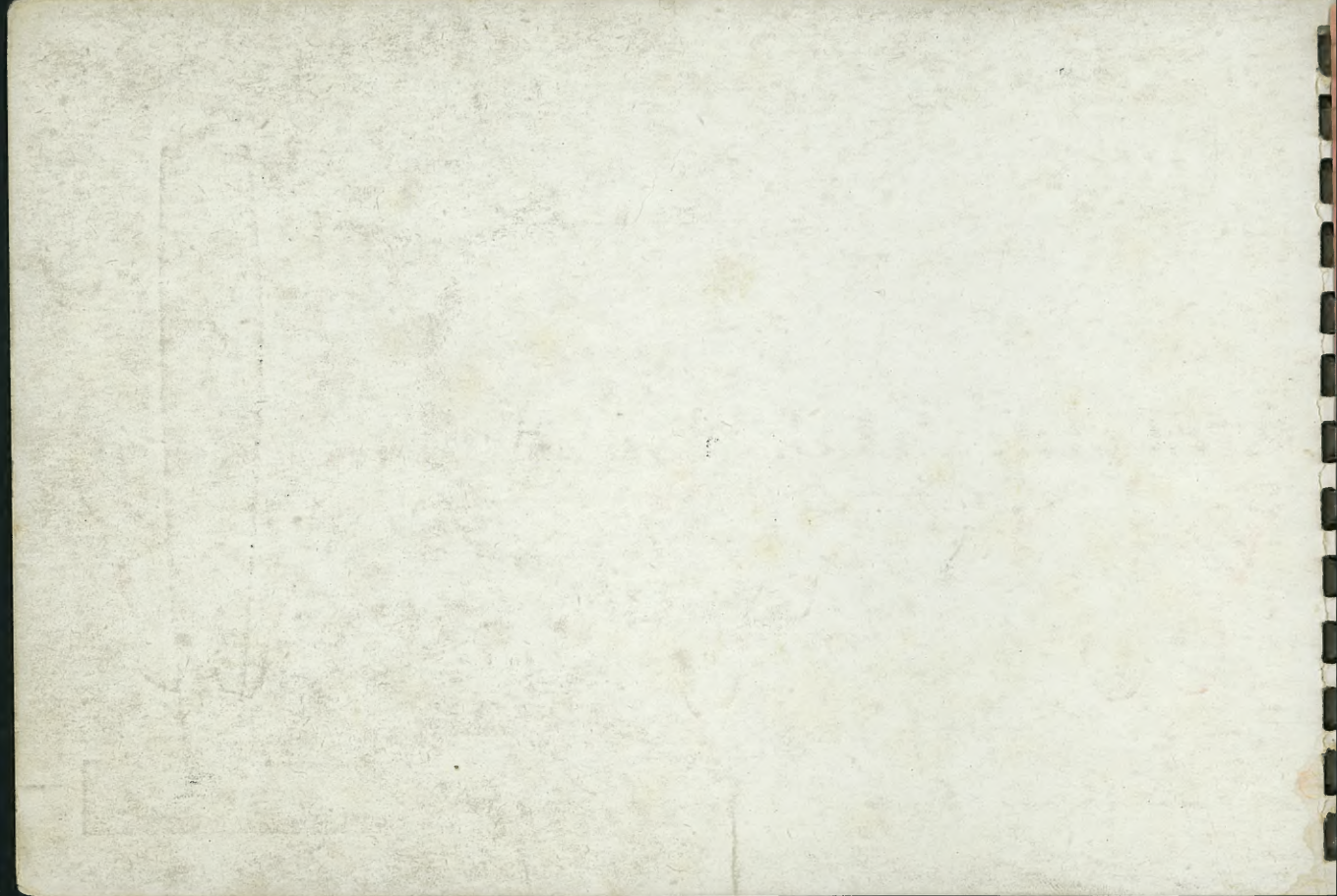


Dr Helen Rosenau

Woman in Art from Type to Personality

Isomorph **5/-** 100 pages 55 illustrations





Woman in Art

Helen Rosenau DrPhil PhD

Woman in Art from Type to Personality

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Foreword

THIS BOOK CONTAINS MORE INFORMATION, ANALYSIS and reflection than many a volume twice or thrice its size. The illustrations are chosen from such a wide field that even experts may find something that is new to them. It is far more, however, than an annotated collection of feminine types and attitudes in chronological order. Dr. Rosenau's approach is sociological. Her aim is to relate the representation of women in art to their position during the various stages through which *Homo Sapiens* has passed in his long and painful ascent from primitive times to

the differentiations and complexities of the twentieth century. Her text, enriched and fortified by elaborate bibliographical notes, reveals her as a thinker no less than as a narrator of social evolution.

The story, which in these pages begins about 25,000 B.C., is summarised in the second half of the title: *from Type to Personality*. Beginning as a mere biological phenomenon, the symbol of fertility, the instrument and often the slave of the stronger sex, woman gradually advances to a position in which she claims and receives recognition as an individuality with a mind and will of her own. History is the record and interpretation of the life of humanity, and the emergence of woman forms one of its most thrilling chapters. This immense and beneficent change, expressing itself in law, politics, economics and social life, ranks with the most significant transformations of the modern age. It is the author's achievement to have studied this revaluation of values from the relatively unfamiliar angle of the history of art.

G. P. GOOCH

London, 1944

Preface

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY ON WOMAN IN ART is threefold: firstly, to show the close interrelation which exists between the visual arts and the society to which they belong; secondly, to suggest the changing attitudes held regarding womanhood in the course of human evolution. The third problem to be considered is whether there may be found some permanent features which repeat themselves in varying social conditions, and may be regarded as typically feminine. It need not be added that completeness cannot be attempted in a book of this kind, either with regard to the examples selected or to the periods studied, especially since owing to war conditions it has to appear in an abridged form. The main emphasis is laid on the Mediterranean and European civilisations, whilst civilisations outside this sphere can only be dealt with as enlightening contrasts or corroborating evidence. Another necessary limitation is the subjective approach of

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the writer. No doubt a book written by some other person in a different period would yield a different approach. At the same time it has to be remembered that only from a subjective standpoint can the concept of history be realised, and that it is a personal point of view which enables us to grasp the order in a seemingly chaotic sequence of events. The picture thus conveyed should be checked by the reader perusing the selection of illustrations, thereby testing the evidence and the conclusions suggested.

I am greatly indebted to the Authorities of the Victoria and Albert Museum for facilitating my work in every way ; to Dr. Karl Mannheim for reading the original draft of this book and making some valuable suggestions ; to Miss V. Douie, of the Women's Service Library for her constant interest in the progress of the manuscript ; and finally to my publisher, for his understanding and enterprise, as well as for the care and taste with which he has given to this study its external form.

H. R.

London,
November, 1943.

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IN THE FOLLOWING LIST ARE MENTIONED THE sources from which the illustrations were taken. I wish to express my gratitude to the Trustees of the British Museum for Figs. 4, 5 and 51; to the Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum for Figs. 26 and 41; to the Warburg Institute for Fig. 8; to Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., for Fig. 9, which is reproduced from Edward Thompson's *Suttee*; to Sir Humphrey Milford, the Oxford University Press, for Fig. 25, which is reproduced from S. Kramrisch's *Indian Sculpture*; to the London School of Economics for Fig. 15; and to Miss Barbara Hepworth, both for the cover illustration, and for her kindness in providing a photograph of a hitherto unpublished work, Fig. 55. I regret that owing to the War, permission to reproduce some of the works could not be obtained, and the present

location of the private collections cannot be stated.

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Willendorf "Venus," c.25,000 B.C.
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Introductory

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN THE EARLIEST PHASES of human evolution is unknown, and any theories on the subject¹ are based on indirect evidence drawn from much later sources, or from field work among primitive tribes. E. Grosse's suggestion, however, that a biological differentiation between the sexes became reinforced by cultural influences may well hint at the solution of the problem.

The earliest representations of women (*Fig. 1*) imply a form of society in which they were considered as basically important. Since the facts of biological paternity are not known by instinct, but only by experience, they must have been ignored at an early stage of civilisation, and the mother have

¹*Bachofen and his followers, among them Briffault, stress the maternal aspect of primitive civilisation; an opposite view is held by the Darwinian-Freudian school, emphasising the patriarchal outlook. The two views are combined in a third theory of W. Koppers and Thurnwald, who show how certain changes in agriculture facilitated a matriarchal stage as a possible but not a necessary precursor of patriarchy. They believe that at an earlier stage a more equalitarian type of family, with little division of labour between the sexes, and based on monogamy and a primitive type of food-gathering, was usual. Cf. E. Grosse: Die Former der Familie, Freiburg and Leipzig, 1896; J. J. Bachofen: Das Mutterrecht, Stuttgart, 1861; R. Briffault: The Mothers, London, 1927; C.*

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*Fig. 1: Willendorf "Venus," c. 25,000
B.C. (Natural History Museum, Vienna)*

possessed a considerable social prestige.

On the other hand, it is true to say that the physical strength of the male is marked in the "society" of apes, and gives him power over a group of females; and there is no reason to suppose that this situation was entirely different from primitive man. But to imagine that such an "order" had no exceptions and that it always worked in the same direction, is all the more unlikely, since as Zuckerman has shown, a varying behaviour may be due to reasons of strength and domination and not to direct sexual causes.²

The term *gynæocracy* has been coined in Greece for the rule of women, but it would be more correct to speak of a "gynæodynamic" character in primitive civilisations, in which the possession of the offspring may have contributed to the woman's influence, and the force of her magic *mana* found expression in veneration and taboos, as Jane Harrison and Gilbert Murray have so abundantly shown in regard to the Greek world. A similar state of affairs is shown by Tacitus³ in describing the ancient Germans, so that it would seem that influence rather

Freud: Totem and Taboo, Harmondsworth, 1940; P. W. Schmidt and W. Koppers: Voelker und Kultur, Regensburg, 1924; R. Thurnwald: Die Menschliche Gesellschaft, Berlin and Leipzig, 1931-35; J. G. Frazer: The Golden Bough, London, 3rd ed., 1935-36; Cf. also R. Benedict: Patterns of Culture, London, 1935. Varying and contradictory male and female characteristics of behaviour are here compared, without however considering the causation of such behaviour patterns. Cf. also G. Bateson: Naven, Cambridge, 1936.

²The classificatory system is, as Thomson in accordance with Morgan's theory points out, best explained by the reality of "group marriage"; and the matrilineal way of counting descent may be derived from the fact that in the society of apes the mother and children constitute the family. The monogamy prevailing with primitive peoples is explained by Zuckerman as due to the scarcity of food supply, or, as one might say, to conditions of environment; in this sense Bachofen's ideas of the importance of the mother-child family relationship are given a basis in the economic structure of the society of primates. To sum up, it may therefore be said that all these theories are not

contradictory, but complementary; the women and children, the first nucleus of the family, were related to one or more headmen acting as fathers, possibly passing from one man to the other, and being as such an important unit to be transmitted. Differing individual propensities as well as economic necessities may stress the one or the other aspect, and especially in a sedentary type of civilisation the matrilineal tendencies may be reinforced by matrilocality of domicile, as Lowie has pointed out. Cf. S. Zuckerman: The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes, London, 1932, esp. p. 308 ff; R. H. Lowie: Primitive Society, London, 2nd ed., 1929; G. D. Thomson: Aeschylus and Athens, London, 1941.

³J. E. Harrison: Ancient Art and Ritual, Home University Library, London and New York, 2nd ed., 1918; G. Murray: Five Stages of Greek Religion, Thinkers' Library, London, 1935; Tacitus: Germania, Chap. XVIII & XIX.

than rule constituted originally the woman's sphere. To this age-old influence the paleolithic figures give a significant clue.

Although a matriloal manner of living, in which the husband lives in the wife's clan, favours monogamy, the matrilineal system as such is frequently consistent with the right of the husband to take a plurality of wives. But, at the same time, these relationships are not necessarily exclusive, and admit, on the part of the wife, of open sexual relations with males other than the husband. Well-known examples of this—commonly called "sacred prostitution"—can be found in the cults of the mother goddesses in Babylonia, Crete and ancient Greece, as well as in the Indian literary tradition. It is essential that these relations were not in any way personal ones, neither were they intended to favour the development of individual love.

The matriarchal tendencies were fostered by division of labour, the invention of primitive agricultural implements by women, and thus hoe-culture is generally considered to be the basis of this type of civilisation. Furthermore, it is clear from Spartan

tradition that the marked influence of the women led to a warlike attitude on the part of the men, a fact which is corroborated by De Moubray when he speaks⁴ of the virile qualities of the Malay men living in a matriarchal society. The tentative explanation which this author gives may well hold good generally: he thinks that the women, who possess the soil, thereby force the men to "go out" and to develop a spirit of initiative and adventure. In this way the culture pattern of matriarchy may itself be instrumental in its own overthrow, since the men, growing more and more independent, master new techniques and ultimately acquire rights over the womenfolk. From this point of view the rise of the influence of the mother's brother and the ultimate power of the husband and father may be explained.

It is worth noting that the man, who in the earliest periods could not have known the facts of fatherhood, had to claim his children by some ritual acts. He therefore must have favoured the patriarchal marriage institution as a safeguard of his rights, and the means of obtaining not only a partner in life but also legitimate offspring for himself. In the course

⁴*G. A. de C. de Moubray: Matriarchy in the Malay Peninsula, London, 1931. L. T. Hobhouse, G. C. Wheeler, M. Ginsberg: The Material Culture and the Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples, London School of Economics . . . Series of Studies III, p. 142 ff.*

⁵*Santhal house-painting, Singhbhum district of Bihar, India. Cf. W. G. and M. Archer; Santhal Painting, Axis No. 7, Henley-on-Thames, 1936. These signs are mantras having originally a meditative meaning. Cf. also F. Boas: Primitive Art, Oslo, 1927.*

of the development of the marriage relationship, however, the situation became reversed, since it was found advantageous for the woman to be kept by the man and her children cared for. The woman, as well as her family, would therefore acquiesce in a restriction of rights which ensured to her the protection and care of a husband. Such a situation presupposes the knowledge of physical paternity as well as the existence of a division of labour which bound the woman to her biological functions, to the house or to the tent.

The influences on art in primitive civilisations are as varied as these civilisations themselves. Two facts appear, however, particularly striking in this connection. The one is that women, who are commonly assumed to have little or no power of abstraction, invent patterns of abstract art (*Fig. 2*) (as with the Esquimaux and the Santhals⁵); the other, that the earliest representations of human beings are of the female sex.

Paleolithic art is the only historical source in existence for the earliest periods of human evolution, and strikingly enough it shows two prevailing sub-

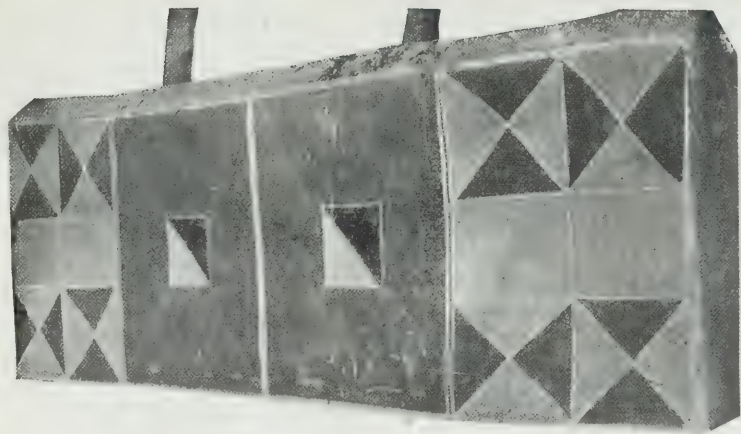


Fig. 2: *Santhal mantra, contemporary (Bihar).*

jects, the animal and the female figure in the nude. The rarer representations of the male, as found for example in Eastern Spain, are not sculptures in the round, but so-called *pictograph* paintings, showing mostly hunters, dancers and magicians, and emphasising not so much their sex as their occupation. The whole interest is in the active and mobile side of men's lives, whilst the interest in the less mobile woman centres around sex and fertility.

⁶*It is worth noting that from these figures no direct evolution can be traced to ancient Egyptian or Sumerian Art. Owing to geological reasons which produced climatic changes, the centre of civilisation shifted from the West to the East in neolithic times, and an artistic evolution set in, starting from primitive pottery and culminating in works of art of the highest aesthetic significance. Cf. F. Boas : Op. cit. p. 181 ; also H. Kuehn : Kunst und Kultur der Vorzeit Europas, Berlin, 1929 ; H. G. Sparing : The Childhood of Art, London, 1930 ; H. Obermaier : Urgeschichte der Menschheit, in Geschichte der Führenden Voelker I, Freiburg, 1931.*

The paleolithic female figures of the "Venus" type are most frequently sculptures in the round. They concentrate on the sexual and reproductive aspects and are presumably the work of men. No indication of the faces is given, but the hair is carefully curled, and the breasts, the belly and the buttocks are shown. The best known and, at the same time, the most revealing example is perhaps the "Venus" of Willendorf (c. 25,000 B.C.). The characteristics of this type have been interpreted either from a sexual point of view—as the name "Venus" indicates—or they have been understood as naturalistic representations of pregnancy or illness. The solution of the problem may well be that the figure is meant to be ambivalent, sexual and maternal at the same time. The same is true also in another respect: one cannot say whether the figures represent human beings or goddesses, since in most cases no attributes are given. Indeed, the lack of clear distinctions is characteristic of the whole group. A magic meaning may well be correlated to these works, which express a subconscious notion of the potential powers of woman.⁶

1: Wives and Lovers

MARRIAGE IS ONE OF THE BASIC INSTITUTIONS OF mankind, and seems to exist in one form or another at all times and places. Its function is determined from an anthropological point of view by Westermarck when he says: "Marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in marriage." The individualistic view of its basis in love is expressed equally well by D. Jansen: "Children are the blessing but not the true purpose of marriage."⁷ Between these two extreme opinions a place can be found for the views held on marriage in the most divergent civilisations. Since visual art gives form to emotional attitudes and valuations, the human relationships of marriage and love are reflected by it and can

⁷E. A. Westermarck: *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I., 5th Ed. London, 1921, p. 72; Th. H. Van de Velde: *Die Fruchtbarkeit in der Ehe*, Horw-Luzern, Leipzig and Stuttgart, 1929, p. 103.

⁸*It is not without significance that the civilisation which first developed the portrait of the married couple should be one favouring the habit of brother-sister marriage. It is equally characteristic that the legal provisions of marriage were fixed by documents establishing the wives' and children's rights, especially the rights of the chief wife (nebt pa). This may be partly explained by the fact that the chief wife, who at the same time was frequently the sister, could not be deprived of her family status; descent and inheritance being reckoned*

according to the matrilineal system, the children belonged to the mother's group, and so it was to the interest of the father to emphasise the stability of the marriage relation. In the case of the slave girls and their children, the situation remained different, since there the master could dispose at will. Cf. H. Ranke: *The Art of Ancient Egypt, Vienna and London, 1936, fig. 74*; M. Murray: *Journal of the Anthropological Institute, XLV, 1915, p. 307 ff*; J. Nietzold: *Die Ehe in Aegypten, Leipzig, 1903, passim*. *Mar. Weber's valuable work Ehefrau und Mutter in der Recht-entwicklung, Tuebingen, 1907, has not been superseded, although some of the author's conclusions with regard to matriarchy require revision.*

⁹Cf. A. Moret: *Kings and Gods of Egypt, New York and London, 1912, esp. p. 16 ff*. *The story of the god visiting the queen has been deprived of its magical and ritual meaning in Moliere's Amphytrion, and is even alive to-day in Jean Givaudoux' modern version Amphytrion 38.*

be studied with its help.

The earliest representation of the married couple⁸ is found in Egypt, and goes back to the third millennium B.C.; the husband usually sits erect with his wife at his side and is generally shown with one arm around her shoulders. There is only one wife, the chief wife, to be seen, and she is of slightly smaller size than her partner. This difference is even more marked when the figures are seen in profile, the male represented on a larger scale, whilst the smaller woman is seated behind him. Another type shows the man seated and the woman standing at his side. In each case the dominant or more leisurely position is allotted to the male. It is characteristic of masculine preponderance that even if the husband is a dwarf, like Seneb, c. 2500 B.C., he is seated on a higher stool in order to appear taller than his wife (*Fig. 3*).

Love scenes in a naturalistic style are usually not described in the Egyptian reliefs where the hierarchic character is strongly marked. In the case of the union of the god Amon and the queen Ahmasi,⁹ god and queen are seated in profile, joining hands and with legs crossed, the ritual character being stressed

by the identity of their position and their rigid posture. It is only the revolutionary Amenophis IV who favours family scenes rendered in an intimate manner.

In ancient Sumeria, Babylonia and Assyria, under rigid patriarchal civilisations in communities ruled by warriors, the act of sexual union was omitted from art. The dominant female figure, Ishtar, frequently appeared in the nude, holding forward her breasts and symbolising sex and fertility. The *hierodoulai*, slave girls dedicated to the gods, expressed religious ritual through sexual acts.¹⁰ The group of the married couple, occurring on rare occasions, shows the husband reclining and the smaller wife sitting in attendance, as in Ashurbanipal's relief in the British Museum. This type cannot be compared either in frequency or in intimacy with the Egyptian scenes. The contrast between the nude figure of Ishtar and the ceremonially robed group of husband and wife in Babylonia is derived from the fact that sacred prostitution was permissible, whilst elaborate laws ruled over marriage and divorce. Thus a circumscribed although inferior



Fig. 3: Seneb and his wife, c. 2500 B.C. (Cairo Museum).

¹⁰Cf. G. Contenau : *La Déesse Nue*, Paris, 1914; S. Kramrisch : *Indian Sculpture*, Calcutta, 1933, esp. pp. 97 & 190; L. J. Delaporte : *Mesopota-*

nia, London, 1925, and Briffault passim, where many bibliographical references are given.

¹¹It is in India that the fusion of the male and female principle has found a symbolic representation in art in the Maithuna groups. But this is not synonymous with a positive attitude towards individual love or equality of women in the social sphere. Cf. Rupam, 1925, and T. A. Gopinatha Rao: Elements of Hindu Iconography, Madras, 1914.

¹²The Talmudic texts imply monogamy as well by prescribing that a High Priest should marry a second subsidiary wife for the Day of Atonement in order to be able to pronounce a blessing over "his house" even in the case of the death of his first wife. This custom shows that a priest normally possessed one wife only. (Yoma I, 13 a/b.) It is also stated that a priest should marry a virgin. Since this word appears in the singular the notion of monogamy is again implied, Lev. XXI: 13. All Biblical quotations are from the Authorised Version.

¹³A. Conze: Die Attischen Grabreliefs, Berlin, 1890 ff; A. Hekler: Greek and Roman Portraits, London, 1912.

position was allotted to women, both sexes being placed under the law.¹¹

The Old Testament, although negative in attitude towards pictorial representations, reflects in many ways the Babylonian background. It differs from it, however, in its particular emphasis on individual love, well exemplified in Elkanah's words to his barren wife: "Hannah, why weepest thou? . . . Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (1 *Samuel* 1: 8). From the Old Testament it is easy to understand that the idea of monogamy also had a germ in Israel. Zion and Israel were regarded as the Bride of God (*Isaiah* 61: 10; *Jer.* 2: 32), ideas which (based on *Eph.* 5: 23-32 and *Rev.* 21: 2 and 22: 17) were later taken up when the Church was considered the Bride of Christ. In Proverbs also the description of the Jewish wife is taken from a monogamous household.¹²

A new world opens itself in Greece, both with regard to form and to iconography. Among funerary family monuments, the warrior with his horse, the housewife with her maid holding the jewel-box, and other scenes including two, three or more figures

are found.¹³

Generally it is the seated figure that is mourned by relatives. Mostly the wife is thus seen, linking hands with her husband who stands before her, ruefully looking up at him. But the same scene can also be used in the opposite way. This arrangement was however less frequent, since the scene centreing around the seated woman in her chamber so clearly expressed the secluded home atmosphere in which the wives and mothers spent their lives (Fig. 4).

In classical Greek art the women were typified in a specific way, such as the goddess, the nymph, the amazon, the *hetaira*, the married woman. The famous saying attributed to Demosthenes: "We have *hetairai* to give us pleasure, concubines for daily bodily comfort, wives to bear us legitimate children and to care for the house," well expresses the differentiation into types¹⁴ as seen from the point of view of the wealthy citizen.

Monogamy for the Greek was a mark of distinction between himself and the barbarian, although this monogamy was qualified. The marked differentiation between the freedom of the female strangers,



Fig. 4: Grave Relief, The Family of Epichares (British Museum).

¹⁴Even Plato's Republic reflects a higher valuation of men, in so far as no particular aptitude is attributed to women, who on the whole are considered similar to though weaker than men. It may be

added that in Plato's Timaios, where the doctrine of reincarnation is adopted, mankind is interpreted as first created from a star, and according to merit, man returns to the star after death or is reborn either as a woman or as an animal. For Aristotle, there is a difference of virtue for men and women as there is between the child and the slave; in his Politics he enlarges on the function of the family, the ruling factor of which is the father, so that for Plato as well as for Aristotle the place of the woman is a secondary one. An extreme opinion on women is found in the Eumenides by Aeschylus, since the male seed is considered all important, the woman not contributing towards the child but only housing it in her womb. Cf. A. E. Zimmern: The Greek Commonwealth, Oxford, 1922, passim; F. A. Wright; Feminism in Greek Literature, London, 1923; H. Licht: Sexual Life in Ancient Greece, London, 1931, gives subjective valuations, but useful bibliographical references. Also G. D. Thomson: Op. cit. p. 387 ff; J. E. Harrison: Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion, 3rd Ed. Cambridge, 1922, p. 300 ff.

¹⁵In the classic art of Greece goddesses like Aphrodite—powerful fertility symbols of an earlier age expressed in the

the *hetairai*, and the seclusion of the Athenian-born woman was expressed in social and artistic life.¹⁵

Contrasting with the Greek attitude further to the West, Etruscan sarcophagi frequently show the married couple; the reclining man is seen in an easier position than his smaller wife, and although the type does not appear identical with its Egyptian counterparts, the social attitude implied is similar. The Republican Roman sepulchral reliefs develop a more equalitarian tendency. The naturalistic busts of husband and wife, sometimes linking hands, are of equal height. Frequently their children are joined to them, and in all cases the degree of individualisation is a remarkable feature. For the patricians it was usual to place the wife by the marriage ritual of *confarreatio* entirely under the power, in the *manus* of the husband. However, in late Republican times, the less rigid forms of marriage between plebeians, which safeguarded the wife's independence, were introduced into the higher classes of society, and so patriarchy was gradually abolished.¹⁶

The great importance of the ideals of *ordo* and *dignitas* permeated not only the Roman family, but

also the Roman Empire and its hierarchy. The careful fixing of the husband's prerogative by law is characteristic of Roman society; at the same time the enforcement of monogamy and the right of divorce for both sexes may be regarded as a compensation for the loss of freedom of the woman, obtained through the influence of her family group. Thus the idea of social equality—a tendency especially strong in Stoic circles during late Republican and early Imperial times—found its counterpart in the practice of family life.

When the ancient discipline of marriage was relaxed in Rome, men as well as women accordingly indulged in frequent marriages and divorces. It was consistent with the freedom generally allowed to women that brothels and prostitution were frowned upon. The term "immoral" frequently applied to this period by modern writers omits to point out this equalitarian aspect. This social evolution towards marriage between equals is paralleled in the creation of a new artistic type: busts or full-length representations of husband and wife joining hands and being united by a female

form of the Bearded Aphrodite—became personified representations of the beauty of women, devoid of the ancient mana formerly attributed to them. A rationalisation of the world took place in the socially leading circles, depriving women of their mysterious powers and ancient rites. But this society found as yet no place for women outside their homes, and it is against this popular attitude that Euripides holds out his challenge. In Athena, the City goddess of Athens, the sexless character is emphasised and a value attached to virginity, revealed artistically in the close drapery and the armour of her figure. Beauty was valued for its own sake in the classic age, and under the influence of this valuation the woman's individual characteristics were not considered a fit subject for the visual arts. The separation of the male from the female sphere also precluded emphasis on the intimate relationship of marriage. Therefore the artistic representation of married life is mainly reduced to farewell scenes in Greek art, the classic example being the well-known relief of Orpheus and Eurydice, the two partners mournfully trying to bridge their separation.

¹⁶*Briffault draws attention to the matriarchal influences underlying Roman society, and retained by the plebeians.*

Rostovtsev describes the economic independence and the civic pride of the Roman citizen, whilst Max Weber has pointed out that in a society of patrician citizens monogamy was an adequate form of marriage. Cf. the excellent article on Marriage in the Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique; M. I. Rostovtsev: The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, Oxford, 1926; and Briffault passim. Also Panofsky in the Burlington Magazine, LXIV, 1934, p. 117 ff; Rodenwaldt in Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1935, Phil. Hist. Kl. Nr. 3 p. 13 ff; H. Rosenau: Apollo, Nov., 1942, p. 125 ff; M. Weber: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, Tuebingen, 1921, p. 207; also Mar. Weber, op. cit. Fuller references are given in P. G. Elgood: The Ptolemies of Egypt, Bristol, 1938; and H. Rosenau: Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, III, 1939-40, p. 155. A contemporary dextrarum junctio is to be seen in the decoration of Kensington Palace, a sign of the importance attached to the scene during the classical revival. Cf. A. H. Smith: A Catalogue of Sculpture, III, London, 1904, p. 318. Woman pronuba, man paranympheus or best man. Of the maiden supporting the bride, only one hand left.

deity (Fig. 5). This ceremonial linking of right hands as a token of marriage, the *dextrarum junctio*, expresses the meaning of the solemn sanctification of the wedding. Since husband and wife are treated as ceremonial equals, the Roman principle of *con-dominium* finds its expression, not only in the state, but also in the family sphere. It is not by chance that when the Italian Renaissance emphasised the equalitarian character of contemporary sex relationships it revived the type of the *dextrarum junctio* for the sacramental wedding scene of Mary and Joseph in the *Sposalizio*.

Interest in the feminine personality as distinct from an ideal of youthful freshness is also made clear by studying the age of the leading women of the period: Cleopatra was c. twenty-eight when she first met Antony, and the Jewish princess Berenice had attained her thirty-eighth year before meeting the Emperor Titus. A high regard for the individuality of the wife in Roman society is revealed by G. Misch¹⁷ in his interesting book on the development of autobiography. The author explains the importance of the *laudatio* delivered by a Roman Republi-

can officer in honour of his deceased wife (end of 1st century B.C.), and shows how this type of posthumous honour was later revived in the Renaissance in the form of a letter by Giovanni Bembo.

During the Middle Ages great changes occurred in the valuation and the position of women in the West. It is only in the Byzantine Empire that the relationship with the classical world is closely maintained. The status of the Byzantine Empress can thus be derived from that of the Roman Empress. In art it is not only a direct iconographic derivation but also a similarity of subject-matter which denotes this relationship. The well-known mosaics in Ravenna of the Empress Theodora with her female attendants form a symmetrical counterpart to the Emperor Justinian and his male followers. On Byzantine ivories the hieratic representations of Christ, blessing or crowning the Emperor or Empress, are numerous. This indicates not only the high regard in which the Emperor's consort was held, but also illustrates her constitutional responsibilities. This position of the Empress is reflected in the German Empire, especially under the influence of a



Fig. 5: Dextrarum junctio, 2nd cent. A.D. (British Museum).

17G. Misch: Geschichte der Autobiographie, Leipzig and Berlin, 1931, esp. p. 131 ff. By contrast, it is characteristic of the Hellenistic "comedy of manners," such as Menander's and the Roman plays influenced by him, that the main figures belong to the sphere of prostitution. This fact finds its equivalent in contemporary naturalistic

figurines, which are less characteristic of the sphere of art than of craftsmanship. Official Roman art is, however, free from such forms of realism, and expresses the religious and ethical valuations held by Roman society. Since these valuations were of an abstract quality, it is significant that Roman art, other than portraits, possesses the same austere and representational characteristics. The Stoic pronouncement, attributed to Metellus Numidius: "we can neither live with nor live without them (women) we had better seek one permanent union," well expresses this attitude of regulated monogamy. Cf. P. Elgood: Op. cit., p. 203.

Byzantine princess, the Empress Theophano, married to the Emperor Otto II in 972 A.D. But it should be noted that such representations of official and ceremonial character throw no light on the situation of the members of more humble strata of society. In fact it is at a later stage of evolution only that socially inferior classes were regarded as artistic subject matter.

Romanesque art was hieratical, instructional, and it turned away from the facts of secular life. During the 12th century, however, the sphere of the feudal courts strongly influenced the visual arts. It found perhaps its clearest expression towards love and marriage during the middle of the 13th century in the famous sculptures in Naumburg Cathedral (*Fig. 6*). They include male and female members of the Wettin family in perfect equality, and among them are two married couples, Ekkehard & Uta, and Hermann & Regelindis. This "gallery of ancestors" in sculpture cannot be considered as portraits, since the chief donors lived as far back as the 10th century. It is all the more interesting to see how the directing sculptor was not satisfied by reproducing types, but

formed individualised visions of the lady and the knight of his time. He was particularly interested in contrast of temperament: thus Gerburg is represented as a refined lady, whereas Gepa is seen in an attitude of mournful loneliness, enhanced by her widow's garb. The expression of sorrow gives a touch of distinction to her face, a face characterised by broad Slavonic cheekbones. In the group of Ekkehard & Uta the sturdy husband is opposed to his delicate wife. Uta's slender hands hold her cloak, in which she seems to hide from him and from the crudities and contradictions of her age. On the opposite side, Regelindis is depicted as a robust and humorous housewife, whereas her partner Hermann looks melancholy and sad. Significantly within each couple, husband and wife are placed at divergent angles, and by this means the lack of community between them, already expressed in their contrast of temperament, is emphasised.¹⁸

By contrast, the early 14th century ideal of beauty consciously discards any notions of age, individualisation or sex differentiation. For example, in the Cathedral of Cologne the sculptures of the



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Fig. 6: Ekkehard and Uta (Naumburg Cathedral).

¹⁸Cf. W. Pinder: *Der Naumburger*

Dom, *Berlin*, 1925.

¹⁹Cf. H. Rosenau : *Der Kölner Dom, Cologne*, 1931, p. 224 ff.

Virgin Mary, Christ and the Twelve Apostles are given in the same linear and ornamental manner, and a similar attitude prevails in contemporary scenes of courtly love.¹⁹ It can be truly said that St. Paul's statement "there is neither male nor female" (*Gal. 3: 28*) has found full expression in the art of this period.

On Medieval sepulchral monuments, from the 13th century onwards, husband and wife are generally seen in isolation, mostly in the gesture of prayer. The Roman linking of hands is discarded as a motive, except in one country and places influenced from there. In England on brass slabs and monuments the *dextrarum junctio* appears frequently from the 14th century onwards, uniting the two partners in marriage into a formal and iconographic unit. This exceptional type reflects English social conditions, the welding together of bourgeois and feudal valuations. The linking of hands was not, as Prior and Gardner take it to be, a "romantic suggestion." The contract for the "counterfeits" of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia specifies that they are to hold each other's right hand. But this is

anything but a romantic arrangement. The "handfasting," the solemn clasping of right hands, means betrothal or marriage, *bewedding*, and this legal concept is expressed in the English monuments.²⁰

It has to be remembered that the fusion of the concepts of love and marriage was a slow process taking place during the Middle Ages and coming to fruition during the Renaissance and later periods. This happened especially under the influence of Puritan valuations, and through the importance attached to family life.²¹ During the Middle Ages courtly love found its object outside the family circle, and childbearing leading to early death meant the possibility of "consecutive polygamy" for the husband. Holbein's famous Meyer madonna (*Fig. 7*) in Darmstadt combines Renaissance and medieval features. The madonna—an earthly mother—in-folds in her mantle of protection the mayor, his two wives and his children, a representation of the family, frequently found all over Europe. This type shows the wives and many children—some of them still-born—taking their place with the husband and father in the position of donors kneeling before

²⁰*Cf. note 16 above, esp. Apollo, 1942.*



Fig. 7: Hans Holbein: Burgomaster Meyer Madonna, c. 1526 (Schloss Museum, Darmstadt).

²¹*Signs of the fusion of love & marriage are, e.g., found in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parsival where married love is ex-*

tollé. The story of Eliduc, characteristically written by a woman poet, Marie de France, at about the same period, emphasises even more strongly the ideal of married love. "Loyaument se maintiendrait," Eliduc has sworn to his wife, and he is therefore unhappy when a young princess falls in love with him. But later he returns the maiden's love and takes her with him to his own country. When his wife discovers the truth she refuses to share her husband, and states "qu'il ait celle qu'il aime tant, car n'est pas bien ni avenant qu'à la fois on ait deux épouses." She therefore retires into a convent and is followed later on by Eliduc's second wife, whilst Eliduc on his part enters a monastery. So renunciation and retirement triumph over love and its complications, and by these means the ideal of monogamy is maintained. Cf. L. Petit de Julleville: *Histoire . . . Paris, 1896-1900*; Cf. M. Borodine: *La Femme et l'Amour, Paris, 1909*, esp. p. 22 ff; A. Wulff: *Frauenfeindliche Dichtungen, Halle, 1914*; E. Wechsler: *Das Kulturproblem des Minnesangs, Halle, 1909*; C. S. Lewis: *The Allegory of Love, Oxford, 1936*; G. Paris: *La Légende du Mari aux Deux Femmes, in La Poésie du Moyen Age, II, Paris, 1906*, p. 109 ff; *Speculum XII, 1937*, p. 3 ff; N. Elias:

the representations of saints or other religious scenes.

But that women have not always been willing to share their husbands or lovers is expressed in art by the numerous classical representations of the jealous Medea, contemplating the murder of her children, and in the later Middle Ages by the *Fight for the Trousers*, a popular engraving of the 15th century (Fig. 8), showing women fighting for the possession of the trousers, symbolising the male.²²

The lack of strictness in the medieval marriage relationship as compared with the Christian ideal is easily understood when considering the ancient Germanic custom of polygamy as practised by their chieftains. Furthermore, intimate contact with the Islamic world was established by the Crusades, and therefore the legal possession of a plurality of wives became a well-known fact.²³ It should be noted that the love poetry as well as the stories of Islam describe the affection of one man for one woman, regardless of the legal status of wives. The same attitude is seen in Persian miniatures and paintings, which illustrate the romance of two lovers only. It is true that, on the Java reliefs of Boro Budur, Buddha appears



Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation, Basle, 1939. The idea of two lovers in complete harmony may well be considered an archetype. Its universality invites comparison with J. K. Folsom's study of "subcultural" patterns. Cf. The Family, New York and London, 1934, p. 91 ff, and note 74 below.

Fig. 8 : Master of the Rolls : Fight for the Trousers, 15th century engraving (after Warburg).

²²Cf. A. Warburg : Gesammelte Schriften, Leipzig, 1932, p. 179 ff. A few more references to the prevalence of jealousy in polygamous households may be added. Westermarck (op. cit., III, p. 92) states that in the Thonga language there is a special term for co-wives' jealousy ; and in S. Leith-Ross's book on African Woman, London, 1939, it is explained that little peace exists in the polygamist's house. A Chinese poem of 769 B.C. expresses the misery of jealousy :

" It is for her he shames me.
I sit and think apart.
I wonder if the Sages knew
A woman's heart."

(Helen Waddell : Lyrics from the Chinese, London, 1913, p. 12.)

²³But the story of Eliduc is world-wide and exists even in countries allowing

in the midst of his women. But he remains lonely and isolated in spite of his surroundings. The representations of *Suttee* (Fig. 9) (the voluntary sacrifice of the wives' lives) in Vijayanagar describe polygamy and " virtuous attitudes" of Indian wives, but not love, whilst in the representations of the god Siva

polygamy. Thus in the Nô Drama of Japan, Seami tells of Hotoke No Hara, who herself retires after having driven her predecessor into conventual life. On the concept of monogamy in Germany, cp. H. Naumann: *Deutsche Kultur im Zeitalter des Rittertums*, Potsdam, 1938, p. 149 ff. This opinion is contrary to the one held by G. Paris in the work cited above (note 21). Equally important is D. de Rougemont: *Passion and Society*, London, 1940. For Japan, A. Waley: *The Nô Plays of Japan*, London, 1921, p. 291.

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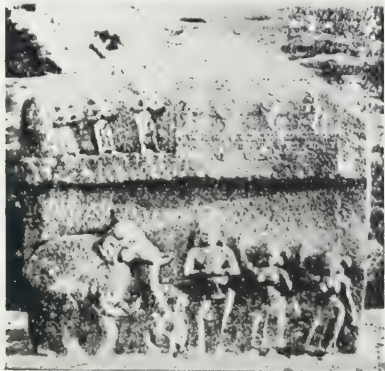


Fig. 9: Sati (*Hampi*, after Thompson).

with his two wives the symbolic side of this subject should not be overlooked.²⁴ It is in modern times that the community of veiled women attracted attention. E. Wolfsfeld in his *Moroccan Mothers*, hints at the life and suffering behind the veil (Fig. 34).

A popular subject derived from medieval tradition but gaining in importance during the Renaissance is the group of a mistress with her attendant lover. The woman forms the main centre of attention. The meaning of the whole situation is clearly expressed by the fact that she is seen in the nude, whereas the man appears elaborately dressed, frequently playing a musical instrument and thus acting as a noble *dilettante*. The different standard of morals and behaviour for men and women noted above finds here a new and striking illustration (Fig. 10).

It is during the 17th century that the antagonism between Catholic and Protestant conceptions of what should be regarded as art deepens, and leads to a "Protestant" as distinct from a "Catholic" sphere in this field. Rubens, the Catholic court painter and diplomat of the Baroque age, describes the raptures of the flesh in allegorical representations

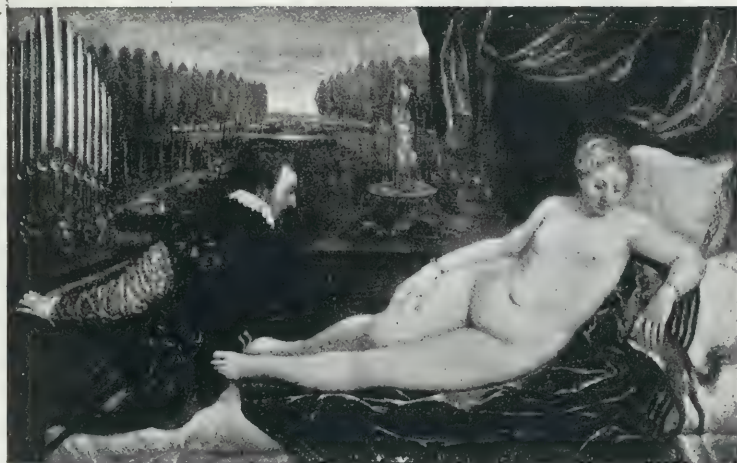


Fig. 10: Titian: Venus Enjoying Music, 1546-48 (Prado, Madrid).

of women in the nude. It is true that the models are represented according to a personal ideal of beauty which remained almost unchanged during Rubens' artistic development. It is not yet clear in his youthful joyous portrait of himself and his first wife, Isabella Brandt, holding hands—a survival of the *dextrarum junctio*—but is seen in his later works and is most clearly expressed in the representations of

²⁴Cf. E. Thompson: Suttie, London, 1928; T. A. Gopinatha Rao: op. cit.



Fig. 11: Rubens: Hélène Fourment, 1630 (Vienna Hofmuseum).

his second wife, Hélène Fourment (Fig. 11). She was thirty-seven years his junior and only sixteen years old when she married him. Characteristic of Rubens' art is the sexual aspect of his feminine figures, the brightness of his flesh tints, the curved outlines of the bodies and the youthful grace of the figures. In Boucher this treatment of the nude finds its culmination in Rococo style.

Rembrandt's so-called *Jewish Bride* (Fig. 12)—in reality the portrait of Don Miguel de Barrios and his wife—shows husband and wife as equals, thus resuscitating unconsciously the classical representation of the joining of hands in a new and highly personal form.²⁵ The husband touches the wife's breast and she lays her hand on his. Both are seen in a tender and at the same time protective gesture. The value laid on the inner life expressed in the faces and hands reveals intensity of feeling and a new emphasis on individualisation. The two people united here are no longer hieratical types. They are understood in the intimacy of their lives, differentiated as man and woman, and, although the wife is smaller in size than the husband, of equal



Fig. 12: Rembrandt van Rijn: The Jewish Bride c. 1668 (Amsterdam Rijksmuseum).

importance in the balance of the picture and in their mutual relationship. A long development of the iconography of the married couple finds expression in this work. It is as characteristic of the ideals of the Western world—personal fulfilment within life—as the symbols of renunciation are under Indian influence of the East.

²⁵Cf. W. Weisbach: *Die Kunst des Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation*, Berlin, 1921; W. Haller: *The Rise of Puritanism*, New York, 1938, p. 121 ff, a book which not only gives an up-to-date presentation of the problems involved, but also excellent bibliographical references for further study. Cf. also the penetrating analysis of English society in L. L. Schuecking: *Die Familie im Englischen Puritanismus*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1929. On Rembrandt, J. Zwarts: *The Significance of Rembrandt's Jewish Bride*, Utrecht, 1929; L. Goldscheider: *Five Hundred Self Portraits*, Vienna and London, 1937.



Fig. 13: F. de Goya: No hay quien nos desate? (from Los Caprichos.)

²⁶J. Hofmann: F. de Goya, Vienna, 1907, p. 33.

²⁷The common interest and happiness of the marriage partners finds expression in numerous works belonging to the 19th

With the bourgeois influence, a critical attitude towards marriage finds its voice in art, such as in the well-known series by Hogarth, *Mariage à la Mode*. Frankly didactic in its purpose, the artist tries to express a moral attitude in the description of a transitory moment, but only succeeds in illuminating in a direct way the particular social wrongs with which he is dealing. With Goya, on the other hand, the simplification of a particular scene stands for the timeless symbol of the event; this fact is clear in his impressive study of the unwilling pair tied together in marriage and overshadowed by the bespectacled owl, in the *Caprichos* (Fig. 13). It shows the Roman Catholic Church as a symbol of reaction, a strong and moving plea for permission to divorce. The caption "No hay quien nos desate?" enhances and explains the meaning of the scene.²⁶

The Romantic age and its ideas on the individual soul, companionship and erotic fulfilment within life for both sexes, led to a deeper understanding of women.²⁷ Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde* expresses in literature a doctrine which was not only preached

but also lived by his age. Men should develop their feminine traits and women their masculine ones; thus androgyny was the ideal. As usual with equalitarian periods in regard to the sexes, it is no longer the young woman only who is considered attractive. This tendency goes so far with the Romantics that they frequently marry women older than themselves. For instance, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, born 1806, married Robert Browning in 1846, when his age was 34. She had her child at forty-three years of age. Rahel Levin, 1771-1833, married Varnhagen von Ense in her forty-third year. Varnhagen was fourteen years her junior²⁸ (Fig. 43).

In France the development followed different lines: erotic culture is expressed by Rococo artists like Boucher, and even in the works of the classicists, as in Ingres' and Delacroix' harem scenes, the study of the nude in women is characteristic. The bourgeois conventionality of two common people bound together in a relationship without any inner meaning is seen in the works of Toulouse-Lautrec, as in *A la mie*, where a man seeks his enjoyment with a prostitute (Fig. 14). In such works are found the

century. Cf. H. von Tschudi: *Ausstellung Deutscher Kunst, 1775-1875, Berlin and Munich, 1906.*

²⁸The Schlegels illustrate the same point: Dorothea, the daughter of the German-Jewish philosopher Mendelssohn, first lived with and then married in second marriage Friedrich Schlegel, who was nine years younger. Caroline Boehmer married in her third marriage F. W. Schelling, who was her junior by twelve years. Madame de Stael married Count Rocca at the age of forty-five in second marriage, he being about twenty-three years younger. Cf. on the period F. Schlegel: *Lucinde*, first published 1799; F. Schleiermacher: *Vertraute Briefe ueber F. Schlegel's Lucinde*, published anonymously 1800; also his *Catechismus der Vernunft fuer Edle Frauen*. On Rahel, cf. L. Assing: *Aus Rahels Herzensleben, Leipzig, 1877*; O. Berdrow: *Rahel Varnhagen, Stuttgart, 1902.*

Fig. 14: H. de Toulouse-Lautrec :
A la mie, 1891. (Coll. Bernheim-
Jeunes).



²⁹Cf. M. Joyant : H. de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Paris*, 1927, p. 50; 1926, p. 83, and p. 271.

³⁰On the problems of realism, cf. G. V. Plekhanov : *Art and Society*, New York, 1937 ; W. Pinder : *Das Problem der Generation*, Berlin, 1926, pp. 83, 271, has some suggestions to make as to style and age of artists.

roots of the present-day trends in contemporary art.²⁹ This realism is in opposition to the bourgeois way of life and a challenge to current conventions ; it is therefore “ social ” in its intentions and political in its implications.³⁰

To deal with contemporary trends, one word should

be added about the Russian woman, as personified for example in the wife of Lenin, Nadeshda Krupskaya. A teacher and an intellectual, she sacrificed her own independence to be his wife in a traditional manner. Her type is particularly important, when contrasted with the heroines of the books of Alexandra Kollontai, who profess "free love," in explaining the most recent developments in Russia with regard to marriage. Already in the early days of the Bolshevik revolution, the attitude sketched in Kollontai's *The Way of Love*, emphasising sexual pleasure and promiscuity, was combated by Lenin when he wrote in 1920 to Clara Zetkin: "The notorious theory that in Communist society the gratification of sexual passion is . . . as simple and commonplace an act as drinking a glass of water . . . has been the doom of many a young lad and lass. . . . The proletariat is a rising class. It has no need of intoxicants as narcotics or as stimulants. Self control, self discipline, is not slavery. No! even in love it is not that."³¹

The portrait of *Sidney and Beatrice Webb*, by W. Nicholson (*Fig. 15*), shows these great social re-

³¹*Cf. J. P. Mayer : Political Thought, London, 1939, p. 452 ff.*



Fig. 15: William Nicholson: Sidney and Beatrice Webb: the Authors at Home, 1928. (London School of Economics and Political Science.)

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³²Cf. E. Curie: *Madame Curie, Paris, and London, 1938. The best formulation of this attitude is perhaps C. B. Shaw's pithy article in Picture Post, XII, Sept. 13th, 1941, p. 21. The opposite point of view is equally well expressed by J. E. Harrison: Ancient Art, p. 216: "Spiritual creation à deux is a happening so rare as to be negligible." It may be pointed out, however, that in recent years an ideal of companionship and joint responsibility is developing. It is based on a new division of labour, which is not founded on sex but is entirely personal in*



Fig. 16: V. I. Mukhina: Worker and Girl Collective Farmer, 1937 (Soviet Pavilion, Paris Exhibition).

search workers in their old age, and is full of restrained intimacy. The fireplace and the little dog enhance the cosy home atmosphere of this childless and devoted couple, whose "two typewriters . . . click as one." The portrait of the Webbs stands for a type of marriage in which the partners are bound together in a common task, merging their individuality. Here the division of labour has been superseded by comradeship in an all-inspiring duty. The Curies³² are perhaps the best-known example of this type.

The sculpture *Worker and Girl Collective Farmer* (Fig. 16), on the Soviet Pavilion, by Vera Ignatievna Mukhina, in the Paris Exhibition of 1937, is of a dynamic character, which expresses not so much love as the moving forward of the man and woman in a spirit of comradeship, an indication perhaps of a future development towards a "social humanism."

But Picasso's early works revealed deeper psychological levels, in producing a challenge; not only with regard to style, but also in subject matter, by introducing into art without sentimentality the embrace of a worker couple (Fig. 17). A rising

character. This new approach has as yet found no expression in art.



Fig. 17: Pablo Picasso: The Kiss (Museu d'Art de Catalunya).



Fig. 18 : Hathor protecting Psammetichus, 26th dynasty (Cairo Museum).

social class makes its appearance, and stakes its claim in all spheres of life. The faces are not important in this scene, indeed they are almost hidden away; it is the eternal aspect of love, permeating all classes and peoples, which is represented in a realist as well as a profoundly moving document.

2 : Motherhood

IN THE FIRST BOOK OF THE ILIAD, HOMER SPEAKS OF the "cow-eyed mighty Hera." This is a definite expression of an ideal of femininity which emphasises in women the fertility aspect, the animal side of life as opposed to a more individualistic notion of beauty. It stands for nutritive abundance and placid calm. In Egypt this attitude is expressed by the goddess Hathor being frequently represented (*Fig. 18*) in the guise of a cow.

The roots of this conception lie far back in human

history. As stated above, in the earliest representations of women—the paleolithic “Venus” figures—the sexual characteristics are shown in conjunction with those of fertility. The buttocks, the belly and the breasts are described, whereas the treatment of the face is neglected. It is typical of this early stage of human development that sex and fertility are not distinguished.

There exists a gap between paleolithic and Egyptian monumental art, a gap best explained by geological considerations; the new beginning in the Nile valley, about 5000 B.C., led from pottery and primitive clay figures to representations of spiritualised motherhood which are best exemplified in the group of Isis and Horus.

In the Egyptian pantheon the protecting goddesses play an important role, especially the goddess Isis, frequently seen in a hieratic stiff position, holding the boy Horus across her knees.³³ Another important mother goddess is the one venerated as Diana of Ephesus (*Fig. 19*). In her case the symbols of fertility are particularly apparent: the reduplication of breasts, the representation of animals

³³*Cf. H. Rosenau: Burlington Magazine, London, September, 1943, p. 228 ff.*



Fig. 19: Artemis Ephesia (Munich, Helbing Collection).

³⁴Cf. H. Thiersch: *Artemis Ephesia*, Berlin, 1935, passim.

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³⁵Cf. Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, III, 1939-40, p. 155. *Whilst the position of the married woman was slowly raised in Roman society, the unmarried mother's status underwent no significant changes. Since she had no claims against the father of her children, the illegitimate child practically lived under mother-right. It is in line with the consistent development of patriarchy that as late as the 19th century the Code Napoléon and laws derived from it laid down that the unacknowledged and illegitimate children legally have no parents, not even a mother. They were filii nullius, although, as is well known, "la recherche de la paternité est interdite," whereas "la recherche de la maternité est admise." This means that to look for the father is forbidden, but that it is permitted and sometimes encouraged to look for the mother.*

and fruit.³⁴

With the Celts of the Roman period the figure of the mother goddess was especially popular. The interpretation of motherhood according to a patriarchal civilisation is found in Republican Rome, well illustrated in the story of a Roman matron, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi. According to the well-known story, when asked by a friend what her greatest treasures were, she replied that these were her sons. (This in spite of the fact that she also had a daughter at that time.)

Oriental influences, especially the cults of Isis and of Diana of Ephesus, further enhanced the position of the Roman mother. Portraits of women reflect this fact. Among them were the Emperors with their mothers represented on coins, such as Caracalla with his mother Julia Domna, wife of the Emperor Septimus Severus. It is significant that the title mother³⁵ was used ceremonially on inscriptions, such as *Mater Augustorum*, *Mater Patricæ*, *Mater Senatus* (although women were not actually admitted to the Senate), *Mater Castrorum*.

The *Matronæ* were greatly venerated, not only on

*Fig. 20: Matronæ (Provincial Museum,
Bonn).*





Fig. 21: Negro mother and child,
Lower Congo (Ethnographic Museum,
Rome).

"In Bonn especially, not only peaceful

the Rhine, but also in England, France and Northern Africa. Apart from women, men also dedicated altars to them, as is clear from many inscriptions.³⁶ In the beautiful monument from Bonn (*Fig. 20*), two older Matrons, wearing their native headgear, reminiscent of a halo, are seated to right and left of a young girl, presumably a bride. It need hardly be mentioned that artistically these figures are based on classical influence, whereas their subject matter is Celtic. The distinctive quality of the monument lies in the artistic unification of native beliefs with imported forms.

The universal appeal of the concept of motherhood is also clear from works of primitive art, especially in negro sculpture (*Fig. 21*). How such works are ultimately derived from Egyptian influences deserves discussion, but the plastic qualities and compact proportions are contributions of a specific native character.³⁷

The valuation of motherhood is clearly expressed in the case of the Empress Matilda by the inscription placed on her tomb:

"Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima partu,

hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens."

(From *Matthew Paris' Chronica Majora*,
A.D. 1185.)³⁸

But that motherhood could be used as a political weapon for an ambitious woman is seen in the case of Constance (1152-98), Queen of Sicily in her own right and wife of the Emperor Henry VI of Germany. Her son the Emperor Frederick II was born when she had reached the age of forty-two, and this fact became not only the fulfilment of her private life, but also of her political career. Through her son she could secure for herself the rule over Sicily, of which she had been Queen in her own right before her marriage. Dr. S. Steinberg has shown that this historic situation found expression on a wooden column from Salerno, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The scene shows the Queen kneeling before St. Stephen, the saint on whose day her son was born.³⁹

The scene of the Pieta, Mary sorrowfully clasping her dead son in her arms, was widespread during the Middle Ages. It shows Christ sometimes as a small child and on other occasions as a grown man. It

donors are represented, but even a victorious Roman soldier striking down an oriental enemy (2nd century A.D.). Cf. H. Lehner: Römische Steindenkmäler, in Bonner Jahrbuecher, CXXXV, Bonn, 1930, p. 1 ff. The most usual representations of the Matrons, discussed by H. Lehner: op. cit., describe them as carrying flowers or fruit as symbols of fertility, but they are also seen with children as their attributes, especially in the South of France. A variation of this type at Bonn, showing the youthful central figure with open hair and carrying a basket of fruit, may be due to the fact that it was a dedication to the goddesses in honour of the bride. The two goddesses are treated as counterparts, so that the ideas of motherhood and protection are not only expressed singly but collectively.

³⁷E. L. R. Meyerowitz: Burlington Magazine, 82, 1943, p. 35. These Egyptian influences will be seen in a door from Northern Yoruba, now in the Middle School of Ilorin, photographed by Mrs. Meyerowitz, showing a pair of lovers reminiscent of the representation in *Deir-el-Bahari* of the god Amon visiting the queen Ahmasi. Cf. also note 9 above.

³⁸"By father much, spouse more, but son most blest, here Henry's mother,



Fig. 22: Relief of the Virgin holding Christ, Odilienberg (after Steinberg).



Fig. 23: Vierge Ouvrante, early 15th century (Cathedral Museum, Vienna).

expresses the Christian valuation of the nobility and the redeeming power of suffering.

But it was not only the classical but also the Egyptian type which influenced the later, and especially the early medieval, development. An outstanding example is a relief in Odilienberg (*Fig. 22*) belonging to the 12th century, in which the madonna, a feudal maiden with long plaited hair, holds the boy Christ seated across her knees, in an attitude reminiscent of the numerous statues of Isis holding Horus.⁴⁰

But the great liturgical importance of the Virgin Mary is perhaps best expressed in the *Vierges Ouvrantes* (*Fig. 23*), madonnas forming a shrine, which when opened frequently reveal the *mater misericordiae* holding in her hands the Trinity, symbolised by God the Father, the Dove, and the Son on the cross.⁴¹

The naturalism of the Pieta is applied to other mystical scenes in the late Middle Ages. The Annunciation at Wurzburg (*Fig. 24*) shows the infant Jesus penetrating into his Virgin Mother through her ear, the ear being connected to God the Father's mouth by means of a symbolic "umbilical" cord.

daughter, wife doth rest." Translation from the Earl of Onslow: The Empress Maud, London, 1939, p. 196.

³⁹Journal of the Warburg Institute, I, 1937-8, p. 249 ff.

⁴⁰Cf. note 33 above, and S. H. Steinberg and Chr. von Pape-Steinberg: Die Bildnisse geistlicher und weltlicher Fuersten, Leipzig and Berlin, 1931.

⁴¹I am indebted to Dr. Kurz for providing *Fig. 23* and for making some valuable suggestions. Cf. Pages d'Art Chrétien, V, p. 101 ff.; Marburger Jahrbuch V, 1929, p. 285 ff. Mrs. V. Sussmann-Jentzsch is in a position to prove the classical antecedents of the Mater Misericordiae. Dr. F. Grossmann kindly draws my attention to a medieval reference regarding the Egyptians' worship of a virgin with child in the Speculum Humanæ Salvationis, Ch. XI, verses 15 & 16.

Fig. 24: Annunciation, early 15th century (Wurzburg, Church of St. Mary).



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⁴²Cf. T. A. Gopinatha Rao: *Op. cit.*, p. 379 ff; S. Kramrisch: *Op. cit.*, with excellent bibliography.

⁴³A similar type has been alluded to above with regard to the Meyer Madonna. Cf. Catalogue of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Italian Sculpture, London, 1932, p. 100; L. Planiscig: *Venezianische Bildhauer*, Vienna, 1921, p. 26.

Thus the concept of immaculate birth finds expression in art. The interest in the miraculous birth of gods and heroes is not however confined to the Christian world. These are fundamental human concepts connected with the birth of exceptional personalities, and are for instance found reflected in scenes of the birth of Buddha⁴² (Fig. 25).

The transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and the Reformation is generally conceived as a strengthening of individualism. In the North as well as in the South of Europe a veil appears suddenly lifted, the main difference being that

in Italy the emphasis is laid on the beauty of form, whereas in the Northern countries the features of everyday life arouse the greatest pictorial interest. But even in Italy naturalistic elements are dominant in the early Renaissance, although realism belonged to the sphere not of detail but of the artistic creation as a whole. The child, symbolised by his head, which in the Byzantine type of *platytera* is not clearly described in its physical relation to the Virgin, but seems somehow to be hovering before her, is now incorporated in a clasp, of the mandorla shape, which fastens her cloak. To this type belongs the *mater misericordiae* (Fig. 26) attributed to Bartolomeo Buon in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴³

With the rise of the middle classes, the English conversation pieces and the French family portraits gain in importance.⁴⁴ It is interesting here to see how the unity of the family is frequently broken up in the sense of a differentiation between a distinctly masculine and a feminine sphere, since the women are more particularly related to the children, especially the babies, whilst the men are portrayed in dignified repose. For example, N. de Largillière's self-



Fig. 25: Buddha's Birth (Indian Museum, Calcutta, after Kramrisch).

⁴⁴Cf. the portrait of the Jabach family of Cologne by C. Lebrun, or the Family Reunion by J. Zoffany.



Fig. 26: Bartolommeo Buon: Mater Misericordiae. 15th century. (Victoria and Albert Museum. From the Corte Nuova of the Scuola Vecchia di Santa Maria della Misericordia, Venice.)

portrait with his family shows the artist holding his palette against the background of a classical statue, whilst his buxom wife receives an apple from one daughter—the symbol of fruitfulness—and uncovers with her other hand the figure of a sleeping baby in the nude with a coquettish gesture (Fig. 27).

The change in the ideal of female beauty in the inter-war period (1918–39) with the consequent fall in the birth rate, may well be exemplified by a work called *The English Girl*, by the Italian sculptor Ernesto de Fiori (Fig. 28). This work is all the more interesting in that it shows a type of English womanhood seen through an alien temperament. Although the sexual characteristics cannot be completely eliminated in a woman in the nude, as far as possible all distinctly feminine traits are suppressed. The breasts and hips are small, expressing the contrast to the formerly established ideal of fertile beauty. The high-heeled shoes which cover the feet tend to emphasise the fact that the prudish figure wears no clothes, and the whole atmosphere is rather more frigid than sexual, more sterile than fertile.

Fig. 27: Nicolas de Largillière: Self-portrait with family (Bremen, Kunsthalle).



Thus a type of sexlessness in woman finds expression, a type as remote as possible from the primitive. This sexless ideal, based on bourgeois and Puritan traditions, has its antecedents in English art, especially in Reynolds and Gainsborough, where the court atmosphere of refined



Fig. 28: Ernesto de Fiori: The English Girl (Collection Buchholz).



Fig. 29: Paula Modersohn-Lecker: Self Portrait, 1906 (Collection B. Hoetger).

⁴⁵*Romney's work appears as an exceptional instance of a more erotic approach to womanhood, whilst the*

loveliness gives women a fleeting and dreamlike, but not a pronouncedly sexual, maternal or individual attraction.⁴⁵

In pre-Nazi Germany, where the tendency towards expression in the most personal sense was characteristic of artistic life until the Nazi revolution, two women artists have left a strong mark by emphasising the specific character of motherhood. Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907), who died shortly after giving birth to a baby girl, found in maternity the deepest fulfilment of her nature, and was quite ready to sacrifice her life and work to this end. She was conscious of the problem "work versus children" and preferred the latter. This highly gifted artist foreshadowed, in the monumental simplicity of her style, the future development of German expressionism. One of her paintings represents a mother in the nude suckling her child, a picture of almost painful intensity. She also painted her self-portrait (*Fig. 29*) in the nude foreshadowing pregnancy, the first portrait of its kind in the history of art, and of special significance in its emotional sincerity and simplicity.⁴⁶

Fig. 30 : Kæthe Kollwitz : The Mothers (Lithograph).



Another German artist, Kæthe Kollwitz (b. 1867), has a more popular appeal. The medium of her work, largely book-illustrations, woodcuts and posters, made it social in the widest sense. It appealed to

active gesture in Reynolds' portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, with her daughter, skilfully avoids any expression of maternal emotion. Reminiscence of the French artists Boucher and Greuze clarifies the English, as opposed to the French attitude. Cf. T. Ashcroft: English Art and English Society, London, 1936.

⁴⁰Cf. G. Pauli: Paula Modersohn-Becker, Munich, 1919, with useful bibliography. It is characteristic of Paula Modersohn-Becker's attitude that she is doubtful about the emancipation of women. Her work has the "earth-like" quality of the primitive, and the scenes she prefers are the simple ones such as mother and child groups, flower pieces, still lifes of every kind. Her self-portraits emphasise this character of stillness. She never questioned her own, a woman's ability for artistic creation, and regarded her difficulties as individual ones, without any bearing on the woman's question generally. This may be accounted for by the tolerant middle-class atmosphere in which she passed her youth, her introvert character, and the friendly fellow artists who surrounded her during maturity. Had she lived longer she might have developed to an even greater form and more mature rendering of genuine emotions. But she died young, happy and radiant

to the last moment. She well illustrates the type of artist to whom belongs a balanced personality, a type best personified by Raffael and Bach in the male sphere and unfortunately overlooked in discussing "the artist" by the majority of psychologists. Cf. O. Rank: *Art and Artist*, New York, 1932; S. D. Gallwitz: *Briefe und Tagebuchblater*, Munich, 1920.

Fig. 31: Albrecht Duerer: Duerer's Mother, 1514 (*Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin*).

Fig. 32: A. Feuerbach: Henriette Feuerbach, 1877 (*National Gallery, Berlin*).

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⁴⁷One of Kæthe Kollwitz' latest sculptures, executed c. 1939, is a torso showing the two hands of the mother protecting the quiet ageless head and the smaller hand of the child. The rhythm of the composition, enclosed in an almost square piece of wood, is impressive, and the lack of any detailed naturalistic rendering enhances the beauty and significance of the hands and the quiet stillness of the child's face. The appeal of this art is as universal as motherhood.

⁴⁸It seems an argument against the overpowering urge of the maternal instinct that the European ruling classes are able



the masses and was meant for them. She shows the woman worker, careworn and aged before her time, playing happily with her child; she describes the timid knock at the doctor's door of the sullenly

determined pregnant woman who, encumbered by too many children, wishes to be relieved of her newest burden : the pathetic joys and sorrows of motherhood are equally clear.⁴⁷ (Fig. 30.)

It is by no means strange that two women have introduced this specific emphasis on motherhood into art, stressing it in a more direct manner, giving it from within, and not only from the point of view of the spectator, however sympathetic.

By contrast, the male artist has frequently rendered the portrait of his own mother in a highly individualised sense. Some examples have been mentioned before. Duerer's (Fig. 31), Rembrandt's, Whistler's and many other artists' mothers, and Feuerbach's stepmother (Fig. 32), are known to us intimately and personally, seen through the medium of their sons' affection.⁴⁸

One difference seems to emerge from the study of the man and the woman artist in this field. The woman usually shows mother and child in a typical way, is interested in motherhood as such ; the man frequently represents his own family, even if the subject-matter is religious, which means that

and willing to regulate births by means of contraception. The childless spinsters, who do not break social tabus in order to have children, seem to point to the same conclusion. Perhaps the maternal instinct is most closely related to social inclinations and emotions generally and can therefore be readily diverted. Thus McDougall relates the protective to the parental and maternal instincts, from which it is derived. Be this as it may, the study of the mother in art shows how in all periods motherhood has been the honoured function of the wife, and has been the responsibility and joy of women. Individualised and diverted in modern times, it has not lost its appeal, as is seen especially in the work of women artists. A social force, it has included the childless woman, as in the case of Henriette Feuerbach. Cf. W. Mc Dougall : An Outline of Psychology, 4th Ed., London, 1928, esp. p. 135 ff; and: An Introduction to Social Psychology, 23rd Ed., London, 1936, p. 142 ff. A. Feuerbach : Briefe an seine Mutter, Munich, 1920, are the best tribute to his stepmother and a significant expression of the artist's feelings by himself. No adequate biography does Feuerbach full justice yet. The importance of a spiritual as opposed to a biological interpretation of motherhood is found already in the Old Testament (Is. 54, 1,

and Ps. 113, 9): "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." In Psalms, "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children . . ."

his approach is more individualistic. This is not to say that there are no typical madonnas executed by male artists, or individual portraits by women, but in a broad generalisation this differentiation of approach between men and women makes itself felt in the representation of motherhood.

⁴⁰Boswell, quoted by J. Langdon-Davies: *A Short History of Women*, Thinkers' Library, London, 1938, p. 234.

3: Further Aspects of Creativeness

"SIR, A WOMAN'S PREACHING IS LIKE A DOG'S walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all." Dr. Johnson's words to Boswell⁴⁹ and the astonishment they imply at the achievements of women outside the biological sphere is characteristic of the transition towards a new attitude towards women, still characteristic of the present day, if we are to believe the contemporary newspaper reports with their

amazement at "What women are able to do in wartime."

This transition goes back to the Renaissance, where the personality of the woman was valued, not only in the highest and princely classes of society as had been formerly the case, but also in a growing stratum: the circles of the rising middle-class.

Thus the personality of woman was a "discovery" which can be compared to other discoveries of the Renaissance. It led to a new perspective, not in space but in human psychology.

Indeed the great mistresses of the French kings, the romantic women of Germany, the suffragettes of England stood on a platform which was first erected for them in Italy. Only to a people whose senses were quick and whose spirit was uncrushed by asceticism could the belief in women become an inspiration. Only here could they form a vital part of society without a sense of conflict.

When considering the place of woman in society, it has to be remembered that a number of people of both sexes escape the normal routine of everyday life by becoming recluses, monks or nuns or celibate

⁵⁰*The more the social position of women is considered unsatisfactory, the more a trend to move in this direction appears, and it is a problem worth studying whether the special appeal which religion has for women may not be closely related to such conditions. In any case it is true to say that movements of religious revival and social betterment of suffering lower classes, such as Buddhism, Christianity, heretic and Protestant sects, have been actively supported by women. The stress laid on spiritual equality between all human beings may well have attracted women especially, and this in spite of the fact that the leading and directing positions belonged to men. Conservative though women are popularly supposed to be, they have all the same taken an active part in revolutionary movements: the wars of the Albigenses, the French and Russian Revolutions, so that consideration must be given to the problem of what social conditions influence women either towards reactionary or towards revolutionary attitudes. Cf. C. Buecher: Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter, Tuebingen, 1882.*

priests and priestesses, in most if not in all civilisations. In the case of women this abnegation is frequently correlated to the idea of a god-like lover, who is the centre of their lives and towards whom their activities are directed.⁵⁰

The division between the male and female spheres, together with a legal discrimination against women, is most clearly stated in the Code of Manu. Here it is specifically laid down that the woman's husband is her god. The ideal of self-abnegation rules the woman's life. It is characteristic that the ethical code is a different one for the two sexes. Only a small distance separates such a wife from the nunnery or the temple, since the impersonal husband-god is replaceable by a deity functioning as a symbolic bridegroom or husband.

The Delphian Pythia is inspired by a god, Apollon. The Roman Vestals, who were represented in numerous statues in a ceremonial and individualised manner, stood under the direction of a male priest, the Pontifex Maximus. They appear closely draped in formal robes, such as befits dignitaries performing significant state functions. The chief of the Vestals,

the *Virgo Vestalis Maxima*, was frequently represented in art. The *Virgo Vestalis* had to be a virgin sanctified to Vesta for at least thirty years, starting her career at the early age of between 6 and 10 years. Thus the main years of female fertility were covered by sexual restrictions.⁵¹

Only superficially opposed to this type of womanly chastity are the Nautch girls and Devadasis. Women, who as sacred prostitutes live in the temples of their gods and goddesses, give themselves to the worshippers as a religious duty. A counterpart to the lives of anonymous devotion is the secluded existence of the married woman in *purdah*. In Babylonia, as well as in India, the latter type is symbolised by the veil, which is considered a mark of distinction. Especially in Babylonia, the temple prostitutes, although honoured in their own spheres, were debarred from being thus distinguished. The Vestals as well as the wives were heavily draped or veiled, the veil signifying the consecration to a mortal, or to a god, a feature resuscitated in the Middle Ages with regard to nuns.⁵² This seclusion leads to solidarity among women.

⁵¹Cf. W. H. Roscher: *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* VI, 1924-37, p. 241 ff.

⁵²Cf. J. B. Horner: *Women under Primitive Buddhism*, London, 1930; L. Eckenstein: *Women under Mon-*

asticism, *Cambridge*, 1896; *E. Power*: *Medieval English Nunneries*, *Cambridge*, 1922; *J. H. Leuba*: *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, *London*, 1925, p. 100 ff; *F. Hauswirth*: *Purdah*, *London*, 1932, p. 23 ff.

But the feeling of solidarity between women inside their family is also considered as an appropriate attitude in patriarchal as well as matrilineal civilisations. The biblical story of Ruth and Naomi corroborates this fact. When Naomi wishes her daughters-in-law to return to their mothers' houses, as she herself is no longer able to bear sons who might become their husbands, she hints at a stage in which levirate and matrilocality formed the background of a patriarchal civilisation. It is not without significance, as regards the change of outlook, in later periods, that Ruth's reply: "Intreat me not to leave thee . . . for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge . . . thy people shall be my people and thy God my God" (*Ruth* 1: 8-17), has now found its place in the marriage service. Blake with his unusual grasp of the symbolic meaning of traditional subjects has described this rarely rendered scene in a drawing of dramatic vigour, contrasting the meek daughter-in-law Orpah with the heroic intensity of Ruth; and the matronly dignity of Naomi with the youthful grace of the two younger women.



Fig. 33 : Group, Cogul.

The earliest representation of a group of women hovering around a small central figure of a man in the nude⁵³ is found in Cogul (*Fig. 33*) and belongs to prehistoric times (15,000–10,000 B.C.). The exact meaning of the scene is unknown, but so much is obvious: there is a striking contrast between the solitary male figure, whose genital organs are proportionately bigger than is necessitated by a naturalistic rendering, and the women. These are clothed and grouped together, their long hanging breasts appearing strongly marked. They seem to be in

⁵³*Cf. Juan Cabre : El Arte Rupestre en Espana, Madrid, 1915.*

Fig. 34: Erich Wolfsfeld: Moroccan Mothers, c. 1934.



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⁵⁴*A sense of spiritual solidarity between women is expressed in the Roman monument erected in honour of the Matronæ, referred to above (note 36). The function of these goddesses is protection, a spiritual motherhood, expressed by the duplication or triplification of the figures,*

attendance on the man. The scene may have a ritual or a ceremonial, religious or magical meaning. In any case it implies clearly a differentiation between the man's and the women's sphere, the women being collectively treated when juxtaposed to the male.

A contemporary painting by Erich Wolfsfeld, taken from inspiration in Moroccan surroundings, has admirably expressed this attitude (*Fig. 34*). He shows two deeply veiled women, and hints at the life behind

the veil. The children, one to the left and one to the right of their elders, give a contrast of cheerful liveliness against the background of hidden and anonymous womanhood. It is thus possible to illustrate the position of the veiled woman of the past by a contemporary painting, since the subjects represented still live according to such standards in the East.⁵⁴

In the lives of medieval abbesses, the solidarity of women may be seen in their concern for their nuns, as in the case of Herrad of Landsberg (2nd half of the 12th century). Her work *Hortus Deliciarum* was primarily directed towards the education of her convent. Drawings of cosmic visions (Fig. 35) by the great Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) were included in her writings and inspired by her, revealing her striking power of imagery; her political gifts were recognised in her time, and her devotion to her nuns permeates her work.⁵⁵

The life of the nuns was comparatively rich in outside contacts, as compared to that of the women in purdah, in a harem, or in similar places of seclusion. For a doctor to communicate with these women, medicinal dolls were used. On them the



Fig. 35: Hildegard of Bingen and Monk Gottfried: Landesbibliothek Wiesbaden (after Steinberg).

⁵⁵Cf. J. P. Schmelzeis: *Das Leben und Wirken der Hl. Hildegardis, Freiburg, 1879*; H. Liebeschuetz: *Das Allego-*

*Fig. 36: Medicinal Doll (Collection,
Mr. and Mrs. How-Martyn).*

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ailing inmates could mark the place of their illness, and by these means the unseen patient communicated with the physician. Although strictly speaking not works of art but of craftsmanship, the æsthetic value of these figures (*Fig. 36*) is nevertheless considerable, and their sociological meaning obvious.⁵⁶

The rigid division of labour between the sexes in patriarchal civilisations finds its counterpart in an equally rigid division in the sphere of female activities itself, restricting further the position of women.

In this connection the type of female "Vices" and "Virtues" so popular during the Middle Ages is revealing, since the marked difference between types of women may here be found treated in an allegorical manner. When Joan of Arc is represented (*Fig. 37*) in *Les Vigiles de Charles VII* by Martial D'Auvergne, she still appears according to this ancient division, representing Virtue, the courtesans representing Vice. Thus even in the late 15th century, it is not portraiture but a type which is rendered—an essentially medieval concept.⁵⁷

The contrast in women's occupations is found on a naturalistic basis in Velasquez' *Carpet Weavers*.

rische Weltbild der Hl. Hildegard, *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg XVI*; F. Werfel in his penetrating psychological study: *The Song of Bernadette*, London, 1942, p. 328, p. 336 ff, draws attention to Bernadette's gift for painting and considers it likely that artistic creation replaces on a more conscious level the visions of the primitive mind.

⁵⁶Cf. M. Hirschfeld: *Women East and West*, London, 1935, p. 162. *On the change in modern China*, cf. Hsieh Ping-Ying: *Autobiography*, London, 1943, esp. p. 93 ff.



Fig. 37: Martial d'Auvergne: Joan of Arc (from *Les Vigiles de Charles VII*.)

⁵⁷Of the questionably authentic portraits of Joan, nothing has been preserved for

posterity. Cf. V. Sackville-West : *Saint Joan of Arc*, London, 1936. In the early Renaissance fresco in the Palazzo Schifanoia at Ferrara, studied by A. Warburg, and showing the planets and the human beings ruled by them, the sphere of the Weavers appears in the field of Mars, that of the Lovers in the field of Venus. Thus the occupations are markedly separate. The attitude implied demands that women should be either weavers or lovers, but that the combination of differing functions is not the woman's task. This fact is also clear in many languages, e.g., English, where the "spinsters" used to spin and were unmarried, the occupation of the women being thus linked to their status. Cf. A. Warburg : *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipzig, 1932, p. 459 ff.

Fig. 38 : Velasquez : Carpet Weavers. c. 1657 (Prado, Madrid).



There the workers fill the dark foreground, whereas the noble ladies watch the finished tapestry in a room in the background flooded with light (*Fig. 38*). The differentiation between the social spheres of life is thus clearly marked and illustrated by the occupation of the women.

But it is in the Dutch school, as exemplified by Pieter de Hooch, that the sphere of activity and co-operation of the bourgeois woman is perhaps most clearly seen: the description of the home of which she is the maker, and in which she takes pride (*Fig. 39*). It is her specific creation, contrasted with the alehouses and inns, populated by servants and loose-living prostitutes, seen characteristically in the works of Jan Steen.⁵⁸

Women as directors of an alms house form the subject of Frans Hals remarkable and justly famous picture in Haarlem, dated 1664 (*Fig. 40*). Here the women are seen highly differentiated and individualised, the counterpart to the more frequent representations of men directors. The spirituality of faces and hands is emphasised, and the dignity of old age coupled with distinction of personality. It seems that the artist, then an old man, was less in sympathy and accord with the men directors, who are represented in a more conventional manner.

Only at a later stage of evolution, and particularly in England's "Narrative Pictures," was a detached attitude of mockery with regard to a subject like



Fig. 39: Pieter de Hooch: Mother and Child (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

⁵⁸*Shopkeeping, buying and selling, belongs equally with weaving to the woman's traditional work; negro tribes have their women traders, and in Proverbs the good wife is described not only as spinning and planting amongst other occupations, but also she "perceiveth that her merchandise is good" (Proverbs 31, 18).*

Fig. 40: *Frans Hals*: Women Directors of an Almshouse, 1664 (*Haarlem*).



women's education possible. E. F. Burney's *An Elegant Establishment for Young Ladies* may be dubious as a work of art, but it is unsurpassed as a piece of educational satire, and makes abundantly clear the background whence sprang the modern "masculine protest" (Fig. 41). English pictures have often to be "read" and not apprehended in



Fig. 41: E. F. Burney: An Elegant Establishment for Young Ladies, water-colour (Victoria and Albert Museum).

one instantaneous intuition. Hogarth's paintings are the best-known example of this fact.⁵⁹ By "reading" Burney's picture the indictment of a useless and superficial education is perfectly understood. From holding one's back straight, from stretching one's neck in a torturing manner, hung high up from the ceiling, all the necessary accomplishments for

⁵⁹Cf. F. D. Klingender: *Hogarth and English Caricature*, London, 1943, passim; S. Sitwell: *Narrative Pictures*, London, 1937; and: *Conversation Pieces*, London, 1936.



Fig. 42: J. Cornelisz v. Oostanen :
Salome, 1524 (Mauritshuis, The
Hague).

acquiring a husband are described. That this type of education was doomed is clear from the painter's criticism. Although many young girls are assembled there is no expression of dignity or relationship between them.

The importance of the woman warrior and leader in warfare is expressed in the Old Testament with regard to Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, *i.e.*, the prophetess who judged and delivered Israel (*Judg.* 4: 4). Deborah was not a consecrated virgin, but a woman in public life, and the fact of her prophecies appeared as unexceptional to the Old Testament writer. It is, however, characteristic of patriarchal civilisation that her figure has been almost forgotten ; thus when outstanding Jewish women find representation in art, it is generally Judith and Salome who are selected. Judith stands for freedom and independence, as a counterpart to the male figure of David, as in Florence. Salome shows the demonic power of woman engendering evil. But this subject can also appear alluring to a bourgeois painter as in Cornelisz v. Oostanen's picture (*Fig.* 42). In both cases the women are instrumental in killing the man

they love, thus forming a part of, and strongly influencing, an historical process. The two spectacular heroines with their sensational fate have inspired the imagination of many artists, including a woman painter, Artemisia Gentileschi, whose *Judith* is a contribution to the baroque movement in Italian art. Deborah, the greater and more austere figure, has, however, been neglected for the most part, since her heroic figure made no emotional or "romantic" appeal.

The poetess, Annette von Droste-Huelshoff, is seated with quietly folded hands in H. Sprick's portrait, but this cannot hamper the penetrating look of her eyes and the fullness of expression of her vivid mouth. "If only I were a man," she exclaims in one of her poems. This woman, who constantly fought the limits set to her sex, was a pioneer like her contemporaries, Rahel Varnhagen-Levin in Germany (Fig. 43) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in England.⁶⁰

Rahel Levin, who was a society leader and one of the romantic lovers of her time, also acted as a social worker in Berlin during the Napoleonic era. She



Fig. 43: C. F. Weber: Rahel Levin engraving.

⁶⁰In the bourgeois world the prejudice against the exceptional woman died out slowly. When in the 19th century the sphere of the men was invaded by women artists: Georges Sand, Rosa Bonheur and others, it is not only characteristic that they frequently worked under male noms de plume, like George Eliot in

England and Georges Sand herself, but that many wore trousers, symbolic of their desire to transcend the limits set by their sex.

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Fig. 44: Sophonisba Anguisciola: Self Portrait (formerly Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

expressed her attitude towards women's work when she asked whether the philosopher Fichte's work would lose in value had it been written by Mrs. Fichte. She thus demonstrated her confidence in the creativeness of women, a creativeness also explicitly acknowledged in Elizabeth Browning's poem *Aurora Leigh*.

The foremost woman artist of the Renaissance, Sophonisba Anguisciola (b. 1527), specialised in portraits, especially self-portraits (*Fig. 44*). She discovered in herself new aspects of life and of interest. Highly honoured, she died blind at the age of about ninety-seven. Her case is significant ; her fame was not only based on these pictorial talents but also on the charm of her personality, her humanistic education and her musical aptitude. Like many of her successors, Artemisia Gentileschi (1597–c.1651), and Rosalba Carriera (1675–1757), who also became blind in her old age, she occupied a highly-honoured position in society and the world of art. The Academies of Paris and Vienna opened themselves to Anna Dorothea Therbusch-Liszewska (1722–1782), as did the London Royal Academy to



Fig. 45: Anna Dorothea Therbusch-Liszewska: Self Portrait (Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin).

⁶¹Cf. H. Hildebrandt: *Die Frau als Kuenstlerin*, Berlin, 1928; L. Goldscheider: *Five Hundred Self Portraits, Vienna and London*, 1937. All the same, the attitude remained primarily human not professional, as seen for example in the portrait of Madame

Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807). In the former's self-portrait, she looks at us in a coquettish way through her monocle, her instrument of work as a miniaturist (Fig. 45). She is serious, self-conscious and inquisitive, and at the same time convinced of her own charm.⁶¹ Although women artists were primarily considered as *dilettantes*, women none the less established themselves professionally, and created precedents.

It was left to the early 19th and the 20th century to give a new artistic form to the heroine and to look for her in the lower strata of society. In poetry this aim has been achieved in Lord Byron's romantic poem of the *Maid of Saragossa*, a theme treated more poignantly and realistically in one of Goya's significant etchings of the *Disasters of the War* (Fig. 46). The maiden's floating robes enhance her fragility; whilst firing she turns her back on the spectator, thus expressing concentrated and relentless action. It is not the mannish but the feminine woman whom Goya considers heroic. At the present time the process has found a significant new development in Spanish and Russian war posters showing



Vigée-Lebrun embracing her daughter, who forms an attribute to the mother's feminine charm. Cf. C. E. Vullamy: Aspasia, London, 1935, p. 195. With regard to Angelica Kauffmann, Mrs. Delany writes: "my partiality leans to my sister painter; she certainly has a great deal of merit, but I like her history still better than her portraits."

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Fig. 46: F. de Goya: Que Valor (from Disasters of the War).

the proletarian heroine.⁶²

In France, the high place of the court lady is based on sensual charm. However, in spite of her social achievements, she remained under the domination of a man, the King. Mlle. de Scudéry represents the force of the woman's personality in the French *grand siècle*. She started her work under

⁶²The Romantic attitude towards women, and the new emphasis and understanding for their long-repressed potential powers of personality, are perhaps best expressed in the German philosopher Schleiermacher's Ten Commandments for Wise Women, from which some extracts are here translated:

1. Thou shalt have no lover beside him. But thou shouldst be



Fig. 47 : J. L. David : Théroigne de Méricourt(?) (Poniatowski Coll.).

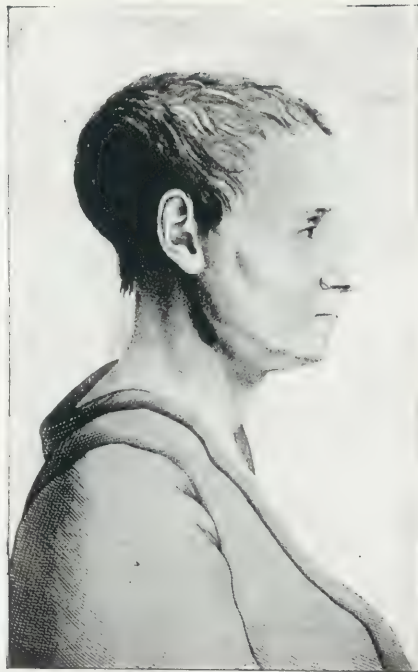


Fig. 48 : Théroigne de Méricourt (after Esquirol Plate 4).



Fig. 49 : C. Meunier : Hiercheuse, Woman Truck Pusher (exhibited in Salon, Paris, 1898).

the name of her brother, since aristocratic circles still frowned on a noble lady who wrote. Her portrait shows that character rather than beauty was the basis of her charm. Olympe de Gouges was an exponent of contemporary feminist views in her *Declaration of the Rights of Women*. Her demands that women should have the right to ascend the tribune since they were free to ascend the scaffold, express the heroism of her personality. Her tragic death by the guillotine finds a parallel in the fate of her contemporary, Théroigne de Méricourt, who ended in the Salpêtrière as a lunatic, thus illustrating the tragic fate of the pioneer.⁶³ Her portraits reflect her features in a naturalistic manner from young womanhood (*Fig. 47*) to the worn profile of the mad woman (*Fig. 48*).

The best expression of the attitude of protest, full of revolutionary vigour and intense naturalism, was created by C. Meunier (1831–1905) in his *Woman Truck Pusher*, who is seen in heavy boots wearing breeches and bereft of all feminine charm (*Fig. 49*). Ellen Key in the German edition of her *Woman's Movement* quotes a poem about this statue, which

capable of being a friend . . .

- III. Thou shalt not misuse even the smallest of the tokens of love.
- IV. Heed the Sabbath of thy heart, and when they hold thee back, make thyself free or perish.
- V. Honour the individuality of thy children.
- VII. Thou shalt conclude no marriage which should be broken
- VIII. Thou shalt not want to be loved when thou lovest not.
- IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness for the men . . . (nor) condone their barbarity . . .

⁶³*Cf. H. Rosenau* : Apollo, April, 1943, p. 94 ff. *Cf. J. E. D. Esquirol* : Des maladies mentales, Paris, 1838.



Fig. 50 : A. Rodin : La Pensée (Luxembourg Museum, Paris).

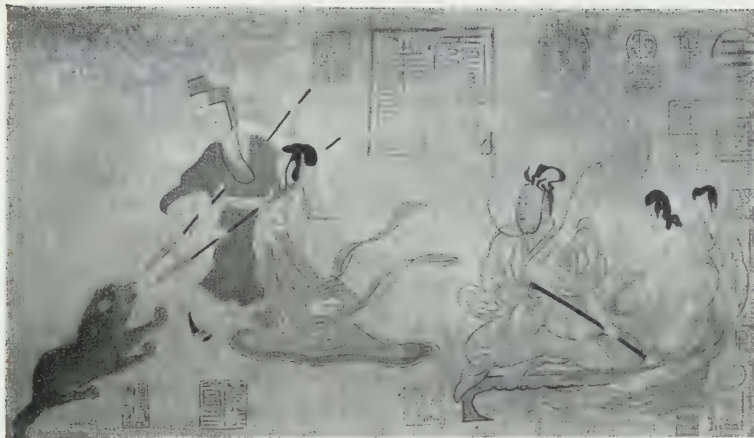
⁶⁴The widening of the basis for political influence by women was attempted by suffragettes and their men friends. It is worth noting, however, that the radical leader, Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, still

reads in translation :

“ The same as a man—
 Also a beast of burden !
 In the dusty mine
 She grew up and lived.
 In body and soul
 Just like him,
 A beast of burden—
 Just like him.”

It is characteristic that the “ masculine protest,” first extensively studied from the psychological viewpoint, makes its appearance here and is found coupled with a conscious feeling of solidarity. The pioneer is no longer an exceptional “ genius ” but one of a group of dispossessed sisters. Once this idea became popular, it influenced politics, especially in the English Suffragette movement.⁶⁴

By contrast, Rodin’s sensibility and instinctive symbolism is the most revealing in modern art as regards the potential power of women. Rodin’s attitude has been expressed by himself in a talk with P. Gsell, when he stated : “ La réflexion très profonde aboutit très souvent à l’inaction.” This in-



appeared first and foremost a "lady" in spite of her political agitation. Cf. note 61 above, and Helen Waddell: *Op. cit.*, p. 24, from which is quoted this poem (675 B.C.):

I would have gone to my lord in his need,

*Have galloped there all the way,
But this is a matter concerns the State,
And I, being a woman, must stay . . .
I may walk in the garden and gather
Lilies of mother-of-pearl.*

I had a plan would have saved the State.

But mine are the thoughts of a girl . . .

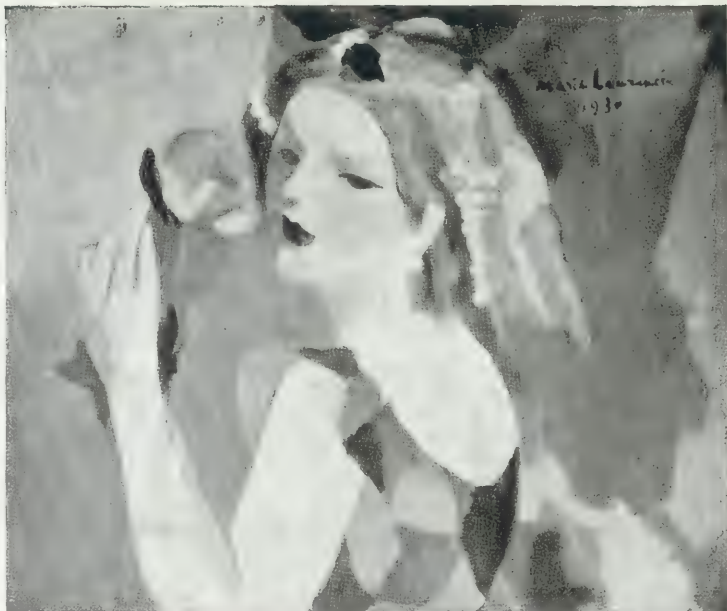
Fig. 51: Ku K'ai-Chih: Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies. Probably T'ang period (British Museum)

tensive thought which is not manifest in overt action takes for Rodin a woman's shape. In his sculpture *Le Penseur* he shows a figure bowed down and concentrated on the task of thinking. His *La Pensée* illustrates the very opposite: out of an angular block the neck and head of a woman arises (*Fig. 50*). It is no longer the collective or the sexual aspect of womanhood which is expressed. In a manner which denotes no effort, thought is repre-

Fig. 52: *Marie Laurencin*: *Girl with Rose*, watercolour. (Paul Rosenberg Coll.)

⁶⁵Cf. P. Gsell: *A. Rodin, Paris, 1911*, p. 205: "Profound thought frequently leads to inaction." The fact that the Hebrew word *ruach* has a masculine as well as a feminine meaning provided the basis which influenced the "Wisdom Literature" as well as Montanists and other Christian sects. Cf. D. Nielsen: *Der Dreieinige Gott, Copenhagen, 1922*, an important work, although a certain bourgeois bias and lack of acquaintance with psychological research mar some of its conclusions. Nielsen deals mainly with the later phases of Semitic thought, and does not consider Old Testament sources. Cf. also E. Jones: *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis, London, 1923*, esp. p. 415 ff.

⁶⁶Cf. L. Ashton and B. Gray: *Chinese Art, London, 1935*, passim; A. Waley: *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting, London, 1922*, p. 45 ff.



sented, the thought of the solitary woman as a thinker. This bust may well remind one of the verse in *Genesis*: "And the spirit of God moved

upon the face of the waters" (*Gen.* 1: 2). It is worth noting that the original Hebrew text uses the word *ruach*, spirit in its feminine form. In this manner a gulf in time is bridged by a great artist's inspiration.⁶⁵

Having reached this point, it should be remembered that such a type of representation is non-existent in the Far East. Thus in the Chinese painting of the *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies*, by or after Ku K'ai-Chih (344-406 A.D.), an attitude of appreciation of the graceful and charming side of women's life is seen (*Fig.* 51). A similar valuation⁶⁶ also finds expression in Hellenistic terracottas, in Japanese woodcuts, in Rococo paintings, where women exert their charms, in a man-made world, and still permeates the art of a modern and sensitive woman painter like Marie Laurencin (*Fig.* 52).

An interesting case psychologically and artistically is that of Elisabeth Ney (1833-1907), who was born in Munster, the daughter of a sculptor, and herself developed a considerable talent for sculpture (*Fig.* 53). Married to Dr. Montgomery, she refused to share his name and preferred to be known under the

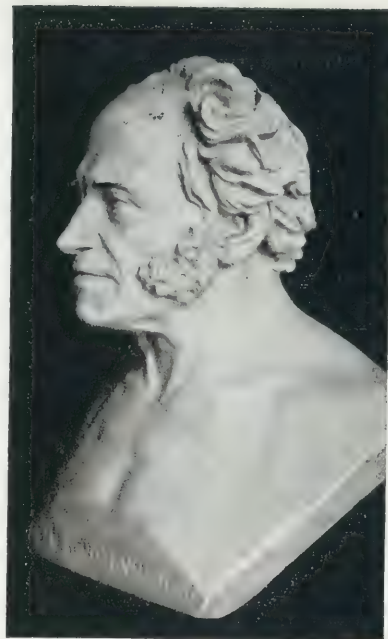


Fig. 53: Elisabeth Ney: Schopenhauer (Muenster).

Fig. 54 : Renée Sintenis : Self Portrait.
Mask in Terracotta (Cologne, Wallraf-
Richartz-Museum).

⁶⁷Cf. Das Schöne Muenster, V. 1933, No. 2. Women being only partly enosh. (Hebrew), anthropos (Greek), homo (Latin), man., had their tasks assigned to them in a limited field. German is perhaps the only language where the word Mensch covers equally men and women. To be productive meant under such traditions to break away from tradition and to be lonely and without precedent. The loneliness, which explains some of the homoerotic aspects of the Women's Movement, was coupled frequently to an attitude characteristic of parvenus, e.g., unwarranted pride in minor achievements. As long as a woman is judged by male standards, and has to be "as good in her work as a man" she is not really considered free in self-expression; freedom of expression is correlated to productivity. Cf. H. Rosenau: Towards a New



title of Miss Ney, under which description she migrated to the United States of America.⁶⁷

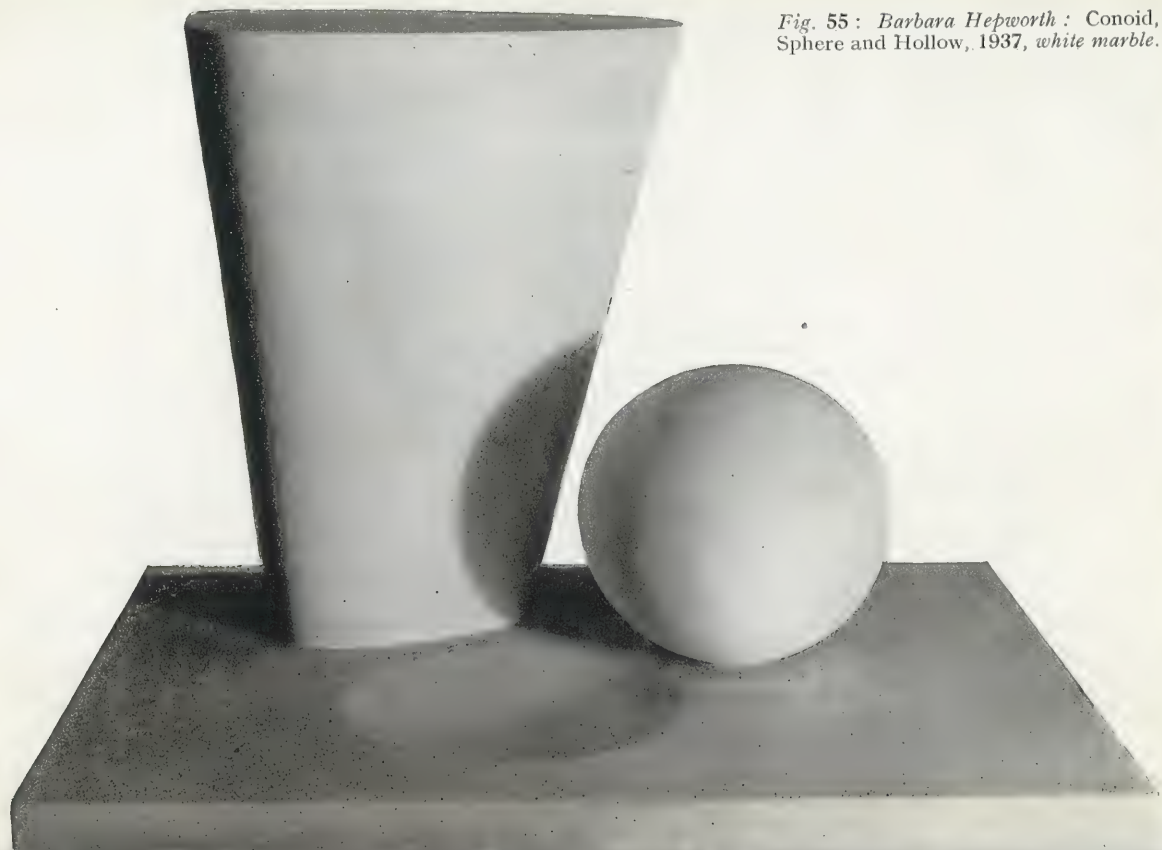
The inspiration of motherhood as a powerful factor in the work of the woman artist has been alluded to above (p. 60ff) with regard to Paula Modersohn-Becker (Fig. 29) and Kæthe Kollwitz (Fig. 30). By contrast, Renée Sintenis (b. 1888), the German sculptor (of Huguenot extraction as denoted by the derivation of her name from St. Denis), represents in her self portrait (Fig. 54) the ideal of self-consciousness and an almost masculine appeal.⁶⁸ From such works the distinct feminine traits as well as the special problems of women are entirely omitted. This type of art, therefore, reveals the wide range of expression attainable for women artists, an expression of a human, not of a sexually determined attitude.⁶⁹ It is characteristic of the present time that wide divergences are represented by women artists. Marie Laurencin (b. 1885), standing in the age-honoured feminine tradition of sensitiveness and delicacy, while Barbara Hepworth's approach to her abstract art is one which transcends the limitations set by her sex (b. 1903).

Synthesis in International Women's News, XXXV, No. 5, London, 1941, p. 97, especially with regard to a unified mode of address which obtains in progressive countries, e.g., tovarich (Russia), gwereth (Jewish, Palestine), bayan (Turkey) for married as well as for unmarried women. Cf. the term ma'am in the British Armed Forces.

⁶⁸Cf. R. Crevel: Renée Sintenis, Paris, 1930. Renée Sintenis was born in Glatz.

⁶⁹Virginia Woolf's description of "Judith," William Shakespeare's supposed sister, in *A Room of One's Own*, London, 1929, is one of the most imaginative creations of contemporary literature, and only paralleled by the same writer's Orlando, London, 1928. In this context it is worth noting that Virginia Woolf was a convinced feminist, a fact not singular in contemporary English literature. Dame Ethel Smyth forms a parallel in music, and Winifred Holtby and Vera Brittain, the writers, as well as Stella Bowen, the painter, to quote diverse examples, share a similar point of view. Cf. also O. Weininger: *Sex and Character*, London, 1906, a study which greatly influenced the typifying of "male" and "female" characteristics.

*Fig. 55 : Barbara Hepworth : Conoid,
Sphere and Hollow, 1937, white marble.*



Barbara Hepworth's *Conoid, Sphere and Hollow* is suggestive in its precision, and the very simplicity and austerity of the forms enhance their spatial pattern (Fig. 55). Such works should be reproduced from diverging angles, since they, although motionless, express a motion of their own. Like all true sculptures in the round they do not represent one, the frontal view only, but a variety of views, each of these being three-dimensional and of a dynamic character.

In Rembrandt's *Jewish Bride*, indeed in Rembrandt's work as a whole, the inner, spiritual life is such as to make impossible a division with regard to masculine or feminine attitudes. An understanding of the individual is reached, which makes the subject, the expression of personality, of primary concern. By contrast, for Barbara Hepworth and the abstract artists of the present period it is rather the "absolute form" which represents the aim of their inspiration. But in both cases, two factors are identical: the endeavour to reach a level where the accidental is left behind, and the expression of the transient in forms of timeless character.

Conclusion

HAVING MADE THIS RAPID SURVEY OF THE DIFFERENT representations of WOMAN IN ART in varying civilisations, a few concluding words may seem appropriate. From an undifferentiated form of womanhood, as found in the prehistoric "Venus," a differentiation into types has set in, whilst the process of individualisation has been understood more consciously during the last few centuries. Women have striven for a more subjective approach to the problems of life, wishing to make their own decisions with a sense of full human responsibility. At the same time they have taken an ever-increasing part in the "objective" spheres: law, science, politics.⁷⁰

⁷⁰*Cf. G. W. F. Hegel (trans. W. Wallace): Philosophy of Mind, Oxford, 1894, p. 103 ff.*

Three main conditions seem necessary for creative activity, whether in men or women. They are

especially difficult for women to attain. Firstly, they must have enough vitality to pour out into the work ; secondly, their intensity of feeling must be such as to demand expression ; and thirdly, the processes of form require power of concentration, an attitude diametrically opposed to the education of the average girl, who is trained to diffuse her attention on various matters with a view to keeping her future house in order. Indeed, housekeeping is perhaps a real education in the diffusion of thought ; looking after the kitchen, the sewing, illnesses or children, and innumerable other minor tasks which crop up during the day. One of these functions is " to be at home," to be in attendance, to listen. It is a constant strain which is frequently not even relieved on Sundays or holidays, since even then the family requires care. On the other hand, the processes of form demand concentration, and only through this means can the productivity of women come into its own.⁷¹

Stella Bowen is a case in point : she has poignantly described the constant strain on the woman artist by an exacting husband, and her revival of strength

⁷¹*Cf. H. Rosenau : Contemporary Review, April, 1939, p. 480 ff and August, 1941, p. 111 ff.*

⁷²*Stella Bowen: Drawn from Life, London, n.d.; passim. On the woman at the present time falls the task to choose her way of life for herself—a task new to her, since in the past it was mainly the man who made the decisions. This possibility of choice may entail sacrifice, since no individual life is limitless in its scope. A "handsome husband" may seem a more enjoyable goal than a doctor's thesis. But there might be a moment of frustration, even when the work is not given up, or when the husband seems less handsome than before. Not only outside work but also housework means drudgery. Although the same problems apply to the male sex, men are biologically and sociologically less limited, and have a wider range of choice.*

when living on her own. At the same time, the artist recognises that these difficulties form the basis of her inspiration, and makes her understand and appreciate more deeply the human and artistic values in life.⁷²

It is, for instance, illuminating to see how few "self-made women" exist at the side of self-made men. The women who rise in the social sphere mostly do it as wives and lovers (cf. the classical *La Serva Padrona* by Pergolesi) which means that their essential functions are not changed. The same is true of motherhood. Lætitia Ramolini stays "Madame Mère" whether to an Emperor or to a sub-lieutenant. Social reasons have strengthened this biological necessity; in fact, women, historically and socially, are less mobile than men.

It is worth noting Madame Curie's statement, made in the midst of universal recognition: "I have given a great deal of time to science because I wanted to, because I loved research." "In science we must be interested in things, not in persons." The new interest of women in the factual side of life has never been more clearly expressed. But Madame

Curie explained further that the combination of wifehood, motherhood and professional work is over-tiring to the average woman.⁷³

The present transitional moment is full of conflicts, women frequently substituting external action for inner contentment. They strive for a "completeness" which cannot permanently be obtained in life, and which is akin to dilettantism, exchanging diversity of interests for concentrated achievement. However, like a work of art, a human life can and should have its own style. By transforming necessary limitations into means of self-expression, by transcending from the concept of procreation to creation, woman is developing from Type to Personality.⁷⁴

But for this evolution to fulfil its promise, the development of the individual woman is not enough. It is only by co-operation and by the recognition of the different personal ways of approach to the social problems of their time, that women will be able to contribute fully to the historical process, no longer as a means only but also as an end of human evolution.

⁷³*Eve Curie* : Op. cit., p. 361 ff, p. 372.

⁷⁴*Cf. Ch. Buehler* : *Der Menschliche Lebenslauf*, Leipzig, 1933; *A. Adler* : *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, London, 1924; *S. Freud* : *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, London, 1922; and especially *Sammlung Kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre II*, p. 181, and *Jones* : op. cit., p. 381 ff; *C. G. Jung* : *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, London, 1928; also : *Psychology of the Unconscious*, New York, 1916; and : *The Integration of the Personality*, London, 1940, where, however, sociological implications are entirely omitted. *M. E. Harding* : *The Way of All Women*, New York, 1933, follows closely Jung's ideas while *A. Ruehle-Gerstel's* important book *Das Frauenproblem der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1932, is the most comprehensive study of modern womanhood, based on Adler's approach. I wish to thank Mrs. T. Sussmann for valuable suggestions with regard to Jung's psychology. Freud's concept of sublimation has taken a wider meaning in Jung's stress on transformation. The latter bases his psychological approach on a wider conception of libido.

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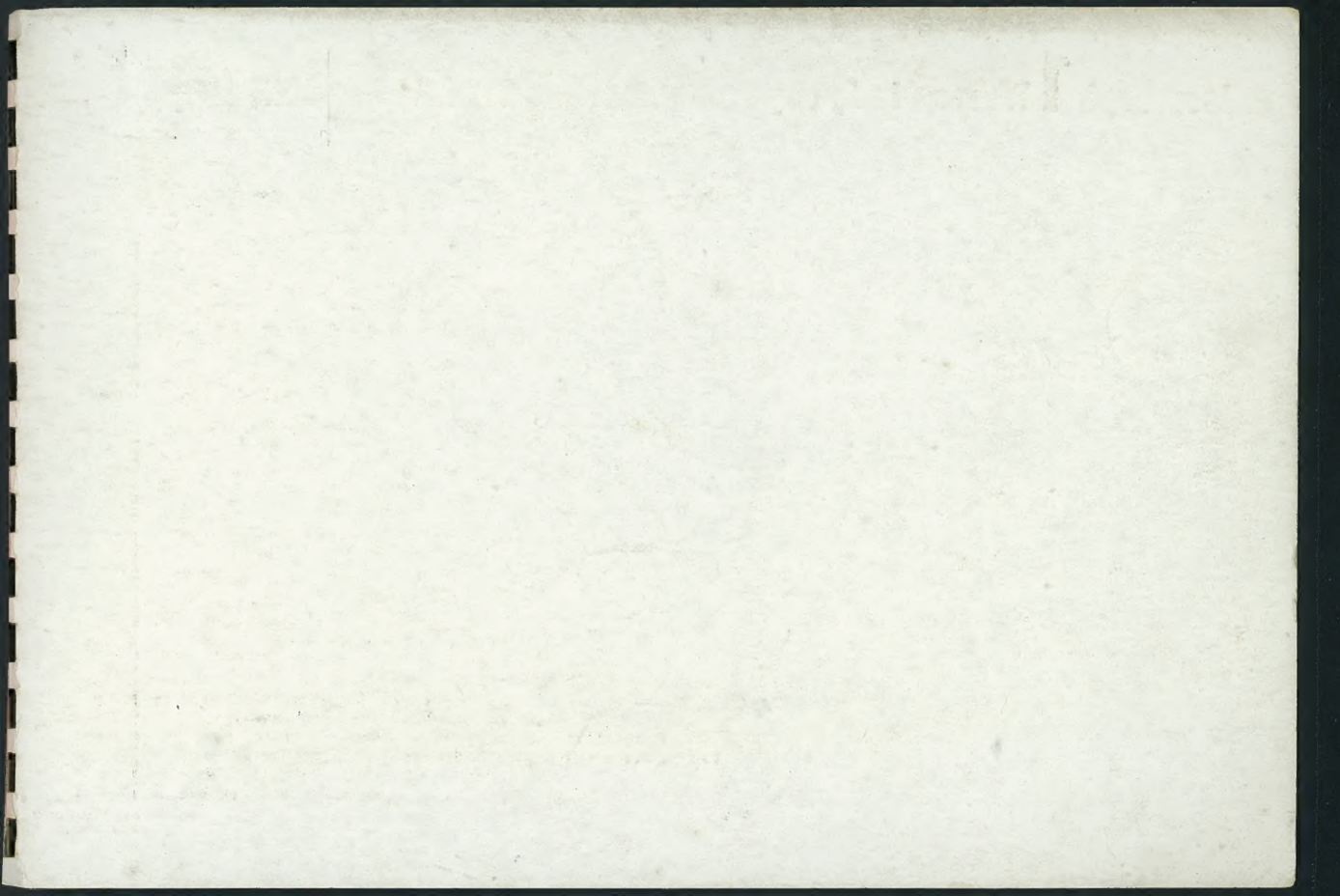
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