

and policy. This was the origin in the Roman Empire of the Greek buildings, temples, and statues of the gods, which made no inner appeal to the soul of the people and whose external splendour was a triumph of the conquering spirit of the mighty, until its hollowness caused its own destruction.

The predominance of civilization, as far as it extends, always means the oppression of culture, a neglect of essentials in favour of technics and external power, whose actual brilliance and ascendancy can conceal the real decline for a time. Yet just as a secure sense of style indicates the concentration and cultivation of all essential forces, so a preference for alien styles is evidence of personal lack of style, even under the most brilliant circumstances, and of the neglect and disintegration of a sense of style. In times of decline, the original sense of style is lost along with the personal capacity for appreciation. Then uncertain attempts are made to find a style which is naturally not to be found either in formulæ or in models. Then what was style is considered and treated with such a lack of character that the unsuspecting are satisfied with the beautiful form, erroneously imagining that they could thus acquire a style of their own. Then what was once animated creative work becomes mere form, thus becoming lifeless, and continues to exist, like the 19th century buildings in Greek style, as an antique setting for a life that is almost completely mechanized and organized, and hence divested of character and as remote from culture as it is from Nature. The vain attempt to revive the antique is only to be understood as intended "to make Hellenic art the art of humanity as a whole", as Richard Wagner demanded for "the work of art of the future", without being particularly clear himself regarding the character of style in general and, in particular, regarding the alien character of the Greek soul in the age of technics and of the "mechanism of the spirit". Every composition is in danger of becoming rigid in the form that is over-valued. One day it stands there empty and lifeless because the spirit and the soul no longer dwell in it. The antique can now hardly still live even where it really grew up. Its imitation in the 19th or 20th century of our era remains a case of romantic enthusiasm without reality, a record of the longing of those too weak in spirit who endeavour to reproduce the style of the Greeks by technical means, and who, soon disappointed, take refuge first in the formal and then in the abstract.

It is obvious that the character of the style at the beginning of the 20th century is not accepted as a matter of course, so much is said about it. The difference of opinions arouses all, but it remains opinion without conviction, will without a point of view, mind without a soul, and hence really infertile. Fundamentally it is a touching and tragic confusion of conceptions. No personal convictions can replace the sureness of the natural feeling for essentials which involuntarily achieves the formation of style.

Talent is no longer sufficient to achieve the character and skill of the great masters of the past, hence the dissatisfied have had the idea of transcending their art. They experience things differently, but in addi-

tion to the haziness of their experiences they also lack both training in composition and patience. The realm of art becomes a matter of personal opinion, and then a slogan with which they strive to slay each other. Neo-classicism is followed by naturalism which is partial enough to challenge impressionism which, again, does not allow expressionism full scope until the latter, from Paris, outbids the more radical cubism, and the revolutionary futurism from Italy shouts down all the rest. One wishes to overcome the other, until finally, in a desperate revolt against itself, an attack is made in the form of dadaism against civilized, and hence mendacious, culture and art.

Where the sense for reality and the gift of observation are lacking, an abstract idea is easily adopted along with an inclination to regard it as a real idea. Art, however, is not abstract but something very real, if it does honour to its name. All these "isms" serve to describe one-sided ideas and forms in the first place, and then lack of form, but in any case not a style, which was what they were really meant to be. They are exercises, mannerisms and futilities of an art that became sceptical because it lost faith in itself.

These strange prophets of a "new art" and disciples of a "new style" are apparently quite God-forsaken, so much do they lack the restfulness of naturalness. They are infected by the excessive selfconsciousness of their time, and are yet impelled by the unknown. But then their dispossessed souls no longer guide them, and they err unceasingly past the essentials. At first they make the mistake, made by all the superficial, of seeing nothing in the figure but the form, and thus excluding life for which they are so eager. And yet they are in earnest, at least the best of them, and the longing for what is essential and natural and for profundity impels them, even in the strangest way. But the speed of technique leaves them no time for consideration, even less for meditation, while the distractions of life leave them no strength for concentration. Hence they cease to be simply painters, sculptors, architects, or composers, and become thoughtful before they produce creative work, in order to seek salvation, or clarity and "ideology", in the sciences or in philosophy. The natural sciences, and especially physics and psychology, which dominate scientific thought, provide the principles to which they can attach their confused power of imagination in the whirlpool of fleeting phenomena and astonishing facts. With the eyes of science they remain on the surface. With a spiritless mental enthusiasm they free themselves from the "compulsion of the object" which they can no longer master artistically. Nearly all of them thus remain remote in their various endeavours from what is natural, essential, and complete, and, as the victims of the moment or of an accident, fail in expression really to form a style. As "reformers", they adhere to abstract ideas or absurd forms, for they forget that a clever idea is far from being an effective conception. But, above all, they underestimate the resistance of the material to the idea. The material yields only to the idea that penetrates it through and through. But their ideas are all too unessential and intentional, and not