubberized women, as for example, Buzzati's and D. Atkinson's illustrations, or Jones's Barbarella lithographs.

Niki de Saint-Phalle is sometimes called a "compelling religious fetishist and mythologist" (Lippard, Pop Art, p. 178). However, it is hard to find any substantial and convincing correlation between the original pre-historic earth-mother figurines and the garishly painted, papier machè, carousel-gay mother-monsters she creates. That the intention is strongly erotic, can be seen from the fact that areas not connected with the erotic - limbs and heads - are neglected (the reason for Lippard's association of these sculptures with fertility figurines?) and other areas are emphasised by the shape of the patterns painted on the figures.

Pop art - intent on destroying the norms of 'high art' aesthetics - succeeded in its aims. In this process of replacing those former values with revolutionary admass and consumer values, these rebellious artists also brought those aspects of man's life which had formerly had a cloak of mystery and romance drawn over it, (despite the Freudian de-mythologising of it) into the open. Drawing it into the open meant, bringing it into the cardboard, coke and plastic factories.

Some artists like Wesselman, Lindner and Jones made it their subject matter. Others treated it impersonally and off-handedly and destroyed it (Warhol and Lichtenstein). Pop art as a result, although popularising eroticism as part of their specific contemporary iconography, has in fact de-erotized it and come to present it as a mere physical fact, often with a commercial interest backing it. The position of eroticism in Pop art is defined by Durgnat thus: "In a sense, mass media eroticism is the negation of eroticism, just as established religion is the negation of the real church". (Durgnat: From Mechanical Brides to Rubber Women, Art and Artists, August, 1970).

EROTICISM IN THE WORK OF PICASSO

Because Picasso's contribution to eroticism in art has been so individual and important it is deserving of separate discussion.

Picasso has had a life-long obsession with the human form, particularly that of the female (nude). Nudes are present in his work from all periods, which includes almost the full range of major twentieth century styles or movements. Berger states that Picasso sees the female nude as the "most direct manifestation of his own feelings". (Berger: Success and Failure of Picasso, p. 156) Picasso himself acknowledged the importance of eroticism in his work and life, when he elevated it to the same level as art, stating that there is no difference between eroticism and art (cf. Penrose: Picasso, p. 465). Furthermore, considering that he said about art : "I love it as the only end of my life", (Wilson: Faith of an Artist, p. 183) one can reach some understanding as to the importance of the erotic to Picasso. Therefore, one can assume that losing his vitality in either would be equally disastrous to him.

Picasso's work has never been divorced from reality. Whatever the extent of the distortions he created, they were always firmly rooted in that reality and can always be traced back to the original object. Thus, in his series of drawings of the painter and his model (1953-54) he ridicules the intellectual divorce of the sensual object from the resulting work of art. This substitution of the cerebral for the erotic is exposed in these drawings, which show the artist

confronted by a sensuous young model. The artist is only capable of creating a messy abstraction which shows no relation to the subject in front of him.

Picasso's distortions, abstractions, metamorphoses and displacements of forms are tools in his attempt to reveal an experience of passionate eroticism - passion being the force which dictates his actions. (cf. Wilson: Faith of an Artist, p. 178) His experiments with forms bearing erotic significance, and his developing them into a private erotic metaphor, are evident in his drawings of 16th April, 1936. These drawings, based on phallic and ovum shapes, therefore charged with sexual connotation, were composed and recomposed into amorphous, yet strangely human, forms. His sculpture, Head of a Woman and Buste de Femme, both of 1931-32, were the forerunners to these sketches. Relying on the power of the association of forms, Picasso here created heads with the impact of the exposed sexuality of man and woman fused into one being - devoid of even potential obscenity. The work itself therefore disproves Gertrude Stein's description of Picasso's work of this period : "... his struggle was in the large pictures where the forms in spite of being fantastic forms, were forms like everybody sees them, were, if you wish, pornographic forms..." (Stein: Picasso, p. 41).

However, not only the displacement of forms or their visual reference to sexual objects, but also their emotional and psychological connotations add to Picasso's imparting of an erotic experience. The meaningfulness of the experience, whether it be violent, destructive and embittered, or pleasurable, poetic and peaceful, is conveyed through both the former and the latter qualities of the forms. It reflects

both his emotional and sexual involvement at particular stages of his life, and his reaction to crises, both personal and national - for example, the suffering which the female figure in his Guernica personifies.

The paintings which were inspired by his relationship with Marie Therésè (for example, his paintings of her, asleep in the curve of her own arms), show a softness and sensuousness of form only paralleled in his drawings of 1953-54. In these paintings Picasso surrenders his former possession of the female form, which had allowed him to dominate it, and had shown him to be the ingenious artist, which he is. (Nude Dressing her Hair, 1940, Girls with a Toy Boat, 1937) Possession of form is now replaced by love for the form and object, revealing Picasso, not as the dominating artist-magician, but the participating lover. The paintings are devoid of the violence and bitter anguish found, for example, in Crying Woman, 1937. Distortion and sympathetic forms combine here to give a direct expression of sensuality and sexuality as a natural and joyful state of being. The social complexities of the sexual relationship are therefore irrelevant. Sex is thus "returned to nature where it becomes complete in itself". (Berger: Success and Failure of Picasso, p. 162) The autobiographical quality of his work is particularly clear in these paintings, especially when compared to the ironical quality of the 1953-54 drawings.

Since to Picasso the female is an essential and elementary constituent of life, not only a favourite subject, it is to be expected that she would be a channel through which more than only simple enjoyment of the sensual will be expressed.

Thus the nude female figure, sexual fantasies and relationships, are to Picasso thematic opportunities through which less happy and more violent ideas can find expression - the maliciousness of the female playing with the emotions of man, portrayed in Girl with Cock, 1938; the horror of senility and impotent old age in the face of youthful beauty (Artist and his model); the conflict of the sexes explored in his paintings with "rape" as a theme (Rape of the Sabines, 1962). In the latter, sexuality takes on the nightmarish horror of sadism, violence and destruction. Mythological elements such as the minotaur, the bull and satyr, combined with cultural symbols from his native country, symbols such as the bullfight and matador, gave further impetus to Picasso's often violently erotic expression. An example is Bull, Horse and Female Matador.

The work of the period since the 1953-54 drawings has become gradually more overtly erotic, gaining, apart from its aesthetic content, the position of psychoanalytic manifestations, the desperate wishes of the old and impotent to recapture his youthful virility. The drawings became the substitute for what is no longer possible in practice. Picasso's etchings of 1968 are particular evidence of this form of nostalgia.

In conclusion, mention should be made of the fact that Picasso's erotic universe is expressed through basic means: the dependence on recognition and association (his use of representative, but displaced forms, and also a wide vocabulary of symbols from mythological, historical, universal and personal sources); and the simple representative statement of the facts of a situation.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

From this short survey of certain aspects of eroticism in twentieth century painting, it is concluded that :
Although eroticism also includes, according to the classical philosophers, a non-sexual side to its nature, that is, the love for and striving towards beauty, wisdom and the attainment of perfection, the manifestation of eroticism in art is always sexually erotic. The forms these manifestations take differ from one artist to another, one period or stylistic phase to another. It is seen in the treatment of the human being, whether it be the nude, the semi-nude, the clad figure or parts of the human figure. It is seen in the context in which the artist places Man; in the conscious and unconscious symbols he uses.

It has been seen that eroticism can be used for un-erotic and non-sexual purposes - as a vehicle for socio-political or socio-political protest and propaganda - the destruction of old norms and the creation of new systems.

Yet perhaps the most significant observation derived from this research is that, due to the popularization and mass-availability and communication of eroticism, personalism has disappeared from the erotic scene, and left as a substitute, a mechanized orgasm - mass sex - in art. The latter knowledge is only acceptable if it is understood that sexuality is but a component of eroticism, and that eroticism is accepted as "the aesthetic elements which can restrict or modify our

total experience of sexual or sensual desire ... It indicates the measure of freedom that a person has acquired, the extent of his intellectual control over his instinctive and emotional experiences". (Kahmen: Eroticism in Contemporary Art, p. 7).

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