

ART, CHANGING WORLD ORDER, AND CULTURAL IDENTITY  
Art as Carrier of Deep Culture and Structure

By Johan Galtung

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin  
Wallotstraße 19

1000 Berlin 33

May 1983

## 1. Introduction\*

As the title of my talk indicates it covers a large field: "art", "changing world order", "cultural identity", and "deep culture and structure". As I shall try to show these four fields are very intimately related, and the International Association of Art is certainly to be congratulated upon having selected this as the theme for their thenth congress. So, let me start with some very introductory comments about the topics to be explored.

I assume that the old definition of art as "reality seen through a temperament" is a very useful one. It says nothing about reality and nothing about the language chosen by the artist for expression. But it says something about the process: temperament, emotions, even deep emotions. Art without emotion becomes artisanry.

I could go further, I could even say: artists are among the most sensitive people in any society. They have a deeper feeling of what is going on, some profound intuitions that most other people do not have. Of course, there are many others who are as much or more sensitive - but artists have the additional advantage of having languages of communication at their disposal, extraordinary languages that speak both to the heart and to the mind of people. This is very important because if means that artists, just like some social scientists and some politicians and many others, can and should see it as their task to articulate on behalf of those who do not themselves command forceful languages of expression: the downtrodden, the underprivileged, the powerless, wherever they may be. An artist who never does this falls short of his obligation to humanity.

But there is another dimension to this sensitivity, beyond the empathy in social space, and in geographical space, with the underprivileged. It is sensitivity in time, artists as the antennae of humanity, stretching further into future, even far into future, beyond what other

---

\*Key note address, Tenth General Assembly and Congress, International Association of Art, Helsinki 28 May 1983.

people are capable of. One should not necessarily believe that this is a conscious process in and among artists. Rather, they are the receivers, and partly also creators, of the waves of the future, giving expression to these dim signals through their art. "Give me the deep meaning of what artists articulate and I shall tell you something about what the future will be like!" I mean this seriously, and in saying so I have also said something about most political deep meaning of what they are talking about and I shall tell you something about which of the many pasts they are the products of. Which does not rule out the possibility that there may be politicians who are artists, and certainly also artists who are politicians.

But this means that artists are indispensable in a society. Where art is free artists can serve as an amplifier of the grievances from the margins of national and global society, and for the signals from the future; where art is repressed and reduced to embroidery and embellishment of the status quo and the past, society loses these two important sources of insight for its own renewal. It follows from this that not all artists have to do all of this all the time, but some of them have to do some of it some time. It also follows that artists who are true to their function will never have unproblematic lives. They will be tormented by the suffering they serve to articulate; they will have to face the agonies of the continuous birth process that any society goes through every day for that matter, transforming past and present into future. Everybody has to go through some of that agony, not necessarily an unpleasant one. But the artist has to take in more of it since his antennae stretch further into the future. There may be high prices to pay for high levels of sensitivity.

Today we are witnessing a tremendous change in world order, some of it captured in the formula New International Economic Order (NIEO). Let it be pointed out from the beginning that NIEO means exactly what it says. It is economic to the point of being economistic, essentially concerned with terms of trade between more or less industrialized countries, with national command over economic assets, with

increased trade and other types of economic exchange between less industrialized countries, with "counter-penetration" of what is often referred to as South into North through investment etc., and with increasing control of South over the world economy as it is articulated in transnational corporations and certain key international monetary institutions (World Bank etc.). Most of this is, in addition, new.

However, more important than the economic aspect is the international aspect: all of this serves to give developing countries a new deal, a fair chance to play on the world market as subjects in their own right, not as objects to be manipulated by others. But then, that world market is a capitalist market, the rules of the game have not been changed, only the cards are distributed somewhat differently. In the overwhelming majority of Third World countries, at least 100 of them, this new international economic order will not lead to any redistribution inside the countries or any improvement of the conditions of the people in general, only to increased class differences that will then be kept under control through the import of more weapons and means of surveillance for the police and the military. A European country like Belgium for instance, with the highest unemployment rate in Western Europe for a number of years (other countries are now catching up with Belgium, at 13,5%) has arms export as the most viable industry in the country. Only a low number of developing countries have distribution mechanisms so that economic growth for the country as a whole will also improve the conditions of the people: the socialist countries, and some of the countries in East and Southeast Asia heavily influenced by Buddhism; at most a dozen or so.

I am saying this because it is important not to identify with any new international order that comes up just because the old international order, that of colonialism and neo-colonialism, is rejected by all decent people around the world. And yet there is that dream of a new world order, an order less dominated by a strong Center around the North Atlantic and with Periphery in most other parts of the world, partly trying to imitate, partly being exploited by the Center. An order

where each part could be a center in its own right. That dream will always remain with us, and will always be worth fighting for regardless of how it may be betrayed by the way the world machinery treats efforts to make life more bearable for the powerless.

This is important also because it has to do with cultural identity. That there is a world transformation going on is beyond doubt, but the question still remains, from where and to where? And what does this have to do with art, and what does it have to do with the special situation of the artist? To that I now turn.

## 2. Social cosmology as an approach to deep culture and deep structure.

I think the problem of cultural identity has to be approached at two different levels, the shallow and the deep. To take an example: when I hear music by the great Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, or watch 19th century romantic paintings from Norwegian fjords I know that in a certain sense I am at home. The rhythms, of music and landscape, the steep transitions from high to low, the color and tone - all of these are familiar. And yet I feel no identity with it: these pieces of art are expressions of a deep culture with which the Norwegian national bourgeoisie undoubtedly identified last century. They took great delight in it, but one century later it is almost meaningless except as decoration. As I will try to show immediately these are expressions of a faith in an order in the universe that it is difficult to entertain today. One may identify with them because they are familiar, but that identification is at the shallow level, not at the deeper level of social cosmology. That deeper level is the level of the hidden code, the program of a civilization.

I have found it useful to bring in the following six dimensions in order to describe any civilization, perhaps adding that these dimensions are certainly necessary, they may not be sufficient. "Civilization"

is then conceived of as a "macro-culture", in other words a cultural program of vast areas of human kind in space and in time. But there are many civilizations in this world, on which ones should I focus? I have chosen to explore a little bit what could be called "Occidental civilization in expansion", the kind of civilization usually identified with the "West". I find it fairly typical of the Occident both in the Roman-Greek period and in the so-called modern period, whereas the Middle Ages would be an expression of a negation of that civilization, "Occidental civilization in contraction". But there are also other negations, the vast variety of civilizations referred to as "non-Western". I do not have to represent anyone in particular. A realistic map of the world at present could very well take the form of comparing Occidental civilization in expansion with its negations, other kinds of civilization.

The six dimensions are:

- (1) Space: the assumption that the world is divided into center and periphery, with the Occident in the center from which most things emanate; and the rest of the world in the periphery, waiting to receive the message.
- (2) Time: the assumption of a time structure with a clear beginning and an end, with progress and crisis and catharsis, with an End-zustand, a dissolution in harmony.
- (3) Knowledge: fragmentation of everything into small, mutually isolated "atoms", then stringed together according to some theoretical, often deductive master plan.
- (4) Person-Nature:relations: the idea that human beings are over nature.
- (5) Person-Person relations: the idea that men are over women and some men are over other men; more particularly that women are closer to nature whereas men are closer to God.
- (6) God-Person relations: the idea that God is over all human beings, then come the men, then the women, and at the bottom nature - with considerable distance between these four groupings.

Let us then reflect a little bit on how such basic codes could be expressed in art. Just imagine that there is a civilization programmed this way, there are artists inside it who accept the program in an unreflecting manner, and they try to give expressions to their art in accordance with the program. How would they do it?

The artists who operate in space, meaning painting, graphic artists, sculpture etc. would take it for granted that there should be a center and a periphery in their artistic expression. In painting this comes out particularly clearly in the notion of perspective that in a sense marked the transition between the paintings of the Middle Ages and those of the modern period. Space in the form of a canvas was equipped with center and periphery. And in the other arts the same comes through clearly, for instance as the object upon which the attention of the person(s) appearing in the painting is focussed.

Correspondingly with the arts that have time as their medium: dance, music, literature. The classical sonata of the Vienna Classics, the way it dominated Western music for centuries, has a time cosmology very much in accordance with what was mentioned above. There is a definite beginning and a definite end, there is a build-up, a climax, there is tension release. One might even say that there is isomorphism with sexual intercourse as traditionally experienced by the male human being in the Occident. And the same with literature: a theme is indicated and developed, actors are brought in, there is a climax, and there is some kind of orderly mopping up towards the end, the drama has been kept together not only in space and time but also in action (according to the classical Greek formula). It has been brought to an end, not necessarily happy, but with the inner drama fully acted out.

The Occidental approach to knowledge also finds its expression in the realm of art. The tendency to fragment, to divide whatever is into something held to be more unitary, is found in the arts, like in science in the form of specialization. Instead of art as an integrated form of expression it is divided into painting, sculpture, graphics,

music, dance, literature, and so on. And these forms are then subdivided into schools and sub-schools, just like for the sciences. And it has the same effect: in science any total view, any holistic conceptualization of what is and what might be, and for that reason also what should be, is lost hold of in all this fragmentation. Correspondingly for art: there is no integrated, total language of expression, only highly specialized languages, appealing to some type of ability and expressive potential, to the neglect, even expression of others.

The idea of man over nature is expressed in art, I think, particularly in the way in which art is isolated from nature. On a canvas nature has been tamed, domesticated, put in two dimensional form on a slick surface with no texture to speak of, ideally with no smell, adequately framed, symmetrically caged on a museum wall which itself is an enclosure, kept apart from nature. And the same could be said about anything which is associated with bourgeois high culture: domesticated, removed from what happens in nature and from man in nature. The message given is not only man above nature but also man apart from nature, setting himself apart. Art becomes artificial, as opposed to natural.

And finally the last two, the relation between human beings and the relation to God. This is where structure enters whereas above one might say that the references have been to culture (actually, it is impossible to draw any strict line between the two). Since this is equally crucial for the problem of identity I would like to expand on it a little more in detail.

To start with, what about God? Obviously medieval art in the Occident was all to the glory of God, it was to serve Him - the white, male, old, urban and aristocratic looking Western God. But God is dead, or at least dying and has been so for some time. In his place, in modern Western society came something else: success. It was not to serve (although there certainly were enough servile people), not necessarily solidarity, not necessarily self-realisation although all of these can also be found. The basic goal, the beacon of life, standing above human beings and also uniting them was and is: success.



Obviously this had to find its expression in the realm of art. Society in general became highly individualistic, fragmenting humankind into social atoms, individuals; and remained highly vertical. Competition, upward social mobility became the concrete expressions of success; the problem is to identify the concrete forms in the part of society concerned with art. More particularly, three basic ideas emerged.

First, a division of art society into three layers: art producers, art consumers and then an inbetween layer of considerable significance: art critics. The art producers were then fragmented in the way mentioned into specialists of various kinds, certainly not totally unknown in other social formations. Art consumers were also fragmented, but somewhat less so, according to which type of art they consume. And the art critics emerged as the mediators between the two, explaining to the art consumers what they should think and feel in connection with the product of art; explaining to the art producers the reactions of the art consumers. Obviously there was and is a considerable amount of fraud at work here: the art critic, usually not him- or herself an artist, sometimes artiste manqué, does not necessarily bother to find out what the art producer tries to express, nor to find out how the art consumer reacts. Essentially the art critic is a closed system, communicating from and to himself and his/her colleagues, the other art critics. Their usefulness is certainly to be disputed, their numbers may be said to be too high, even to be regarded as some type of malignant (as they are very often malicious) neoplasm in art society, standing on the way of direct exchange between producers and consumers.

Second, extreme individualism set in. Art lost its unanimity, it became identified with the artist. It was no longer there only to serve God or humanity, but also to serve the success of the individual artist who consequently had to have his/her name attached to it. This brought in considerable despair among the art critics/specialists who tried to come to grips with "primitive" art and "medieval" art and found it lacking in names, profoundly anonymous, an expression of popular art, people's art or simply collective art, with the artist as a tool, an instrument of the collectivity rather than as a subject, the actor

shaping the art. In this one may find some explanation of a very basic phenomenon: women were and are still highly underrepresented among the art producers, possibly because this part of social cosmology/structure fits them much less than it fits the highly competitive male part of modern society.

Third, art society became extremely vertical. Art is often evaluated not so much in respect of what this or that piece of art stands for, or means for individuals or society, as what it means for the position of the artist. After this product, is he up or down or the same; and if he is up is he "of our best" or not? How much talent is the product indicative of? The question is not only "Is the artist good" but "Is the artist better than --- ?" The focus is on placing the artist more than on understanding the product. Once placed some of the interest tapers off and the focus is on new artists, on new stars on the firmament, on their way up.

And this again is where the critics enter, communicating and expressing ranking of the artists. The art critic informs the art consumer who is now up and equally importantly who is on his way down. The art dealers (among them the impresarios) find monetary expressions of this by marketing the product, not to mention by marketing the artist as worth investing in: "He is a young man on his way up". One consequence of this is that artists largely produce for each other and for the middle man, and that the consumers' task is to finance and to maintain the system, for instance by buying paintings that go well with their furniture. This would differ from a society where production would be more for God, for Society or for the Prince and the artist will somehow be kept alive by anyone of these three. It will be seen how the critics are indispensable for this particular structural perversion of artistic activity. And it should also be noted that even for the consumers verticality becomes a reality: they have to learn how to be good consumers, to appreciate what is in and depreciate what is out, to move through a museum and an exhibition at exactly the right pace (too quick is a sign of superficiality, too slow might be a sign of indulgence in one piece of art at the expense of all the others), emerging at the end after a correct orbit, with the

correct facial expression, possibly to be rewarded with a glass of sherry.

\* \* \*

My assumption now is that we have to work at the level of these six dimensions and not at the level of the cultural arte-facts in order to understand the meaning of art in a social setting. And art can only be in a social setting, otherwise it is meaningless: it is an act of communication from something through the artist to something, and that is already the social setting. But that does not mean in any sense that the artist is a captive prisoner of the social cosmology of a given social formation or civilization. The artists, as mentioned, are sensitive - they take in signals from future formations; they participate in the creation of such future formations. Of course they have to have a minimal freedom in order to express itself, so that it becomes visible, audible, tactile to others. The positive thing about the Occidental order just referred to is that it has given a fair amount of such freedom to very many artists during the last generations. Hence, the question may be asked: What have been the messages, what alternative cosmologies have found their first expressions in the languages of the artists?

Let us use the same order of presentation as above, the same six dimensions and see what the message has been.

Clearly, space early this century lost much of its center-periphery gradient the way painting was transformed. I am, of course, thinking of "cubism", particularly of Picasso: he invites the viewer to see reality from many angles at the same time, there is no particular center in the painting, nor is the viewer a center. Perspective is, of course out - but the management of space, "*l'a management du territoire*", is much more revolutionary than that. One might even say that there is an experience of total space from total space, brought about by a very particular painting technique. And then, of course, there is the non-space, the "abstract" painting that communicates form and colors for which the term "space" would be totally inappropriate. Not strange that the bourgeoisie felt that there was no longer any order in the universe and was against this:

they were right, this was a challenge that went far beyond art into the whole perception of the social space. If space has no center and periphery how can social space and world space have center and periphery - in other words, how can there be strong centers in certain capital cities, exercising command not only over its own nationals, but also over peoples in the most remote corners of the world?

The same applies to time. The revolution, again early this century, was clearly directed against the time order communicated by the classical sonata form. The tripartite division known from that type of music was rejected, the single peak climax was no longer there, the dissolution of tension in harmony, ending firmly on the tonica, was out. But worse than that: the music no longer had any clear beginning or any clear end. It could actually start almost anywhere and begin almost anywhere; it was from eternity to eternity. But this is rather important because it means that the music continues in the listener, not as a memory, as something to be relished, possibly to be sung. If the listener were really tuned in it could continue after it was over. In short, music as something isomorphic to a sexual intercourse as experienced by the female in the Occident (and perhaps by most people elsewhere). Of course, there are all kinds of forms inbetween, and what has just been said is perhaps more typical of Oriental music than of modern music in the West. But still it should be appreciated how different it is from classical music with its sharp beginning and end and its clear internal time structure. A bourgeoisie sure of itself; here we come, here we grow and develop, here we erupt and here we come to rest, there is peace and harmony in the universe.

A similar development took place as a protest against fragmentation of art. I doubt that it has found so clear forms as the space and time revolutions just referred to, but the Gesamtkunstwerk tradition, also associated with the more ambiguous name of Wagner, is important. There seems to be an increasing tendency to bring arts together, not only artists, in order to integrate not only consumer experience, but also the art producers. In this there is a search after something more holistic, more integrated: it will be exciting to observe this in the future.

The relation to the nature also seems to have been changing. Paintings, or in general art that uses material for exhibits, get more and more texture. They communicate not only form and content, but also material as such; nature, crude, sharp, sometimes disagreeable. There are tendencies to break out of the classical rectangular canvas with its more or less golden ratio. Paintings become three-dimensional, sculptures become four-dimensional (time is added, they become dynamic); in the collage anything may become related to anything as long as there is still an element of expression. In addition to this more and more art is exhibited and consumed, possibly also produced in nature than before - taken out of the artificial settings and brought into some kind of harmony or even disharmony but at least relation, with nature. This, of course, is also reflected in the way people are dressed when they consume art: less as if it were an anniversary or funeral service; more as if they were hiking in nature, casual, informal.

Then, the social structures engendered by artistic activity. It is not so clear exactly what the message is at this point, but it is at least away from the three basic points elaborated above.

First, there is more and more tendency for art producers and art consumers to have direct contact. There are countless meetings with dialogues, "what do you expect of us, and what do we expect of you." Without this being said sufficiently explicitly there may be a tendency to by-pass the art critics, the art specialists. People want not only to hear, of worship, even touch the artist; but also to relate to him/her as human beings. And the artists, fully aware that the structure that has been created around art reaches the upper echelons of society and then only a particular fraction of it more than the rest, try to communicate with other parts of the population, theater pieces, music, art exhibitions go straight to the margin of society, to the underprivileged, meaning not only working class but also the sick and the old, the minorities, the children. This is not a public very capable of

paying for art consumption, hence this activity is or was to a large extent the product of a society in rapid economic growth, not only of dedicated artists. It will probably decline in serious economic crisis.

Second, there is less emphasis on individualism. Artists tend to produce more together, in collectivities, in communes, although the collective art product may still be for the future. But in addition to that there is more of a tendency to see artists as expressions of the collectivity, of basing art on the fundamental wave of the cultural civilization out of which they have sprung, with the individual articulations of that carrying wave being important but not the only thing that matters. The artistic ability in everyone is emphasized, not only the artistic talent in the chosen few. It becomes very similar to sport: elite sport also leads to spectator sport; it may stimulate mass sport activity, but may also stand in its way. Similarly élitist art may lead to spectator art, the art of being a good spectator - and it may stimulate, but also stand in the way of mass artistic participation, as producers. The dilemma is there for everyone to see, there is no simple solution anywhere, but a problem of more adequate balance.

Third, of course verticality is still here, there are sharp distinctions between good and bad, better and worse, in art, and among artists. But may be they are tempered somewhat by the deep concern for the message, a concern which is natural during the social transformation of a society rather deeply steeped in crisis. May be the question becomes more how genuine, how honest it is as a piece of art than how good the artist is, and what is his ranking on the score sheets handed out by these people who are so happily grading others, the critics, legitimizing their activity by seeing themselves as guides for the rest of society, assuming that the rest of society is unable to do so itself.

This, of course, would also point in some other directions where the substitute for the dying God is concerned. Instead of success it might be precisely to serve some higher ideals, for instance peace (Artists for Peace is a rather important movement today), solidarity

(artists contributing substantially to campaigns against inhumanitarian activities, regardless of where they have been perpetrated on earth) and self-realization, including the self-realization of the consumer by inviting him to participate in creativity; for instance by asking the public up on the stage, to perform. No doubt there is something new going on. But it may take vertical forms with masters and disciples, and it may take more horizontal forms with everybody, including the consumers, participating in some kind of art production commune, perhaps not so much producing art, as being art, together. In a sense it does not matter so much which form it takes: it may also be argued that the best possible outcome would be a plurality of forms, a diversity that could only enrich our existence - some forms of art highly vertical, others equally deeply horizontal. One does not have to exclude the other, there could be room for both, in the same society even.

However, having said all this it is quite clear that something has been going on this century and that all of it is contrary to the expansionist mode of Occidental civilization. The step from painted space, a painting with no clear center and periphery, to the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism is conceptually a very short one. The economic, political and military forms of this fight are very well-known today. There is also the cultural dimension, not so well-known among people outside the fields of arts. Of course, one understands that something strange is going on when a French minister of culture attacks violently, and rightly so, "cultural imperialism" - meaning by that essentially the way in which US-made cultural products are penetrating into all corners of the world, particularly through the mass media, and the movies and the pop - but somehow forgets to consider what his own country is doing in this field. It sounds as if culture no longer can have any imperialist connotation if it comes with a French accent! In other words, the new spatial representation is fully compatible with a world without a center, with many centers in their own right, with no

part of the world trying to impose its culture on others, nor to steal the cultural artefacts from an other part of the world and put them in museums, regarding them as their own property, not returning them to the proper owners. But this comes only through a fight based on self-respect, deep enough to enjoy fully other cultures, yet able to reject the idea that something is, for instance, "la langue plus culturelle du monde".

Some of the same comments apply to time. If music and literature no longer have this clear progress, climax and Endzustand, what happens then to the Occidental dream? Whether given christian, liberal or marxist expressions, what happens to progress, to crisis (the agony of whether one is saved or not, the agony of economic success vs. bankruptcy, the agony of a revolutionary process) and to the Endzustand (eternal salvation, eternal economic growth, communist society)? The whole Western project is challenged through a representation of time that refuses the listener the pleasure of a contradiction-free finale. Instead it becomes like Chinese philosophy understands time: one splits into two, two unites into one, one splits into two and so on and so on. Daoism, as it has been already during millennia, maoism as it was until recently, right now pushed into the background by a more bourgeoisie-like leadership, itself subject - in due time to the dialectics of social change.

No doubt the striving to put the arts together is similar to the striving to put people and their activities together so typical of innumerable commune movements around the world, in the North as well as in the South. People refuse to be fragmented into homo economicus, homo politicus, homo ludens, homo faber, and so on. As a matter of fact, it may very well be that here common people have been ahead of artists, possibly because they have less vested interests. For the artists in contemporary society the chance of making a living depends on his ability to work out his/her own niche own sub-specialty, with a specialty, within one form of art, and be rewarded accordingly.



A society more in harmony with nature would also be a society with more ecological considerations because of a much higher level of sensitivity to nature. It should perhaps be noted that for this to emerge it is not sufficient to see nature as a recreation area, to be enjoyed once in a while, tended by others. One also has to produce in nature, and to produce with nature rather than against her. This is fully understood by most primitive and traditional people, it is only the "modern" peoples who are treating nature that consistingly badly. The trends repeated about artistic acting are fully in line with this.

And then, of course the new social relations indicated above between art producers and art consumers could also serve as a model for relations between authorities and subject in a modern state, the leaders and the led, the manipulators and the manipulated. The artist who does not insist that he is sovereign because of his talent, and different from everybody else who should flock together in admiration, but sees himself in continuity with other people - perhaps as having more on a dimension of artistic expression than others and being able to articulate better than others but not that qualitatively different - points towards other social formations than the ones we are used to. They are less divided into watertight compartments, less individualist, less vertical - although the vertical possibility certainly also is there, with masters and disciples, and not only in the arts. One might be thinking not only in terms of medieval Western society but also in terms of contemporary Asian societies with gurus and bhikkhus, not exactly entering society in an egalitarian manner but paying with a very low material level of living for their high non-material status, even power.

There are strong arguments today in favor of such societies and cosmologies, and particularly in the overdeveloped part of the world. Smaller units, decentralized, more self-reliant, not claiming to be the centers of the world, perhaps more stable and less dramatic, with more spirit of self-realization, service and solidarity and less distance to nature and among humans. Many will recognize this as the green wave currently coming to life in the Western world. And its precursors were the artists.

### 3. The problem of cultural identity

So, this is where I would try to locate the problem of cultural identity. What is happening in the world today is what could be referred to as cosmology exchange: slowly, and with very much agony, the expansionist Occidental cosmology is slipping, losing its hold on people in the Occident, still very much alive in the leadership as symbolized by such figures as President Reagan of the United States and Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom. It is yielding, and in its place comes a set of other cosmologies, expressive of other ways of viewing nature, human beings, society and the world as a whole. But at the same time the old expansionist cosmology is penetrating into the former periphery of the world, getting an increasingly stronger hold on the minds not only of the elites but also of the people of Third World countries - perhaps even more on the people than on the elites that may already have developed their doubts. There is a greening of the West, but at the same time the non-West is increasingly painted blue for liberalism/capitalism and red for marxism/socialism or rose/pink for some compromise between the two but nevertheless centralizing and expansionist: social democracy.

The problem of cultural identity is not the problem of cultural idiom at the shallow level. It is the problem, at the deeper level, of where one stands, or floats, drifts, walks, runs, jumps relative to these cosmological poles. I have mentioned that the de-occidentalization of the Occident in a sense can be said to have been started with the artists, as it should in accordance with the hypothesis of artists as the most sensitive and articulate part of human kind.

But if that is the case the opposite should also be the case: that in the non-Occident artists will have been among the first to take on Occidental forms of expression, thereby accelerating the grip Occidental cosmology could have on their peoples. They would start painting with perspective, center and periphery. They would start constructing music with beginning, climax and end, and write literature according to the Greek rules, linear progression with actors who unfold themselves,

whose life lines twist and twin through the plot, within time and space binds and orderly put to rest at the end. And there would be fragmentation and specialization, away from traditional dances with singing and chanting and colors, the typical "primitive" Gesamtkunstwerk, found almost everywhere in the world till it became touched by Occidental patterns. Moreover, Third World artists would move out of the villages, out of the bush so to speak and into airconditioned rooms where they can meet the civilized public. And they would start participating in the artist rat race, using the art products to serve their own success as most other people do in that type of social formation. In doing so he will of course use the colors of his culture. He would know perfectly well that it is only by writing, painting etc. in a way that is cosmologically correct that he will be accepted at all, but his comparative advantage would consist in using the colors and the tones, the idioms of his own soil. And people will say, vaively: "how African!", "how Asian!"

Is this a crisis of identity? I am not so sure. The Third World artist is doing what he can do, what is open to him in order to gain a position in the society taking shape around him which certainly is a social reality. He may have roots in one cosmology yet living in another; he may know the language of expression, the symbols of a non-Western culture and also those of a Western culture. He may, concretely, talk a non-Western language and also have perfect command of a Western language. But does this mean that he has a cultural identity crisis?

I think it depends on how he or she is able to handle it, and what kind of social pressures are put on the person. Normally we do not say that the person who talks, for instance, six languages is in identity crisis - we might also conceive of the person as lucky, privileged in that way to be able to participate in six different cultures. Why should that not also apply to other means of expression, for instance to the symbols of tone, color and form, music, painting and forming? Why should a person only be in command of only one language and not be polyglot?

In short, I do not think the problem is whether one is rooted in one, two or more cosmologies, cultures, symbols or languages. Of course there is an upper limit to human capacity, but in most cases only a part of our potential has been utilized. Nor is the problem necessarily whether the person feels at rest, at ease or not. One may be perfectly unhappy knowing only one language and perfectly happy knowing several, correspondingly one may be in a constant turmoil as a fully integrated member in one culture and also develop a kind of identity based on two or more identities, some type of super-identity very well known by the millions in the world today who come from one country and live in another, who have parents from different cultures and so on. There are deeper factors at work. The simplistic formula, "one is harmony, two is tension, more than two is chaos" is simply out of touch with reality.

Rather, the problem in connection with art should be stated in a different manner. Of course my own relation to art is more that of a theoretician and consumer, not of the producer. But like so many others I have sometimes written short stories, may be also tried something more ambitious - enough, I think, to know something of the psychology of artists creativity, at least enough to know what my friends who are artists talk about when they are exploring such matters. I think I can say that I know it to be very similar to scientific creativity. It has something to do with being sensitive, open to impressions, letting them touch you deeply, even hit you, hurt you. It has very much to do with the agony suffered when all these impressions are crying to be formed, to be brought together, to be marshalled into some kind of wholeness above themselves, at one or several levels higher. How to do it comes as a lightning, in either case, very often after a sleep. In the early morning it is simply there, recognized not so much by the conscious thought as by the gut feeling of the body. The rest is a question of handicraft, of having a language at one's disposal with which to express that gut feeling. The rest is to a large extent a technicality, self-discipline, hard work. Inspiration and transpiration, as somebody said.

But there is one more point to it and this brings us closer to the problem of identity. In this entire process there is a basic distinction between what is honest and what is dishonest, what is genuine and what is not. I think the artist, just as well as the researcher, again, has a strong sensitivity where this is concerned. He and she feels it as "bad conscience", to speak religious language, and as a "bad feeling", to speak body language, the moment form and content are not truthful to each other and not truthful to all those small impressions and sensations impinging on one. One may be attracted by a worn out formula, a cliché taken from somewhere or somebody else, not adequate or appropriate to what should be expressed. One may try to neglect some expression/sensations at odds with the rest, those that bring disharmony into the picture, that refuse to be incorporated into the Gestalt that took shape in those moments of inspiration. And I think the problem of the artist with roots in more than one cosmology, more than one culture, more than one symbolism might be this difficulties in knowing what is true and genuine since there are so many truths and so many things that are genuine, to different persons, at different times and places.

But then he can also use this in order to produce new and better art! If he is a member of two worlds then he is not alone in that situations, there are millions in the same situation. Why should he only express a non-Western cosmology or only a Western cosmology, why could he not express both, bring to life others who are also members of two worlds and also have the agonies, the doubts, the complexities and the richness that this engenders? I would strongly argue in favor of that more eclectic approach to the problem, but in doing so in no way arguing against the person who feels deep roots in one of these and wants to find artistic expression to the socio-cultural logic of that system alone. That should be his or her freedom. And he or she should not be forced by anybody, any ministry of culture, any critic, any grouping of any other kind or just blind social circumstances to express only one (because this is where he comes from) or only the other (because this is where he has arrived). The artist should be sensitive to his or her own inner commands, doing what is felt as true and genuine. Only then is he truthful to the vocation as an artist; reflecting through his temperament, amplifying the silent voices of the downtrodden, giving us visions of new societies, new worlds.