THE GOSPEL, ART AND AESTHETIC THEORY

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Introduction
The gospel is good news. It is good news to a sin torn, rebellious world, spelling hope on the one hand and judgment on the other.

Art is a sphere of cultural activity. It concerns poetry, plays, novels, movies, dance, puppets, rock music as well as Bach, Rembrandt, Picasso, Henry Moore and the efforts of all those humble souls who would seek to embrace this God-given sphere of human culture, developing and appreciating it in ways that enrich and deepen the joys and sorrows involved in the spiritual struggles of everyday life.

Aesthetic theory is the activity and content of theorising about a certain dimension of creaturely existence, one that has important connections with art. As the conventional wisdom exemplified in Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias would have it, aesthetics is concerned with art and beauty - and aesthetic theory is concerned with an analysis of their character and function in a wide variety of contexts:

This essay is concerned with the impact of the gospel upon art and upon aesthetic theory. As such it is principally concerned with the ongoing work of the Christian reformation of aesthetic theory in a way that seeks to understand the character of art, of theology and of other dimensions of human life as these are lived out before God. Its main spring arises from the conviction that the entirety of human life is rooted in religion. Religion, however, as it is used here, is not to be identified with cult, with ritual or even with theology. Rather religion has to do with the way that human life - as nations, individuals and communities; in thought, beliefs, cooking, celebrating and labour relations - is both considered to spring from and also to be orientated toward an ultimate source or sources of the diversity of order and meaning of the cosmos of our experience.[1]

Thus to the ancient Egyptians and to the Shinto Japanese the sun is divine, and the Pharoah or the Emperor respectively is deemed to partake of this divinity. These views concerning the sources of order and meaning penetrated all aspects of Egyptian and Japanese life. Again, to the Greeks in general and to Aristotle in particular the stars and planets in the cosmos above the geocentric sphere of the moon were deemed to be divine. Accordingly they were considered to be made of a quintessence that was eternal and not subject to change or decay, moving only in eternal, static circular orbits. These religious views had a profound influence upon the course of scientific (not to mention Ecclesiastical and social!) history.

Secularism has attempted to deal with all manner of issues concerning human life in ways that have sought to reach agreement and practical conclusions by attempting to cut off discussion concerning the ultimate sources of order and meaning in human life. It is often considered that secularism, in this sense, is non-religious. However, it would be more accurate to say that secularism is a new kind of religious movement - one that attempts to find the sources of order and meaning **within** the secular experience itself. Although these sources may not always **claim** to be ultimate, they nonetheless have invariably come to function in that way. In so doing secularism is not, therefore, religiously neutral. Rather it is a religious force that, within the context

of the modern world, rivals that of paganism in the world of the Bible. Secularism, in effect, answers the question of ultimate sources of order and meaning in the claim that they are found within the secular experience itself - in science, in art, in politics, in technology, in economics, as well as in the secularised sentimental Christmas of Santa Claus and Commercialism.

In the Bible, however, the creatures in the heavens tell of the glory of God. The stars, the sun and the planets are neither gods ordering the cosmos, nor are they simply hunks of rock or molten gas existing by chance. Rather they are creatures that in their own ways testify to the glory of the One who made them and who continues to order them faithfully with respect to their destiny in the purposes of God. Thus does the Psalmist write:

> The heavens are telling the glory of God;
> the very shape of starry space makes news of his handiwork.
> One day is brimming over with talk for {3} the next day,
> and each night passes on intimate knowledge to the next night;
> there is no speaking, no words at all, you can't hear their voice;
> but their glossolalia travels throughout the whole earth!
> their uttered noises carry to the end of inhabited land.[2]

In these words the writer bears artistic witness to a view of life that is just as religious as that of the Egyptians, the Shinto Japanese, Aristotle or modern secularism. It is also a very different religious vision; the sun, the stars, the planets, the clouds, the trees, the mountains, the flowers, the birds, as well as human beings and all their works, are creatures of God, functioning in a cosmos that He brought into existence and continues to sustain and bring to its fulfilment. The LORD Yahweh is the one and only ultimate source of meaning and order throughout the entire cosmos of our experience.

Humankind is God's Image-bearer; men, women, boys and girls are all God's stewards, called to care for and cultivate the earth - in covenant partnership with God. Fallen humankind, however, has fallen prey to sin and idolatry - attributing ultimate sources of order and meaning to the creature rather than the creator - with the result that we worship and serve the creature rather than the creator, suffering accordingly:

The gospel is good news. It calls humankind to worship and serve the living God; it offers forgiveness, grace and mercy to the poor in spirit: To them it offers new hope - freedom from sin and idolatry and a freedom to worship and serve the living God as a redeemed steward:

This essay seeks to explore some of the contours of what all this means for art and aesthetic theory. This does not mean that it is an exercise in applied theology or liturgical artistry. Indeed it is claimed that the discipline of theology is in just as much need of reformation as aesthetic theory. Further, it will be claimed that in the process of its reformation aesthetic theory can be of assistance in understanding some of the fundamental problems that have shaped the very contours of theological reflection.

The essay is in four parts:

1.Art, Religion and Idolatry.

2.The Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy.

3.The Zone of the Aesthetic.

4.The Reformational Contribution to Aesthetic Theory.

Part One seeks to give a preliminary survey of some of the ways in which pagan and secular religious orientations have shaped Western culture with particular references to the arts.

Part Two attempts to give some historical background to the problems of the way in which philosophy, art and theology have interacted over the centuries - seeking to illustrate the ways in which all three are beholden to sources of wisdom that find their roots in source(s) of ultimate order and meaning.

Part Three opens up the question of the character of the aesthetic, partly by a consideration of the realities of everyday experience and partly by tracing the historical background of the basic issues in aesthetic theory, bearing in mind the significance of the religious points of departure that have influenced the historical development of the discipline.

In the light of this Part Four aims at a critical summary of the development of the Reformational contribution to aesthetic theory, suggesting certain new points of departure.

1. ART, RELIGION and IDOLATRY

Some Preliminary Considerations

At this preliminary point of the discussion, I shall introduce some basic terms. As the essay proceeds it will be necessary to deepen the theoretical clarity introduced here. However, an essay of this kind is intended to give theoretical insight in a way that helps to deepen our grasp of the concrete horizon of our everyday experience - recognising both its significance and primacy. The present section, therefore, is largely concerned with art in its relation to Western culture in an effort to understand something of the way religious forces have shaped its more dominant contours. As such its prime focus is not theoretical, but is in need of the assistance of some theoretical clarity.

A **work of** art is the skilled crafting of an angled, imaginatively wrought insight regarding our shared life experience in some particular medium. Thus, whilst a work of art may well have a powerful message, this message should be woven into the art work in a way that is 'angled', in that it enriches and deepens life experience by means of exposing features that are not obvious, but rather makes use of subtlety, metaphor and allusion. It will be later claimed that this is precisely what is involved with an art-work being aesthetically qualified.

As such the basic purpose of a work of art is that of enriching and deepening shared human experience, whether shared by two people or by two billion or more.
The life perspective of the Kingdom of God invading, challenging and consummating human history should call into question our pre-conception to the effect that only 'Great Art' is good. Art is a gift of God that can be developed by many humble people, and in many circumstances of life, {4} can be more thirst-quenching than a glass of

water, particularly in those circumstances that tend to debilitate our spirits, such as oppression, grief, disappointment, or adversity.

Religion is the living human response that follows from the attribution of ultimate source(s) of order and meaning to the cosmos of our experience. Religion is practised much more widely than in that aspect of life we refer to as cultic, where worship, ritual, prayer take place. Religion is not an **area** of life like science, art or cooking. It is an **orientation** of human existence that shows itself in **all** areas of life, as these touch upon and work out of responses to ultimate source(s) of order and meaning.

Idolatry is the living human response that follows from the implicit or explicit, intentioned or unintentioned assignment of ultimate source(s) of order and meaning, to aspects of creation, rather than to the Creator - the Lord Yahweh - revealed to us in Scripture, in Christ and in Creation. As Christians we need to be very careful of Pharisaism when it comes to idolatry. It is emphatically **not** a question of a them and us syndrome. Idolatry is a constant and real force in the lives of all of us.

Subject and Contextual Perspective.[3] In artistic activity we may distinguish between **a subject** and a **context** of the subject. The subject is the immediate focus of attention - that which the art work is about, and which is usually quite obvious to us. The **context,** on the other hand, is concerned with how the subject fits into a broader whole. The context inevitably impinges upon questions of ultimate order and meaning, and to that extent we may say that the subject is treated from a **contextual perspective** that embodies religious as well as other worldview features.

We may say emphatically that if we are going to talk of Christian art, then we should do so **not** with respect **to certain subjects -** drawn from the life and death of Christ, for example, but rather with respect to **a contextual perspective** that we might call Christian. What this amounts to, of course, requires some discussion; I would claim that it is the way in which a contextual perspective is shaped by the contrast between the realities of the kingdoms of this world and the coming Kingdom of God in Christ. As such, an art work has to deal with the way in which the realities of sin and grace, for example, are woven into an appropriate stylistic coherence.

Further, when we talk about idolatry and the arts, we may mean one of two things:

(i) The way in which the activity of art itself functions in the lives of the people of a given culture and society - in the way that it gives meaning to their lives - whether or not it functions as an **ultimate source** of meaning in their life, for example.
(ii) The way in which idolatrous contextual perspectives actually shape the artistic contents of a work of art.

In these two senses we should not simply consider the art work in isolation from its social function. It is quite possible for a work of art embodying strong con-tours of a Christian contextual perspective in its stylistic coherence, for example, to **function** idolatrously because of the social/cultural features just mentioned. In our present cultural context, for example, 'performances' of the St. Matthew Passion of J.S. Bach very often suffer exactly this kind of fate. The Christian community generally has little appreciation of the work and how it might contribute to enriching its life: The cultural elite, on the other hand, show a great appreciation of its more specifically musical features, but not in a way that would like to believingly identify with its message as a communal celebration of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

This example is in many ways typical of the way that art has come to function in the mainstream of Western Culture. In his book 'Art in Action'[4] Nicholas Wolterstorff argues with considerable cogency that, especially since the eighteenth century, the modern Western institution of 'High Art' has come to function idolatrously.

He argues that High Art has come to function as 'Intellectualised Contemplation' with no other end in view. As such it has become separated from life - functioning in the special rooms and auditoriums set aside for the purpose of such contemplation - Concert Halls, Art Galleries, Theatres, Opera Houses.

In some of its clearest expressions on the part of theorists such as Clive Bell[5], aesthetic meaning has been abstracted from life, and then considered to function in such a way as to provide new and distinct meanings to life, ones that have their ultimate origins in man's creative genius - one that is specifically likened to that of God.

Into this institution of High Art the prizes of art works from the whole of the West's past are now being assembled, as are the art works from the whole range of non-Western societies. The question as to whether or not they truly belong there is not really asked, and if it were it would no doubt be answered on the basis of a standpoint that espoused works of art as objects for Aesthetic contemplation, worthy of consideration and treatment in this way, in and for their own sake.

Works of art thereby become surrogate secular gods, with aesthetic contemplation taking the place of the worship and service of the LORD God as the One who truly is the ultimate source of the meaning and order of the aesthetic dimension of life, as well as every other.

Our main purpose in Part I of the essay {5} will be with reference to the second of the above senses in which we may consider art in relation to idolatry. I will do this by considering some of the ways in which secular and pagan idolatry have shaped the themes and contexts of works of art, and thereby reveal something of the ways these idolatries have been and continue to be at work within our cultural landscape. This sketch will be developed in three themes:

(i)The background to Secular Idolatry in Art.
(ii)The Secularizing of Art and its Dilemmas.
(iii)A Calling for Christian Reformation in the Arts.

The Background to Secular Idolatry in Art
It is very difficult for us modern Westerners to fully appreciate the power of paganism in the ancient world: It is also very difficult for us to truly appreciate the struggle between paganism and the gospel in that world.

I think that it is most important that we develop our insight as to these issues, for they will help us a lot in deepening our grasp of the spiritual struggles that we should be engaging in today - both with secularism and with paganism.

I quote from Egon Wellesz in his introduction to the First Volume of "TheNew Oxford History of Music"[6] , the one devoted to the music of non-Western and pre-Christian Music. He writes:

> "There is, however, a unifying idea in the volume. It deals 'with the music of the non-Christian world: a world in which music is regarded as a power creating a magic effect upon the listener. This magic character of music ranges, according to the state of civilization of the people who produce it, from totemistic connotations to music which represents a certain rite or a certain ceremony and creates in the listener the proper mood to participate in it.
>
> The rigid attitude of the Church in its first centuries shows that she was aware of the magic power of music in the surrounding pagan world. When the Christian faith was established as the acknowledged religion all over the Roman Empire, it was no longer necessary; the magic spell was broken. Music could now be used primarily as Laus Dei, to heighten the splendour of the service, and in our Western civilization the way was opened for its development as an art."[7]

D. H. Lawrence has also made some interesting remarks concerning the functioning of drama within various pagan worldviews:

"The Greek gods", Lawrence writes, " were the witnesses of and the audience for the ceremonies performed in their honour. It differs, for example, from that of the Mexican Indians because they do not regard themselves as created by a god external to themselves. All is divine: the god is part of the world-all as are the trees, the rivers, the sky, the animals, and the Indians themselves. Lawrence described the corn dance and the bear dance in which the participants do not **represent** gods and natural forces but **are** gods and nature.

The Indians are even closer to nature than the pagans of the Mediterranean are, for the Indian rites are not mere performances; rather, their rites create an event, they **are** creation in the making".[8]

It is in this sense that we may say that for the Mexican Indian drama is not only religious, it is also cultic. However, for the Greeks, on the other hand, drama was religious but **not** cultic:

Drama and Myth within the context of the Greek Mystery religions, however, was definitely **cultic** in character:

During the Renaissance there was consider-able interest in Greek myths and the Mystery Religions, as well as in a form of magic and Neo-Platonism that blended into these features.[9]

These pagan elements influenced important contributions to painting, and were a formative element, for example, upon the works of Botticelli - his "Primavera" and "Birth of Venus".

However, there were important ways in which these pagan powers were tamed by the gospel but in a way that continued to exercise a strong influence.

Titian, for example, painted several versions of "Venus and Music" in which the musician is depicted as playing away at the organ or spinet with his head over his

shoulder looking at the completely naked figure of a woman, Venus by name: The meaning of these paintings would be almost lost on most school children today - and indeed most adults, too. There would be a strong tendency simply to view the painting as if the musician were having a peek through the lady's dressing room!

To understand the work as Titian painted it one must ask oneself: who is Venus? With the taming of paganism by the gospel, few really believed in the power of Venus as a goddess, or literally worshipped her. Rather, the old pagan gods of antiquity were revived as allegorical figures, figures through which invisible yet real ideals could be symbolised and visualised by means of painting. Mars stood for war, Hercules often for the human soul, Mercury for trade and Venus for love and beauty. Further, these ideals were considered to have a real existence - in a Platonised Christian heaven.

Thus, the meaning of the Titian painting, in the sense of its contextual perspective, is to be found in the idea that the musician is looking to the transcendent ideals of love and beauty, {7} seeking inspiration to realise these same ideals in his art.

The Greek myths functioned in a similar way within the history of opera from 1600 to about 1780. They were not performed in a way that believed the myths and gods had an actual pagan power. The Christian religion had tamed them from the full force of paganism. They either functioned by way of representing religious-philosophical truth - as in the case of Monteverdi's "Orfeo", or else they functioned in such a way as to act as a mirror for the lordly aspirations of the Aristocratic classes of Europe, again suitably Christianized, of course!

This broadly Christianised Platonism that allowed for a Sacred/Secular distinction was one in which the Christian faith "tamed" the Greek pagan religion, allowing it to be more human. As such it was a powerful force in the 16th and 17th centuries, and continued well into the 18th century. The 'taming' involved a genuine synthesis that, on the one hand accommodated the pagan gods in the form of transcendent ideals to the supremacy of the LORD Yahweh, but on the other hand modified the view of the lordship of Yahweh over His creation. The same. Sacred/Secular contextual perspective functioned both within and without church walls, and dominantly involved a Christianised Platonic heaven as the fulfilment of human life, whilst allowing a secular drama to unfold on earth - as long as it was supervised appropriately by the Church!

The Secularising of Art and its Dilemmas

To gain some insight into the way the Christianised Platonism of the Renaissance gave way to Secularism in the arts, we will consider further the themes of nudity in art and Greek myths in opera:

In the first place we will look at the treatment of the nude female figure in painting.

In the Renaissance the representation of the female nude was not to be understood as one of an actual flesh and blood woman at all. The nude figure of Venus represented something transcendent - symbolising something ideal and valuable - love and beauty, the purpose of which was to encourage mankind to contemplation and to imitative acts in this world.

With the secular orientation this interest in the transcendent began to change

considerably, and is reflected in the way people dealt with the nude female figure in painting.

In the early 19th century Goya, for example, painted his mistress, the Duchess of Alba, in two versions, a naked and a clothed Maya. She is lying on a couch, following the well-known formula originated by the Venetians of the 16th century. However, the nude on the couch is no longer Venus, it no longer represents something ideal and transcendent. She is simply a beautiful woman, portrayed from her head to her toe, and everything else included!

The significance of all this should be viewed against the major shift in the religious foundations that were now shaping the dominant worldview of Europe. Ultimate meaning and order were not to be found **outside** the secular experience, but within it. What was really real was what we could touch, see and smell. Orderly social life was not to be sought on the basis of normative conditions prescribed by God but by the sovereign will of mankind as it made its way toward a Utopia.

During the 18th century the very notion of an objective, transcendent beauty came into question. Philosophers spoke of taste, of the **sense** of beauty, not of beauty itself. Whilst some of these philosophical developments were positive the overall result was to replace an objectivism by a subjectivism. The latter should not be understood as a relativism, but as a concern for beauty as apparent to the subject, underpinned by a corollary to the effect that it had no specifiable foundation in the object. With the subsequent failure to find subjective agreement, this subjectivism then can be seen as laying foundations for a relativising that had serious difficulty in justifying standards that could command intrasubjective validity.

Against this background there could be no more paintings of Venus, for the basic outlook that had given them significance was dead. Now there is only man's subjective reasoning from his perception. So, although we could no longer paint a Venus, we could **see and experience** the beauty of a woman as she is painted on the canvas!

Then Manet painted his "Dejeuner sur l'herbe" in which two gentlemen, fully clad, are sharing lunch with a naked female! Again the significance of this picture is not that the female nude figure appeared on the canvas. In this respect Titian's "Venus of Urbino" is far more voluptuous! It was the fact that the female figure was no longer representing something transcendent. No longer was the ultimate meaning and order of secular experience to be viewed as resulting from outside that experience.

During the early part of the nineteenth century when these movements in painting were taking place, much of the Christianity of the time was very moralistic, and the public reaction to such moves was very often simply at that level. However it should be apparent from the above discussion just why such a reaction is totally inadequate. To react to this kind of painting on the plane of sexual morals tends to miss the whole point.

A similar point can be made with regard to the hula dancing in the South Pacific {7} Islands. Whilst I was at Expo in Brisbane in 1988 I saw some of the toned down versions of this dancing and music making. Now, it would seem to me that you have to be pretty silly not to realise that this music and dancing has strong sexual connotations, and, indeed in the original versions of these celebrations the whole

company climaxed in a mass public sexual intercourse. Many Europeans were horrified at this display of overt sexuality, and attempted to teach them more civilised, Christian modes of conduct.

Now, whilst not wishing to condone the immorality of this conduct, it would seem to me that unless we penetrate to the religious foundations of what is going on - then we miss the whole point. The origin and source of order and meaning in the cosmos in pagan religion is of course the gods acting within the cosmos, and these gods may be awakened in their ordering activity by sympathetic, religious ritual. For a fruitful harvest, for rain, for the effective functioning of the cosmos the gods need to be active in their sexual life, in accord with the rhythms of nature. The music, dancing and sexual intercourse of the whole ritual enterprise is designed to encourage the gods into their activity and so preserve the wellbeing of the harvest, the rains and the continuing favourable ordering of things. It is this religious meaning which lends the important features of the contextual perspective of hula dancing:

In a similar vein if we are to understand the movement in the treatment of the female nude figure in painting from Titian to Manet we need to understand the way in which a Christianised paganism gave way to a secularism in which the ultimate sources of order and meaning of secular experience were deemed to derive from within the secular experience itself.

ORFEO

The next example that we shall consider is the history of the treatment of the story of 'Orfeo and Euridice' with particular reference to opera. Again what is significant here is the way in which the varying contextual perspectives shape the religious meaning of the story.

The subject of the story is the love of Orfeo and Euridice, the death of Euridice, and the subsequent pursuit of her into the nether regions by Orfeo. In the original Greek myth Orfeo is able to lead Euridice up from the netherworld to earth provided he does not look at her. However, he cannot resist and Euridice disappears into the shadows and Orfeo is taken away to be torn to pieces by the Maenads.

This tragic and despairing fate is, of course, in tune with certain pessimistic features of Greek nature religion, but is quite out of tune with the God of the Christian faith, as He gives ultimate order and meaning to human experience, restoring all things in a resurrection and a new heavens and a new earth.

Monteverdi's treatment of the myth in 1600 involved an ending wherein Orpheus is not joined with Euridice to live happily ever after; but he is not killed either. Rather he is transported to heaven by Apollo. Nothing is said in that connection with regard to Euridice however!

Thus Christian faith tamed **certain** features of the original pagan background of the myth.

150 years later Gluck wrote a version of 'Orfeo' in which the hero goes to fetch Euridice, and leads her up toward earth, and cannot resist the temptation to look at her. However, Orfeo sings the famous aria "Che faro senza Euridice?" and the god Amor, who has been watching Orpheus, is so deeply moved by this impassioned outcry that he restores Euridice to life and permits the rejoicing lovers to proceed to

the world above.

The contextual perspective being brought to bear upon the subject here is a very thinly disguised projection of the power of romantic love, a theme that is completely secularized in the Romantic era, exemplified for example, in Beethoven's opera "Fidelio", a work that employs no mythological material whatever.

The final phase of this secularising tendency is devastatingly and hilariously treated by Jacques Offenbach in his work "Orpheus in the Underworld".

In this work the gods are actually held up to ridicule, and the whole piece is richly satirical in respect to the double standard of morality so prevalent then and now.

In the first place, for example, both Orfeo and Euridice are having affairs, and Orfeo has planted a snake to bite his wife's lover. The snake actually bites Euridice, but the lover, who happens to be Pluto in disguise, whisks her off to the lower regions.

Orfeo is delighted. However, there is the powerful figure of **Public Opinion,** who persuades Orfeo that if he wishes to advance his good name in society and all that, then he should make the appearance of mourning her death to the point of seeking her from the nether regions.

The scene on Mount Olympus is one in which the gods are all sleeping it off after cavorting around the place the night before. Jupiter finally takes on the appearance of restoring order, only to suffer a revolt from his supposed subordinates. Eventually Orfeo, in the company of **Public Opinion** has an audience with the gods, and Jupiter and all the gods decide to accompany Orfeo into hell to fetch Euridice.

Jupiter assumes the form of a fly, and releases Euridice:

The scene is set for rejoicing in the last act. Orfeo is supposed to lead Euridice and not look behind him. In fact **Public** {8} **Opinion** is the one who tries to keep him up to the mark in this respect. However Jupiter, not to be outdone, delivers Orfeo an electric shock, which causes him to turn round, and Euridice vanishes with Jupiter making a bacchante out of her.

Moreover, in keeping with all of this, the music of the last act is something that has since become well known in another context. It is the famous Can-Can of the Folies Bergere.

Now, on one level this treatment of the Orfeo story is hilarious. On another, however, it is devastating. All that the gods had come to symbolise in the Christianised Platonism of the Renaissance is dashed to pieces. Moreover, because the same basic contextual perspective had come to function both in Church and elsewhere in society, Offenbach's treatment of 'Orfeo' has considerable significance for church life! In this new emerging secularism the ultimate sources of social order were now seen as lying with the people, and in this respect the most powerful force in maintaining social order, was **Public Opinion -** the bourgeois character of which is symbolised brilliantly by Offenbach.

To conclude by way of a generalisation that needs a lot more discussion than can be devoted to it here: the unfolding of secular idolatry in art has tended to show itself

predominantly in three directions. The first is with reference to becoming a propagandist instrument of various forms of modern ideology, principally Communism and Nazism; the second with respect to the tendency toward 'kitsch', and the third with respect to the kind of aestheticist 'High Art' discussed by Wolterstorff in 'Art in Action'. Whilst the latter two often embody features that are good and wholesome, this does not absolve them from their idolatrous trends. Aestheticist 'High Art' has become by its very nature elitist and removed from life. On the other hand in 'pop' and 'kitsch' there is the tendency to superficiality, to commercialism, and to a form of entertainment that is the artistic equivalent of 'McDonalds' and 'Kentucky Fried Chicken' - in short toward a 'coke' rather than a 'wine' culture.

The first of the above tendencies is well illustrated with reference to the way that artists have been expected to paint, write and compose in ways that are ideologically supportive of the Revolution and its aftermath in Russia and in China. Indeed, during the Cultural Revolution in the **1960's** and 70's in China, the functioning of theatre almost reached a 'secular cult' in this respect. It is also illustrated by such movements as 'Futurism', in accord with Marinetti's Manifesto to destroy the past and shape the culture of the future in the image of the machine.

The second tendency is well illustrated in the bifurcation of modern artistic endeavour into the serious art for the elite and the pop art for the masses. There are very many ways in which much that has gone under the name of 'pop' and popular art during the last two centuries has been shaped by a meaning to life offered by an increasingly secular, bourgeois direction - typified by modern TV advertising attempting to seduce us into believing that life's meaning can be found in food, things and entertainment that have no other ultimate source of order and meaning other than the experience itself. Even **public opinion** as a source of social order is beginning to wear a bit thin for many!

The direction of 'Kitsch' has many different faces. They are united by the tendency to be shallow and nice, but in such a way as to be careful not to plumb deep realities or conflicts. It is concerned with sentiment, with what is appealing to the senses, and above all to be entertaining and nice. As an illustration of what this involves we might consider the background to the contextual perspective of the musical "The Sound of Music".

The Sound of Music
In the early sixties a film was released telling the story of the Trapp Family Singers. It was rich in human interest, and rich with the folk and art music of Austria. There was also a book published by Maria Von Trapp. The latter added many details thatwere lacking in the film, but the film, of course, was unsurpassed in its treatment of the music. The main feature omitted in the film was the rich and meaningful Biblical Faith of this Catholic family, and how it was their deep convictions from these sources, that provided them with the courage and hope to leave their native land with nothing rather than face compromise or internment by the Nazis.

The "Sound of Music" is a story that bears many resemblances to that of the Trapp Family insofar as its **subject** is concerned, but artistically its contextual perspective is a secularised sentimentalised version of the story, one that lacks the riches of Biblical faith, and the heritage of Austrian music. The religion is secularised into bourgeois 'niceness' and the music whilst an improvement on the 'pop' of Doris Day and Frank Sinatra, is still the Julie Andrews version of that genre.

As such, whilst it represents the better side of popular culture, it is nonetheless a good illustration of what is now a secularised, sentimental outlook, with its dependence upon the role of **Public Opinion** to provide a backbone of principle.

Thus the secularising of art has brought with it many dilemmas. When it seeks to speak strongly about life it tends either to become ideological or else pessimistically realist to the point that it is in danger of becoming despairing.

On the other hand the dominant directions in more popular art are commercialism, pop {9} - and the dangers with all this are simply the vulgarity, the simplicity, and the paucity of any strength by which to live.

Then we have the secularising aestheticism that has made art objects into things to be contemplated in and of themselves, thus treating aesthetic meaning as if it had a purpose in its own right, apart from a God-given coherence of meaning that is being renewed in its fulness by the gospel of the Kingdom.

The great tragedy in this overall situation is the general lack of a salt that genuinely deserves the name 'Christian'. Apart from the salty grains of C. S. Lewis, Tolkien, Rouault and others like them, the general Christian penchant in matters artistic and otherwise would appear to taste more of sugar than salt.

The general direction has been to follow the more sentimentalising tendency in the secularising of art. In music, for example, this has meant a vulgarising of word and sound in worship and elsewhere, one that evokes very little of the transcendence of God, and of His grace to meet the length and breadth of the needs of a lost and fallen world.

As a consequence, in the current reaction against secularism, there have been strong tendencies to draw upon forms of transcendence that are not of a Biblical character. These are illustrated in the films of people like Bergman, for example: They are also illustrated by the Gnostic use of symbols in the painting of people like Kandinsky and it is in this spirit that Stravinsky wrote his opera "Oedipus Rex". The latter is an opera in which the characters are dressed up but do not move or act. It is written in Latin as a language which is old, partly sanctified, so that it cannot be easily vulgarised. In a word it seeks to capture something of the transcendent but in ways that owe more to mediaeval cultural patterns than to the Reformation or the Renaissance.

In their own ways people like Cage, Stockhausen and others are exploring similar directions, but more overtly in ways that seek to explore Eastern mystical traditions. Many of the directions in 'pop' and 'Rock' culture have tried to explore various pagan forms of transcendence. In this respect the latter were associated with the broader Countercultural movement of the 1960's and 1970's. There was a sustained exploration of final solutions to life's problems in ways that explored pagan ideas of transcendence, and which have since become one of the tributaries to the 'New Age Movement'.

In the latter respect we have a very significant contribution in the form of 'Missa Gaia' by Paul Winter.[10] Although not directly associated with the New Age Movement, there are many trends in music particularly that have a definite link with its quest for pagan spirituality and transcendence, often couched in Christian jargon. Such, for example,

is the contribution called 'Nomine Jesu' by the English composer Paul Taverner. I quote the following words of the composer from the dust jacket of the record:

> 'Nomine Jesu', is based on a single chord and a single name - Jesus. The name 'Jesus' I believe has magic power when called out and sung. In the first section, five European languages are used, and in the middle section, which I call 'Cycles', the main Asiatic and Negro languages are employed. The last section contains verses from St. John of the Cross, sung by the soprano soloist, under which 'the chord' and 'the name' evaporate.

It is in such ways that many within the secularised West are seeking to artistically confront the acidic and sugary spirits of secularism. The style of the music embodies a spirit that is Gnostic and magical, evoking a sense of transcendence and otherness that does not really speak of a Personal God revealing Himself in grace, mercy and love.

A Call for Christian Reformation

The problems we face as Christians in the secularised West are challenging and difficult, precisely because as a people we have failed to discern the major spiritual drift of our culture - in the arts and elsewhere - over the past centuries.

The net result is that for the greater part we Christians have suffered a secularizing and sentimentalising in our outlook upon the arts:

In music, for example, most have virtually lost all sense of the great and deep heritage of Christian music-making, both folk and art music. Not only that, for the greater part it has succumbed to the sentimentality and shallow sweetness of the secularising features of nineteenth and twentieth century popular music-making. The latter has no guts or grit about it. It also evokes little of the transcendence of God and certainly nothing of a breadth of the Kingdom that is to come in its fulness, when the earth and all its inhabitants will be renewed and the power of sin will truly be banished from the scene. Further the Platonic vision of a future in heaven, rather than in a renewed earth that continues to shape much mainstream 'orthodox' Christian eschatology does a lot to paralyse the contemporary Christian Church from developing a fully Biblical vision of life in this world before God. Typical 'Christian' art in this context is then easily identified with that which is 'spiritual' in a Platonic sense of the term.

The calling of art may be considered as offering strong and good parables concerning the Coming of the Kingdom in a Fallen World. Art that is characterised by such a Biblical contextual perspective will expose what is wrong in the world, but it will do so in a way that shows the {10} humble triumph of grace and mercy. It will evoke the presence of God in all his transcendent glory, but will never vaunt piousness as a virtue. It will show a great breadth of perspective - one that recognises the depth of our human relation to the non-human environment, but in a way that never looks to it as a source of power or wisdom, for they lie with God alone. It will show joy in the midst of a sadness for the stains of sin and rebellion on the world. In this way it will be a parable of the coming of the Kingdom of God, and a testimony to the New Age to be inaugurated in its fulness with the return of Christ, the purifying of the earth and the resurrection of the dead.

A good modern example is the musical 'Les Miserables', based soundly on the novel of Victor Hugo: In many ways the latter may be considered a modern version of the parable of 'the Pharisee and the Publican'. It is set within a social context that is torn

apart by the forces of oppression wearing the respectable face of law and order set against those of revolution: In this context there are those who discover and seek to live by the reality of grace, mercy and love that involve self sacrifice in ways that confront and deal with both sides of the forces that are arrayed against them:
The music too is very effective, resulting in a genre that fits neither in the tradition of such popular musicals as 'Show Boat', 'The Sound of Music' or 'The Student Prince'. At the same time it falls short of being an opera with all the elitist connotations that this genre has unfortunately come to inherit.

The work as a whole really does offer a depth of insight into our everyday experience in a way that packs a powerful, yet angled message, resulting in an uplifting enjoyment that causes many to reflect more deeply upon life's meaning before God.

2. The QUARREL BETWEEN POETRY and PHILOSOPHY

Having explored something of the theme of Art in relation to religion and idolatry with particular reference to the dominant spirits that have come to shape Western culture, we shall now turn more directly to the problems of aesthetic theory. Both Parts II and III will be devoted mainly to the consideration of historical background. The present section will be concerned to examine the issues of aesthetic theory as they have emerged historically in relation to the quest for wisdom and knowledge, involving a consideration of the relationships variously of art, theology and philosophy to religious roots. Part III will then be devoted to a more strictly aesthetic theme - seeking to identify the major issues confronting an aesthetic theory. Part IV will then be devoted to the consideration of giving answers to these questions.

POETRY or PHILOSOPHY?

According to Gilbert and Kuhn[11] the Greek philosophers Xenophanes (abt. 565 - 470 B.C.) and Heraclitus (abt. 540 - 480 B.C.) were among the first philosophers in the Western world to refer to art, and when they did, they did so by way of criticism. Thus they quote the following saying of Heraclitus concerning the poetry of Homer and Hesiod:

> "The poet errs in saying: 'Would that strife might perish from among gods and men'. For there would be no harmony without high and low, no animals without the opposition of female and male".

They also go on to suggest that what we now call aesthetic theorizing actually began in the midst of a quarrel - a quarrel that reverberates down to modern times. At the height of Greek speculation in the fourth century B.C., Plato refers to it as "the ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy"[12].

The root of this historic quarrel was that both poets and philosophers claimed exclusive possession of the fount of wisdom in Classical Greece. Devotion to wisdom and truth is the root meaning of 'philosophy', but in the period to which Plato refers it was also the meaning of poetry, for the works of Homer and Hesiod furnished the Greeks with more than aesthetic delight; they played a part in Greek life that is comparable to the Scriptures of the Old Testament to the Jews, and to the Old and New Testaments amongst Christians.

Indeed the best way to understand Plato's aesthetic theory is precisely its role in this conflict. On the one hand Plato suggested that the work of the poets did not arise from art, in the sense of human work and artistry, at all. Rather it arose from the inspiration

of the muse in a way that rendered the position of the poet and his 'critic' as something akin to that of a medium, acting without reason:

> 'A poet is a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside him-self, and reason is no longer in him.'[13]

On the other hand Plato's theory of the transcendent forms and their imitation in the world of sense - with the empirical house one step removed from the ideal form of the house, and the painterly or poetic imitation of the latter - as 'icon' or 'phantasm' - two steps removed from what is ultimately real, placed poetry, as art, on the lowest rung in the pursuit of wisdom and truth. This is then contrasted by Plato with the role of philosophy in the latter regard. The philosopher-King, with his direct and fully reasoned contemplation of the forms, has a direct line to the wisdom and truth that qualifies him to rule the ideal republic.[14]

In both these lines of argument it is {11} Plato's clear intention to show that poetry's claim to wisdom and truth is clearly inferior to that of philosophy. The first approach - that of inspiration-partakes of the divine at the expense of human art, including reasoned thinking. The second - by art via imitation - results in the mere 'icons' or 'phantasms' that are deemed to be simply either imitations of imitations (icons) or else mere appearances of imitations of imitations (phantasms). Thus philosophy is clearly the true path to wisdom - involving the transcendent contemplation of the divine forms by means of art that involves the full use of reason.

Now the myths and heroic tales of Homer, Hesiod and other poets were the raw materials from which the Greeks were taught. This involved a combination of myth and poetry that embodied a pagan polytheistic interpretation of the order and meaning of things. The philosophers of the Greek Enlightenment, cosmologists such as Xenophanes and Heraclitus and the Sophists had strong objections to this combination. They asserted that truth and wisdom were not to be found in myth, but by way of critical reflection. Plato's particular version of the criticism of the poets was in many ways the most devastating and far-reaching, with others, such as Aristotle seeking something more of a middle ground that attempted to accommodate both poetry and philosophy in the pursuit of wisdom. Nonetheless the respective claims of poetry and philosophy - generalised to the claims of reason, imagination and inspiration - initiated in 'the ancient quarrel' have reverberated down to modern times, and were made considerably more complicated when a third competitor entered the race.

BIBLICAL WISDOM ENTERS THE RACE

Through the expansion first of Hellenism and then of the Roman Empire the competing claims of Greek philosophy and poetry - as sources of wisdom and truth - met with the claims of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures. The Proverbs speak of 'the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom', and the apostle Paul in the New Testament says that 'Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the gentiles' fulfilling Isaiah's words - 'I (God) will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart'.[15]

THREE SOURCES OF WISDOM

Greek Philosophy, Greek Poetry and the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures are three

sources of wisdom that have played a major shaping role in the development of Western culture. To appreciate something of the way these three particular sources in conjunction with the respective approaches of reason, inspiration and imagination rooted in and angled toward various religious roots have made contributions to these developments, we may picture an over-simplified but nonetheless accurate picture of the drama of the unfolding of these respective sources in the form of a three-way series of matches, each of which seeks to solve the problem of relating these sources of wisdom into a wholistic outlook.

THE NEO-PLATONIC DRAW: AUGUSTINE'S SOLUTION

The first match of this three-way series was largely played out between the wisdom of Greek philosophy and the wisdom of the Christian Scriptures. The provisional result for Western culture should probably be described as a draw. Augustine (354 - 430), drew his ideas from a wide range of sources, bringing them together in an overall framework that owed much to the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Iamblicus as well as to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Neo-Platonism differs in some important respects from Plato, one of which concerns the status of imagination and inspiration. Whilst the continuity of the Platonic tradition is maintained in the doctrine of the transcendent, and indeed divine, forms that constitute the ultimate sources of order and meaning, art and the imagination were viewed more positively, no longer deemed to be inferior or contrary to reason. This was partly because of a more mystical emphasis in the contemplation of the forms on the part of Neo-Platonism, and partly because of a more positive appreciation of art and the imagination as a means of relating to these transcendent forms:

These emphases were taken up by such Christian authors as the one who wrote under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite, who claimed that the painters of icons and the writers of the original Christian chants were **inspired** in such a way that the icons transmit to us pictures of a worship in heaven and the divine hymns do the same with respect to an echo of the soundless hymns that are deemed to be sung there by the angels.[16]

In respect to such attempts to give divine sanction to her worship of God, the Christian Church drew heavily upon the ideas of Plato, seeking to adapt his ideas of inspiration, via Neo-Platonism, not only to the Scriptures but also to the liturgical art of her own tradition.

In respect of the relationship of Biblical religion to Greek philosophy Augustine drew upon the ideas of the Roman thinker Terentius Varro, a prolific writerand learned encyclopaedist of the last days of the Republic (116-27 B.C.), who, according to Augustine[17], distinguished three kinds of theology: mythical, political and natural. Mythical theology had for its domain the world of the gods as described by the poets, especially Homer.

Political theology included the official State religion of the Greek States and the Roman Empire together with their institutions and cult. Natural theology, on the other hand, was that universal thinking about the divine found in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. It is most likely {12} that Varro inherited this threefold distinction from some earlier Hellenistic philosopher for he still used the Greek adjectives 'mythicon', 'politicon' and 'physicon' to describe his threefold distinction of theologies.

Indeed Augustine was one of the first to replace the Greek 'physicos' by the Latin 'naturalis', and thus provide the framework of a 'physical' or 'natural' theology as an 'ancilla theologiae' or prolegomena to the 'theologica supernaturalis' of Christianity.[18] However, when one appreciates that the 'physical theology' developed by Augustine was very much a reinterpretation of Neo-Platonic ideas, grafting the wisdom of the Scriptures onto a tree that was shaped by the vision of transcendent Ideas to be accessed by Reason over Sense, and then contemplated as part of the mind of God, then one realises that the two sources of wisdom - Greek and Hebrew-Christian - ended up in the draw of synthesis. With the establishment of the Christian religion in the Roman Empire after Constantine, the popular wisdom was partly fed by Church teaching and partly fed by the continuing influence of various forms of wisdom founded upon pagan religion.

Augustine had made some profound assumptions concerning the sources of wisdom. In the first place he claimed that the God of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments was the sole source of wisdom. In this respect he set out the schema of Creation, Fall and Redemption in which the drama of human life was being acted out. This schema gained its major impetus from the Scriptures, calling for an inner reformation of all thought and life in the power of the gospel. On the other hand, his actual usage of Neo-Platonic thought as an ancilla theologiae was not adequately brought into this schema.

Indeed his employment of Neo-Platonism as the first 'natural theology' in the modern sense of the term, gave support to the human enterprise of theoretical work in the form of philosophy being viewed free from any deeper starting point than theory itself.

THE INFLUENCE of ARISTOTLE

This continued to be the case with the second match of the series - one that was also played out between Greek philosophy and the Christian Scriptures. However, the Greeks were now captained by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) rather than the great veteran Plato. The work of the great Peripatetic had been kept alive by the Arabs, and in the 12th century, was being discovered by European scholars. As such the Aristotelean system made many new challenges to those that had been developed through a synthesis of Platonism with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274) solution to this situation was one that in many ways paralleled that of Augustine. However, it involved a move that tended to strengthen the idea that theorising had no deeper starting point in human life than theory itself. He too claimed that there was one source of wisdom - namely the God of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures. However, in the realm of Nature investigated by philosophy the exercise of Reason was deemed to have an autonomy within certain boundaries prescribed by faith. In this schema, too, philosophy functioned as 'ancilla theologiae', pointing the way to the revelation of God that needed to be received by Faith. Thus his solution was to accept the metaphysics and science of Aristotle as philosophy in the natural realm, albeit modified in important respects, and to develop it within this realm in such a way as to provide the foundation for a 'natural theology' that was to be complemented by a Christian theology in the realm of grace.

OCCAM AND THE PARIS PHYSICISTS

The next matches were played out in rapid succession. The first two were again

played out between the heritage of philosophy in relation to the wisdom of the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures. They were taken up by thinkers, who, in many ways, wanted to challenge the stranglehold of Greek thought, but whose general solutions were less than satisfactory.

For example, in his quest to maintain the freedom of God and to see universal concepts as merely human constructions, Occam split the realms of Nature and Grace wide open, leaving God open to the charge of being without character and his actions arbitrary.[19]

On the other hand, in their quest to take the idea of Creation seriously, the Physicists of the Paris school - such as Buridan and Oresme - rejected much of Aristotle's metaphysics, and endeavoured to develop a new physics, one that was less organismic in character, and in this respect sought to do greater justice to the problems that many had come to appreciate as inherent in Aristotle's theory of motion.[20]

These developments in the fourteenth century were coupled, especially in Italy, with desires to break from the stranglehold that the Church had come to hold over life, with the poetry of classical Greece beginning to function as an important stimulus to a non-ecclesiastical art in the vernacular. Occam's nominalism was seen as providing support for these secularising tendencies. The work of the Paris physicists, on the other hand, was to lay the important foundations that, together with other contributions, helped the emergence of the new science of motion in the time of Galileo that was eventually to play its own role in these developments.[21]

RENAISSANCE PLATONISM

The third was played out in a way that involved the reassertion of poetry and the imagination found in Renaissance {13} Platonism, and exemplified in the poetry, art and philosophy of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As such this involved a resurgent interest in the poetry and myth of Greek culture, in ways that were liberally dosed with philosophy, magic, alchemy and astrology, mingled with the Jewish Cabbala as well as the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. People such as Pico della Mirandola sought to Christianise this pagan heritage in ways that helped form the kind of outlook that shaped the contextual perspectives that were brought to bear upon the paintings of the female nude figures of Venus and the treatment of the theme of Orfeo and Euridice considered in Part I.[22]

Of course, in these respects the basically negative attitudes toward imagination and art found in Plato himself were supplanted by the more positive attitude toward art and imagination found in the Neo-Platonists as well as in Aristotle. In these respects the artists of the Renaissance sought to represent or imitate the universally transcendent forms on their canvas or in their music.

THE REFORMATION

In the midst of this activity the Western Church fell into decay and lost its respect and authority. The secularising trends of the fourteenth century, coupled with corruption and decadence led to a situation in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that was in drastic need of reform. This much was agreed on the part of such figures as Erasmus and Luther: However, they differed in respect to the basic questions as to the sources of wisdom. In this respect the fourth match was played out under the captaincy of Reformers such as Luther and Calvin, who discovered and proclaimed the sole source of wisdom in the God who was now reclaiming His Kingdom through

the sovereign activity of His grace - and sola fide, sola gratia, sola Scriptura, solo Christo were claimed over against the pagan sources of the wisdoms of the world.

However, the victory in this match was short-lived. The approach of the reformers was quickly overtaken by attempts to return variously to Aristotle and the Stoics on the one hand, and to the more modern paths that were to emerge.

MODERN RATIONALISM

The fifth match was played out in a way that refashioned Reason. Ideas were deemed no longer to have their source in forms external to the mind of man. If they were known apriori then their source was deemed to be in the mind of man, albeit given by God at the beginning. This Reason, secularised of pagan influence, involved a rigorous Science that was orientated to the Mechanistic view of the Natural world that developed in the seventeenth century. As such its captains were variously Galileo, Descartes and Newton and they all batted strongly against the Greek intellectual heritage of Plato and Aristotle, whilst gaining some impetus for their ideas from Archimedes and the Epicureans.[23]

Whilst they claimed an allegiance to the One source of Wisdom revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, there were many ways in which they viewed this presence and activity somewhat drastically removed from day-to-day life, being conceived in a fundamentally deistic outlook that attributed natural law to belong to creation itself, following its creation in the beginning. In France during the 18th century this triumph of Scientific Reason was used as a ploy to critique God, the Church, and all who would follow them. In America and Britain, on the other hand, the Enlightenment outlook tended to be harnessed in such a way that it was deemed to support and shape the wisdom delivered via the Scriptures.[24]

ROMANTICISM

The sixth match of the series involved the reassertion of poetry's claims to wisdom: For many the eighteenth century Enlightenment was a victory of mechanistic philosophy allied to Reason and Science opening up a confidence in the power of humanity to build the New Jerusalem in the form of 'dark Satanic Mills'. There were those, however, who viewed this as a threat both to the human spirit and to the culture of the West. The result was similar to the battle for wisdom that occurred in Classical Greek times, but this time it was poetry's turn to challenge Reason as espoused by the Scientist as well as the Philosopher.

In England, for example, William Blake referred to himself as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness', an early champion of prophecy and imaginative vision in an age in which reason and nature as known to the senses had been for two centuries the synonym for wisdom. In response he announced the new 'glad day' of a released imagination in a language drawn from Swedenborg, Boehme, Paracelsus and the Hebrew prophets.[25] In this respect it is indeed ironic that all of these thinkers drew upon a well of spiritual wisdom that owed much to Plato, and then to realise that Plato himself, in his contribution to the quarrel between the poets and philosophers, championed the path of Reason against the poets, whereas these later exponents of Platonism were now fighting a narrow scientific Reason in the name of the Imagination.

This suggests, of course, that it is quite mistaken to view the aforementioned conflict about sources of wisdom as if it were simply one between the exercise of Reason on

the one hand and Imagination on the other. Whereas Plato championed the path of Reason to access the transcendent realm of the ultimate reality of Forms and Ideas, thereby seeking to expose the ignorance of the inspiration of the poets, the latter day exponents of the mystical Neo-Platonic tradition, with its mystical, Hermetic and Cabbalistic sources,[26] now attempted to access the transcendent realm {14} of reality by means of imagination being brought to bear upon it, rendering it 'visible' by means of symbols.

KANT'S SOLUTION

In this respect the treatment of the imaginative faculty by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in his three Critiques became a crucial factor in the development both of German theology and of the Romantic movement generally. Drawing from Hume, Kant had made a role for the **reproductive imagination in** ordinary perception. Sensations given to our senses acting on their own did not provide us with knowledge as understanding; the reproductive power of imagination was presumed to function in such a way as to bridge the gap between sensation and knowledge of the phenomenal world. However, of the noumenal world of things-in-themselves, of God, of Freedom, of Immortality we know nothing. These noumenal Ideas (as distinct from concepts) of Reason (as distinct from the Understanding) remained veiled from us. Such was the conclusion of 'The Critique of Pure Reason'. The latter conclusion was modified somewhat in 'The Critique of Practical Reason' - the actual experience of freedom involving moral choice was considered to provide a window to the Idea of Reason, but not in ways that could grant knowledge of ultimate realities.[27]

In the 'Critique of Judgment', however, Kant discusses the aesthetic distinctions between beauty, taste and the sublime current at the time, but in a way that draws them into the central thrust of his critical philosophy. In this respect there are two directions in which Kant allows our understanding, aided by imagination, to actually come near to comprehending an idea of Reason. The first is in our experience of the sublime, in which Kant explicitly says that we try to imagine for ourselves ideas of Reason, and, even though such images are doomed to failure, there is at least the suggestion that the imagination in its **productive,** as distinct from its **reproductive** role knows how to go about the attempt. The second and more important is with respect to the way creative art in the hands of a man of creative genius is deemed to be able to express for us an aesthetic idea which is analogous to an Idea of Reason. Although language is inadequate to such an Idea, and our understanding cannot grasp it, the imagination in its specifically aesthetic function, is deemed to be able to present it to us in symbolic form. Thus 'the poet', says Kant, 'transgressing the limits of experience, attempts with the aid of imagination to body forth the rational ideas to sense, with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel'.[28]

We may therefore view the philosophy of Kant as an attempt to settle the ancient quarrel between poets and philosophers turned scientists by way of a truce or compromise. The scientists are deemed to talk about a knowledge that is restricted to the appearances of things as they impinge upon our senses, and the poets are permitted to reveal truth beyond such appearances in the form of incomprehensible images.

With the philosophers who followed Kant - Fichte, Schelling and Hegel - the barrier between 'ideas' in our minds and the reality of 'things-in-themselves' was broken down by attributing to reality it-self the notion that it was an idea. The result was that the categories of our understanding were no longer deemed limited to appearances, with

reality and thought being identified. This trend in philosophy also granted a high place to the imagination - especially in art - as a means of accessing ultimate reality and its representation in the form of artistic symbols.

However, with the breakdown of Romanticism and Idealism, the problems presented by the above Kantian solution to the ancient quarrel between poets and philosophers was once again to the fore, forming the background to modern existential philosophy, much of twentieth century theology and to much of modern art. Erich Heller, for example, in writing of the significance of the literature of Franz Kafka touches the central point wherein the phenomenal world and ultimate truth and reality are estranged. However the art of Kafka does not only symbolise the 'noumenal' world beyond, it also seeks to do so in a way that tries to draw the starkness of the contrast between the Kantian 'phenomenal' world of sense and secular experience in all of its familiarity on the one hand, and the Kantian 'noumenal' world of unknowable ultimate reality on the other. He writes:

> 'Kafka represents the absolute reversal of German idealism. If it is Hegel's final belief that in the Absolute truth and existence are one, for Kafka it is precisely through the Absolute that they are for ever divided. Truth and existence are mutually exclusive. From his early days onwards it was the keenest wish of Kafka the artist to convey this in works of art; to write in such a way that life, in all its deceptively convincing reality, would be seen as a dream and a nothing before the Absolute.'[29]

Moreover, the discipline of theology in recent centuries has become thoroughly caught up in these problematics. On the one hand, since the early 19th century Conservative Orthodoxy has endeavoured to ally itself to Science and Reason, having adopted the Enlightenment philosophy of Bacon(1561-1626) and Reid(1710-96) in an effort to fight the speculative and imaginative claims of the post - Kantian Enlightenment liberal theology, together with the Higher Critical theories of the Bible.[30]

On the other hand the general direction of Liberal Theology has been set by the problems posed for Natural Theology subsequent to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.[31] {15}

TRENDS in CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

When contemporary theologians describe their work 'as a kind of poetry' they are drawing upon the Kantian solution to the ancient quarrel between poets and philosophers. In this respect they wish to solve the problem of talking about a reality that lies beyond our sense experience in terms of the power of the imagination to portray ultimate reality in terms of myths, images and symbols, the content of which defies cognitive analysis. In this respect they reject the characterization of theology as a science, one that involves the attempt to develop a systematic, analytic content relevant to its particular field of investigation:

On the other hand, when Fundamentalists react against viewing the Bible as a collection of myths, fables, poems and symbols that carry transcendent truth without definitive or normative content, and in its stead attempt to view it as providing the basis for Creationistic and Catastrophist science, they are seeking to affirm philosophy or science as the victor in this ancient quarrel, albeit in relation to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as their ultimate reliable source.

THE COUNTERCULTURE AND THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The protest movement of the sixties and seventies known as the counterculture was concerned with a way of life and viewing the world that eschewed the ugliness of the shallow values of the secularised West, its lack of concern for the environment, its scientism and its technocracy. It searched for a new reality, a new religion, a new worldview. It found its sources in the West in a kind of Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism that had fuelled the Renaissance and the Romantic movement. Theodore Roszak, for example, a significant New Age commentator on the Counterculture, cited William Blake as a major figure from whom he drew inspiration.[32] Thus a fundamental issue raised by these movements of modern times, has again been that of the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy.

RIGHT AND LEFT BRAIN

A further instance of the significance of 'the ancient quarrel' is provided by the growing popularity of the distinction between Right and Left brain. Some of the ways in which the latter distinction is promoted would appear to assert that there is a complementarity between the two sides of the brain in a way that denies the possibility of a cognitive analysis of the functioning of imagination on the one hand or the possibility of imagination functioning in science and analysis on the other. Put forward in this way the distinction between Right and Left brain is little less than a continuation of the Kantian solution to 'the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy', superimposed upon some all too scant a basis of evidence in the modern science of the brain.

A Resolution of the Ancient Quarrel?

In an attempt to break these deadlocks between Right brain and Left brain, between Fundamentalism and Liberalism, between Enlightenment Rationalism and Romantic notions of New Age, as well as the Two Cultures of C.P. Snow[33] at their roots, we need to tackle the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy in terms of a solution that differs from those offered by Kant, by Commonsense Realism, by Blake and the Counterculture as well as the emerging New Age Movement.

In seeking to do this we first of all need to query the claim that Christian thinking is either to be equated with or mediated by a discipline called Theology. To see this with the needed clarity we need to appreciate the beginnings of this academic discipline in Greek times.

In the first place the discipline of Theology may not be identified with Christian or with Biblical Theology. As W. Jaegar has pointed out in his insightful book, 'The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers'.[34]

> "The word 'theology' is very much older than the concept of natural theology and the Verronian trichotomy. But theology is also a specific creation of the Greek mind. This fact is not always rightly understood and deserves special emphasis, for it concerns not only the word but even more the thing which it expresses. Theology is a mental attitude which is characteristically Greek, and has something to do with the great importance which the Greek thinkers attribute to the logos, for the word theologia means the approach to God or the gods (theoi) by means of the logos.... The words θεολογος, θεολογία were created in the philosophical language of Plato and Aristotle. Plato was the first who used the word 'theology' (θεολογία), and he evidently was the creator of

> the idea. He introduced it in 'The Republic', where he wanted to set up certain philosophical standards and criteria for poetry. In his ideal state the poets must avoid the errors of Homer, Hesiod, and the poetic tradition in general, and rise in their representation of the gods to the level of philosophic truth.[35]

From these remarks it is quite evident that the discipline we know as theology developed in classical Greece as part of their wider theoretical enterprise of philosophy. In this sense theology as the enterprise developed by the Greek philosophers was unequivocally a theoretical enterprise, to be set over against and contrasted with both 'mythical theology' and poetry. To claim that theology 'is a kind of poetry' is tantamount to the claim that, in Greek terminology, 'God or the gods may not be approached by means of the logos', which is simply saying that the Kantian solution {16} to 'the ancient quarrel' parts company with the main tradition of Western thought in a way that rejects a theoretical consideration of the subject of theology and instead elevates myth and poetry as such to the position of pseudo- revelation.

At the same time, however, to claim that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments should be approached via theology in the first instance, or to give theology even a pre-eminent place in Christian thought gives a **primacy** to theoretical endeavour. This emphasis does not derive from the Biblical background of Hebrew culture, but rather from the emphasis upon the primacy of theory on the part of the Greek philosophers.

Further, from the remarks quoted from Jaeger above, it is evident that the discipline of theology developed in classical Greece was an integral part of their wider theoretical enterprise of philosophy.

Indeed, it is possible to view the historical beginnings both of Aesthetic theory and of Theology within the context of the conflicts engendered by 'the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy'. The mythical deities of early Greek poetry were tinged with all kinds of human weakness, and such an idea of the gods was irreconcilable with Plato's and Socrates' conception of the divine. Thus, when Plato set forth his 'outlines of theology' in **The Republic**[36], the creation of that new word sprang from the conflict between the mythical tradition and the natural or philosophical approach to the problem of God. And, to quote Werner Jaeger again,

> 'Both in the Republic and the Laws Plato's philosophy appears, at its highest level, as theology in this sense. Thereafter every system of Greek philosophy (save only the sceptic) culminated in theology, and we can distinguish a Platonic, Aristotelean, Epicurean, Stoic, Neopythagorean, and Neoplatonic theology.'[37]

The importance of this last remark cannot be overestimated, for theology as an academic discipline may not be dissociated from philosophy. What is true for the theologies of the Hellenistic world is equally true for the Mediaeval, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Romantic and Modern periods. Augustine's dependence on Plato; Aquinas' on Aristotle, Luther's on Occam, Calvin's on the Stoics; Conservative Orthodoxy on Bacon and Reid, Liberalism on Kant, Schelling and Hegel; Neo-Orthodoxy on an interpretation of Kierkegaard and Occam - all bear testimony to the continued relationship between theology and philosophy.

Finally, the 'ancient quarrel of poetry and philosophy' regarding the sources of

wisdom and truth took root in a culture whose worldview was shaped in important aspects by pagan religion. Although Greek theorising was quite unconnected with the cults and myths of Greek religion, it is nonetheless true that pagan views of ultimate order and meaning pervade and shape the very contours of the various strains of Greek philosophy in its **entirety,** not merely in relation to that part of its fruit that we have inherited as theology.

It is precisely at this point that some further reflection concerning the role of the third party to 'the ancient quarrel' in the conflicts regarding the sources of wisdom in the religious sense discussed in this essay needs to be given further consideration. The remainder of the essay will attempt to develop the implications of an integral Biblical worldview with particular respect to aesthetic theory. However, we need to consider some of the main features of an orientation that may be said to represent Biblical religion.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF BIBLICAL RELIGION

In the first place Biblical religion is orientated toward a **single** source of ultimate order and meaning to our experienced cosmos. This source is the LORD, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the covenant God of Israel, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. This God is present in all that he has made, ordering it and giving it meaning. However, He is quite distinct from all the creatures that He has made and in the process of ordering and bringing to their fulfilment. The monotheism and monolatry of the Bible stands in stark contrast to the paganism of all other ancient cultures in all these respects. Furthermore nothing in the whole of creation can be considered apart from its dependent and purposive place in the ordering and meaningful activity of its creator.[38]

In the second place the Biblical literature is of diverse kinds: poetry, prophecy, symbolism, historical narrative and close analytical argument all have their place within a unified book. The unity is found in the realisation of the purposes of God in bringing His creation to its fulfilment in a way that involves the partnership of humankind as His junior covenant partner.

Thirdly, the Bible points to a Person, to Jesus Christ, the Servant-King, the One whom all humankind may enter into relationship with as LORD and New Covenant Head. Thus Christianity cannot simply be called a 'book religion':

Fourthly, within the context of both its poetry and its analytic argument we are presented with the view that we human beings are part of a Creation that is meaningful and everywhere ordered by God through the activity of His Word and Spirit. (e.g. Psalms 147, 148; Colossians l:1-2:15). The theme of conflict in the Bible is always between the will of God and its frustration within Creation as the result of the sin, idolatry and infidelity on the part of the responsible creatures whom God has made. God is utterly faithful, binding Himself by covenant to {17} these creatures - in particular to humankind, who are called to keep covenant in the fulfilment of their responsibilities to love and serve God and neighbour in the stewardly maintenance and unfolding of Creation and its many possibilities.

In other words, whatever conflict there may be between sources of wisdom, we should first of all examine their religious roots, to enquire whether or not some creaturely source has broken loose to a position of pretended autonomy.

Within the context of a Creation whose meaning and order all derive from the One source, exercised in a rich and variegated manner, there is a God-given place both for rigorous analysis and for poetic imagination.

To put it another way, Truth is perspectival, involving the viewing of all subjects, events, processes and things in the complexity of the functioning of their various properties and inter-relationships within the **context** of the True or Pretended source(s) of ultimate order and meaning.[39] Thus the functioning of creaturely analysis on the one hand, and of creaturely imaginativity on the other are not to be viewed as sources of wisdom that are given an autonomy outside of the One ultimate source of order and meaning if our outlook and religion is to deserve the title Christian. This, I take it, is the meaning of the phrase: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'.[40] As such wisdom may function in many ways in human life, but all are to be viewed as within the covenantal setting of God's ordering of His Creation by His Word and Spirit.

In these respects the **perspectival** truth of an integral creation, ordered and meaningful by virtue of the ordering activity of God's Word and Spirit may be approached in diverse ways simply because God's ordering of the creation itself is diverse. Thus poetry (and art in general) and philosophy (and theory in general- including theology and aesthetic theory) are two different approaches to the **One** Wisdom that finds its single religious root in the **One** God who orders all things.

In keeping with these insights concerning the third contributor 'to the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy' that has influenced the development of Western culture, it is important that this inner Christian Reformation of theory involves contributions of Theology and Aesthetics, as well as other fields. In this we recognise that both in Art and in Theory the Greeks have made a great contribution to human culture. However, in the light of a Biblical view of religion, if we are to live by the grace of God and seek to honour Christ as Lord, then we need to subject all the results of human work as well as our own hearts, to the searching critique of His Word and Spirit, as God brings all things anew into Christ. Thus the remainder of this essay will be devoted to the question of the inner
Christian reformation of aesthetic theory.

3. THE ZONE OF THE AESTHETIC

Introductory

If we take our starting point from the conventional wisdom that is partly inherited from tradition and partly simply the dictates of the practice of con-temporary artists, philosophers and to some extent the general public, then the field of aesthetics is best described as a confused but nonetheless identifiable field of enquiry. As such it is one whose legitimate significance within the corpus of distinct special sciences is one that continues to grow. At the same time it has yet to be accorded its appropriate place within the university setting and to be properly appreciated within the wider thinking of Western culture.

Thus there are journals devoted to Art Criticism and Aesthetic Theory: All Newspapers and Magazines of any quality include a discussion and comment upon the arts, as well as upon styles in architecture, clothing, cooking, furniture and housing. As an academic discipline, aesthetics is characterised by the continuing reflection of philosophers upon various topics related to the arts, to art criticism, and

beyond these concerns to a consideration of 'the aesthetic attitude', and to enquiries into 'What makes a situation Aesthetic?'[41] Much of the discussion is somewhat esoteric, with some of it generating more heat than light in realms that appear far removed from the concerns of everyday life:

However, despite the fact that there is much debate if less agreement about what constitutes the field of 'the aesthetic' it is nonetheless true that it has come to be recognised as a special field of enquiry to be investigated, to be studied, appreciated and better understood with many implications for everyday life. As such this field may readily be distinguished from physics, ethics, politics and economics; it is closely related to, but by no means to be identified with the arts.

The following introductory comment from the 1984 edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica illustrates the main point being made here:

> 'The discipline called aesthetics may be described broadly as the study of beauty and, to a lesser extent, its opposite, the ugly. It may include general or theoretical studies of the arts and of related types of experiences, such as those of the philosophy of art, art criticism, and the psychology and sociology of the arts. The word general is emphasized because a narrowly specialized study of a particular work or artist would not ordinarily be regarded as an example of aesthetics, although it might provide data for aesthetics. Aesthetics has often been defined more specifically as the science of the beautiful, a definition implying an organized body of knowledge covering a special field of subject matter. Although this raises the question of what properly is a science and what is its subject matter, it at least has the advantage of bringing aesthetics into some relation with the familiar special sciences of today and suggesting that it may be a recent development - which in fact it is'.[42]

This attempt to define the field of aesthetics makes many good points: it mentions the breadth and generality of a field of reality to be investigated - one that includes the study of the foundations of the arts, but is by no means restricted thereby; it points out the fact that it is a special science, but one that is of comparatively recent origin; it points out the need to clarify the nature of science in a way that would make it clear that aesthetics qualifies as such; it points to the long tradition of theorising about beauty, suggesting that aesthetics **may** be identified with beauty, but at the same time gives an indication that there are problems in relating aesthetics to beauty, and art to both beauty and aesthetics.

Thus there are acknowledged difficulties in this attempt to define the field of the aesthetic. The attempt to circumscribe the zone of the aesthetic by the term 'beauty' is not one that would command much agreement from aestheticians today. They seldom refer to the term in any technical sense at all. Furthermore it should be apparent that by far the greater part of contemporary art in almost all its forms scarcely warrants the title 'beautiful'. It doesn't even aim at being such.

Of course it may be argued that beauty embodies a **normative** requirement for the field of the aesthetic, and that although modern art may not be beautiful, the indictment simply falls upon modern art and the civilization of which it is part. Whilst there is a grain of truth in this argument it does not really touch the central point at issue: namely, whether or not art is to be discussed primarily with reference to the beautiful or the ugly. Picasso's 'Guernica' and Penderezcki's 'Threnody for Victims of Hiroshima', for example, point to some of the horrific realities of twentieth century

life. In doing so these works imaginatively symbolise the meaning and broader significance of events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Atomic bombing of Hiroshima in ways that utilise pictorial images of broken bodies and strident, harsh sounds respectively. Whilst questions of 'beauty' and 'ugly' are not irrelevant they are not really to the forefront of the discussion of the artistic merits and demerits of these works. These particular examples of modern art do undoubtedly qualify as art in the sense briefly discussed in the introductory section of Part I of this essay, and this is sufficient to raise the question as to the appropriateness of beauty or its opposite being the way to **qualify** something as a work of art: This does not detract from the importance of **normative issues** in aesthetic life. It is simply to suggest that these may not be exclusively or even primarily discussed in terms of beauty, whatever particular content may be spelt out in its name.

The second preliminary critical point to be made regarding the definition of aesthetics arising from the Encyclopaedia Britannica article is simply that just as it recognises the need to raise important questions as to the nature of science, so there is an important issue surrounding what is connoted by the term 'art'. The article goes on to read:

> 'The arts may include the visual and theatre arts, music, dance, and literature. In the ancient world there was no clear distinction between aesthetic and useful art.'[43]

These comments bear witness to the fact that the modern term 'art' has immediate connotations as 'fine art', but this usage is of relatively recent origin, dating in fact from the eighteenth century. Both the Latin term 'ars' and the Greek equivalent 'techne' for 'art' had connotations that were not only broader than the fine arts, they were also not specifically aesthetic.

In view of these kinds of problems in attempts to circumscribe the zone of the aesthetic in the terms both of our contemporary practice and our inherited conventional wisdom, my method in at-tempting to deal with the problem will be threefold:

(i)In the first instance I shall attempt to survey the field of the aesthetic by pointing to a whole range of examples from everyday life. Certain features of these examples, it is suggested, should be recognised as aesthetic: I shall then attempt to summarise some major points that will involve important distinctions that will be elaborated and clarified as the essay proceeds.

(ii)In the second place I shall seek to give an historical overview of the way in which the key categories of aesthetic theory, such as beauty, art, aesthetic, imitation and imagination, have been caught up in the conflicts between rival claims to the ultimate sources of wisdom already discussed in section two of this essay.

With relation to both (i) and (ii) I shall then attempt to summarise the major foundational problems that any aesthetic theory needs to confront.

(iii)Finally, I will attempt in Part IV to offer solutions to these problems in ways that discuss aesthetic theory within the context of the development of reformational philosophy in the twentieth century. {19}

A Survey of the Aesthetic Field from Concrete Experience.
Travelling the Australian outback people come across the mighty piece of rock that stands upon a surface that is otherwise completely flat for miles around. Ayres Rock, with its smooth surface, its changing colours in the early morning and late evening all call forth a response from human beings, one that is not shared by the kangaroos, dingos and other forms of wild life that inhabit the area. Similar, if different, comments could be made of Mount Egmont/ Taranaki, of Mitre Peak, of the Sutherland Falls, the Huka Falls in New Zealand; or of the Jamison Valley in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney.

The scent of flowers, their colouring and the varying delicacy of their immense variety; the songs of birds, their colouring and movement; the sea, with its gentle lapping of waves on a beach haven, the power of its seven metre waves caught amidst the sounds of a howling wind in a storm at sea; the encroaching mist over the moors or the mountains, enshrouding the environment with eerie mystery; Big Ben striking twelve on New Year's Eve; the sight of vultures gathering; the smell of silage; the creak of an old barn door; a sight of mother suckling her babe at the breast; the thought of a baby left on the doorstep of a church building; the whine, the whimper, the bark, the growl of a dog; the sight of the red sun sinking in the West over the sea.

The elegance of a cover drive by David Boon, Alan Border, or Martin Crowe; the effective but inelegant hit of Lance Cairns for six over long on or that of a French cut by Merv Hughes, the stylish execution of the gymnastic routines at the Olympic Games; the grace, power, and elegance of the ice-skating at the Winter Olympics; the heaviness of the clothing styles in a Soviet Winter or the light casual garments (or sometimes the lack of them!) on Sydney beaches during an Australian summer; the use of perfume, after shave, talcum powder and underarm deodorant!

The fine timber grain of Rimu or Cypress Pine utilised in the interior decoration of a building; the lightness of the space created by a 'cathedral ceiling'; the seemingly immovable rigidity and the powerfully petrified solidity of a building constructed of stone; the delicacy and taste of a Japanese garden, replicated in the miniature of bonsai; the cool feeling of a room furnished by the judicious use of green ferns.

The varying styles of food preparation - the hot spiced curry of Pakistani food; the rich variation of sweet and sour, as well as the lightly cooked greens in styles that are typically Chinese; the use of cheese, pasta and tomato in Pizza and Spaghetti; the french-fries, hamburgers, cheeseburgers and fast foods at MacDonalds, the expensive tastes requiring waiters- with- tails-who-pull-your-chair-out-for-you, and then give you the menu that makes- you-want- to-leave- because-prices-are-so-high!

The ways national styles are expressed in spoken language, utilising sounds in rich but yet characteristic ways: the quick smooth flowing, easy and pleasant to the ear sound of Italian speech: 'molto, molto presto, prego' spoken in Italian is much richer than 'much faster, please!' The way the Chinese language embodies symbolised meanings in tonal differences that entail its speech to be akin to stilted singing; the deep cumbersomely expressive sounds of German that lend it so well to the singing of German lieder; the somewhat nasal, slightly arrogant yet exceptionally fast and smooth tones of the French tongue are tailor-Made to sing the glories of France. The English language-in its many dialects can reflect the down-to-earth life of a London Cockney or a Yorkshire fisherman, but is equally capable of the tones of a well bred squire with pretentions to Empire and his ruling the earth. Then we have the native

home-spun skills that are capable of dealing with every situation under-the-sun in the manner of the back-country Aussie, Crocodile Dundee. The accent fits the character and context admirably. It is well exemplified in a somewhat less graphic context by Max Walker advertising Tooheys 2.2 beer. It also has across-the-Tasman variations in Barry Crump advertising Toyotas and Wal of Footrot Flats, with John Clarke bridging the Tasman gap as either 'Fred Dagg' or Prime Minister Hawke.

Everyday social relations between people exemplify many aspects of meaning that relate to personality traits and quirks. These are capable of many different qualities: ranging from pathos to the ridiculous, the dry, the bawdy and black humour. As such these features, in both people and events, form much of the content of modern Television shows. Thus 'Yes, Prime Minister' exemplifies the humorous side of the vanity, the pride, and the tradition of British politics, whilst such programmes as 'Game, Set and Match' and 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy' exemplify the duplicity and callous calculating exploitation of husbands, wives and trusted workmates, in this case, within the context of the icy world of the cold war game of spying. Monty Python captures an incredible range from the dry, the bawdy, the black, the ridiculous in ways that are good at showing up the emptiness of meaning in modern life.

The everyday lives of most people tend to have a blend of the funny, the serious, the pathetic, the tragic and the boring: It is possible to give quite different insights to these everyday happenings by emphasising one or other of these sides of the character traits and events that occur in everyday experience. Thus the T.V. programmes 'Ullo, Ullo' and 'Secret Army' both focus upon the day-to-day life of Cafes in occupied France/Belgium during the second world war in ways that show how the Germans and various Underground {20} organizations shared the same Cafe precincts and used them and their owners in the war effort. However, the programmes couldn't be more different in their character. Whereas 'Ullo, Ullo' focusses upon the humour of the real events in ways that are farcically ridiculous, 'Secret Army' focusses upon the drama and tragedy of these same kinds of people and events. The former lacks the serious, the tragic, the boring sides of these everyday events whilst the latter is rarely able to consider the humorous side of either the people or of the events related. However both make excellent Television!

Then we have the imaginative play of small children playing 'Mum, Dad and the kids', 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' or 'Star Wars'. Such imaginative play is more highly developed in the form of acting in drama, in dancing in a finely choreographed piece, or in a slow-moving operatic aria, duet or quartet.

Then we have the styles of houses and buildings, of cities and streets, and the way these are blended in with trees and gardens. Unfortunately we also have garbage dumps, sewerage plants, chemical and radioactive waste, coke cans, plastic bags and plates, throwaway products that litter the landscape.

Finally the various forms of literature, music, painting, sculpture, ballet, drama, film, all, in their many and various forms and ways, exhibiting their special relation to the aesthetic as arts.

SUMMARY

The above sketch is not meant to be exhaustive, and it is not intended by way of rigorous analysis. It is intended as a way of pointing to a whole range of particular every-day occurrences, with the suggestion that implicit within these typical things

and events there are elements, features and a class of properties that we may group together as aesthetic, without any attempt at this stage being made to analyse precisely the character of this common thread that runs through them.

However, we may at this stage point out the following two important features:

(i)Aesthetic properties are exhibited both by natural and by humanly formed creation.

(ii)Creation as it is humanly formed always involves aesthetic properties. However, not all humanly formed creation deserves the description of 'art' in the modern sense of 'fine art'.

What exactly characterizes the similarities and differences in the aesthetic properties of the kinds of things and events cited here forms much of the specific content of aesthetic theory, the theme to which we now turn.

The Historical Development of Basic Aesthetic Concepts.
Within this section I shall attempt to unravel the main lines of the background and development of the basic ideas of aesthetic theory as we inherit them, with a view to an attempt at critically reviewing and reshaping them in Part Four: The basic ideas involved are 'aesthetic', 'beauty', 'art', 'imitation', 'inspiration', 'imagination', and 'expression'.

AESTHETIC
The term 'aesthetic' with its modern connotations of a field of knowledge somewhat linked to the arts was first coined by Alexander Baumgarten in his book 'Reflections on Poetry', published in 1735. The primary meaning of the term as introduced by him was with regard to a theory of **sensuous knowledge** as a counterpart to logic, viewed as a theory of intellectual or conceptual knowledge. The connection with poetry lay, in Baumgarten's contention, that the artistic merit, understood as sensuous beauty, of a poem was in direct relation to the clarity of the sensuous knowledge conveyed by it.

Within the Rationalistic tradition of philosophy and science as developed by Descartes and Leibniz, knowledge was identified as the system of 'clear and distinct' ideas exemplified by logic and mathematics. In Descartes' terms, for example, 'clear' meant what was unquestionably apparent to an attentive mind, and 'distinct' meant what was precisely differentiated from other things or internally articulated. Thus, in a geometrical system all of the terms and propositions are presumed to be both clear and distinct, whereas ordinary discourse is presumed to be the opposite: obscure and confused or indistinct. Sensations and perceptions tended to be regarded by the Rationalists as intrinsically confused or indistinct, and also invariably obscure. In effect, therefore, this kind of Rationalism tended to restrict knowledge to something having narrow theoretical boundaries, deemed to be founded upon indubitably clear and distinct ideas.[44]

Baumgarten was a follower of the theoretical Rationalism of Descartes and Leibniz. However it appeared to him that poetry and the other arts afforded examples of a form of perceptual knowledge that was clear, if conceptually indistinct and confused. He set about trying to correct the oversight and restriction in knowledge imposed by his fellow Rationalists. Drawing upon the Greek word for perception or sensation - 'aisthesis' - he coined the word **aesthetic** for the form of perceptual knowledge that he claimed to be clear if indistinct and undifferentiated.[45] His 'Reflections on Poetry' is a

systematic exposition of this subject matter, with many examples of Latin and Greek poetry cited to bear out his thesis that the greater the perceptual clarity in a poem then the greater its {21} poetic perfection in the sense of sensible beauty.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophical traditions of both the theoretical Rationalists (e.g. Descartes and Leibniz) and the British Empiricists (e.g. Locke and Hume) were deeply indebted to the ancient and mediaeval philosophical traditions wherein behaviour, knowledge and mental phenomena were deemed to be explained with reference to distinct faculties of soul or mind. Thus there is the vegetative faculty (which accounts for nutrition and procreation), the rational faculty (which accounts for thinking and theorising) and there is the sensory faculty (which accounts for perception, imagination and the like).

In effect Baumgarten tried to develop the meaning of the word 'aesthetic' as a theory of the knowledge of the sensory faculty with a particular orientation to 'sensible beauty'. Aesthetics was thus initially put forward as a form of knowledge, albeit one that was inferior to that orientated primarily to the rational faculty. As such it could be deemed to function as a bridge between the rational and the sensory faculties.

In this respect the usage of the term 'aesthetic' is full of irony in the hands of Immanuel Kant as he developed the ideas of his three major Critiques. The link with the word 'aesthetic' referring primarily to a form of perceptual knowledge is quite clear in 'The Critique of Pure Reason' (First Edition 1781, Second Edition 1787). In this work he used the term 'Transcendental Aesthetic' to refer to 'the science of the laws of sensibility', determined apriori as the pure forms of intuition, space and time. However, in the third Critique, 'The Critique of Judgement', first published in 1790, Kant used the term 'aesthetic' to adapt the theories of taste, orientated to 'the sense of beauty' and to 'the sense of the sublime' as they had been developed by eighteenth century British thinkers such as Hutcheson and Burke, in a way that endeavoured to fit them into the schema of his critical philosophy as a whole.[46] This involved an adaption of the inherited theory of faculties of mind or soul so that it encompassed the faculties of cognition (understanding, judgement and reason), the feeling of pleasure/displeasure, and the faculty of desire (will).

He did this by discussing the role of the faculty of judgment in its mediating cognitive role between the otherwise mutually exclusive realms of Nature and Freedom, treating it in such a way that **the subjective feeling of disinterested pleasure in objects achieving their formal ends, orientated to taste, genius, beauty and the sublime, whether in Nature or in Art,** was deemed to be the zone of the aesthetic.

In fact Kant's two usages of the term 'aesthetic' split Baumgarten's in half. In the earlier critique it retained a cognitive status, but was severed from any concern with 'beauty', 'taste' or 'art'. In the later critique it gained the latter but lost any claim to cognitive status, although the latter was attributed to that faculty of **reflective** judgment dealt with in the second part of the third Critique - the Critique of Teleological Judgement.[47]

The modern meaning of the term 'aesthetic' has been set by Kant's 'Critique of Judgement'. It is this work more than any other that has been paradigmatic for setting out the distinct field of enquiry associated with the long tradition of theoretical reflection upon art and beauty, designated by the term 'aesthetic'. Its more general significance in this respect also relates to the way in which these themes were woven

into the general themes of Kant's philosophy, particularly as they were taken up in the Romantic movement and in the Idealist Philosophies that followed Kant in Germany.[48]

Now, although the term 'aesthetic', as used in this way, dates from Kant's reworking of Baumgarten's introduction of the usage of the term in the early eighteenth century, theoretical reflection on the subject matter, albeit less systematic, is, of course, much older. Partly because of this and partly because of the aforementioned problems in giving a clear modern definition of the term there has been a strong tendency in more recent times to try to characterise the field of the aesthetic by means of a discussion of its history.[49] Thus George Dickie, for example, attempts to discuss the field of the aesthetic with reference to 'the twin concerns in the history of thought: the theory of beauty and the theory of art', citing Plato as the major innovator with respect to both these fields.[50] Kuhn and Gilbert also assume that the field of the aesthetic is to be discussed with reference to the dual concerns of **beauty** and **art** as these have developed since the Greeks. However, they not only add the important rider that such theorising was born amidst the 'ancient quarrel between the poets and the philosophers'; they also make the following important comment regarding the way aesthetic theory functions in the wider matrix of human thought:

> 'The first encounter of poets with philosophers in their competition for the name and fame of wise men and teacher is not yet aesthetics. Aesthetics proper begins to take shape for us when we attend to the whole body of philosophical reflection at this period. The place and outlines of the early meditations on the nature of art and beauty were determined by the total plan of archaic philosophy. This being true, aesthetics shared in the three major philosophical enterprises of dawning Greek speculation: (l) cosmology, or theory of the structure of the Universe; (2) psychology; and (3) theory of purposive human activity (techne). Within these wider spheres, {23} the narrower emerging aesthetics developed a metaphysics of beauty, a doctrine of the soul's response to beautiful phenomena, and a theory of the process by which beautiful things were created'.[51]

The last sentence of this quote, taken as a description both of aesthetic thought and of artistic practice during the Classical, Mediaeval and Renaissance periods of Western history, presumes a relationship between 'beauty' and 'art' that did not really emerge until the 16th to 18th centuries. As such these comments could be taken to convey an impression of a unity of aesthetic theory to these periods that simply didn't exist. Despite this Kuhn and Gilbert do us a valuable service in pointing out that the historical origins of theorising about beauty and art had a broader context of meaning, one that was shaped by the broader philosophical and religious issues of the times. They discuss this idea of the influence of the wider matrix of thought upon a particular discipline only with regard to the **beginnings** of philosophical theorising, and even then only with particular reference to the Pythagoreans and Sophists. Neither do they seek to uncover the way in which Greek theorising was shaped in important respects by the pagan character of their religious views concerning the ultimate sources of order and meaning. Nonetheless, Gilbert and Kuhn do provide us with a helpful clue as to how to pick our way through the history of aesthetic theorising in a reformational way, and in the discussion of 'beauty', 'art' and related topics such as 'imitation' that follows, I shall seek to develop this insight in ways that **do** expose the significance of such roots.

BEAUTY

The Greeks were pagan polytheists. This meant that for them the ultimate source(s) of order and meaning of our experienced cosmos were attributed to the activity of spirits, gods, muses and daemons. These were deemed responsible for the daily ordering of the cosmos, functioning immanently within it in ways that human beings could readily relate to. The early Greek nature religions were orientated toward the continuity of the organic stream of life in ways that knew little or nothing of permanence and individual immortality.[52] This strain in the Greek outlook is reflected and represented in the philosophical ideas of Heraclitus. Over against this were the Homeric gods of Olympus - who may have been endowed with immortality, enshrining certain cultural ideals of Greek culture maintained by State religion, but in almost every other way were as fickle and sinful as human beings. Orphism grafted the idea of perfection onto this idea of immortality. This perfection was associated with Ouranos, the heavens, understood as a **divine** realm above the earth.[53] The ensuing contrast between the eternal, unchanging, perfect realm of the divine on the one hand, and the changing, imperfect world of human experience on the other was a major underlying religious motif of the theorising of both Classical and Hellenistic Greece, and it is against this religious background that Greek theoretical reflection upon 'beauty' takes its starting point.

To appreciate the specific features of its initial development, however, there are two important preliminary points that need to be made. In the first place ('kalon'), the Greek term for 'beauty' (Latin 'pulchrum') **was never one that distinguished aesthetic from moral perfection.** In the second place, for Plato, the initial mover in the theoretical discussion of beauty, the divine world of perfection, of unchanging ideas, spirit and immortality was deemed to transcend the changing world of the senses altogether, being accessed by reason as opposed to sense. Thus, when Plato discusses beauty in the **Symposium** and in the **Phaedrus,** he is not speaking merely of the beauty of physical form. He is also implying a perfection of moral attributes of the soul. In this way Plato is able to articulate his 'ladder of Beauty' in a way that **begins** from a discussion of the qualities of aesthetic and moral perfect-ion in the things of ordinary experience and **ends** with the mystical contemplation of the divinised transcendent abstraction of aesthetic and moral perfection itself.[54]

The first step on the ladder toward the elevated Universal Beauty, is from the experienced beauty of actual corporeal things to a substantive Beauty that is deemed to inhabit the bodily existence of them all: The second step entails the switch from body to soul, and from the insight of Beauty of Spirit we proceed to the beauty of customs and laws, and then to the beauty of learning and science. The third and final step involves the ascendence to Beauty itself, unencumbered by its attachment to things corporeal or spiritual. This Beauty in and of itself is deemed to give meaning to all the lower beauties, and, to those who have the courage and endurance to pursue the journey up the ladder of Beauty to its end, have suddenly revealed to them 'a wondrous vision', the fulfilment of a mystic rite that is beyond being and knowing. This Idea of Beauty has special significance for the growing soul: the will of the divine part in us is represented as the coming home of the soul itself, the recognition of its own nature in its contemplation. As such, Beauty is deemed to be the Divine mid-wife fostering the soul's re-creation in the image of divinity.

Thus the transcendent element in Plato's philosophy renders his treatment of beauty as the fulfilment of a kind of mystical quest. With Aristotle the eternal unchanging realm is no longer transcendent; it is identified with the cosmological realm above the

sphere of the moon. He does not discuss the theme of beauty at any length, and, insofar as he does use the term[55] he seems to imply {23} that it is basically the property of the way a whole is harmoniously made up of parts. With Cicero this idea of beauty was also identified with a pattern in one's mind, so that rational people are enabled to recognise the harmonious as the apt configuration of parts, as beautiful.[56]

With Plotinus the transcendence of the divine world of Forms is emphasised once more, and along with it he re-emphasises Plato's 'Ladder of Beauty'. Beauty is strongly linked in with the mystical return of the individual in the fulfilment of their longing to return home to the One - to goodness, to the divine, to Beauty. His discussion is therefore very much a kind of metaphysical 'Pilgrim's Progress', and as such both he and Plato established **contemplation** as a central feature of the theory of Beauty in the West, one that in Christian synthesis, has strongly influenced the worship life of many Christian traditions, and in being secularised, has continued to be influential in the form of 'aesthetic contemplation' as discussed by Wolterstorff in his book 'Art In Action', considered in Part I.

The major thinker responsible for the synthesis of this pagan Beauty theology of Plato and Plotinus with Christian faith was, of course, Augustine. Basically his approach was to adopt and adapt the Platonic transcendent world of forms accessed by the mystical abstracting reason of the Platonic tradition, attributing them to the God of the Bible. For this purpose the Platonic ladder of Beauty was adopted as part of an effective apologetic.

Aquinas, of course, was far more under the influence of Aristotle than Plato, with the result that his conception of 'beauty' was not one to entourage an unworldly flight into the transcendent contemplation of the mystical Beauty of God in His Holiness in the Platonic tradition. He defines 'beauty' as 'that which pleases when seen'.[57]

In this respect Aquinas's theory has both objective and subjective aspects. He attempts to isolate the properties of the object that warrant it being called beautiful. The conditions are three: perfection or unimpairedness, proportion or harmony, and brightness or clarity. On the other the idea of 'being pleasing' as part of the meaning of 'beauty', introduces into it a feature that belongs irretrievably to the subject.

The Renaissance saw a significant resurgence in Neo-Platonism, one in which little if anything basically new was added to the theory of Beauty promoted by Plotinus. The latter, however, was significant for the art of the period, in that, unlike Plato, Plotinus assumed that artistic works sought to imitate the primeval, transcendent forms and ideals rather than their mere worldly imitations.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC SECULARISM ON THE THEORY OF BEAUTY

The matrix of thought consisting largely of the heritage of Greek ideas, with its roots in pagan religious views of the ultimate sources of order and meaning of our experienced cosmos, was the dominant influence upon the course of the Western world up until the end of the sixteenth century. This situation changed dramatic-ally in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, bringing with it some major changes in aesthetic theory, particularly in respect to the idea of beauty.

An important feature of the matrix of ideas shaping the development of the modern phase of philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the development

of the mechanistic conception of Nature in the mathematics and physics of the seventeenth century. This was closely linked, of course, with the 'the Scientific Revolution'. As such this matrix of ideas was strongly influenced by Descartes' formulation of the view of reality into two substances - **res extensa** and **res cogitans**. The two substances met, somewhat uneasily, in human beings, and subsequently allowed Man and Nature to follow their course according to Natural law or General Providence, the workings of which might be set aside when God chose to act by way of Special Providence.

However the religious roots of this division of reality: a mechanistically determined Nature and a Free autonomous Person, do not sit that easily together, with or without a Deistic designer. Indeed the conflicts involved between them form much of the inner religious dialectic of conflict that characterises the pre-dominant direction in the development of modern Western culture.[58]

One of the more significant ideas arising from this new climate of thought for aesthetic theory was that connected with the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, as developed by Galileo, Descartes, Boyle and Locke. According to this doctrine **primary** qualities were those deemed to belong to objects themselves - solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest, and number - qualities of a mathematical or physical character. **Secondary** qualities, on the other hand, were deemed to be but the result of the powers of primary qualities to produce various sensations in a subject. Thus colours, sounds, tastes were all viewed as secondary qualities, produced by the primary qualities of objects in their interaction with human subjects: By contrast with primary qualities, the ideas produced in us of secondary qualities were deemed to have no resemblance to the bodies themselves.[59] Thus, many of the qualities that are usually attributed to the objective functions of things were subjectivised - deemed to belong to the subject rather than to the object of our human experience. {25}

This trend of thought had a big impact upon the character of the reflection of the nature of beauty in the 18th century. Prior to this time it was generally assumed, both in ordinary discourse and in theoretical discussion, that 'beauty' named an objective property of things, and judgments about the beauty of things could be made just as readily as judgments about their colour. The Platonic strain of thought may have wished to claim that the transcendent quality of Beauty was the more fundamental, and that the empirical beauty of things was but a pale reflection of this transcendent reality. But whether transcendent or empirical, judgments of beauty were understood primarily with reference to the **objective** side of human experience, albeit as in the case of Aquinas, that attention was also given to the subjective. qualities that enabled the judgement to be made.

However, during the eighteenth century, particularly amongst the British thinkers, the focus of attention shifted from the beauty of the object to the alleged subjective human faculty or faculties that react to the objective world. Thus the focus became one of **taste,** as the subjective **sense** of beauty. Others then broke this single faculty up into several: the sense of beauty, the sense of the sublime and others. It is again important to realise that this did not involve a **subjectivism** in the sense of a **relativism**. By contrast, it was believed that by focussing upon taste as a human faculty then a greater measure of accuracy and agreement in aesthetic matters would result. In other words the subjectivism in aesthetic theory amounted to a switch of focus to human nature and to its response to the world rather than, as had been

previously, to 'objective' properties that were presumed to reside in the object independently of the subject - whether empirical or transcendent. The influence of the doctrine of primary/secondary qualities had placed the reality of the latter in doubt, and an objectivism was replaced by a subjectivism.

This subjectivist trend in aesthetic theory is not meant to imply that all those who engaged in such Aesthetic reflection were ardent followers of John Locke. To the contrary, the thought of the influential third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) was such as to attempt to embrace a version of the Platonic theory of beauty along with a theory of the subjective sense of beauty or taste. Shaftesbury put forward the view that there was a single faculty of taste which could either function as a moral sense for making judgments about behaviour or else as a sense of beauty for making judgments about whether or not something possessed such a quality, deeming the objects of the judgment of beauty to have actuality, and Beauty itself to be a transcendent quality. Shaftesbury himself, it should be noted, did not distinguish aesthetic from moral beauty. This step, however, was taken by one of the British thinkers following him - Francis Hutcheson. The latter modified Shaftesbury's 'sense of beauty' by distinguishing the **aesthetic** sense of beauty from the **moral** sense. At the same time he, like Burke, Alison and Hume, rejected both the transcendent Platonic theory and any discussion of the beautiful properties of objects.

One of the principal ways in which Shaftesbury's ideas were developed by those who followed him was in respect to the idea of the 'faculties of soul, or mind'. Following on from Greek and mediaeval precedents, Francis Bacon had divided the faculties of mind into three: reason, memory and imagination, assigning philosophy, history and poetry as the respective products of these faculties. With Shaftesbury and those who followed him the subjectivist trend developed in such a way that the entire fields of knowledge, morals and beauty were considered to be founded upon inner faculties of sense, completing a trilogy of conceptual, moral and aesthetic realms of the soul or mind. This trilogy of mind faculties was adopted by Thomas Reid and the Commonsense Realists, and helped pave the way for the triads in Kant's Critiques, and thence to the faculties of mind approach to modern value theory.

Within the context of the modern world the theories of taste focussed upon subjective aesthetic judgements developed by the eighteenth century thinkers has, to all intents and purposes, given way to a relativism. As a theoretical concept in aesthetics 'beauty' has all but lost any precise meaning; this creates a serious problem for the future of an effective aesthetic theory, one that we shall try to address in Part IV of this essay.[60]

ART

The term 'Art', in its modern sense of 'the fine arts', dates only from the mid-eighteenth century. As such, it links together such fields as painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry in a way that recognises not only that they have something in common, but also that this feature enables them to be collectively distinguishable from Science, from Craft, from Technology, from Commerce and other human affairs. Although the precise character of what the term 'Art' connotes may vary, it has nonetheless been taken for granted by most writers on aesthetics since Kant that it refers to that distinctive grouping of human activities exemplified by painting, sculpture, music and poetry. It is generally further recognised that the common feature linking these and other arts is both closely related to, and included in, the zone of the aesthetic.

It is not that painting, sculpture, architecture, music or poetry did not exist before the eighteenth century. It was not even the case that the distinctiveness of these activities was not recognised. It was rather the case that there were serious difficulties in being able to give a clear theoretical {25} account of what was entailed with this grouping of human activities. This related both to the inherited meaning of the term 'art' and to the inherited way of grouping various human activities together: into 'the manual arts', the liberal arts', and 'the spiritual or theological arts', with this ordering indicating a hierarchy of spirituality and proximity to the Divine.[61]

Within the Greek and Roman background of Western culture, the term 'art' (Greek 'techne', Latin 'ars') did not have any specifically aesthetic or artistic connotations at all. It was a term that applied to all kinds of human activities which we moderns would more likely call crafts or sciences. Thus, when the Greeks opposed Art to Nature they were thinking of **human activity in general.** When Hippocrates contrasted Art with life he was thinking of medicine, and when his comparison was repeated by Goethe and Schiller with specific reference to poetry, it simply serves to show how radically the generic term 'Art' had changed by 1800 A.D.! When Plato placed Art above routine and accused poetry of resulting from 'the inspiration of the muse' as opposed 'to developing according to art' he was also simply emphasising the fact that art was considered to be **human** activity, one that, in his view, proceeded by the rational principles of knowledge concerning both the means and ends. 'Routine', on the other hand, was mere habit and did not entail the knowledge of means or ends. So too 'inspiration' was presumed to take place in a way that did not involve human knowledge of means and ends. On this basis Plato claimed that its fruits could not be deemed 'art'.[62]

Further, within the context of the developments in aesthetic theory in the eighteenth century that enabled the distinctiveness of the fine arts to be more adequately recognised, it was also the case that the new emerging secular outlook tended to exalt Art and Artists in ways that viewed them both as purveyors of ultimate truth. This accounts for the fact that many of the terms in the development of this aesthetic theory were strongly tainted with the secular idolatry attributed to the realm of the aesthetic, as discussed by Wolterstorff.[63] Of its main concepts - taste, sentiment, genius, originality, creative imagination and expression - the latter four were particularly influenced by the secular religious character of this emerging outlook. The former two, on the other were strongly influenced by the subjectivising of beauty and feeling as has already been discussed in this essay.

Thus, whilst 'Beauty' as the main focus of modern aesthetic reflection has waned since the eighteenth century, its place in centre stage has been taken by 'the Arts' in the sense of 'the Fine Arts', dominated by the secular idolatry of 'the tradition of High Art of the West' since that time.

In all of these problems and in the emerging developments associated with them, religious issues involving the influences of competing claims of ultimate source(s) of order and meaning have made their mark upon theoretical reflection upon the character of what is connoted by the term 'art', and the principal purpose of this present section is to try to outline the history of the conceptions associated with this term in ways that expose these influences.[64]

THE INFLUENCE of PLATO and ARISTOTLE

One method that Plato used to define the term 'art' was to trace it to its origin. In the

course of doing so he discussed the myth of Prometheus. In this the prehuman animals, so the story goes, were supplied by the gods with furs and hairy skin for protection against the cold, and with claws to secure prey for food and for fighting enemies. But the human creature, in this primeval distribution, was somehow forgotten. However, Prometheus, out of concern for this bedless, naked and defenceless creature, stole fire from Heaven and the arts of weaving and metal-working from Athena and Hephaestus.[65]

This mythical story suggests two things. The first is that humankind is differentiated from the prehuman animals in that he has learnt skills by which he can meet his needs. 'Instinct' and 'nature' are insufficient foundations to fulfil the needs and tasks of being human. The second is that these skills were of divine origin. In the context of 'Protagoras', Plato was simply giving expression to the general Greek view of 'art' of his time, one that had been well analysed by Socrates: in talking about shoe-makers, carpenters and saddlers, he wished to present a surprisingly simple idea. To do what he did the shoe-maker needed the art of making shoes, and this art implied a twofold knowledge: first, a knowledge of the end embodied in the intended product; second, a knowledge of the appropriate **means** in the sense of the skill to achieve the desired end. This idea of the two-fold knowledge of ends and means entailed in various forms of human activity was generalised to a very wide range of activities. For example, the medical art comprises first the knowledge of medical health as its end or Good. Second it comprises the knowledge of medical treatment as the means of attaining the latter Good.

In respect to what was thus connoted by 'art' in the Greek mind, this distinction between ends and means lay at the foundation of the rational analysis of art worked out by Plato and Aristotle. Plato drew a sharp line between an **absolute or supreme end,** and the ends that are ends only with regard to a group of subordinate acts, corresponding to a distinction between arts that are concerned with the realisation of particular ends, and the arts which concern the living of human life as a whole. The manual arts, including medicine, for example, all fell under the first grouping, whilst the second, as the Supreme or Royal Art, had Wisdom as its end. The main intellectual {26} quest of Plato was the understanding and determination of this Royal Art, identified with Philosophy, as the means to the end of wisdom. The philosopher spends all his days in learning what goods are true goods, and what the intrinsic values are in terms of which all the ends of the other arts are to be measured.[66]

With Plato, therefore, 'the Supreme Art' is identified with the pursuit of a generalised abstracted theory of reality that is then interpreted in terms of the pagan idea of a perfect, unchanging world of Forms and Universal Ideas that transcend the world of sense experience. The ongoing significance of this Platonic tradition for the idea of 'Art' in Western culture is profound, having two major features: the hierarchical grouping of the three categories of arts, and the idea of 'the imitative arts' in relation to what has since been identified as 'the fine arts'.

The hierarchical grouping of the arts into the three categories referred to above derives from Plato. The contemplative reflection upon the supra-sensible world was readily given a Christian face, giving way to the supremacy of 'the spiritual or theological arts'. The pagan elevation of theoretical thinking as a way relating to the divine via the divine part of man led to the grouping of various 'Arts' that were deemed to be intermediate between the divine pursuit of wisdom in the form of theology and the base and low pursuits involved in manual work. This second or

intermediate grouping was identified as 'the liberal arts', and developed in slightly varying ways in both Classical and Mediaeval times. The third or lower and inferior grouping was identified as the **manual arts** and formed a definitive grouping of seven in mediaeval times.

Thus, philosophy and/or theology, in its various branches, was identified as the **means** of the Supreme Art, with its **end** as wisdom. Various other intellectual disciplines were organized into a secondary or preparatory position. The latter, the 'liberal arts', were subject to a number of changes during the classical and mediaeval periods.[67] Thus, Cicero speaks of the liberal arts and their mutual connection, although he does not give a detailed list of the arts concerned. The definitive scheme of the seven liberal arts, as it took shape in western culture, is found in Martianus Capella (late 4th to early 5th centuries). It comprises Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectic as the **Trivium** and Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music as the **Quadrivium.** Other schemes which are similar but not quite identical are found in many Greek and Latin authors before Capella. Very close to Capella's scheme, and quite possibly its source, was that of Varro. This, however, included medicine and architecture in addition to Capella's seven arts.[68] Similar, too, was that of Sextus Empiricus, which contains only **six** parts, omitting logic or dialectic, which is treated as one of the three parts of philosophy as the primary discipline.

These variations may be appreciated in the light of the way in which the pagan preference for 'pure learning', as being 'closer to the divine', on the part of the Greeks, influenced the classification of the arts. The Greek author, Sextus, was more conscious of the difference between the secondary or preliminary disciplines or arts and the primary one of philosophy, whereas the Latin authors such as Varro, were less influenced by such views, being more ready to include arts that involved the use of the hands. Capella seems to have struck something of a compromise, but one that still preserved the liberal arts as exclusively linked to the activity of the rational part of the soul, and therefore closer to the divine.

Later in the mediaeval period the attempt was made to formalise a definitive grouping of seven mechanical arts that corresponded to the particular scheme of the seven liberal arts. The scheme of **the seven mechanical arts** was developed by Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141). These were wool, construction, navigation, agriculture, hunting, medicine and the theatre. The 'liberal' arts were, of course, deemed the more spiritual. Indeed the 'mechanical' arts, in the words of St. Antonio of Florence, "are so called from the word 'moecher', to commit adultery, for in them man's intellect is as it were adulterated, since it is created principally for the understanding of spiritual things, and in these mechanical arts it is occupied with material (factibilia) things".[69]

Significantly therefore, there is no grouping of 'the fine arts' in the Classical and Mediaeval classifications of the arts. Music appears as a member of the quadrivium, but in reality this was partly the elaborate theory of modes and harmonics inherited from such figures as Aristoxenus and Ptolemy, and partly the speculative concerns that sought to relate music to the divine and music of the spheres.[70] It was less concerned with either the theory or the practice of music composition and performance. Poetry was closely linked with grammar, rhetoric and logic in the Trivium whereas Architecture, along with Sculpture and Painting were listed as subdivisions of the mechanical art of construction.

THE IMITATIVE ARTS

The link with the modern system of 'the fine arts' from the period of Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century is found in the idea of 'the Imitative Arts', and it is in this respect that Plato imparted his second legacy to the ongoing discussion of the character of Art in the Western world.[71] As discussed in Part II of this essay, the beginnings of aesthetic reflection amongst the Greeks may be considered to have emerged within the context of a quarrel between the **arts** of poetry and philosophy understood as competitors for the supreme **means** of achieving the **end** of Wisdom. Plato's attack upon poetry as the means to the supreme end of wisdom was to criticise two alternative foundations in its claims.

In the first place he contrasted 'inspiration' with art, claiming that the poet, when inspired by the Muses, does not create **by means of art,** but by an irrational process in which the poets are 'out of their minds', under the influence of the muse, who inspires poet and spectator alike, drawing them together like a magnet. Thus the claim to the status of art on the part of poetry inspired by the muse could be dismissed on the grounds that the poet had no knowledge of the ends or the means to bring it about. The latter, of course, were deemed necessary for something to qualify as an art.

The other ground on which poetry, painting and the like could be considered arts were on the basis of the **means** of imitation. That painting, dancing and certain forms of poetry involved the **imitation** (Gr. 'mimesis') of the sounds, shapes and colours of powers of nature, poly-theistically interpreted, was no doubt a popularly held view in Plato's time, as it still is today. What Plato did was essentially to work the more naive features of this commonsense view into his theory of Forms. According to this theory, of course, the ordinary things of experience were themselves deemed to be but imitations of the True transcendent reality of Divine Forms. Thus the so-I called 'art' involved in painting, poetry and the like, simply involved imitating the imitations of the true reality. Thus the material fashioning of a likeness of sensible reality resulted in mere 'icons', the imitations of imitations, and the conjuring up of fantasy by imagining involved the mere **appearance** of an imitation of an imitation. Using this argument Plato sought to discredit Poetry's claim as the art providing the royal road to wisdom.[72]

However, Plato does not only discuss poetry, painting and the like with respect to their **means** as arts. He also discusses their **ends.** In his respect he discusses drama, music and dancing as forms of imitation that have **pleasure** as their **end.** However, this causes Plato some considerable concern, as this pleasure is often not controlled by wisdom as the greater good, but is rather allowed to awaken, nourish and strengthen the lower human impulses, thus causing the higher to starve and wither.[73]

However, when Plato declares that music is a pleasure-giving art he qualifies himself, claiming that music has an inherent affinity with the soul, and that it should not be thought of in abstraction from the moral temper it presents. In this sense Plato claims that music partakes of soul that then imitates it, and it is for this reason that the ultimate goodness of music must be evaluated according to moral criteria, based upon supposed correlations between modes and dispositions of the. soul - either toward a war-like and violent disposition, or else toward one that is sobering and gentle. This doctrine of the inherence of soul in music is of considerable significance in Plato's aesthetics, not only because of the way it is used as a basis for musical criticism but also because it formed part of an elaborately developed application of these aesthetic ideas to education. In this respect Plato conceived the learning process as one that

involved a large measure of unconscious absorption of correct habit, and to secure the desired ends he laid it upon educators to provide the music of appropriate modality and moral temper to ensure the desired unconscious assimilation of good manners, disposition and taste.[74]

Although music tends to hold a special place in this regard, it is nonetheless possible to generalise: after transforming and directing 'pleasure' toward the higher moral qualities of human life, Plato allows the 'image-making' or 'imitative' arts to have **pleasure** as their **end**.[75]

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle discussed aesthetic topics more directly than Plato. His understanding of the basic character of art as the know-ledge involved in bringing things into being in a way that appreciates the means and ends involved is very similar.[76] So too is his view of poetry, painting and music as examples of the 'Imitative Arts'.[77] However, his emphasis is different. This is principally because he sees the Divine world of Forms no longer in a realm that transcends sense experience, but as an immanent one ordering the otherwise chaotic and formless matter in the world of human experience. He seeks to argue, for example, that both poets and philosophers are concerned with the pursuit of the universal, but in differing ways.

PLOTINUS

Plotinus took his starting point from Plato, and elaborated his metaphysics of Beauty in ways that were less inclined to polemically 'reduce the poets to dust'. He plays back and forth between the way a sculptor or architect creates and Nature creates, or between concrete expressions of beautiful things and the transcendent Beauty of the Divine. Thus Plotinus claims that there is more to artistic creativity than the imitation of concrete things. Possibly learning from Aristotle he suggested the possibility that creative art seeks to imitate the very forms and ideas from which Nature herself derives. Hence it is from Plotinus rather than Plato himself that a more positive and innovative estimation of the works of sculpture and painting were to eventually gain ground within the Platonic tradition: Nonetheless, although the theory of beauty in Plotinus makes room for a connection with what were later described as 'the fine arts', whereas it was totally absent in Plato, the connection with art and beauty is still secondary to the more transcendental concern.

Now, although we can find a link between the modern idea of 'the fine arts' and the classical idea of 'the imitative arts', {28} there are some important differences. Firstly the imitative features were not linked together in a coherently aesthetic manner: there was no idea to the effect that these arts sought to imitate the beauty of nature, for example. The latter was a development from the Renaissance and after. Secondly, music and dance were treated as parts of poetry. Thirdly, architecture was not included in the tentative schemes of 'the imitative arts', and finally, the latter included such activities as 'sophistry', the use of the mirror, the imitation of animal voices and magic tricks.[78]

THE EMERGENCE OF THE IDEA OF THE FINE ARTS

Neither in the Classical nor in the Mediaeval or Renaissance periods of Western Culture was there an effective singling out or grouping together of 'the fine arts'. The latter remained scattered among the various 'arts' that we would now describe as sciences, crafts or other human activities. Poetry and music were among the subjects taught at many schools and universities, the visual arts were confined to artisan's

guilds, in which the painters were sometimes associated with the druggists who prepared the paints, the sculptors with the goldsmiths, and 'the architects with the masons and the carpenters. Moreover, the treatises that were written on poetry, rhetoric, music and other arts/crafts all tended to have a strictly technical and professional character, showing little or no tendency to relate any of these fine arts to one another or to philosophy.[79]

The period of the Renaissance, whilst it brought about many important changes in the social and cultural position of the various arts, and also involved some profound changes in the outlook shaping the art products, thus preparing the ground for the later development of aesthetic theory, did not formulate a system of fine arts and did not develop a comprehensive aesthetic theory.

Beside the distinguishing of the realm of the moral from the realm of the aesthetic there were two other major developments for aesthetic theory in the 18th century. The first was a definitive grasp of the significance and independence of the imagination. Building upon the thought of many before him Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), in his "Nuova Scienza" (1725) put forward the view that the imagination is not a mere daughter, servant or minister to anything else, but is good in and of itself, to achieve its own ends, principally in respect to poetry. The second was the recognition of a grouping of "the fine arts" in a manner that recognized them as having features in common that marked them off from other arts or sciences.

The decisive step toward this recognition of a system of the fine arts was taken by Abbe Batteux in his famous and influential treatise, 'Les Beaux Arts Reduits a un Meme Principe' (1746). Although many elements of his system were built upon the results of earlier authors, it should not be overlooked that his was the first attempt to set forth a clearcut system of the fine arts in a treatise devoted exclusively to the subject. In this he starts from the poetic theories of Aristotle and Horace, and tries to extend their principles for poetry and painting to the other fine arts. In his first chapter he gives a clear division of the arts, distinguishing the fine arts, which are deemed to have pleasure as their end, from the mechanical arts. He lists the fine arts as music, poetry, painting, sculpture and dance, and adds a third category which is deemed to combine pleasure with usefulness. The latter includes eloquence and architecture. In the central part of his treatise, Batteux tried to show that 'the imitation of beautiful nature' is the principle common to all the arts, and then he concludes his work with a discussion of the theatre as a combination of all the arts.

In almost every respect the thought of Batteux is still orientated to classical philosophical theory, especially to Aristotle, for the articulation of its aesthetic theory. In this he was roundly criticized by later German critics of the eighteenth century, especially for the 'theory of imitation' as providing the common link between 'the fine arts'. The developments in aesthetic theory in the eighteenth century, therefore, took place in a climate in which the matrices of classical philosophy and of modern philosophy were both making their contribution. Indeed the functioning of these two tendencies is clearly evident in d'Alembert's famous **'Discours Preliminaire'** to the **'Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire Raisonne des Sciences, des Arts et des Metiers'** (Encyclopedia and Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts). It draws upon the Baconian trichotomic division of knowledge, based upon the trichotomy of faculties of the mind - reason, memory and imagination - in a way that incorporates Batteux's classification of the fine arts, together with its linking theme of 'the imitation of nature'.

In so doing d'Alembert criticises the old distinction between the mechanical and the liberal arts, and then subdivides **the liberal arts** into **the fine arts,** which are still deemed to have **pleasure** for their end, and the more necessary or **useful** liberal arts such as grammar, logic and morals. His discussion concludes with a division of knowledge into philosophy, history and the fine arts, in a manner that clearly reflects and amplifies the Baconian division of knowledge, but yet does not rest upon the Baconian notion of the faculty of the imagination as that which gives rise to the fine arts. For the latter he sticks closely to 'the imitation of nature' as developed by Batteux. Thus, d'Alembert effected a definitive systematisation of the fine arts in a manner that drew upon both the philosophic conceptions of olassioal theory as well as those of more modern developments. Moreover, the prestige of the Encyclopedie and its famous introduction did a great {29} deal to establish the modern system of the fine arts over against the classical and medieval distinctions between the liberal and mechanical arts that left no room for a definitive grouping of the fine arts.[80]

EXPRESSION and the INFLUENCE of ROMANTICISM

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the basic idea involved with all imitation theories of art, as they had their roots in antiquity were called into question. During the nineteenth century, the idea that art, especially literature and music, was related to the significant **expression** of the **feelings** of the man of **genius,** revealing ultimate realities in their inspired works, came into prominence.

A theory of art does not spring up in a religious and intellectual vacuum. The view of 'the fine arts' linked to an idea of imitation in classical Greece was closely related to the pagan views of the ultimate sources of order and meaning current in certain quarters of Greek culture, and given philosophical articulation by Plato in his theory of Forms.

The rise of the various expression theories of art is related to the genesis and development of Romanticism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The new religious orientation is linked partly to the idea of a **Nature** replete with its laws that may have been created by a Deity in the beginning, but now, for all intents and purposes, was deemed capable of complete explanation in terms of its own laws. This idea of nature was the first ultimate source of order and meaning. The second, in some ways by way of reaction to the first, was the idea of **freedom** as a universal self that was deemed capable of reaching for the divine and realising its fruits in the present life of humanity.[81] Philosophically it had its antecedents in Descartes, Newton, Hume and Rousseau, but it received its crucial formulation in Kant.

The philosophical views which underlie the Romantic theories of art are mainly those of Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. However, all of these philosophers were dependent upon Kant's theory of knowledge and upon Rousseau's idea of the transcendental universal self. Kant distinguished between **the empirical world of nature,** which is the object of know-ledge, and the **noumenal world,** which in some sense lies behind the world of sense, and of which, in strict terms, we cannot know anything.

In part, the phenomenal, empirical world has its order because of the structure imposed on it by the mind. In part too, it is dependent upon the unknowable world of noumena, or things-in-themselves, undistorted by the structures of the human mind. This ultimate source of order and meaning lay mysteriously behind and beyond the

sensuous world, but defied comprehension. As such it fascinated many philosophers, men of letters and others in the nineteenth century. The Romantic quest tended to involve the effort of the Self to overcome the epistemological restrictions of Kant, supremely through the emotional expression of the artist as the man of genius articulating the symbols of the Noumenal.

As discussed in Part II, as far as the general quest for wisdom is concerned, Romanticism may be viewed as a reaction against both empiricist philosophy and the scientific world view as it was being shaped by narrowly defined mechanistic views. As such it involved an attempt to reach behind the sensuous screen of ordinary knowledge to something thought to be more vital and important. It was in this definitively religious context that the Romantic view of the Artist and of 'the High Art' that it produced took root, shaping the modern view of art, in the sense of 'fine art', in very profound ways. The artist was conceived as a person of genius, able to get in touch with the vital sources of the noumenal world, revealing the kind of ultimate realities of existence which scientific knowledge was incapable of giving. The 'knowledge' conveyed in the arts, however, was 'symbolic', in the sense that it transcended conceptualization. It was rather identified with, or at least associated with the release of emotion. In this context, emotion assumed an importance it had not previously had in relation to art, being the vehicle of a superior kind of 'non-conceptual' knowledge that was a complement to science.[82]

Further the treatment of imagination on the part of Romanticism was such as to provide it with the supremacy of creative powers, exulting human freedom and placing the genius of the artist into the position of a prophet:

Overall these trends result in modern aesthetic theory being almost exclusively concerned with a theory of the artistic, and very often preoccupied with aspects of the artistic that are not fundamentally aesthetic in any objective sense. It is deemed, for example, to be concerned with 'significant form' (Bell), with 'a symbol of feeling' (Langer), with 'imaginative expression' (Croce, Collingwood), etc. However the question needs to be asked: what is particularly aesthetic or artistic, in any objective (i.e. belonging to the art object rather than the subject) in these various theories?[83]

The Basic Questions for an Aesthetic Theory.
Partly as the result of our earlier survey of the field of the aesthetic in terms of the kinds and range of everyday affairs that relate to it, and partly as the result of our historical sketch of the development of the leading aesthetic ideas, we are now in a position to {30} summarise the basic problems which must be faced by any theory of the zone of the aesthetic in the following four points.

1. (a) Throughout its long tradition, theoretical reflection upon the nature of 'Beauty' bears witness to the point that there is a common aesthetic feature to the natural world and the world resulting from human formative activity.

1. (b) The attempt to point to typical everyday things and events having an aesthetic character would also strongly suggest that both the natural world as it is unaffected by human formation, and the world as it is humanly formed have properties that we might describe as 'aesthetic'.

1. (c) The effective breakdown in the long tradition of theoretical reflection upon the nature of 'beauty' would suggest that it is unsuited as the kernel of that empirical

feature of reality that we now term 'aesthetic'.

The first foundational problem of aesthetic theory is to describe and conceptualise the kernel of the zone of the aesthetic.

2. (a) Within the world of human formative activity we may distinguish products or activities that deserve the title of 'artistic' - in the sense that they qualify as art in the sense of fine art. At the same time, however, there are many products or activities of human formation that exhibit aesthetic properties, even if they are not qualified or characterised by the feature of being artistic.

2. (b) The distinguishing feature of 'the artistic' was considered by Batteux, in the definitive eighteenth century attempt to characterise the grouping of the arts in the sense of activities and artefacts that qualify as 'artistic', to be 'the imitation of the beauty of nature'. Since his time the idea of 'the arts' constituting a distinctive grouping of human activities that we may describe as 'artistic' has become well established in Western culture. At the same time the ideas of 'beauty' and 'imitation' that enabled Batteau to put forward this grouping in theoretical terms, have largely been rejected. As a result, 'aesthetics', as a theoretical discipline has become virtually identified with a theory of the arts, with various new attempts being made to clarify the basis of their common character.

2. (c) However, our preliminary consideration of 'the zone of the aesthetic' in everyday terms, clearly suggested that the zone of the aesthetic was not exhausted by 'the artistic'. Within the range of things and events in the world as it is humanly cultivated, we may therefore draw the conclusion that there is an important distinction to be made between 'the aesthetic' and 'the artistic'.

The second foundational problem for an aesthetic theory is the conceptualisation of the distinction between the artistic and the aesthetic in the broader sense.

3. (a) Within the process of human formative activity we may distinguish between a subject and an object. The latter may, for example, be an artefact (e.g. a theory, a shoe, a painting, a meal), a performing activity (e.g. a play, a song, a lecture, a talk), or the objects in the process of being formed into another thing or performing activity, or else aiding this process as a tool (e.g. the earth, the plants and tools in the context of the formation of a garden; the wood, the bricks, mortar and tools entailed in a house being built; the various musical ideas being tried out on a musical instrument in the process of the composition of a piece of music).

The **subject,** on the other hand, is the one undertaking the formation of an object insofar as they are actually **leading the shaping of its formation.** Thus subjective formative activity may variously be the **development** of a theory, the **making** of a shoe, the **painting** of a picture, the **playing** of a character in a play (the character itself is an object), the **singing** of a song, the **giving** of a lecture, the **preparing** of a meal, or the **building** of a house. To undertake such subjective activities, in ways that are effective in the achievement of good objective results, requires skill and insight.

3. (b) Various candidates have been offered with respect to the subjective processes involved in artistic activity - imitation, imagination, inspiration, expression of feeling. Various candidates have also been offered for characterising the purpose, end or qualifying function of artistic activity, such as beauty of form, pleasure, or symbolic

form.

The third foundational question for that part of an aesthetic theory that we may describe as artistic is: what are the subjective processes and objective ends that are involved in artistic activity? Furthermore, should such a theory focus upon the subjective processes, the objective products or both?

4. In the course of this essay, I have sought to identify the ways in which religious responses to the question of the ultimate source(s) of order and meaning shape art, artistic activity and aesthetic theory.

In particular, with regard to aesthetic theory, I have tried to discuss some of the ways in which the pagan religious influences upon Greek culture helped shape the theories of Plato and Aristotle. I have also tried to show how these views were then accommodated to the Biblical religious view of the ultimate sources of order and meaning.

Modern thought, beginning from Descartes, had a new religious twist to it, one in which the ultimate sources of order and {31} meaning were, in effect, attributed to a **self-contained lawful cosmos and to a free** human agent in the quest of universality, held in something of a dialectical tension. The fact that God was deemed to have **originated** this order and meaning was acknowledged, but to all intents and purposes it made very little difference to the issues of order and meaning in everyday life, indicating that the **actual** ultimate sources of the latter could scarcely be attributed to the God of the Bible in any crucial way.

The principal ways in which the emerging secular religious orientation has shaped the matrix of aesthetic theory are twofold: the first concerns the subjectivising of the aesthetic subject-object relation in respect of 'beauty'; the second concerns the way in which the secular orientation of Kant helped to shape Romanticism, nurturing the idea of art as expressive of 'the symbols' of ultimate reality as revealed by the expressive feeling of men of genius and imagination.

The fourth foundational problem of aesthetics is with respect to the way in which religion functions in such a theory.

This essay is, of course, founded upon an answer to this question. However, it is still claimed that any aesthetic theory gives an answer to this question, albeit implicitly. As far as the present essay is concerned, it still remains for the implications of the Biblical answer to the question of the ultimate source of order and meaning to be spelt out in terms of specific content for aesthetics.

In Part IV I shall attempt to deal with all four of the above foundational problems in a manner that takes the Biblical view of the LORD God as the single ultimate source of order and meaning seriously, and in this way to contribute further to the Reformational development of aesthetic theory.

NOTES

[1] In the Scriptures human life might be summed up as the service and worship of the LORD, or the service and worship of the gods. The suggestion here is that the word 'god' means 'a source of order and meaning of our experienced cosmos that is deemed to be ultimate'. For a contemporary discussion of this view of religion refer to Richard E. Wentz, 'Why Do People Do Bad Things in the Name of Religion?' Mercer University Press, Macon, 1987. Refer also to Exodus 20:l-3; Joshua 24; Matt. 4:10; Rom. l:25, Mark 12:28:28-34.
[2] Psalm 19:l-4, translation by C. Seerveld, 'Rainbows for a Fallen World', Tuppence Press, 1980.
[3] There are various ways in which I will be using the word 'subject' in the present essay. In the later sections the term 'subject' will generally refer to the activity of the artist, as an artistic subject, shaping a cultural object – the art work. In the present context, however, 'subject' **does not mean** the subjective activity of the artist, but rather refers to **the particular focus** that a work of art may be said to be about. The contextual perspective, on the other hand, refers to **the way** in which this focus is treated. The latter will include stylistic features as well as questions of worldview and religion, resulting in the way the artist deals with the 'subject' in contextual perspective.
[4] Eerdmanns, Grand Rapids, 1980
[5] 'Art', Chatto and Windus, London, 1949
[6] Oxford University Press, London, 1957
[7] Ibid. p. xxii
[8] 'Mornings in Mexico', London, Secker, 1927, quoted by Thomas Molnar in 'The Pagan Temptation', Eerdmanns, Grand Rapids 1987, p.16
[9] Refer, for example, to Edgar Wind, 'Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance', Oxford University Press, 1980.
[10] For a good discussion of the significance of this piece of music for the 'New Age Movement' refer to David Spangler, 'The Rebirth of the Sacred', Gateway Books, London, 1984. esp. pp 37-50, and p.78
[11] 'A History of Aesthetics', Dover, 1972, pl.
[12] Plato, Republic 607b.
[13] Plato, Ion, 543b.
[14] Plato, Republic X, 589-608.
[15] I Cor. l:19 ; Is. 29:14.
[16] Refer to the discussion by E. Wellesz in 'The New Oxford History of Music', Vol. II, ed. by D. A. Hughes, p.16 and pp. 43-44.
[17] Augustine, 'The City of God', Part 6, Chap. V.
[18] Refer, for example, to W. Jaeger, 'The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers', Gifford Lectures, 1936, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1947, pp. 1-10.
[19] Refer, for example, to the discussion of Occam, and to the comparison and difference between him and Buridan and Oresme by Stanley L. Jaki, in 'Steps to God as Stepping-Stones to Science', Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1978.
[20] In addition to the work mentioned in (19) refer also to 'The Sighting of New Horizons', chapter ten of 'Science and Creation' by Stanley L. Jaki, Scottish Academic press, Edinburgh, 1986.
[21] {See 20}
[22] In these respects the writings of Frances Yates are most incisive. Refer especially to 'Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition', Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964.
[23] Refer, for example, to the study of E. A. Burtt, 'The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science', London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1924.
[24] Refer to the studies of Peter Gay, 'The Enlightenment: An Interpretation', 2 Vols., New York, Alfred Knopf, 1967-69, and T. D. Bozemann, 'Protestants in the Age of Science', Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1977.
[25] For a thorough study of the scope and content of the meaning of Blake's symbolism, refer, for example, to ' A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake' by S. Foster Damon, Thames and Hudson, London, 1965.
[26] Refer to Frances Yates, 'Giordano Bruno', 1964, op. cit., for a discussion of the background to these sources.
[27] In Kant's vocabulary an 'idea' in the technical sense is the product of the highest faculty of mind -

reason - but this is deemed not to involve the faculties of sense perception, and is introduced into The Critique of Pure Reason' in an almost purely negative way. An 'idea' **regulates** our thoughts, directing them, but does not have direct application to the world of phenomena. A 'concept', on the other hand, is a product of the understanding and does apply directly to the world of the phenomena that we experience with our senses.

[28] I. Kant, 'Critique of Judgment', translated by J. M. Meredith, Oxford, 1952, 313.

[29] Erich Heller, 'The Disinherited Mind', Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961, p192.

[30] These tendencies have been well documented, for example, in Bozemann, 1977.

[31] These tendencies, together with their relation to modern art have been well documented, for example, in 'Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology' by P. Tillich, London, SCM, 1967.

[32] Refer to the following books of Theodore Roszak penned with reference to the counterculture: 'The Making of a Counterculture', Faber and Faber, London, 1969; 'Where The Wasteland Ends', Faber and Faber, London, 1972; 'Unfinished Animal', Faber and Faber, London, 1976. He has since written several novels - 'Bugs' and 'Dreamwatcher' that explore the themes of Scientistic culture and imaginativity, particularly as they involve 'Religion' and 'the Occult'.

[33] C. P. Snow (1905-1980) was both a literary figure and a scientist. As such he was well equipped to write about the relationship between scientific and artistic culture in the twentieth century. His best known book is 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution' (1959). In it he argues that the practitioners of each of the respective two cultures (scientific and artistic) know little or nothing of the other, with communication between them being difficult if not impossible.

[34] W. Jaeger, 'The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers', Gifford Lectures, 1936, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1947.

[35] Ibid, p 4.

[36] Plato, 'Republic', II 379a. Refer also to note 13 on Chapter 1, p194, Jaeger, 1947.

[37] Jaeger, 1947, p4.

[38] Consider, for example, Psalms 147, 148 as well as the last chapters of Isaiah and Jeremiah 31.

[39] Refer to H. Dooyeweerd, 'A New Critique of Theoretical Thought' Three Vols., Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Vol. II, p552 ff., esp. pp 571-582, for a full discussion of these issues.

[40] Proverbs 9:10.

[41] Refer, for example, to the series of essays in 'Philosophy Looks at the Arts: Contemporary Readings in Aesthetics', edited by J. Margolis, Scribners, New York, 1962, and to 'Aesthetics: An Introduction', by G. Dickie, Bobbs Merrill, New York, 1971.

[42] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1984, Macropaedia Vol.1, p. 149.

[43] Ibid, p.149.

[44] This theoretical Rationalism needs to be distinguished from the Rationalism of Rousseau and the French philosophes: The latter appealed to a 'popular' as opposed to a 'theoretical' Reason, and was the supposed basis for the critique and condemnation of the Ancien Regime.

[45] This, of course, is the Greek background to the name of the field of Anaesthetics. The latter literally means 'no feeling or sensation'.

[46] For a good appreciation of this background to Kant's work on aesthetics, refer to L. P. Zuidevaart, 'Kant's Critique of Beauty and Taste: Explorations into a Philosophical Aesthetics', M. Phil. thesis, 1977, Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

[47] The transition between these two usages is reflected in the additions to a footnote in the second edition of 'The Critique of Pure Reason'. Refer to the footnote on p.66 of 'Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason', translated by Norman Kemp Smith, McMillan, 1987. Refer also to the comments of C. Seerveld, in the footnote on p.115 of his 'Rainbows for a Fallen World', 1980.

[48] For an estimate of the significance of these issues in the development of Theology in the Nineteenth century, refer to P. Tillich, Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Protestant Theology', SCM, 1967, pp 64-83.

[49] Those mentioned in association with the article on 'aesthetics' in the 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' discussed earlier in this section.

[50] Dickie, 1971, p.1.

[51] 'History of Aesthetics', 1972, p:3.

[52] For a discussion of the nature-religion background to the Greek culture of later times, refer to J. E. Harrison, 'Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion', Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903 and to M. P. Nilsson, 'The Minoan-Mycenaen Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion'. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1927. 2nd revised edition, 1950.
[53] It needs emphasising that in the Old Testament the phrase 'the heavens and the earth' is simply a concrete way of saying 'all creation', thus avoiding any sense of divinity being attributed to the skies, the stars and the planets. The secondary Biblical sense of 'heaven' denoting God or his dwelling place is never one that confuses the Creator with the creation. Much confusion in Christian thinking on the matter of 'heaven' over the centuries has resulted from the influence of the Orphic idea of the divinity of Ouranos as this was mediated in different ways by Plato and Aristotle, and then adopted in some way by sections of the Christian Church. For a discussion of the issue in relation to John Philoponus's criticism of the pagan distinction between the heavens and the earth and its significance for the development of modern science, refer to S. Sambursky, 'The Physical World of Late Antiquity', London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp 154-175.
[54] Refer to Plato, 'Symposium', 210ff.
[55] For example, in The Poetics, 1451a
[56] Cicero, 'On the Orator' I, 8-10.
[57] Thomas Aquinas, 'Basic Writings of St.Thomas Aquinas' Vol. I, trans., New York, Random House, 1945., p.46.
[58] Refer, for example, to H. Dooyeweerd, 'A New Critique of Theoretical Thought', Vol. I, pp 169-495.
[59] John Locke, 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding', 1690, Book II, Chapter 8.
[60] For parallel discussions of the 'Rise and Fall of Beauty as the Theoretical Focus of Aesthetics', refer to the following: George Dickie, 'Aesthetics: an Introduction' Bobbs-Merrill, 1971, pp.1-31; W. T. Stace, 'The Meaning of Beauty: The Theory ofAesthetics', London, Grant Richards & Humphrey Toulmin, 1925; Jerome Stolnitz, 'Beauty: Some Stages in the History of an Idea', Journal of the History of Ideas, 22, No. 2, April-June, 1961, pp 185-204; W. Tartarkiewicz, 'The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline', Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 31, No. 2, Winter, 1972, pp 165-180; C. Seerveld, 'A Christian Critique of Art and Literature', Toronto, Association for the advancement of Christian Scholarship, 1977, pp 32-39; C. Seerveld, 'Rainbows for the Fallen World', Toronto, Tuppence Press, 1980, pp 116-137.
[61] Refer to the discussion of the significance of this threefold distinction for mediaeval aesthetics in 'A History of Aesthetics', Gilbert and Kuhn, 1972, pp 154-161.
[62] Plato, 'Ion', 533d
[63] 'Art in Action', 1980. Refer also to the discussion of Kant's solution to the 'the Ancient Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy' of Part II of this essay.
[64] Whilst it does not seek to discern the religious influences upon the problem of the emergence of the System of the Fine Arts, the general discussion of the problem in 'The Modern System of the Arts' by P. O. Kristeller, is excellent. It constitutes a major source of influence upon the present section of this essay. It is printed in 'Renaissance Thought and the Arts', P. O. Kristeller, Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 163-227.
[65] Plato, 'Protagoras', 320d - 322, and 'Statesman' 274c.
[66] Plato, 'The Republic' Book VI, 505. Plato develops his conception of the 'Philosopher-King' in 'Republic' V, VI, and VII, as well as in 'Statesman'.
[67] Kristeller, 1980, p173.
[68] Ibid p173.
[69] Gilbert and Kuhn, 1972, p158.
[70] It is of some interest to note that these kinds of concerns are in resurgence within both the general developments of modern music and within the concerns of the New Age Movement. They are, for example, well documented in the works of the musicologist Joscelyn Godwin: 'Harmonies of Heaven and Earth', Thames and Hudson, 1987; Music, Mysticism and Magic', Arkana, New York and London, 1987; 'Cosmic Music: Three Musical Keys to the Interpretation of Reality', West Stockbridge, Mass., Lindisfarne Press, 1986.
[71] Refer Kristeller, 1980, pp 171-172.

[72] Plato, 'Sophist', esp. 263d - 268d. Refer also to Gilbert and Kuhn, 1972, pp 32-36.
[73] Plato, 'Republic', Book X, 605.
[74] Plato, 'Republic' Book III, 398-403; 'Laws' Book II, 655-674
[75] Plato, 'Laws', Book II, 655-674.
[76] Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book I, 980-982; Physics, 194(a)- 194(b); Ethics, 1193(b): 14 - 1141(b):8.
[77] Aristotle, 'Poetics', 1447(a):15; 1460(b):10.
[78] Kristeller, 1980, pp 171-172.
[79] Ibid. p. 176.
[80] Kristeller, 1980, pp. 199-203.
[81] Refer to H. Dooyeweerd, 1953, Vol. I, pp. 169-566. Refer also to Robert C. Solomon, 'The Rise and Fall of the Self: Continental Philosophy Since 1750', OUP, 1988. It gives an excellent treatment of the second of 'the ultimate sources of order and meaning' cited here.
[82] The section on 'The Expression Theory of Art' in Dickie, 1971, pp 38-41 provides a good summary of these issues as they relate to the philosophies of Plato and Kant, but does not point out the religious contexts in which these were nurtured.
[83] Clive Bell, 'Art', Chatto & Windus, London, 1914; Susanne K. Langer, 'A Theory of Art', Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1953; R. G. Collingwood, 'The Principles of Art', Clarendon Press, London, 1938.