

An assumption that began unnoticed, but alongside the obvious expansion of technology, science, and industry, was that new art, untraditional art, noninstitutional art, was international, worldwide. This assumption, like most assumptions about art, hasn't grown to the point of discussion. Occasionally someone attacks the assumption by implication by stating that the only true art is something smaller. Whether art is international or not is a question which unravels the present nature of art, just as criticizing the military unravels the nature of society, and so is a large question. The virtue or not of being international is very ambiguous; it varies from necessary, to indifferent, to malign, with every aspect of the society. Since art became international accompanying the expansion of science and industry that were first European, it is reasonable to question whether that art is merely European, like clothing and food, or only international, like science. European food is not relevant to Japan and Korea and the rest of the world; science is no longer European. I think that art is an international activity.

But it's evident that the international art which occurs at the same time as the industrial society – it's a further question as to whether art is the art of that society – began in Europe, where, as another complication, it was certainly international, which raises the complication of the identity of Europe. Even traditionally, art in Europe was always primarily international, although less than now throughout the industrialized world. Has the internationalization within Europe become, like science, the internationalization of the world? Or has it remained the internationalism of Europe but imposed on the rest of the world? As there are other earlier civilizations, which continue now, there are other earlier international civilizations: China, Korea, Japan, and outward in all directions; India, Southeast Asia, and outward; the Islamic latitude, East Africa, West Africa; and, nearly destroyed, South America and North America. Each might have been the origin of the present international art. All will have a greater effect upon it than now, as all

histories become equal. The international traditional art of Europe did not become international worldwide. Art in the colonies became colonial art, secondary art, inferior art, diluted European art and architecture, diluted not at all by the indigenous art of the country, which was almost always superior to the colonial art, but by the ignorance of the colonists. The similarity of colonization to any international idea or institution is so great that all should be questioned. The European art which was becoming international in the last half of the last century was itself peripheral to the society, and in this century even more so, so that this change is hardly the same as the baroque church replacing the teocalli, but after all the art was made in Europe, and everywhere, as during colonialization, there are lesser versions, now in the basements of museums. These, incidentally, often don't deserve the basement. Also, every country has artists who are only known there, not as good as Cézanne, who are only unknown elsewhere because of the impoverished simplification of the history of art, not because their work is inherently regional and national and therefore, in one argument, irrelevant. Their work, on the contrary, is international, perhaps too much so, self-consciously so. The work is derivative, short of the intelligence and resolution of the inventor; it's a second language, not the first. This internationalism isn't sufficient and produces an appearance, a suspicion, of imposition. This isn't done with the violence of colonization, but usually the power and the money are elsewhere and especially the attitude of superiority, which always requires an attitude of inferiority, which raises the question of what that is. This derivation is the usual quick decline of ideas, and is not due to distance from centers of power. Most of the nature of present art is outside of power and money, in fact these are inimical to it, so that the derivation occurs anyway, and is stored as well in the basements of France and Germany. A third category in storage is because everything that is said well once has to be said badly

many times. It's easier, supposedly necessary now, to repeat than to think. The sales of art and architecture may degrade them, not necessarily, which are caused by power and money, but power and money now cannot create good art and architecture.

Colonialism is achieved by force, by the gun, but the magic of the gun is even more important, the consequent attitude, because magic is religion, the structure of the society and the nature of the world. It's necessary to conclude that the magic of Christianity is superior to your own, and submission follows. Societies change, divide their aspects over time, but not at once. They submit at once and sometimes recover over time. The abrupt change conspicuous in all industrial countries is more in awful appearance than in old attitudes. The whole can be broken quickly by force; the selection of new and old, good and bad aspects takes time, now probably centuries. Most people in South and North America were killed but some by chance were not, among them those of the Northwest Coast of North America. The gun, Christianity, and a few other mechanical appliances convinced them that their religion, their society, their natural world was wrong, even though the Bible doesn't explain Raven. Their fabulous painting and sculpture became obsolete, inferior, and not to be done, even though there was no Christian art to replace it, only photographs of themselves as they were. However, they, the Navaho, the Hopi, the Pueblo, many groups, are more durable than expected and recover, but not as they were. The inferiority isn't clear now. In the Northwest there is a lot of good art. The Navaho and all of the Pueblo produce all of the jewelry, textiles, and pottery that is worth having in North America. Who is inferior? The ultimate proof of American superiority was winning World War II. Without that magic gun, Coca-Cola wouldn't be magic. But after that Coca-Cola as a symbol convinces everyone that their tea is prosaic and inferior. And after that the few tokens of the industrial society that its people

can afford become associated with the rich and glorious United States, now not rich and never glorious. Next to the gun, after bulldozers, refrigerators conquer the world, even more than television sets, being practical, sitting in houses and huts denying much about the people in them. This isn't the way contemporary art should be international, but it's easy for people to treat it this way, including artists who think that they are doing the latest in France and Germany, or, of all places, New York City, and so think they are superior to what is being done and thought locally, which in European colonies like the United States may not be much. A perverse example of the latest elsewhere is a complaint in 1974 by an Australian art critic about a group exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art in New York saying that it was unnecessary to send it because in Australia there was one of each like the artists shown.

The word "international" is used scornfully for the architecture prior to theirs by the "postmodern" architects, who are international in one of the worst senses, merely Coca-Cola. It is used in many senses. Like Christianity once was, it is used as progress, used as superiority. All religions still believe in their superiority, but most don't claim to be progressive. "International" and "progressive" were catchwords of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. They are still of the United States. It's important to distinguish between the many senses of the latter word and to identify what is progressive and beneficial and what is reactionary and harmful. The worst situation for art is to be used as part of a reactionary imperialism, commercial as well as military. This is the dominant attitude of the world society, part colonizing part, throughout, not only the United States colonizing the world in both ways. And as well the United States Government colonizes its own people, since they are exploited to support the military, an alien business which before the Revolution was overseas, and a huge bureaucracy, alien as well. This aggressive attitude

becomes extreme over and over again, as commerce slows and requires force, as now, as in World War II, as last year in Iraq where the United States made a war it needed. International concerns and progress are invoked as the avant-garde carrot while the donkey is beaten in the rear by a reactionary whip. In the fall before the war there was a great revival of colonial justification in the United States, including appeals by the President to the Christianity of a large portion of Americans. Someone high in the government said flatly that the Iraqis were inferior and, repeating the slogan for Vietnam, "we're going to bomb them back to the Stone Age." But I think he also said that they were already in the Stone Age, for which of course he was probably fired, since it makes the bombing unnecessary. Exhorting Christians, or anyone, forward against a supposed enemy is a very dangerous manipulation. Whipping this up in the United States was a large part of the "war effort." The invocation of the identity of religious groups and social groups is of course a growing issue in art, where, I think, it's as fatal to that small activity as it will probably be in war to a large portion of the world, as it is now to small portions.

Considered alone the internationalization of refrigerators might be harmless, as many things are, but most things, certainly refrigerators, are "designed." They are not allowed to remain machines; they are decorated to convey values, usually status, which worldwide is achieved with replicas of the past, but in this case the European and American past: plastic wood grain, stamped leather texture, antique door handles, little shiny modernized antique crowns and numbers. These symbols are recognized everywhere and mean upward mobility, usually to the bureaucracy, guaranteed progress, and that somewhere a civilization is leading and yours is following. Of course even a plain machine conveys and acquires values, as all human products do, but not necessarily these. An imitation wooden surface of plastic is the symbol of the century. All classes love it, from the bottom, which can't rise, to the top,

which can rise no further. It's absolutely international and meaningful and, like science, neither traditional nor local. Science is truly international but is unknown to most people, due to poor education and to diversions such as religion. As the decoration of refrigerators shows, it is an amazingly diverted society. There is pressure from all nations and especially since the 1930s from the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to control science, to use it for their government's benefit, to appropriate it for its purposes and values, which is always a tendency in regard to art, which was total in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which is increasing in the United States, now that they have noticed art. Science is defended of course by ceasing to develop if there is too much interference. The airplane crashes and that's a lesson. In regard to art and architecture no one notices that the plane has crashed, in fact they think it looks better, so that control continues, as it did in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Corporate capitalism, which is neither free enterprise nor democracy, isn't very interested in art, but insofar as it is it wants a version of social realism too, but not token workers, instead token individuals. But so does everyone, rich, poor, and especially the middle class, again if art comes to mind at all. A little token landscape provides a context and, in free and democratic opposition to Soviet social realism, some brushwork represents token individualism, free expression.

Science is present knowledge, absolute at each moment in time – what isn't known isn't known, however much it exceeds what is known. What is known is known. This knowledge is the same throughout the world, and occurs throughout the world. It is not affected by local and traditional beliefs, except in the reduction of financial support. Science itself and so far as it is known by others, before its distortion as a symbol of progress, ignores the social hierarchy and implicitly denies traditional beliefs about the nature of the world. Science

contradicts most of the society and its beliefs. Present knowledge contradicts the society, but most people, often even scientists, don't see the contradiction. Present science is the nature of the world to the extent that we know it. It is a true, necessary internationalism and not an imperialism. The dilemma is that it is right and that it denies traditional religions, some of which have already been destroyed, and so denies the social organizations which religions enforce. Some present art, I think the best art, in congruence with science, also causes this dilemma, not by participating in it, but by existing. This is an inevitable contradiction, not an imposition. There is no resolution to this dilemma. The main thing is that it not be confused with Coca-Cola overriding tradition, or the United States suppressing the Filipinos at the beginning of this century, or at the same time the United States and Christianity trying to destroy the traditions of the Hopis, one superstition supplanting another, a larger power a lesser. The traditional beliefs of the Hopis, for example, cannot be believed by scientists and some others but the contradiction cannot be touched. Knowledge exists. It becomes political if it is pressure. The contradictions will continue among the Hopis, among everyone. The Hopis never fought the United States, only the Spanish once, but their children were taken away to distant American schools and taught Christianity. The schools in the area, though, are probably still American. This is aggression and shouldn't happen. It happens everywhere. The earlier science in a sense of all religions may be wrong, but the religions as organizing structures have attitudes which may or may not be wrong, may even be partially right scientifically, and therefore may not be completely contradictory, and may be useful eventually. We don't know; enough has been destroyed.

I know enough about Christianity to recommend its demise, not by force, but I know very little about other religions. They are everyone's history. The earth everywhere is being bulldozed under itself – the refrigerator needs lots of room

around it – and similarly so is the history of humanity, the ways of living, the religions, the traditions of the societies, the art, and in a very short time and by a very large population. My image of what is happening is a great big thumbtack, which when little is a harmless international device. The wide, flat head is the population now and the thin stem is the earlier population, perhaps about equal. Or, all of history is equal to that of this century, at least in quantity, not in quality. This is a horrifying growth and explains, other than attitudes, the problems of the present. The little stem of all history is not going to be easy to find under the vast, flat head of the tack. The growth is vast and quick and so the people are ignorant and indifferent and mindlessly aggressive. The change in the appearance alone of the United States since World War II is extreme. In 1947 I was in Korea for a year. There was almost nothing from the European twentieth century. In 1991 and 1992 I was in Korea. Everything, everywhere, the normal appearance in 1947, almost the whole of the Korean tradition and society, is now behind glass in the folk museum in Seoul and isolated in the folk villages, of course important and beautiful. This is a complete reversal in forty-five years, like the joke about the animals being outside the cages looking at the people inside. This is very fast and of course while partly good is very destructive, as can be seen by looking around, in Korea or anywhere. Some traditions, say hating the variant group, are very strong, and some, such as architecture, are very weak. Nowhere have architects and city planners learned from the past: there is little of the real nature of Japanese and Korean architecture in Seoul and Tokyo, there are none of the virtues of Paris in its new surroundings, there are none of the small virtues of Dallas in its new preposterous center. It seems that no beneficial lesson is learned from the past.

The world is going to become more and more unified, more international. There is already a world society, a world similarity. There are centuries ahead. What should go and

what should be kept is crucial and is not being considered. What should be international and what should not isn't discussed. Nor much of anything. "That's the way it is." The Cold War, the divisions of Germany and Korea, the subjection of the Eastern European countries, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were inevitable and unchangeable. Suddenly they changed, without much discussion, like a fashion, and suddenly the new situation is the way it is, little to be done or said. Nothing to be learned, as in architecture, no lessons learned. The Americans are looking for a substitute for the Cold War to justify three hundred billion a year for the military; Iraq was only good for one year. No one questions the military, which here in Switzerland just flew over with a sonic boom. The sun came out and when it does so do the Swiss jets. No one has said that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was a large, central government which didn't work and that this implies the failure of central government. The United States is an example not far behind, sinking under its incompetence and its military. The huge military business is a fifty-year-old institution. The failure to soon drastically reduce military expenditure, and thus the deficit, and thus make it possible to improve education and other necessities, will produce a great depression that symmetrically may last fifty years. The delay is very dangerous. The threat of the collapse of the military makes this time one of collapse when, because of the changes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet empire, it should be a time of pleasure and resurgence. The enormous American military makes Russia question disarmament and presses Germany and Japan to rearm, after fifty years, as in the war against Iraq. It must be an auxiliary plot to reduce them also to insolvency.

Europe doesn't learn from the fall of either empire. The unification of Europe is considered progressive even though Europe has no enemies, the usual reason for enlargement, no dangerous economic competitors, and no internal threats

of aggression or revolution. To make an institution larger than necessary is creating a redundancy that invites exploitation and control, totalitarianism. The redundancy destroys smaller institutions and finally the people who made it. The unification will benefit large corporations who will be able to freely move money and factories. They will be free in the present United States Government's version of free enterprise, which is to do to Europe what the automobile companies were free to do to Detroit. The "little" people will be more controlled. As Leona Helmsley, a big hotel person, said: "Only the little people pay taxes." In an unaccountable failure of the "good ole boy" system she went to jail the other day for tax evasion. There is a present development toward small countries, which is basically good. Why get rid of them in Europe? The unification is an old and obsolete idea of progress derived from the idea of the United States, which won the war. The main argument made against small countries, based primarily on the aggression in Yugoslavia, is that they are nationalistic, as if the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are not, as if they are objective and tolerant, two supposed attributes of central governments. The main point for art is that it is politics, community concerns, which are local, those which the central governments destroy, real concerns and activities, not just going to church now and then. It is not art which is local. Art cannot even reflect those particular concerns and, as with every decoration of politics, it would only obscure them. Art was used in the past to justify, not to solve. It can't be used to justify the mostly awful behavior of the present governments. It's not credible that it justify Mobil oil or decorate Washington, D.C. It's been a long time since artists worked for institutions anywhere – the last first-rate Christian art is in the seventeenth century. It's petty for art to be used to represent and justify segments of an international society. Another sonic explosion.