

**G.S. Evans**

# **ART ALIENATED**

*An Essay on the Decline of Participatory-Art*

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## INTRODUCTION

Art, for many of us, is something to be appreciated or even revered. We have, for instance, favorite movies, records, television programs, paintings and novels which have great meaning for us. Meanwhile, the artists and entertainers who have created these works have earned a special place in our hearts and minds. But lost among the appreciation and adulation that we give to our popular artists and the art-products they produce is one salient fact: we are a people who have become almost completely alienated from art. Because, for all the billions upon billions of dollars that are spent to buy art each year, very few people actually make art themselves. Except for the professional art-specialists and a small group of amateurs, art for most people is a commodity like any other. It is designed by a few specialists and then marketed, distributed and sold to the public at a profit to the manufacturer. Thus, instead of singing our own songs, we buy records; instead of telling our own stories or engaging in theater, we watch television shows or movies; and instead of making our own crafts, we buy mass-manufactured products. As a result of this we are taking on the appearance of media 'zombies' who consume innumerable art-products but are unable to make, or in many cases even conceive of making, art on our own.

This alienation from art is a relatively recent phenomenon. As we shall see, the making of art was a central part of people's lives for most of human history--that is, until the relatively recent advent of a capitalist, commodity-based culture in Europe and North America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that time the emphasis in art shifted from participants, who could satisfy their own artistic needs, to specialists, who demanded a paying, non-participating audience to buy their 'products'. Essentially, the art-commodity came to replace participatory-art in most people's lives, and art increasingly became a source of alienation.

This alienation only grows worse as the technology for the perpetuation of art-commodities develops. The mad scramble to buy compact discs, car stereos, videocassette recorders, and Walkman-type portable tape players is an indication of this almost obsessive fetishizing of the specialists' art-products. This fetishism is best exemplified by the avid record collector and 'audiophile', someone who may well own thousands of records and play them on the finest equipment available, and yet be unable to play an instrument or sing a simple tune. Such a person has truly been reduced to Marx's concept of the Commodity Man (or Woman), someone whose identity is tied up, not in what he or she does, but in what he or she buys.

It is vital that we liberate ourselves from this fetishism of art-products, and thereby overcome our artistic alienation. As with all forms of human expression, the making of art is an essential part of our being and of our need to express our feelings and thoughts, joys and sorrows. In addition, it can be satisfying and fun in a way that no art-commodity can possibly be, because one is actually doing instead of just watching. Ultimately, then, we must start making our own art in order to begin the process of liberating ourselves from the alienation of commodity culture, and thereby regain our ability to fulfill our expressive needs.

**PART ONE**

**ART NOT ALIENATED**

## 1. ORIGINS

We live in a society where art is primarily a commodity, something people buy instead of make. Consequently, very few people are actively involved in making art.<sup>1</sup> Because of this general lack of participation, many find it difficult to believe that societies have existed in which literally everybody sang, danced and made their own crafts, all on a daily basis. Yet, not only did (and do) such societies exist, but we cannot address the lack of artistic participation in our own society without having some idea as to what life's such a society would be like.

I stated in the introduction that active participation in art has been characteristic of human culture for most of its history, and that the commoditization of art is a recent development. The most immediate proof of this can be gained by examining the lives of those people who have lived as hunter-gatherers, whose form of social and economic organization featured small groupings of people and a nomadic way of life. Technologically very 'primitive', the hunter-gatherers had few material possessions and only one basic division of labor: the men hunted animals and the women gathered fruits, berries, nuts and the like. Despite this, they may well have had the most participatory artistic culture of all, as Bruno Nettl explains:

“One aspect which may be unique to primitive cultures is the general participation of all members of a tribe in music. Such general participation occurs to some extent in most of their activities. The typical primitive group has no specialization or professionalization; its division of labor depends almost exclusively on sex and occasionally on age, and only rarely are certain individuals proficient in any technique to a distinctive *degree*... the same songs are known by all the members of the group, and there is little specialization in composition, performance or instrument making.”<sup>1</sup>

In such cultures singing was virtually interchangeable with speech and done on almost every occasion: social, ritual, work and recreational. Not to be able to sing or dance was considered such a severe social handicap that there was little choice but to learn how.<sup>3</sup> Yet, far from being a rare or exotic form of human society, this way of life prevailed for thousands of years, until the development of agriculture.

With the rise of agriculture, however, the egalitarian cultures of the hunting-gathering societies were increasingly replaced by societies characterized by class divisions and specialization. One of the results of this specialization was the creation of a class of professional musicians, dancers, and craftsmen. These were the first art-specialists, and their ability to devote themselves completely to art led to the destruction of the egalitarian artistic culture that was characteristic of hunter-gatherers. Despite the presence of art-specialists, however, artistic-participation itself remained a vital aspect of agricultural societies. In Africa, tribal culture largely survived the transition to agriculture (in a more technologically and socially complex form) and therefore still allowed very wide artistic-expression among its members. Meanwhile, in Europe, Asia and parts of America, a feudal, peasant-based culture eventually developed that also retained widespread participation in art. So, while it is true that the making of art in these agricultural societies was less widespread

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<sup>1</sup> In one survey, 3% of the people reported that they had participated in amateur music or drama in the preceding four weeks. Meanwhile, another survey revealed that over 90% of the people watched at least some television every week, and over 60% reported listening to music for at least an hour every day (see Appendix # 1)

<sup>2</sup> Bruno Nettl, *Music in Primitive Culture*, Cambridge, Harvard 1956, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, tribal culture in general led the ethnomusicologist John Blacking to ask: "[If] ... all members of an African society are able to perform and listen intelligently to their own indigenous music ... we must ask why apparently general musical abilities should be restricted to a chosen few in societies supposed to be culturally more advanced. Does cultural development represent a real advance in human sensitivity and technical ability, or is it chiefly a diversion for elites and a weapon of class exploitation? Must the majority be made 'unmusical' so that a few may become more 'musical?'" John Blacking, *How Musical is Man*, Seattle. U. of Washington. 1973, p.4.

and egalitarian than among the hunter-gatherers, it was a difference of degree, not of kind,

This "difference of degree" will be the subject of the exploration of popular artistic-participation in late Medieval and Renaissance Europe that follows. I use this time and place as the case example for this essay because it will not only show a society where most people still made their own art, but also how this situation changed gradually with the growth of capitalism. In the process, it will also show that it was not the presence of the art-specialists *per se* that destroyed most people's ability and opportunity to make art, but rather the specialists' linkage to a rising commodity-culture. This linkage allowed the art-specialists to go from being leading participants in the making of art to having a near exclusive monopoly on it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As a result of this essay's favorable presentation of past historical periods, the following descriptive pages may seem on the romantic side to many. There is, however, no idealization or romanticism here. The many harsh and brutally oppressive features of life and society in medieval times are not being overlooked; they simply do not relate to the narrow focus of this essay, which is society's participation in the making of art. For instance, though I may glowingly describe court customs and traditions relating to the arts, I do not deny that the courtiers had great privileges at the expense of many people--they did. The point is that they used this privilege, in part, to create a rich tapestry of life revolving around the playing and singing of music, dancing and writing poetry. Our ruling class instead chooses to use its privileges to consume more, better and expensive art-products, and this difference is very significant in the context of this essay.

## 2. IN THE CITIES

In late Medieval and Renaissance Europe both the cities themselves and the courts of the nobility, which were usually located in the major cities, had a strong and vital cultural life. A cultural life, it should be added, that emphasized actual participation in the making of art.

One of the most dramatic examples of this participation was the popularity of domestic music making. Among the merchants, lawyers, teachers and bureaucrats that constituted the middle-class of this time it was expected that one would be able to play an instrument and sing; otherwise one might face considerable social embarrassment. This is hinted at rather strongly in the following, a preface from a music instruction book published in 1597:

But supper being ended, and Musicke books, according to the custome, being brought to the table: the mistresse of the house presented me with a part, earnestly requesting me to sing. But when after manie excuses, I protested unfainedly that I could not,<sup>5</sup> everyone began to wonder. Yea, some whispered to others, demaunding how I was brought up.<sup>5</sup>

The many diaries that have survived from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provide ample illustration as to just how common the playing and singing of music was at this time. Roger North (1653-1734) recalls that in his youth his grandfather:

...played on that antiquated instrument called the treble-viol, now abrogated wholly by the use of the violin, and not only his eldest son, my father, who for the most part resided with him, played, but his eldest son Charles, and younger son, the Lord Keeper, most exquisitely and judiciously; and he kept an organist in the house, which was seldom without a professed music master. And the servants of parade, as gentleman ushers, and the steward, and clerk of the kitchen, also played, which, with the young ladies', my sisters', singing, made a society of music, such as was well esteemed in those times.<sup>6</sup>

The noted diarist Samuel Pepys recalled a typical musical evening when the family's new gentlewoman, named Mercer, "dined with us at table, this being her first dinner in my house. After dinner, my wife and Mercer, and Tom and I, sat till eleven at night, singing and fiddling, and a great joy it is to see me master of so much pleasure in my house. The girle plays pretty well upon the harpsichon, but only ordinary tunes, but has a good hand: sings a little, but hath a good voyce and eare. My boy, a brave boy, sings finely..."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Pepy's diaries are filled with descriptions of him actively playing music with various family members, friends and associates in a wide variety of social situations. These occasions ranged from the typical after dinner music-making to the atypical, such as when he sang with a complete stranger while taking a ferry. Pepys was also constantly commenting on friends' and associates' musical abilities, ranging from the exalted in describing a particularly good player to "Lord, it was enough to make any man sick to hear her..."<sup>8</sup> when commenting on the harpsichord playing of a friend's daughter.

This emphasis on being musically proficient seemed to have cut across class lines. Besides the highly regarded abilities of such highly placed royalty as King Henry VIII, Mary Queen of Scots

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke*, 1597.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Bessie A. Gladding, "Music as a Social Force During the English Commonwealth and Restoration", *The Musical Quarterly*, 15:516-517, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 519.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Latham and William Matthews, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Berkeley, U. of California, 1971, May 1, 1663.

and Queen Elizabeth I we find numerous other famous personages known for their musicianship, including the Earl of Derby, Lord Brereton and the Earl of Sandwich. Even John Milton, better known for his poetry, was an accomplished musician who was considered to have had "a delicate tuneable voice, an excellent ear, could play on the Organ and bear a part in vocal and instrumental Musick."<sup>9</sup> At the other end of society servants were highly valued (in a relative sense, of course) for their music-making abilities, as is indicated in both the North and Pepys quotations above. There was, in fact, a great demand for servants and apprentices with musical ability,<sup>10</sup> either to entertain the family and guests or to fill out the family consort and make for a fuller evening of musical performance.

Almost as significant as the frequency with which music was made at this time was the relationship between amateur and specialist. For even though "professionals of high skill existed, they had not yet enforced a division between them and the amateur in the quality of composition which they performed."<sup>11</sup> The Pepyses and Norths were not hobbyists or amateurs in the sense that we know them now, playing simplified pieces or arrangements, but rather playing the leading 'art' music of their time. While it was true that virtuosity "existed among professionals ... as in the Masses of the Netherlands School, or in certain compositions of the English virginalists (e.g. Bull's "Walsingham")...these were display pieces, created by and for a small number of kept musicians, and the bulk of accepted music was within the range of the amateur. Its simplicity of technique did not automatically imply simplicity of conception, nor did it bear the stigma of not being advanced enough to be suitable for the professional."<sup>12</sup> Amateurs such as Pepys typically played with professional musicians, such as the Master of the King's Music, while a few of the amateurs (such as the physician Dr. Wallgrave on lute) were considered to be among the finest performers on their instruments.

Obviously not all of the amateurs were this talented, nor did they always perform their music under ideal circumstances. So, to deal with all the disparity as to where, how and by whom their compositions were to be played, the composers took a flexible approach to their composing. This allowed their works to be performed by players of varying skill, instrumentation and circumstance. Hume's *Poeticall Musicke* (1607) was "principally made for two Basse-Viols, yet so contrived, that it may be plaied 8. severall waies upon sundrie Instruments with much facilitie", and these ways are, in fact, specified.<sup>13</sup> Other pieces allowed virtually any combination of instrumentation and singers, while many lute-songs could be sung solo or with several voices, with or without instruments. In general there was a very close relationship between the art-specialists, who did most of the composing, and the amateurs, who did most of the playing. As a result they were in direct personal contact with each other. This is revealed, in all its complexity, in the following passage from Pepys' diary, dated January 23, 1664:

After we had dined came Mr. Mallard; and after he had eat something, I brought down my vyall, which he played on - the first Maister that ever touched her yet, and she proves very well and will be, I think, an admirable instrument. He played some very fine things of his own, but I was afeared to enter too far in their commendation for fear he should offer to copy them for me out, and so I be forced to give or lend him something.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony a Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses* (1815), vol. 1, col. 486 quoted in J.A. Westrup, *Domestic Music Under the Stuarts*, Proc. Mus. Ass., 1942.

<sup>10</sup> Gidding, op. cit., p. 519.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Lee, *Music of the People*, London, Barre and Jenkins, 1970, p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Westrup, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Pepy's Diary, op. cit., January 23, 1664.

We see then that music-making was commonplace among the middle and upper classes to a degree that far exceeds what occurs in our own day. Further, in these earlier times the composer knew that the popularity of his compositions depended on the public's ability to play them, and not merely on their willingness to listen to them. Such a situation seems far removed from the current reality in which our specialists turn out millions of pre-recorded musical products that can only be listened to. Gone is that dynamic interaction between amateur and professional that produced, far from the inferior musical product that one living in our time naturally associates with amateurs, a period of musical history that is considered to be the 'Golden Age of English Music.'

## Dance

If music was the pre-eminent form of popular artistic-expression among the middle class during late medieval times, dance could claim the same position among the nobility at court. Dance, in fact, was the primary social activity at the formal balls and masques that played such an important role in the social life of the court. For this reason it was considered, along with riding, jousting, field sports, harping and singing, to be a socially necessary skill for a nobleman.<sup>15</sup> To maintain these dance skills and keep up with changing styles many courtiers took dance lessons daily, thereby making dance an everyday adjunct to court life.<sup>16</sup> We get some indication as to the role and nature of court dancing in the following contemporary accounts, the first of the nuptial of James IV of Scotland, the second in its description of the Pavane, a popular dance of the time:

After some words rehearsed betwixt them [the King and Queen], the minstrels began to play a basse dance, the which was danced by the Queen and the Countess of Surrey. After this done, they played a Rownde, the which was danced by the Lorde Gray leading the queen, accompanied of many Lords, ladies and Gentlewomen.<sup>17</sup>

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[The Pavane] is used by kings, princes and great lords, to display themselves on some day of solemn festival with their fine mantles and robes of ceremony; and then the queens and princesses and the great ladies accompany them with the long trains of their dresses let down and trailing behind them, or sometimes carried by damsels. And these Pavaues, played by hautboys and sackbuts, are called the Grand Bal, and last until those who dance have circled two or three times around the room, if they do not prefer to dance by advances and retreats. These Pavaues are also used in a masquerade when there is a procession of triumphal chariots of gods and goddesses, emperors or kings resplendent with majesty.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly it was expected that even the highest royalty should dance, and many of the monarchs did with considerable enthusiasm. King Henry VIII, for instance, was an avid dancer when a young man, often dancing to his own musical compositions. His daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, would take time out on her tours of the

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<sup>15</sup> Frances Rust, *Dance in Society*, London, Routledge and K. Paul, 1969, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Kraus, *History of the Dance in Art and Education*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1969, pp. 66-67.

<sup>17</sup> John Leland, *Collectanea*, vol. 4, pp. 275-300 quoted in George S. Emmerson, *A Social History of Scottish Dance*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's Univ., 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Arbeau, *Orchesographie*; quoted in Emmerson, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

countryside and search for new country dances to incorporate into court dances, and she remained an active dancer right up to the time of her death at the age of 70.<sup>19</sup>

Court dancing was to reach its height of popularity in the early seventeenth century with the masque, a court occasion which had initially been a rather simple affair, but later grew very elaborate. A typical early masque in England (circa 1500) would begin when a group of masked nobility would, unexpectedly, visit a castle or nobleman's house accompanied by torch-bearers and musicians. The visitors would present gifts and then dance for the hosts and any guests present, later inviting them to join in the dance.<sup>20</sup> By the early part of the seventeenth century the masque had evolved into a major, pre-planned social 'event', with elaborate and ornate sets, dramatic plots, and choreographed dances, all of which necessitated weeks of rehearsals. These performances were arranged as a series of dances, not unlike ballet (of which it was the precursor), presenting different aspects of the dramatic theme. For instance, in one scene that was typical of these masques, thirty genii (actually the musicians) sounded the coming of the (fictitious) Queen of Spain, who made her entrance surrounded by fourteen nymphs and a band of Amazons (all courtiers). All of the dancers then sang and danced until it was time for the next scene.<sup>21</sup> The production aspects of this 'le grand ballet' portion of the masque, as it was called, were usually handled by the dancing masters, musicians and composers who were attached to the court in a professional capacity. The dancers themselves, however, were all amateurs. The common, popular social dances which the courtiers learned as a part of court social life were adapted for use in the ballet portion of the masques. As a result, many of the finest dancers in Europe at this time were amateurs. King Louis XIV of France, for one, was considered an excellent dancer and danced in 26 of these ballets before reaching middle age.

Following the production of the ballet portion of the masque (and true to the earlier masques) members of the audience would join the participants in general dancing. King Louis XIII, also a talented dancer, was so enthusiastic about dancing that after the masque he and his fellow dancers would leave the royal palace and perform again in various nobleman's mansions with a final performance in front of city hall with the townspeople as their audience. The King and his troupe would then finish the evening by dancing with the townsfolk in the streets.<sup>22</sup>

## Theater

Theater in late Medieval Europe could be best described as the ultimate in community theater. Not "community" as opposed to "professional" theater (of which there was little), which is how we think of it now, but rather theater that was literally a part of the community and involved, in some fashion, all of its members.

There was a wide variety of theatrical forms present in medieval towns, some performed more spontaneously and on a small scale (as a part of street fairs or during market days) and others more formally in the church or town square. Here, however, we will focus on one of the most ambitious forms: the procession or pageant play which presented a cycle of related plays on different episodes in divine history. What made the pageant play unique was that each play was presented on a separate wagon or cart that would proceed, with the other plays to be presented, in a procession of wagons to different parts of the city. At each location where the procession stopped, a part or the whole of each play would be performed on each wagon in the order of their arrival at the location.

The origins of the pageant play lay in the various pageants and processions that marked medieval life. Performed on special occasions such as a municipal holiday, coronation or royal visit to a town, these

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<sup>19</sup> Rust, op. cit., p. 45. So much so that at the age of 66 she was still dancing the Gaillard, a controversial dance at the time because of its sexually provocative movements, as the Spanish ambassador cynically reported in 1599: "The head of the Church of England and Ireland was to be seen in her old age dancing three or four Gaillards."

<sup>20</sup> Rust, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Kraus, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> Kraus, *ibid.*, p. 73. This was obviously long before the French Revolution.

pageants would feature leading citizens and members of the town's guilds dressed specially for the occasion and carrying banners. These early pageants also featured various entertainments, such as brief plays and mimes, as a sidelight. It was the processions marking religious holidays, however, that provided the direct catalyst for the development of procession plays, especially the Feast of Corpus Christi held in late spring each year. The holiday became established in the early part of the fourteenth century and was initially celebrated much the same way as the municipal processions mentioned above. In the course of the next century, however, the processions grew more and more elaborate; first the banners became more ornate, then wheeled wagons, or floats, started carrying people dressed in costume silently depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Eventually these mime-like figures started reciting brief speeches as the procession moved through the streets, which finally led to the actual presenting of plays. By the middle of the fifteenth century the procession play had reached maturity and was to remain a major event for over a century.

In the pageant play's mature form, the procession of horse-drawn wagons carrying the plays would typically start out at daybreak. The wagons would wind their way through the streets of the town, stopping at certain pre-determined points, which could be as few as 2 or 3 in a small town or as many as 10 or 15 in a large one. When they stopped they would present a part or the whole of the play (which would take about 10 to 20 minutes). Spectators at the stopping points, located at strategic locations in the city, would have the opportunity to see the plays, one after the other as they arrived in the procession, without leaving their part of town. The final destination was usually located in an area that could hold larger numbers of people, and here all the plays (which could range from 5 or 10 in a smaller town to as many as 48 in a city such as York) would be performed in their entirety.

The wagons used in the plays had a main stage surface that was about six feet above the street. Sometimes there were additional playing levels above or below the main stage which might, for instance, be used to represent heaven and hell. The action of the play would often overflow onto the street, and ladders would be used to climb up and down from the wagon. The roof area (which was roughly ten to fifteen feet off the ground) would support simple stage machinery that might be used to manipulate stage props, as in the raising and lowering of a crescent moon.<sup>23</sup> In a play such as the "Secunda Pastorium" (Second Shepherd's Play), whose action takes place both in a pasture with grazing sheep (painted on to the backdrop of the stage) and in the inside of a household, the stage would have been divided with the pasture on one side and the house interior on the other. When the actors would move from one scene to the other they would step off one side of the wagon, make a 'journey' through the street and climb a ladder up onto the other side. When an angel appeared later in the play, to announce the birth of Christ from a 'divine height', he might do so from a higher level on the wagon or from the top of a building next to it.<sup>24</sup>

The responsibility for the organization, performing and financing of the plays lay with the community. In England it was the trade and craft guilds, the backbone of civic life, that took this responsibility. Members of a participating guild were levied a "pageant-pence" tax to help finance a play, with additional help coming variously from city authorities and the church.<sup>25</sup> The guilds were also responsible for finding the actors (who, with few exceptions, were amateurs culled from a cross section of town society), including some from their own ranks.<sup>26</sup> Besides filling some of the acting roles the guild members would contribute, where appropriate, their skills to the making of the wagons, stage scenery and costumes. Further, each guild would back a particular play, often one related to its particular trade, e.g., the fishmongers would produce a play involving Noah's Ark. Not unexpectedly, the various guilds came to take great pride in their

<sup>23</sup> B. Donald Grose and O. Franklin Kenworthy, *A Mirror to Life: A History of Western Theater*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Arnott, *The Theater In It's Time*, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1981, pp. 129-136.

<sup>25</sup> William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978, pp. 225-

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 202.

presentations and apparently the competition gave rise to disputes. For example, in the Corpus Christi procession at York in 1419 the "Skinners were set upon by the Cordwainers and Carpenters as they processed."<sup>27</sup> In addition, members of one guild could not appear in another guild's play without special permission.

The cycle plays themselves were the work of numerous playwrights, none of whom are known to us, and then evolved over time as they were repeatedly revised in the course of their performances. Though the subject matter was essentially the same from town to town, the play itself was different. The original playwright would, in all likelihood, have been a local citizen, and in any case the evolution of the play over time as it was changed and modified for various performances made it truly unique to its community.

The pageant play, then, was truly a community event. The very authorship of the play lay in the community, as well as its organization, financing, staging and ultimate performance. Finally, its very mobility, which must have been tremendously difficult to execute (and spectacular to see), is testament to the importance that was given to making it a part of the entire community.

## Visual Arts

When one speaks of the visual arts in medieval times, one is really speaking of craft. This is because there was no differentiation between "art" and "craft"; all who worked in the visual realm were considered craftsmen. And since medieval town and city life was for a long time dominated by these craftsmen, the visual arts had an important place in medieval society. Far from being isolated and secondary to the life of the time (as they are now), those craftsmen practicing in areas related to the visual arts were central to all aspects of town life--economic, social and cultural.

This is not so surprising when we consider that the mass production techniques of the industrial revolution had not yet been developed. There were no factories or assembly lines to turn out vast numbers of goods mechanically, and so everything had to be made individually by hand, resulting in a vast proliferation of trades. These trades ranged from major ones such as those of masons, weavers, blacksmiths and carpenters to the extremely specialized ones such as the bookbinders, harpmakers and seal-engravers. We get some indication of the craftsman's importance in the towns when we consider that York, England in the 1370's had a total of 2,000 households of which 1,000 were headed by a craftsman running his own shop.<sup>28</sup> One hundred different trades were represented by these craftsmen in York (though some, such as buckle-makers and clockmakers, only had one practicing craftsman). The larger trades were organized into the powerful guilds that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries often controlled the political life of the towns (in a semidemocratic manner) until their power was usurped by the merchants in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The craftsman's presence was felt in the town in another important way as well, namely that they were the ones who built the cathedrals, houses and shops that the townspeople lived and worked in. In addition, they made the clothes and shoes that the townspeople wore. In fact, the high proportion of craftsmen in the medieval community and the influence of their work made the medieval town reminiscent of a modern-day "artist's colony", a place where enough artists and craftsman are gathered together to give it a special character. Such a special character that the physical appearance of the city or town itself was created by these artist-craftsmen.

In order to become a craftsman one had to undergo a seven-year apprenticeship followed by a two-year period as a journeyman working in the shop of a master craftsman. After this the apprentice became a master craftsman himself and could set up his own shop. Until incipient forms of factories started to displace craftsman in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most were able to run their own shops with complete control over their work and work-space. The nature

of the shops depended on their work; those involved in the building trades would likely work at the site of the construction while most of the other trades operated out of shops, with the work space located in the back and a retail area up front.

How many of these craftsmen's work could truly be said to be artistic in nature is difficult to say precisely, but most craftsmen had at least some opportunity to be artistically expressive in the course of their work. Obviously the stonemasons and painters had a wide range of expressive potential, being the ones who laid the foundations for our modern forms of art. Glaziers, who were responsible for the spectacular stained glass windows of that time, had considerable opportunity to work with shapes, colors and forms as did weavers, embroiderers, gardeners and some of the wood working trades (such as the cabinet-maker or carpenter). A few crafts, such as net-makers, brick-makers and nail-makers had only limited opportunities to add an aesthetic dimension to their work.

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>28</sup> John Harvey, *Mediaeval Craftsmen*, London, B.T. Batsford, 1975, p. 22

### 3. AMONG THE PEASANTRY

Art was thoroughly integrated into the fabric of daily life in the villages and fields of the medieval countryside to an even greater degree than in the cities and courts. As is true with peasants in the general the European peasants made art while working, socializing, celebrating and worshipping.

In the case of music any peasant had ample opportunity to sing with others in all of the contexts mentioned above.<sup>29</sup> One of the most common of these contexts was while working, as is described in the following account of peasant women singing while hoeing in the fields near Dragalevtsy, a village in the Sofia region of Bulgaria:

There was a hypnotic rhythm of sound and color in their work as the line of blackclad bodies, and white headcloths, swayed forward together through the thin green blades ... While the women worked they sang old folk songs about beautiful heroines and the brave Krali Marko, a legendary Balkan hero who carried out prodigious feats against the Turks, or of peasant girls knitting gay stockings for village boys. The songs were usually romantic and often were cheerful in theme; but now and then one was moved by a haunting sadness deeper even than that of the negro work songs. Hour after hour I used to hear the unhappy music rise in its bizarre cadence; day after day for three weeks the corn was hoed in one field after another.<sup>30</sup>

Coming to or from the fields provided another opportunity to sing,<sup>30a</sup> as we can see in the following example, also from Bulgaria: "All the country roads leading to the village are filled with groups of returning harvesters. In the twilight and on into the darkness the echoes of their singing resound. The songs are designed to be sung at sunset, on the way to the village; at the house of the landowner, and so on, following the homeward progress of the workers. As might be expected, the songs sung in the evening are subdued, personal, and sentimental."<sup>31</sup>

In the homes of the peasants singing accompanied many different tasks. Most notably it figured prominently in the *sedenka*, an occasion in which teenage girls would gather together in the evening to spin yarn, later to be joined by the boys of the village at which time the real festivities began. During one typical *sedenka* there was "much singing ... someone struck up an old ballad and others joined in. Then after a few more ballads, someone ventured a popular song

<sup>29</sup> In examining artistic-participation in the countryside it has been necessary to rely on accounts of peasant life in Eastern Europe (particularly Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary) that date from the early part of this century. This is because peasant lifestyles had long since disappeared from Western Europe and only the sketchiest information survives of peasant life during medieval times. Enough does survive, however, to show definite parallels between Eastern European peasants of this century and their medieval ancestors in terms of economic organization, social relationships and cultural life.

<sup>30</sup> Irwin T. Sanders, *Balkan Village*, Lexington, U. of Kentucky, 1949, p. 47. Sanders was an U.S. citizen who lived in the town of Dragalevtsy off and on during the 1930's and provided an excellent account of life there. Dragalevtsy had a population at this time of about 1,700 and was, as yet, relatively unaffected by consumer culture. During Sander's time there was, for instance, only two radios in the whole village and no record players.

<sup>30a</sup> I use the past tense to describe the peasant lifestyles here because a combination of World War II and economic modernization in Eastern Europe has largely ended the traditional peasant lifestyles in Eastern Europe. Peasants living in a traditional manner still exist, to be sure, in other parts of the world, but they lie outside the scope of this essay.

<sup>31</sup> Boris A. Kremenliev, *Bulgarian-Macedonian Folk Music*, U. of California, Berkeley, 1952, p. 127.

... [In general] the singing of some particularly lively tune at the evening gatherings might lead to folk dancing in which both the boys and the girls took part ... Usually after midnight, the singing at the *sedenka* began to decrease in volume, conversation became dull, and the boys sensed that it was time to go.<sup>32</sup> Artisans in the village also sang, as in the case of the Dragalevtsy village barber, who, "when his services were in demand ... pulled the victim's chair to a corner where he set to work in view of the general public. His mellow tenor voice, none the worse for his imbibing, brought him more trade than his ability as a barber."<sup>33</sup>

Ritual and ceremonial occasions such as Christmas, New Year's Eve or Easter also gave rise to music-making. At Christmas groups of men went from house to house and sang a variety of carols, depending on whether the listeners were young or old, male or female, soon to be married, etc. In fact, "the singers have a definite repertoire for every house; after they finish it, they ask the host to drink wine from their flask. He on his part offers them some wine from his flask, and his wife gives them bread rings, bacon nuts, flour and money."<sup>34</sup> Singing also played an important role at weddings, where "each stage of the wedding has its prescribed songs--the arrival of the parents-in-law, the veiling of the bride, the journey to and from the church, the moment when the bride enters her new home, etc."<sup>35</sup> Singing accompanied many other activities, ranging from church-related ones to singing as an accompaniment for dance or for calling the cattle in from the fields. In general, it is safe to say that almost all the peasant women sang regularly, as well as many of the men. This is not to suggest that all peasants were equally good singers, or that they all engaged in singing with equal enthusiasm, but that they all had the ready opportunity to sing regularly with other people in the course of their everyday life.

For all the emphasis on singing there was comparatively little regarding the playing of instruments. Women rarely, if ever, played them and even the men, who had traditionally played them, could easily become reliant on others to do it. Zoltan Kodaly writes:

There is a difference in the way peasants feel about songs and instrumental music ... [Where instrumental music is concerned] everyone is a listener; performance is the task of a few. Whether the musician is a gipsy or a peasant, he stands alone, or with a few companions, face to face with the listening masses. These are not entirely passive: they dance to the music and are quick to feel if it is not played to their liking ... Hence, in instrumental folk music, peasants have long since strayed away from the original lines of folk-culture--a state of musical self-sufficiency. At a pinch, young people will dance to a song accompaniment, but dancing cannot take place at a village gathering, however humble, without instruments and invited musicians.<sup>36</sup>

The shepherds represented the only group among the peasants where the playing of instruments was still typical--at least by the time detailed accounts of peasant life were being recorded. To while away the vast amount of time that they had on their hands while the sheep grazed, they played flutes for hours on end, developing repertoires of hundreds of tunes. They were also proficient in the use of various types of alphorns; the large, long (up to 9 feet) horns that were

32 Sanders, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

33 *ibid.*, p. 17.

34 Raina Kataroua-Kukudoua and Kiril Djenev, *Bulgarian Folk Dances*, Cambridge, Slavica, 1976, p. 39.

35 A.L. Loyd, from the liner notes of *The Folk Music of Bulgaria*, Columbia Records (Vol. 15 of The Columbia World Library of Folk and Primitive Music, ed. by Alan Lomax).

36 Zoltan Kodaly, *Folk Music of Hungary*, New York, Praeger, 1971, pp. 126-127.

used to call flocks together and signal their movement to different fields and which were also engaged for playing dance tunes and funeral airs.<sup>37</sup>

It is interesting to note that professional musicians were not generally asked or expected to sing at any of the events they played at, simply because the peasants had no need for them to do so. In a society where it was not "unusual to find peasants who know three- or four-hundred songs, and an exceptionally endowed singer may have a repertory of over a thousand items,"<sup>38</sup> there was rarely any need to have a professional sing for them.

## Dance

That dancing was also very prominent in peasant life is attested to by the fact that peasant dances were structured to allow any number of people to participate. The most common peasant dances (typified by the Bulgarian *horo*) had the dancers linked together into a chain, circle or line by holding on to each other's hands or shoulders. Most of the dancers would do a series of steps and jumps, repeating them over and over to the music. Meanwhile, the leader of the dance (at the head of the chain) improvised or led changes in the steps. There was no limitation to the number who could be linked together in such a fashion and so, on a major holiday, a whole village might dance together in the village square or in a clearing near the village. On such occasions the population of the village would form a long line to dance in with the dancers either providing their own accompaniment by singing antiphonally, or having musicians provide it. After a song was over, the leading dancer would move to the end of the chain and the next-in-line would take the lead. Hundreds could take part in these dances that might well last for hours.<sup>39</sup> A first hand account from Dragalevtsy gives us some idea of what such occasions were like:

On a comfortably mild Christmas Day old women and little children, the first to arrive in the main village square, sat in twos and threes waiting for the dancing to begin. Girls in their Sunday best, with necklaces of gold coin flashing in the sunlight, passed through the square as they walked. They were bareheaded, since they could not yet wear the married women's head kerchief. As they drew close, the blotches of rouge, the tremendous earrings, belts laden with clinking silver pieces, and heavy bracelets showed that the girls considered this no ordinary holiday. They formed a line, side by side, and began the dance after persuading the gypsy musicians to strike up a tune; one by one the boys who had come out of the taverns joined the moving line: one step to the right, one step to the left, then three steps to the right, kicking high as they stepped. As the dancing progressed, many married women participated, while the married men looked on with condescending interest. The little children, dressed like miniature adults, gathered on the fringes of the crowd to imitate the dancers. Gossiping groups formed, buzzed, and then dissolved to form anew.<sup>40</sup>

Weddings were another major occasion for dance, as was the village fair where "from dawn till dusk horos in many chains are danced simultaneously at several places ... New dancers join the chain, and others leave it. One set of musicians is replaced by another. Expert dancers from

<sup>37</sup> Tiberiu Alexandru and A.L. Loyd, from the liner notes of *The Folk Music of Rumania*, Columbia Records (Vol. 18 of The Columbia World Library of Folk and Primitive Music, ed. by Alan Lomax).

<sup>38</sup> Loyd, op. cit., liner notes. The only type of singing where one might hear a professional would be in the singing of epic tales.

<sup>39</sup> Katzarova-Kukudova and Djenev, op. cit., pp. 10-18.

<sup>40</sup> Sanders, op. cit., p. 3

different villages vie with each other as to who shall lead the dance...".<sup>41</sup> Some fairs lasted as long as a week, allowing for continuous, non-stop dancing.

Most interesting, however, is the role dance played in the daily life of the village. Almost every job began or finished with songs and dances, especially when it was a group activity such as the autumn gathering of grapes where the grape pickers liked to make fires and dance horos around them.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, such domestic chores as bleaching the laundry or spinning were considered an occasion to dance. Even the simple act of going to the village fountain provided an occasion for dance, as we can see from the following account:

About seven o'clock the people used to go to the pasture to get their animals. If the animals were slow in coming, then the people danced the horo there in the fields. When the animals had been taken home, and after the girls had finished up their housework, they went with jugs to one of the three fountains in the village and there danced again until eleven o'clock.<sup>43</sup>

Dance was also popular on occasions when boys and girls would congregate--the evening sedenkas mentioned earlier is a good example.

## Theater

Theater, as we now know it, had little parallel in peasant society since there were no actors or actresses who dressed up in costumes and spoke lines. Sometimes ritual or carnival-related dances would feature masked dancers enacting a legend, but these were more in the nature of theatrical dances than true theater. Peasant societies were also largely illiterate and the dramatic arts therefore fell largely into the domain of storytelling, which in the peasant context involved the reciting of tales of adventure, witchcraft, sorcery, and humor.

As Chaucer indicated in his "Canterbury Tales", storytelling was a common form of artistic-expression for all classes of medieval society. However, as the written word came into increasing use among the upper classes, storytelling gradually became the preserve of the lower classes. It survived as a commonplace activity until very recently in many villages in Eastern Europe. As late as 1950 Linda Degh reported that in the village of Kakasd, Hungary, "almost all intelligent adults were able to tell a good many tales from the community repertoire and they also knew the favorite pieces of the recognized raconteurs."<sup>44</sup>

These raconteurs, or master storytellers, were widely recognized for their great skill and ability to entertain. Generally speaking, the best of these storytellers were to be found among those workers (such as day laborers, journeyman and hired hands) or craftsman (tailors and shoemakers) whose work gave them the most opportunity to tell tales. For instance, during the nineteenth century "young people in Pool-Ewe, Rosshire in the West Highlands of Scotland used to assemble on long winter evenings when tailors and shoemakers came to the village. While they made the new quilts and shoes for the villagers, they told tales all night."<sup>45</sup> Similarly, in Eastern Europe one writer tells of "the great storytelling occasions which resulted when a shoemaker, tailor, wheelwright, or carpenter came into the house. Storytelling was part of his trade, and the

<sup>41</sup> Katzarova-Kukudova and Djenev, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> Sanders, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Linda Degh, *Folktales and Society: Storytelling in a Hungarian Peasant Community*, trans. by Emily M. Schossberger, Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Press, 1969, p. ix. This excellent book on the role of storytelling in the lives of the Szekler people of Kakasd immediately after World War II forms the basis for this section.

<sup>45</sup> quoted in Degh, *ibid.*, p. 356.

family and neighbors would sit down together [to listen]."<sup>46</sup> Cobblers, too, spun tales, as this description from Hungary indicates: "Anybody who came to Andras Berko to have his shoes repaired waited while it was done. Several people thus would gather in the house, and while he repaired the ir shoes, Berko told stories to those who waited."<sup>47</sup> Since all these occupations allowed for travel, it was also easier for such craftsman to learn new tales. In fact, another excellent group of storytellers were once to be found among wandering vagrants. Besides Gypsies, who were famed for their storytelling prowess, groups such as the Bacaigh (Itinerant People) of Ireland were highly regarded storytellers as were the Brodjaga (vagrant) narrators of Siberia who, numbering in the the thousands in the second half of the nineteenth century, would narrate tales on successive evenings and in return would "receive the hospitality of a family."<sup>48</sup>

Stories were told on many different occasions. Work was one of these occasions, and not just for the craftsmen. Other villagers told stories while doing domestic chores, such as spinning, or when farming where "nearly every kind of work in the fields which is not excessively strenuous can be an occasion for storytelling--hacking, weeding, cutting roots, gathering potatoes, planting, sheafing. Storytelling is done during work like this by one of the workers, who sits down near a ditch and entertains the others."<sup>49</sup> Traveling to and from work provided another major opportunity for storytelling and many stories were told while walking to work in the mines or the fields. In village social get-togethers storytelling could either be the primary entertainment, or be one of several different kinds, the others being party games, dancing and singing, riddle telling and question and answer games.<sup>50</sup> When it was the primary activity, two systems were used in organizing the storytelling. In the first, several persons narrated in turn through the entire evening, in some cases leading up to the finale at which point a recognized master would have had the honor of going last. The second system assumed the presence of a master storyteller who held sway the entire evening, or, if necessary, on several successive evenings. Only a truly outstanding storyteller, however, would have been capable of maintaining an audience's interest for that long.

For this reason only such a master would have been engaged on the occasion of a wake, which could last for as long as 48 hours in parts of Eastern Europe. During the daytime part of the wake there was singing of religious dirges and praying on one hand, and drinking and playing of cards on the other.<sup>51</sup> But in the evening the focus was on the storyteller, who would recite an epic narrative with the idea of keeping the people at the wake sufficiently entertained so they wouldn't fall asleep. When successful the storyteller "entertains those present and at the same time makes storytelling a constant part of the wake itself."<sup>52</sup> Sometimes these dusk to dawn performances would be remembered and talked about for years.

The audience on story-telling occasions numbered no larger than the capacity of the room would allow, and questions and comments from the audience were not unusual. The listeners absorbed the stories being told and re-told them or parts of them on other occasions themselves. Sometimes, however, certain stories were associated so much with a particular master storyteller that he or she came to have a monopoly on it. Though other master storytellers might have known the story they would not present their own version of it until the recognized teller of the story died or left the village.

As with modern-day actors and actresses, the storytellers used a variety of techniques to enhance their presentations. Physical gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice were all utilized. In addition, they would enhance already established stories by adding some of their own

<sup>46</sup> quoted in Degh, *ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

<sup>47</sup> quoted in Degh, *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 105.

material to them. They also added or deleted text while telling the story depending on the audience's reaction to it -- condensing a story if the audience grew impatient, or expanding on it if it went over well.

## Visual Arts

Unlike the urban areas of Medieval Europe, which were dominated by craftsmen, the countryside had relatively few professional artisans. Further, those few craftsmen that did practice in the countryside were primarily concerned with the manufacture and maintenance of basic agricultural implements. This meant that the peasantry themselves had to become proficient in many areas of craft. Among the peasantry, then, "every man knew how to work with wood and every woman how to sew. The absence of these skills or incompetence in them put an individual on the fringes of the community. People used to say that a young man unable to work with wood was unfit to become a successful farmer, and a girl unable to make herself an apron or a bonnet was incapable of running a household. While truly creative talent was limited to only a few individuals, the fact that others tried to imitate the best specimens of various decorative items at least encouraged creative activity, for which the present times offer little incentive."<sup>53</sup> The sexual division of labor led to a different emphasis between the sexes in craft-related manufacture. For the men it was more a matter of economic necessity related to their farming, and only occasionally would they make something more aesthetically-orientated, such as flutes or toys. Shepherds were an exception to this as they were famous for the elaborate, ornate herding staffs they carved. For the women craft-related work was one of their primary activities, both economic and artistic. Whether it was the spinning of yarn, weaving of cloth, quilting, embroidering, lace-making or knitting, craft was an integral and important part of a peasant woman's life. Much of the singing, gossiping, and storytelling took place on occasions when village women would get together to spin yarn. To be sure, much of this work was menial, such as the making and mending of work-related clothes. But much of it was artistic as well. The following, a description of one girl's "hope chest" (a chest full of items that a girl starts making by hand when she is 8 or 9 in preparation for her wedding day), gives some idea as to the variety of things that the women made:

...25 pairs of socks knitted by the girl, 55 long white shirts of homespun cloth (half to be given away, half kept), 35 homespun belts to be given to unmarried men, 15 face towels, 15 handkerchiefs worn by married women, 20 sukmani, or black jumper dresses (most to be kept by the girl).<sup>54</sup>

The fashions and styles used were of the peasants' own design. Based partially on tradition and partially on innovation the peasants were able to create the very way that they looked, and the wide variation in peasant patterns and styles between villages only a few miles apart were the result of this organic, collective effort. And collective it was, for as much variation as there may have been from region to region, or even village to village, there was little variation inside the village. In Dragalevtsy "there is not much individuality in dress, for whenever someone gets something new the others copy it. Especially the young unmarried girls try to buy or to make something new so as to attract attention. But all the rest, as soon as they see it, won't take time to eat until they have made the same thing so that the one possessing it will not feel that she is in a higher position than others."<sup>55</sup>

53 Salzman, Zdenek and Scheufler, Vladimir, *Komarov: A Czech Farming Village*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, p. 127.

54 Sanders, op. cit., p. 86.

55 Sanders quoting Zdravka, the tailor's wife, *ibid.*, p. 15.

## **PART TWO**

### **ART BECOMES ALIENATED**

## 1. THE RISE OF COMMODITY CULTURE

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries major social and economic changes transformed Western Europe. These changes included the forcing of millions of peasants off the land and into the city through the enclosure acts, the destruction of the guilds as the craftsmen increasingly became proletarianized, and the once-powerful landed nobility losing its economic power to the capitalists. Additionally, the rise of a capitalist ideology destroyed the feudal ideological sanctions against greed and selfishness and replaced them with the concept that humans were, and should be, self-seeking, acquisitive and desirous of accumulating wealth. A culture that fetishized commodities was born, and the communal art of medieval Europe declined.

The speed with which this decline affected the traditional, medieval forms of art varied considerably, depending on the whether it occurred in town or country, among upper class or lower. The first and hardest hit was medieval theater. Its clear association with Catholicism doomed it in areas affected by the Reformation. Though these traditional plays remained popular among the people, a number of legal edicts and decrees were issued banning their performance in Protestant areas during the course of the sixteenth century; the last York Corpus Christi cycle was performed in 1569. Even in areas that remained Catholic the plays were subjected to increasing restrictions. The Counter-Reformation Church, responding to the Protestants' attack, became far stricter in their control over the religious stage, which was seen to have had too many vernacular excesses. In addition, medieval theater inevitably suffered from the economic assault on feudal institutions, e.g., the declining guilds having less ability to financially and physically support the plays than they did in the past. In addition, the rising capitalist system started to offer new forms of art that, beginning in the late sixteenth century, started to fill the void left by the decline of medieval theater. It was at this time that professional actors, organized into companies, started to perform in specially built theaters (such as the Globe in London) instead of the public spaces used by medieval theater. These professionals, "by rapidly capturing the public's affection, diverted its attention from the loss of one of its richest and more rewarding corporate assets: a thriving traditional and popular theatre created over several centuries and genuinely belonging to the whole community ... As commercial considerations came to dominate, no longer did hard labour and varied skills, time, talent, and monetary levy, weld together people and presentation; no longer was a public dramatic performance the result of widespread communal activity but something to be purchased like any other commodity; no longer could spectators identify with local performers whose personal habits and usual daily pursuits they recognised and acknowledged. The new theatres might inherit some conventions and customs from an earlier age but now an invisible wall had sprung up between the paid actor on his apron stage and the paying audience in pit and galleries. It has still to be demolished."<sup>1</sup> We had Shakespeare, but at a price.

The court dances discussed earlier suffered no such suppression, and yet the inexorable movements toward commercialization and professionalism were to affect them as well. The institution of court dancing started to change in the 1660's when King Louis XIV of France chartered the Royal Academy of Dance, an institution dedicated to further improving the technical aspects of dancing. Over the ensuing decades the Academy developed more and more advanced techniques that increasingly demanded the full-time attention of the dancers, something the courtiers found themselves unable to give (and ultimately paving the way for our modern ballet). Additionally, the Academy was given the use of the theater in the Palais Royal, originally built for the staging of plays and used by Moliere and his actors. Unlike the court masques in which the performance occurred on the palace floor with the spectators surrounding it, the performance now occurred in an enclosed theater on a raised stage, with the audience facing the stage. Further, the audience could no longer join in the dancing after the formal performance, as they had done with the masques. In fact, they could do nothing but enter, sit, watch, applaud and

<sup>1</sup> Tydeham, op. cit., pp. 245-246.

exit. The effect of all this was that "over a period of decades, performance became the domain of the professional dancers who were trained in the Royal Academy and who developed an increasingly high level of skill that separated them, more and more, from the amateur performers in the nobility."<sup>2</sup> At the start of the seventeenth century the best performers were to be found at court; by the end of the century they were professionals.<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that dancing completely died out at the court. The minuet, one of the more difficult social dances, peaked in its popularity in the early eighteenth century. However, "after that, 'social' dancers gave up the unequal struggle to reach the standard of excellence attained by the professional dancers, trained by the Academie Royale, and tended to relax with their cotillons, country-dances and contredanses."<sup>4</sup> This represented the beginning of a decline in the general standard of social dancing that has continued to the present day.

Domestic music-making started to go into decline toward the end of the seventeenth century. After Charles II's restoration in 1660 a variety of people, such as shopkeepers and foreman, started to get together every week at taverns to sing, drink ale and chew tobacco. Soon, however, professional musicians were invited to entertain, and out of this "developed the popular concert, an institution quite unknown in the earlier part of the century."<sup>5</sup> By the end of the century there were several such places where one could go, pay an admission and hear a concert put on by "an excellent master." Because of the increasing demand for professional musicians caused by these public concerts there was a correlating increase in their numbers, and even though they were "created at first to entertain and not to dictate, these musicians had the leisure to develop a higher level of technique than the average amateur could hope to attain."<sup>6</sup> The professional musicians increasingly became a class unto themselves and they no longer interacted directly with amateur musicians. As a result both the popular and 'art' music of the time left the realm of the amateur musician. Domestic music-making certainly did not die out completely, even into the nineteenth century leading composers continued to write music for the amateur. But what the composers were writing for the amateur was neither their best nor their most serious music; unlike a seventeenth century composer the nineteenth century composer was writing down to the market. Much of the energy, enthusiasm, and vigor of domestic music-making was lost as it became secondary to the musical life of the time. The decline was noted in 1709 when a contemporary observed: "where you used to see songs, epigrams and satires in the hands of every man you met, you have now only a pack of cards."<sup>7</sup> Roger North moralistically warned around the same time that "if the home cultivation of music be neglected vice will start up to fill the vacancy...When we know not how to pass the time we fall to drink."<sup>8</sup>

Domestic music making was to survive until the introduction of records and radio in the early part of this century, principally in the form of the Victorian drawing room ballad (described by one writer as a "sticky mass of sentiment and tired melody"<sup>9</sup>). Usually played on the drawing room piano by the daughter of the family, this music was a far cry from the high standard of composition and performance found in seventeenth century domestic music. At least, however, people were still trying. As Ronald Pearsall writes "although we may shudder at the prospect of hearing 'Shells of Ocean' waveringly droned out by three timid daughters accompanied by maybe a flute, a concertina, and a piano, do-it-yourself music is an activity that we could have more of today."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Kraus, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Rust, op. cit. p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Westrup, op. cit., p.45.

<sup>6</sup> Lee, op. cit., p.57.

<sup>7</sup> Steele, *The Tatter*, no. 1, 1709, quoted in John Harley, *Music in Purcell's London*, London, Dobson, 1968, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Roger North quoted in Harley, *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Pearsall, *Victorian Popular Music*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1973, p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95.

The decline of craft most directly relates, in an economic sense, to the rise of industrialism. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries merchants and traders were able to wrest political control from the craftsmen in the towns and then, by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, controlled them economically as well. A 'putting-out' system had developed in which the merchant purchased the raw materials, paid a craftsman a fee to make them into something, and then took the finished product for trade. As a result, though the craftsman still worked in his own shop, he was no longer fully independent. The next step was for the merchant to own the shop and equipment as well, paying the craftsmen a wage to work in the shop, thereby creating a factory-like situation and proletarianizing the craftsman.

This became very widespread by the seventeenth century and once the industrial revolution hit its full stride the craftsmen largely disappeared. As John Harvey described it:

The speed of change, from mediaevalism to industrialism, varied greatly between different crafts. Whereas the great leaders of mediaeval art in the trades of mason and carpenter had lost their leadership in the sixteenth century, clockmakers, homers, joiners and cabinet-makers, and saddlers continued their work with only slight modifications down to a time within living memory. The fundamental skills of the apothecary, the gardener and the working jeweller survive, as do some others. Yet it has to be said that the last glimpses of the mediaeval scene, and of mediaeval method, have nearly come to an end within our own time. The last great sailing ships have gone along with the last steam locomotives, both of them exemplifying in their individuality the same vital spark, continuing from the age of the craftsman. It would seem that humanity now faces a future of automatism in which the personal alliance between brain and hand progressively disappears.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

## 2. IMPACT ON PEASANT CULTURE

For the peasants the impact of commodity culture varied considerably depending on their proximity to the major areas of industrialization and their integration into consumer culture. For instance, the traditional peasant culture in England was largely destroyed by the beginning of the nineteenth century and had entirely disappeared by the beginning of this century. In parts of Eastern Europe, on the other hand (which were much slower to industrialize), many peasants lived a traditional life until quite recently.

The single outstanding reason for the decline of peasant culture was the sheer havoc wrought on it by industrialization, which included the destruction of the peasantry's traditional economic activities, subsequent break-up of their communal lifestyle and the massive emigration of peasants into the cities. As a result of these economic changes the peasantry was turned into a rural proletariat and peasant culture became marginalized as the village became integrated into an increasingly urbanized and industrialized culture.

In England many peasant art traditions simply died out. Folk-singing, for instance, was only remembered by some older people at the turn of this century and folk song collectors such as Cecil Sharpe desperately had to collect and 'preserve' these songs before the last singers died. Indeed, there wasn't even much positive regard left for these traditions, as E.N. Bennett indicated in 1914: "I have heard quaint lines sung to unprinted melodies by old men in Oxfordshire, which, words and tune alike, are nigh unto vanishing away, for the young men and maidens refuse to learn the old songs, and when they sing at all use more or less obsolete music-hall ditties from the towns."<sup>12</sup> The cultural traditions of peasant times were perceived as old and archaic, as compared with the newer, urban, middle-class models that were being disseminated thru singing societies, printed sheet music and music halls. Dancing met a similar fate as the traditional dancing on the village green, which was once such an important social occasion, was replaced by the more formal dance halls. Storytelling as an active art form was gone as well, replaced by the increasing availability of mass-produced fiction found in magazines and books.

Mass production had a similar effect on peasant craft. Once cheap manufactured clothing became available it usurped the use of traditional clothing, and not only because of its ready availability. In England during the nineteenth century vast numbers of young women and girls were forced by the decline of the village economy to work both as domestic servants and in factories, causing a tremendous disruption of female peasant culture. This took them away from traditional work patterns and made them wage earners, making it that much easier for them to become consumers of clothing rather than makers of it. There was also the dominating presence of town culture and the desire on the part of villagers to imitate it. Even in Bulgaria in the 1930's we start to see this tendency developing, where in Dragalevtsy "all self-respecting village women possessed a pair of cheap western shoes. Comically enough, they frequently walked barefoot and carried these uncomfortable badges of status."<sup>13</sup> The creative artistic control over what they wore passed out of the peasants' control as they too attempted (often rather pathetically, for they were poor) to match the fashion designers' concept of how people should look.

Not all peasant traditions have actually died, even in England, but where they have survived it is usually in a fossilized form. An early example of this fossilization was to be found in the English town of Addbury. During the 1890's it was noticed that the traditional spring-time dancing around the maypole had disappeared from Addbury. An organization made up of the town's respectable middle-class ladies thought that such a 'quaint' custom should be revived. So, under the patronage of these women the children (adults no longer participated) were dressed up, instructed by the school teachers as what to do, and then gave a performance.<sup>14</sup> Along these same

<sup>12</sup> quoted in Michael Pickering, *Village Song and Culture*, London, Croom Helm, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Sanders, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Pickering, op. cit., p. 42.

lines we find Christmas caroling, once a spontaneous adult activity, is now something that (when it is done at all) is usually done by children, who are often coerced into it by their parents. We also find various other peasant crafts and performance traditions artificially maintained, in a static fashion, for the benefit of tourists who wish to see such 'authentic' customs when visiting the tourist-oriented villages that try to recreate aspects of 'olden times.'

Even where peasant culture survived intact until recently, and where the level of consumerization is still comparatively low, there have still been great changes in the nature and form of artistic-participation. In Bulgaria, for instance, where earnest attempts have been made to maintain peasant traditions as a mainstay of national culture we see the inevitable effects of modernization. Peasant dances, once a spontaneous activity on the part of villagers, are now (c. 1988) overseen by the Department of Amateur Artistic Activity. Some 3,000 amateur folk dance groups have been organized that perform at country, district and national festivals where other folk customs, "such as weddings, St. Lazarus' Day and Christmas rituals ... are staged with the accompanying dances."<sup>15</sup> The most talented of the amateurs are recruited into the national folklore companies, such as the State Folk Song and Dance Company, where they become full-time professional dancers, touring nationally and internationally.

In the course of all this organization and formalization of peasant dancing the concept of a staged performance, with passive spectators, has developed. Indeed, so has the 'star-system', whereby the talented amateur can aspire to and be awarded professional status and national fame. In short, dance and music are no longer self-contained, spontaneous activities done by the villagers for their own satisfaction and fulfillment.

<sup>15</sup> Kataroua-Kukudova and Djenev, op. cit., p. 73.

### 3. THE RISE OF THE MASS MEDIA

As the industrial revolution continued to progress in Western Europe and America in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the last vestiges of medieval culture passed from the scene. Consumer culture came to predominate and art became increasingly popular as a commodity. To encourage this commoditization of art attempts were made to make it a more saleable commodity, one of these being the construction of bigger and better theaters for ballet, drama and music. These attempts were successful and concert-going became an established fact of life as large numbers of the growing middle-class flocked to these concert halls, which could seat thousands for a single performance. This new, "listening" public, perhaps as compensation for the gradual loss of their own artistic skills, demanded the highest virtuosity from their performers and the legends of Paganini and Liszt were born. Meanwhile an ever-expanding print media helped to popularize the first superstar celebrities as performers as widely varied as Tom Thumb, Jenny Lind and Frederick Chopin developed large followings of admirers (the first 'fans'), who were increasingly reliant on the art-specialists for their art and entertainment as their own organic forms died out. It was also at this time that the Romantic concept of the towering, isolated, artistic genius was born and people started idolizing their favorite artists as god-like figures capable of expressing profound thoughts or emotions through art.

By the end of the nineteenth-century, then, the art-specialist was clearly in the ascendant. They had re-shaped the public's perception of art in a way favorable to them and were reaping the rewards. However, the art-specialists were not yet able to dominate art completely. Because there were many homes and communities the art-specialist could not yet reach, some widespread forms of art-participation continued to survive. As we have already seen, it was still standard in the nineteenth century to have a piano in the drawing room where members of the family would play light classics and sing popular songs of the day. The sheet music upon which these songs were printed could sell in the millions for a single song. And sheet music, though a commodity, requires a performance from the buyer to bring it to life. The early part of this century also saw the first of the popular dance 'crazes', such as the Tango and the Turkey Trot, that contributed to a dramatic increase in the number of dance clubs being built, culminating with the dance palaces of the 1920's. Meanwhile, in the rural United States, the turn of the century stands as an idealized period of barn dances, singing societies, and barbershop quartets. And, inspired by the popularity of John Phillip Sousa, it was a time when "hardly an American hamlet was without its village band; hardly a public occasion passed without the sound of the brasses, woodwinds, drums and cymbals of a band."<sup>16</sup> A similar movement of amateur brass bands (with as many as 40,000 spread across the country) became a popular rage in England during the 1890's. Amateur painting also became very popular around this time, and it was considered to be 'de rigueur' to take one's canvas and oils along when going to an interesting locale.

Even for those people still engaged in making their own art, however, a combination of the dominating presence of the art-specialist and the influence of market forces led to a qualitative change in the nature of artistic-participation from pre-capitalist times. Therefore, though many people still played music, it was written and controlled by a publishing industry (such as Tin Pan Alley) and sold as a product. Social dance had become less a community get-together than a "social" event, where one went to a place outside the community and *paid an* admission to participate in it. In addition, informal forms of artistic-expression largely had died out as work songs, storytelling, the making of handicrafts and other art activities associated with everyday living disappeared. The concept that art was something that was only experienced on special occasions, removed from daily life, had become established. Artistic control by this point

<sup>16</sup> H. Wiley Hitchcock, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1974, p. 116.

rested entirely with the specialist, and the concept of art as commodity had also become firmly established. Popular artistic-participation, therefore, continued to survive at this time but only as a secondary activity in many, though not most, people's lives. Nonetheless, compared to the present day it was still relatively common and would probably have remained so if the products of the art-specialist had remained limited to live performance, art galleries, sheet music and books. In other words, so long as there were limits to how deeply the art specialists could reach into people's home and social life. By the second decade of this century, however, these limits were being shattered by a phenomenon known as 'mass media'.

The first form of this mass media to have a perceptible effect on peoples' lives was the motion picture. Silent movies first became widely popular around the time of World War I, and many live venues such as theaters, music halls and vaudeville stages were either closed or converted into movie theaters to meet the demand. Then, in the 1920's, phonograph records and radio hit a mass market, causing sheet music sales to plummet.<sup>17-18</sup> During the 1930's sound was added to motion pictures, increasing their popularity. Record sales continued to increase at the expense of sheet music sales, as did the number of radio stations. At this point even the specialists were becoming seriously threatened; the American Federation of Musicians membership was being hurt so badly by the loss of live performing jobs to pre-recorded forms of music that it called a 27-month strike against the making of records in the early 1940's in an attempt to get compensation for the lost jobs. This was a losing battle, however. The introduction of long play records, high-fidelity playback systems and stereophonic sound in the course of the 1950's and '60's made listening to pre-recorded music an aural experience comparable with live music. Such was the quality of this sound that live dance bands gave way to disc jockeys in the dance halls, now renamed 'discotheques'.

It was the introduction of television, however, that struck the final blow against participatory-art. With television it became possible to watch a variety of art forms (and in a very mesmerizing form) without leaving one's home. No matter how popular movies had been, one still had to go outside of the home to see them, and so they had only a limited effect on home life. But television could go inside the home, and, by combining sound with picture, do so in a far more captivating way than radio or records could. Television, in effect, swallowed up people's time and, within a few years of its introduction on the mass market, it was being watched an average of thirty hours a week per person. When one adds to this total an extra few hours for listening to records and radio we find that by the 1960's the average person was spending approximately 35 hours a week watching or listening to art-commodities. Only a few decades before the people themselves would have had to fill these 35 hours; now the time could be filled for them, and by a commodity to boot. The effect this has had on people's thinking, reading and social habits have been given considerable attention, but its effect on popular, participatory artistic-expression is no less significant. Because it can move the art-commodity into the home in such a dominating fashion, television represents the final triumph of the art-commodity over participatory-art.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In Great Britain sheet music sales declined from 566,459 worth in 1925 to 284,691 in worth in 1933. Pearsall, *Popular Music of the 1920's*, Newton, David and Charles, 1976, p. 83.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd discuss the effects that early forms of mass media had on the artistic activities of a typical midwestern town in *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929, pp. 244-250.

<sup>19</sup> I am calling, in this context, television programming an art commodity even though it is true that it is not sold directly to the consumer in the way a record or film is. Nonetheless, via a circuitous route (the advertisers), it is essentially being 'sold' to the public.

**PART THREE**

**ART ALIENATED**

## 1. RADICAL MONOPOLY

The dominance that art-commodities have over popular art-participation in our society is best described as a *radical monopoly*. A radical monopoly, as defined by Ivan Illich, occurs when "any industry...becomes the dominant means of satisfying needs that formally occasioned a personal response."<sup>1</sup> Thus it is not the same as a commercial monopoly which might occur in music if one record company, let's say Columbia Records, controlled the sale of records, tapes and C.D.'s (that is, pre-recorded music) relative to the other record companies. A radical monopoly, rather, occurs when pre-recorded music as a product comes to replace the making of music in society; in other words, people stop making music themselves and start buying pre-recorded music instead. A further aspect of a radical monopoly is that it becomes an entrenched and structural part of society. People who only listen to music and do not make it for themselves, for example, will normally put on pre-recorded music, no matter what the situation, rather than make their own. This is partially because of conditioned habit, but also because they will no longer be capable of making music among themselves. In addition, the radical monopoly will set up modes of performance that are exclusive to it and will push more personal modes out of style, i.e., make people like or relate to them less and less. For example, a society aesthetically conditioned by big-budget films and television with "Star Wars"-type special effects, acrobatic photography and general 'larger-than-life' production will generally find a lone storyteller or even a stage theater production flat and dull in comparison. Having become very visual in their tastes and with a strong sense of realism in their aesthetics, most people actually want to see in great detail the place in which the action is taking place. A film, such as the recent "The Last Emperor", will in large part be judged by how well the director photographs and presents it atmospherically, the dialogue having become secondary to the visual.

As a result, people conditioned to such films are not generally impressed with a few stage props meant to symbolically represent the scenery, any more than people aesthetically conditioned to theater from Shakespeare's time, or George Bernard Shaw's, would be impressed with the sparse and limited dialogue of modern film and television. But, and here is where the radical monopoly becomes complete, these different forms are not comparable when it comes to presenting them in a form compatible with popular artistic-participation. The master storyteller in a peasant village was on an entirely equal level, in terms of material resources, with everybody else. The only possible difference between him or her and the other villagers was in the skill, talent, artistry and enthusiasm of the presentation. As a result anybody could, and usually did, engage in narrative storytelling in the course of his or her normal social and work life, deferring to the master storyteller only when one was present. Even the staging of a Shakespearean play can be done by a relatively small group of people with modest stage props, such that amateurs can compete, in terms of material resources, with the professionals. But when multi-million dollar movies become the cultural and popular norm, how can a small group of people, much less a lone storyteller, compete? How could one stage "Star Wars" in a theater, or try shooting it on 'home' movie or video equipment? And, even if one could, would it bear any relationship to the original? Would anybody used to watching the big budget versions bother to watch it?

In essence, then, this radical monopoly has created something of an *aesthetics gap*, in which the prevailing cultural and aesthetic tastes have become so conditioned by expensive technology that most people demand it of their art and entertainment. Because of this gap, those forms of art and entertainment that do not, or cannot, incorporate this technology are relegated to the margins and periphery of society.

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Illich, *Energy and Equity*, New York, Harper and Row, 1974, p. 45.

## 2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

The ramifications of the art-commodities' radical monopoly on the artistic life of our time are deep, complex and self-perpetuating. They have effectively destroyed forms of artistic-expression that allow for participation, deprived people of the technical ability and self-confidence to make their own art, and made the public dependent on expensive, large-scale forms of art that no community or individual can produce.

For music, this radical monopoly has meant domination by a multi-billion dollar recording industry which has succeeded in placing pre-recorded music almost everywhere. Whether through home stereos, Walkman, car stereos or Muzak, we are at all turns of life surrounded by this prerecorded music. This vast industry, helped by other media such as television, has largely eliminated live music (even that played by professionals) from our lives. An example of this is the disappearance of dance bands, which have been replaced by the high-fidelity playback systems that are being used in discos. Here, even in a 'live' situation, it is pre-recorded music that has triumphed. Indeed the 1970's, like the 1940's, saw desperate attempts on the part of professional musicians to save their jobs as they picketed discotheques in a failed attempt to convince people to dance only to live music. For the professional musician to become successful, therefore, it has become increasingly important to land a recording contract or find work in the recording studios.<sup>2</sup> Though there is still some work to be found playing older styles of music in lounges, churches, weddings (though disc jockeys have largely replaced the live band there as well) and orchestras, the live situation looks like it will remain bleak. This is because the contemporary, popular music that should be the basis of live music is so tied up in recordings that there is relatively little opportunity to perform it, or make a living from it, live. For example, a rock band can play the club circuit for years and develop a devoted local following and still be unable to make ends meet financially due to the high costs they must incur to compete with the recording superstars. The instrumentation, sound system, transportation and rehearsal costs are such that few do more than break even, and so most rock artists concentrate their efforts on landing one of the few recording contracts.

Needless to say, if even professional musicians are reeling under the onslaught of pre-recorded music, the situation has not boded well for the amateur. In music as surely as in drama an aesthetics gap has been created by the increasing sophistication of pre-recorded music in the last 25 years. Early on, from the time when records first entered the mass market around 1920 until the late 1950's, recording technology was too limited to do much besides simply recreate a live performance. A rock and roll band in the 1950's, for example, would write a song on piano or guitar, rehearse it and go into the recording studio. They would then record 2 or 3 different takes, choose the best one and be done, usually within a few hours. This started to change in the late 1950's and early 1960's when 2 and 3 track recording equipment allowed some instruments or voices to be added ('dubbed') after the initial recording session. The performance heard on the record was therefore no longer a straight reproduction of the live session. In 1967 this was taken several steps further when the Beatles released their "Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band" album. This record, by using multi-track tape recorders, was able to create unusual mixes of voices and instrumentation that went far beyond a simple dubbing. Additionally, it used various special effects (such as slowing down and speeding up the recording) that created a record that not only didn't reproduce a live situation, but *couldn't* be reproduced in a live situation. It was the first popular and influential record that was truly unique to the recording studio, and in which the studio (and the record producer) became as important an element in the musical process as the musicians themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Even the studio musician is being threatened as the musician's unions have, in the course of the 1980's, been losing their battles to keep digital synthesizers and samplers (which can increasingly sound like the 'real thing') out of the studio.

These 'studio' albums, as they came to be called, quickly became the norm in popular music in the course of the 1970's and '80's as recording technology grew more and more complex. Twenty-four and forty-eight track tape recorders became available, followed by digital recorders and synthesizers, various special effects devices such as digital delays, reverbs and vocorders, and extremely sophisticated audio processing technology. Recording a modern popular album now takes 2-3 months of 40+ hour weeks in recording studios that charge \$200 an hour for the use of their high-tech (and extremely expensive) equipment. The final record, often costing over \$100,000 for studio costs alone, could almost be described as a collage of several different recordings. The bass player and drummer (if in fact a drum machine or synthesizer hasn't replaced the rhythm section entirely), who recorded the initial rhythm parts early in the recording process, will likely never come into contact with the various back-up singers, wind and brass players and other musicians who play on the same song. Each of these musicians will come in at different times, weeks or months later, to record their parts. After all of the different parts have been 'laid down', the producer and recording artist will spend long hours mixing and re-mixing the multi-track master, adding effects or subtracting them, experimenting with different sound processors, and quite possibly bring in even more musicians to add extra parts that are felt to be needed. In this environment the recording process *is* the composing process, and as a result many recording stars go into the studio with nothing written or worked out, choosing to do all their composing within the studio's confines. In essence, the master tape has become the modern equivalent of the classical composer's manuscript paper--parts are scratched out, added, redone, *etc.* in the course of writing a composition. There is a considerable difference, however, in the price and availability of manuscript paper and piano on which a classical composer might compose an aria, and the price and availability of a modern recording studio in which one might compose a contemporary song.

In fact, these recording artists encounter the very aesthetic gap that they themselves created when they play live. Their fans expect their songs to sound like they do on the record, but even expensive sound equipment and road crews cannot compete with the time, equipment and attention that can be lavished on the studio recording. As a result live albums in rock and popular music are very rare, and it is an axiom in rock music that a band rarely, if ever, sounds as good live as on record. Significantly, the opposite axiom is true for older traditions, such as classical music, where recording strive to sound as good as the live performance.

Obviously, then, it is even more difficult for amateur musicians to perform contemporary music. We saw earlier how music was once written to be played in the home, and if somebody liked a piece of music he or she would simply buy the sheet music for it and play it. This is still technically possible; sheet music is still published for our popular songs. But it usually only bears a vague resemblance to the actual recording. The sheet music can only show the chords and melody of a song, and no matter how well arranged, it comes out as nothing but a skeletal outline of the music that was heard on the record. All the elaborate mixes, synthesizers, sound collages and extra musicians are missing. Therefore the 'color' that is so important to the music of today is gone, since these things cannot be reproduced on a lone piano or guitar. It would be a bit like trying to reduce a Mahler symphony (that, unlike a Mozart symphony, was so reliant on 'color') to sheet music--just how would one reproduce a dramatic cymbal crash on piano? The only way to even roughly imitate most of these contemporary recordings in the home or community would be to have several thousand dollars worth of instruments, amplifiers, microphones and a mixing board sitting around, ready for use (and be in a living situation where the sheer amount of noise caused by playing the music wouldn't cause the neighbors to call the police). The only other alternative would be to invest several thousand dollars in one's own recording studio, but that

seems no more viable for a truly participatory art than the first option. The fact, then, that contemporary, popular music is not written to be played, but to be listened to, makes most of it inappropriate to be used in any other fashion.<sup>3-4</sup>

When one considers the extent of this radical monopoly and aesthetics gap in modern popular music, it is hardly surprising to learn that most music still made by non-specialists is made in those various surviving institutions that preceded the introduction of mass media. These include concert bands, civic orchestras, various remnants of folk and ethnic music and, especially, churches. Even though many churches have indeed fallen into the pattern described by Eric Clarke of "making congregations of passive listeners, played at by the organist, sung at by the soloist, treated, in fact, exactly like a theater audience, only asked not to applaud"<sup>6</sup>, there are many (especially among the 'low' churches) that still offer ample opportunity for congregational singing. Even in those churches where the congregation has limited singing opportunities, at least members of the congregation can join the choir and be musically active within the context of their everyday life.

## Dance

In general, the making of art in our society is something done either by professionals, aspiring professionals or amateur devotees. In addition, it usually exists in isolation from the normal social routine that most people lead. We have seen where, for some people, church singing represents an exception to this. Another exception, at least in part, is in the area of social dance. Though the actual number of people dancing is still on the low side,<sup>6-7</sup> there is a segment of society for whom it is still an important social activity, namely those between the ages of 15 and 25. For many in this age group dance is not just a 'hobby', something that they go off and join a special club or society to do. It is an integral part of their social life, and perhaps as a result of this there are still many places where one can go to dance. Almost every urban area of any size has one or more discotheques, and in addition it is possible to dance at certain bars, clubs and- private parties. And, while live dance bands may have

<sup>3</sup> Karaoke machines would have to be seen as a response to this fact: the background music is entirely recorded in a studio, so that the singer can at least "participate" in something that sounds like the currently popular form.

<sup>4</sup> In relation to this dominance of the studio sound, some may attempt to argue that the occasional success of a neo-folk artist such as Suzanne Vega or Tracy Chapman belie my point of the aesthetics gap. However, these singers manage to be briefly popular mainly because their acoustical music offers a 'break' (almost to the point of being a novelty) from the deluge of studio-based music. On the whole, they have been unsuccessful in challenging the dominance of studio-based music.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Clarke, *Music in Everyday Life*, New York, Norton, 1935, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Please see Appendix #1.

<sup>7</sup> There has, however, been a noticeable decline from 50 years ago -- the era of big bands and ballroom dancing. According to a Gallup poll taken in 1938 that asked "What is your favorite way of spending an evening?", 12% answered "dancing". Asked the same question in 1986, only 3% gave the same answer. Gallup, George, Jr., *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1986*, Wilmington, Delaware, Scholarly Resources, 1987.

largely disappeared from the scene, recorded dance music is actually rather popular, even spawning some sub-cultures (such as hip-hop).

Obviously though there are real limits to the importance of dance in our society, for the fact remains that dance is no longer an important part of our general culture. Even among younger adults it is a small minority who actively dance,<sup>8</sup> most preferring to go out to movies, bars and concerts instead. Nonetheless, for somebody who really wants to dance, it is possible to find people to dance with and places to do it in, all in the context of a popular, contemporary culture. Because of this link with popular forms of music, culture and social habits social dance is probably the contemporary art-form that most readily allows people to participate in the making of art without having to leave the cultural mainstream.

### Verbal Arts

Theater has also had a difficult time adjusting to the realities of a mass-media dominated age. In the first quarter of this century theater was at its popular peak, with between 250 and 300 'legitimate' houses presenting plays in New York City alone, and Broadway's 76 theaters averaging 225 new productions each season. In addition, a vigorous and dynamic alternative theater movement, called "Little Theatre", had arisen to present smaller-scale productions that had more of an artistic orientation than most of the commercially-produced plays. Community theater was also going strong at this time in a variety of places, ranging from the rural village theaters to the urban, working-class theaters. Nowhere was community theater stronger, however, than among the recently arrived immigrants, as the following description indicates:

During these peak years for immigrant theatre, countless amateur groups played in church basements, barns, social halls, school auditoriums, cafes, and living quarters. Professional and semiprofessional companies performed weekly, daily, sometimes as much as twice a day in handsome, well-equipped structures such as the Astoria Socialist Theatre (Finnish), in Astoria, Oregon, which seated eight hundred, and the Washington Square Theatre (Italian) in San Francisco, which seated a thousand. Swedish Theatre in Chicago attracted as many as four thousand to a single performance ... Large numbers were involved, not only as audiences but also as actors and playwrights. The Yiddish-speaking Workman's Circle, for example, which encouraged its members to write as well as to produce plays, had 250 lodges in New York City alone ... Many people who worked fourteen or more hours a day in mills, mines, or sweatshops spent their few precious hours of leisure attending ethnic theatre, acting in it, or writing for it.<sup>9</sup>

Competition from movies during the 1920's, followed by the economic depression of the 1930's struck the first major blows against live theater. Many theaters converted to movie houses and community and ethnic theater started to **decline** as people more and more attended movies instead. Indicative of this decline was the fact that by the mid-1940's there were only 80 to 90 new productions on Broadway each season, down from the 225 openings averaged during the 1920's. With the advent of television in the 1950's a further blow was struck, one that decimated community and Little Theaters, and destroyed much of the remaining commercial theater. Even Broadway, the symbol of theater in the United States, declined to an average of only 30 to 40 productions per season by the 1980's. In the rest of the country commercial theater has done even worse. Apart from the

<sup>8</sup> And a small minority who actually learn *how* to dance, since many people who do only a limited amount of dancing seem to take "freestyle" all too literally, sometimes not even moving in rhythm to the music.

<sup>9</sup> Maxine Schwartz Seller, *Ethnic Theatre in the United States*, Westport, Greenwood, 1983, p. 5.

occasional touring Broadway hit such as "Evita" or "Chorus Line", the only commercial theaters to survive to any extent are dinner theaters. As a result of the depressed state of commercial theater, the backbone of theater in the United States now consists of the thousand or so non-profit theater companies that have arisen since the early 1970's. Aided by government arts grants and corporate sponsorship, these theaters have certainly helped to fill some of the void left by the crash of the commercial and Little Theaters, especially in the production of art-orientated plays.

However, these companies' very need for benefactors to help pay their bills points up the reduced status of theater at this time. For while there is a natural and well-earned ebullience in the theater community for having pulled itself out of the ruins it found itself in during the 1960's, the sad fact remains that theater is now a minor eddy in the currents of popular culture. The days have long since passed when playwrights (such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams) were major public figures. The same holds true for the plays themselves. Plays such as "The Death of a Salesman" or "A Streetcar Named Desire" were seen by enough people (after long and successful runs on Broadway) that their characters and ideas became popular symbols. What play of the last 20 years could make the same claim? Instead, it is the movie producer's and director's creations that become popular symbols, and it is the Bernardo Bertolucci's and Francis Ford Copella's that are the household names. Further, as the English critic Michael Billington points out: "The theatre is becoming a talent-nursery: television and film the place where writers earn their daily bread." A situation in which "theatre will train the talent which will then flourish elsewhere."<sup>10</sup> Billington is speaking of English playwrights such as Harold Pinter and Trevor Griffiths, but the same is true in the U.S. where we see playwrights such as Sam Shepard and David Mamet increasingly concerned with film. Further, in order to compete with television and movies theater has, led by Broadway, turned increasingly to big-budget visual spectacles such as "Cats" or "Phantom of the Opera". Even the art theaters are feeling this pressure. American National Theater director Peter Sellars states that "because traditional theater is no longer relevant to a whole generation, and the most exciting developments today are electronic, theater must remake itself from an electronic standpoint."<sup>11</sup> This is only logical, for in an age dominated by the visual and action-orientated aesthetic of movies and television, there is little choice but for theater to try and match it. But, of course, in so doing theater ceases to offer a viable alternative to the media, becoming instead a live (and extremely expensive) imitation of it.

This marginalization of professional theater has only hurt community theater as well. There are currently about 4,000 theater companies and college theaters in the United States, involving approximately 120,000 active participants.<sup>12</sup> Of these less than half, under 0.1% of the adult population, could truly be called amateurs (non-professional and non-student). These low figures are explained by the very backwater theater now inhabits; most people do not want to go on stage and act, as their favorite celebrities are no longer stage actors. The stage has, in this sense, lost its magic. It is media that now possesses this magic, and people scramble to be extras in the on-location shooting of a film or get on long waiting lists for the opportunity to sit in the studio audience of a television program. Others try to make their own films but this, as we shall see, is fraught with difficulties.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Billington, "Where have all the playwrights gone?", Manchester Guardian Weekly, March 27, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> quoted in "American theater, changing art.", Christian Science Monitor, June 5, 1986. In the same article Eric Bogosian notes the aesthetic gap problem noted earlier when he states: "Traditional theater in this country is dead in the water. You're talking about [an audience] relating to a stage after a million rock concerts."

<sup>12</sup> Estimate based on listing of community theater groups and college theater departments in the American Theatre Association's *Annual Directory* for 1985 and nationwide projections based on the number of theater groups active in Chicago during the 1988-89 season (see Appendix \* 1).

Few other forms of verbal art have fared better. Poetry has almost totally disappeared from the mainstream of society, and only survives in university literature departments, coffee house readings, or in small press journals whose circulation numbers in the hundreds. Storytelling too has fared poorly. The National Association for the Preservation and Performance of Storytelling lists 6,000 members in the U.S.A., hardly enough to make storytelling an integral part of our culture. As a result, few have the foggiest notion as to how to tell even a short (by peasant standards) 10 minute story, much less an epic tale.

The novel is the only traditional literary form that is still going strong in a popular sense. Best-selling novelists reach an audience that a playwright or poet can only dream of. However, because writing a novel is a solitary, labour-intensive art form its practice is limited to a small group of highly dedicated and specialized participants.

## Visual Arts

Painters and sculptors, who replaced craftsmen as the leading force in the visual arts in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, peaked in terms of their popularity and social stature in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. Since the introduction of mass media, however, their position has been declining. Films, using the movie screens as a sort of oversized canvas, have become very self-consciously 'visual' in their approach and have combined with mass-produced reproductions of historical artistic works to largely replace the modern-day artist in the popular consciousness. The lack of any recognizable, popular names (even among the older generation of contemporary artists) to replace the Picassos, Miros and Dalis in the popular imagination only emphasizes how much these art-forms have been relegated to the periphery. The leading painters and sculptors are now known only to art collectors and the small circle that patronize the galleries. The most popular outlets for visual art in recent years, poster and graphic art, are both disseminated through mass production and sale. They have combined with the similarly manufactured reproductions of historical art to displace the individual, creative artist from the popular marketplace. As with theater, this removal of painting and sculpture from the mainstream of culture has inevitably impacted on the number of amateurs engaged in these art forms. Painting and drawing, popular hobbies in the nineteenth century, are now practiced only by a small number.<sup>13</sup>

Craft continues to survive, in part, as a hobby. There are some classes offered by community colleges and other schools in specific skills such as pottery and weaving, a few stores that sell craft-related items, and a small circuit of arts and crafts shows where amateur and semi-professional craftspeople sell their products. The total number of people involved in these activities is very small. Where craft has survived the best seems to be where it still serves a functional purpose. There is still a significant, though declining, number of homemakers who sew, knit and embroider. In addition, many homeowners still engage in considerable woodworking and home repair. In a similar fashion home renovation, where somebody buys an old house and then renovates it themselves, is the only craft-related area that has actually been popular to the point of being trendy in recent years. The few aesthetically-orientated professional craftspeople left are concentrated far away from the centers of production and population in places such as Santa Fe, New Mexico and Sedona, Arizona where they make tourist-related pottery, jewelry and embroidery. The insignificance of their numbers is apparent when we compare the visibility of the modern-day craftspeople's work with the visibility of the standardized buildings, molded plastic, cement and fiberglass materials that have so standardized our physical environment, and the preponderance of mass-manufactured 'poster art' and handicraft items, which are mere imitations of real handiwork. We must go to 'quaint' pre-industrial or at least pre-twentieth century towns or

<sup>13</sup> According to one survey about 1% reported painting or drawing on a weekly basis and almost 95% reported not painting or drawing at all (see Appendix #1).

houses to see what an environment was like when craft was still the dominant force.

The only one of the visual arts that can be said to be practiced by a very wide group of people would be photography, at least based on camera and film sales. However, the vast majority of the pictures produced are of the 'snapshot' variety, taken with automatic cameras.<sup>14</sup> In essence, they represent people simply recording an event. This can hardly be considered artistically-expressive, and when we measure the number that truly make photography an active part of their life we find, again, the number to be all too small.<sup>15</sup>

By way of summary one more question must be addressed. I have blamed much on the media and have tried to show the effect it has had in making music, theater and the visual arts inaccessible to popular participation. But couldn't, it might be asked, media itself be made more participatory? Some, such as the futurist Alvin Toffler in his book "The Third Wave",<sup>16</sup> are very enthusiastic about the potential of decentralized media, especially with the growth of cable television and home video. Cable, after all, theoretically allows many more possibilities for independent producers to reach people's homes as does the growing home video market. In addition, video cameras are now relatively affordable, giving many more people access to them.

Unfortunately, however, access doesn't guarantee success. Because of the tremendous differences in publicity, star-attraction and production quality between the amateur production and the professional, the amateur production is unlikely to be given a chance by most viewers. Even one costing several thousand dollars will be made with inferior equipment, poor lighting, limited acting and technical crews, all giving it the cheaper look associated with amateur productions. It has to compete with the professional production that has millions of dollars to spend on state-of-the-art equipment and resources. This includes elaborate lighting systems, multiple camera set-ups (that enable the quick cutting we see in movies and television today), crane-mounted dollies for smooth camera movement and tracking, on-location shooting, make-up specialists, technicians, special sets, and the hiring of the best available actors backed by potentially hundreds of extras, all outfitted in appropriate attire. Therefore, no matter how ingeniously the small-scale producer creates his/her film or video, for most people it will still have that "home movie" look compared to the professional production and will not be able to compete (as has clearly been the case so far), cable television and home videos notwithstanding.

Therefore, amateur film and video makers are also, in effect, excluded from the mainstream of our cultural life. This, even though they work in its most popular media. These practitioners are ignored and even ridiculed for the inevitably severe technical limitations that their creations have, compared to the professional films and television people are used to seeing.<sup>17</sup> And so amateurs once again find themselves relegated to the fringes of society, trying to be artistically-expressive in a society that values commodities more than people.

<sup>14</sup> The automatic 35 mm and disc cameras that dominate the market are made with one primary consideration, to make it as easy as possible for the user to take a standardized photograph of a given scene. They have automatic focus, exposure, loading and various other features to achieve this. However, in doing so they severely limit the camera's range of artistic-expression. Since it would only take a few hours to learn the basic mechanics of operating a full feature 35 mm single lens reflex camera, and therefore be able to utilize the full artistic possibilities of the camera, it is difficult to take the user of automatic cameras seriously, even when they do try to take more than a simple 'snapshot'.

<sup>15</sup> Under 2% on a weekly basis, according to one major survey (see Appendix #1).

<sup>16</sup> Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, New York, Morrow, 1980.

<sup>17</sup> This would not be true, for instance, in the case of painting. Here one is on an equal level, materially, with even the greatest (or richest) of artists, and the production of it can occur in and be a part of the community.

**PART FOUR**

**ASPECTS OF ALIENATED ART**

## 1. THE ALIENATING CONCEPT

It seems inevitable that a society whose basis lies in the buying and selling of commodities would turn art itself into a commodity. Art had to be, in a sense, taken away and alienated from people so that it could be sold back to them as a commodity. As a result we live in a world where art-specialists 'manufacture' artistic products for us, selling them to us at a profit (albeit, with most of the profit going to the corporate middleman). So ingrained is this in our society that most would find it difficult to imagine a world without this fundamental division between specialist and consumer. In fact, our culture's very concept of art, which developed during the nineteenth century with the rise of the art specialist, provides a definition of art that exalts the role of the specialist. This concept holds that art is the aesthetic expression of the innermost, conflicted feelings of humankind and that the art-specialist, by virtue of his/her dedication, talent, skill and social sanction is the sole legitimate interpreter of these feelings in the artistic realm. He/she is also considered, along with their fellow specialist, the critic, the highest authority on the conceptualization, practice and value of different types of art. The best of these specialists, who are considered the artistic 'geniuses', are supposed to be able to tap into the deepest realms of the human psyche and express great and profound thoughts, feelings and/or wisdom. For a long time these isolated, towering figures of artistic genius could only be white males creating art in the upper-class European tradition. Recently, however, this semi-divine status has been extended to include figures such as John Coltrane and, to some extent, even 'popular' artists such as John Lennon. For the most successful of the art-specialists this hero worship has made it possible to sell millions of dollars worth of their art-commodities on name power alone, and gained them large and loyal followings that would do a head-of-state or television evangelist proud. This 'larger-than-life' status for the art-specialist arose in the nineteenth century Romantic attitude towards musicians and composers (with whom the concept of the genius specialist originated) such as Ludwig von Beethoven or Richard Wagner, more recent examples include Pablo Picasso in the visual arts and actors such as Marlon Brando and Lawrence Olivier in the dramatic arts. Even the bizarre cult-like worship of Elvis Presley is a by-product of this.

With the growth of mass media this star status has reached such a point that it is now possible for a few specialists with super-celebrity status to dominate our artistic culture. The effect all this has on popular, participatory artistic-expression is profound indeed. By placing so much value and importance on the specialist and his/her work we have precluded other's artistic efforts being taken seriously. Simply put, the prevailing belief is that legitimate art is produced solely by art-specialists and anybody else's efforts are secondary at best. This belief becomes, then, an essentially self-perpetuating definition of art, namely that art is what art-specialists produce.

## 2. ONLY A SPECIALIST...

The art-specialist has become so dominant in the world of art that most people tacitly accept their lack of opportunity and training to make art themselves. Where only a few hundred years ago it would have been unthinkable that people would not regularly sing, dance, recite tales, etc., it is now assumed that most never will. The underlying assumption is that this vast number of artistic non-participants will have their artistic needs met, not by actually making art themselves, but rather by consuming the products of the art-specialists. Indeed, most critics of the public's role in art criticize them for not purchasing the right art-commodities, i.e., classical music, jazz, serious theater, ballet, etc.; not for their lack of participation in the actual creating or performance of art. Many people even feel that since the accomplishments of the specialists, especially the leading ones, are so much greater than possible contributions by the great mass of 'untalented' people, the public may be better off with this arrangement (i.e., it is better to listen to Beethoven's "Fifth" in all its glory than to play a simple folk tune for oneself).

Ultimately, then, we have come to equate the experience of art with the actual making of it, as if somehow the need for one can satisfy the need for the other. But while this is undoubtedly a convenient ideology for a capitalist culture, it is fundamentally wrong. Listening to music, for example, is simply not the same experience as playing music, anymore than sitting and watching the performance of a play would be the same as writing or acting in it. When we experience someone else's art, we perceive their ideas, shapes and sounds. But we are still passive, for we play no role except that of an observer. Being an observer can be rewarding in that context, but the fact remains that we did not contribute to it, and it will exist unchanged no matter what we do. For example, no matter how much I might like Ingmar Bergman's film "The Seventh Seal", and even though it may have great meaning for me, I can only appreciate it, not contribute to it. No matter what I do it will remain a completed, finished product, unaltered by any of my actions. The parts of the film I don't like, and would have suggestions or ideas on how to improve are still there. The additions I might make, that are unique to *me*, are left out. In short, I have absolutely no input. Therefore, for me to have input, to be artistically-expressive and contribute my own ideas or personality, I must create or be integrally involved in the making of an artistic product myself. If I do not, and instead surround myself with the artistic products of others by watching television programs, movies, listening to records and so on, I will be little more than a receptacle of other people's ideas and concepts. I will therefore be denied my expressive (and human) potential.<sup>1</sup> The radical monopoly held by the art industry and the resulting dominant position of the art-specialist must be seen therefore in the starkest terms. We cannot continue to confuse in any way artistic appreciation with artistic expression. Indeed the logical outcome of our current view of art would be a situation where the great mass of people will spend most of their non-working hours surrounded by their "home entertainment centers", rarely stirring from their seats as they choose between a vast array of art-products to pass their time.. This scenario, as

<sup>1</sup> Or, as Eric Clarke put it in 1935 regarding music: "in music the doers are more to be welcomed than the listeners. All participants are concert-goers, anyhow, but they have a closer association with the art. To be in love is to know the glamour of romance. To love is to have gone further, to have passed through the stage of being in love and to long to be partners through thick and thin, to long for constant companionship, in a devotion which loves all-fine qualities and shortcoming too. Listeners may be in love, but doers love. They live with the music of the composers, and know them in their weaker moments as much as in their glory. For the welfare of the art, as much as for their own pleasure, people should be encouraged to continue their singing and playing throughout their lives. The pity is that so much of it stops when school days are over." Clarke, op. cit., p. 83.

I stated in the introduction, is the stuff dystopias are made of. Yet, there is relatively little criticism of this trend; even so-called progressives seem too busy rejoicing in the proliferation of consumer choices now glutting the art and entertainment market to take note of its implications.

The cultural and artistic hegemony of the specialist has not only created a situation in which most people readily accept the lack of artistic-expression in their own lives, but has also made it very difficult for those non-specialists who still desire to be artistically-expressive to do so. These non-specialists, described as "amateur" artists, are seen by our society as being peripheral to art, unable to compete with the specialist who is able to spend more time and develop superior technique. Indeed, we have denigrated the amateur to such a degree that the very word connotes a second rate quality; for instance, a poorly acted stage play might be called "amateurish". The best an amateur can hope to do, it is thought, is give a reasonable imitation of the specialist's work. Amateurs themselves are aware of, and intimidated by, these attitudes. As a result they have been cowed into artistic submission, seeing what they do as no more than a hobby or diversion that can contribute nothing original to art. Yet, other cultures and historical periods have held very different views of the role of the amateur. In China, from the time of the Yuan dynasty (thirteenth century) until the beginning of this century, professional painters were regarded with disdain. They were viewed as being mere technicians whose superior technical skill only proved their lack of artistic talent. It was the amateur gentleman, who was also a poet, musician and scholar, who was seen as having the breadth of experience and knowledge to produce a true piece of art. Indeed, virtually all of the masterpieces of Chinese art were produced by these amateurs.

In a similar vein, the European Renaissance was a time of the Universal or Renaissance Man, when it was thought that "a man can do all things if he will." The Leonardo de Vinci's happily applied themselves to a wide variety of fields and thought themselves the richer for it. In our time, however, Leonardo would be considered an amateur or hobby painter since for him it was only one activity among several. Perhaps if we were not blinded by our concept of the tortured artist slaving over his/her work we too might see it as a limitation if all the artist did was single-mindedly pursue art. Yet that (with diversions allowed only for sex and drugs) is our ideal for an artist. Art is not after all a purely technical exercise, and the amateur who has truly experienced life and art in all its manifestations could well make an equal or superior contribution to art, even if his/her technical skills are often inferior. But, in a society where art is defined by the specialists according to their own technically-oriented criteria, this cannot happen.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to virtually eliminating the general public and the amateur from our concept of art, the existence of the art-specialist has also created a separation between art and craft as well. In our society's view craft, even when practiced by a highly skilled craftsman, is something which exists in the functional, everyday world and cannot compare with the true art of the art-specialist. It is, at best, a "decorative" art, implying a superficiality next to the art-specialist's work. And, indeed, to term a painter's or sculptor's work "craft-like" would be taken by most as an insult. And yet, if we'd been living in medieval Europe we would have seen no difference between the two, because what we now separate into art and craft was then thought to be in the same realm. Painters, musicians and actors were organized into the same type of guilds as masons and smiths were, and if what they produced was unusually pleasing aesthetically, then they merely proved themselves the superior craftsman. Even as late a composer as J.S. Bach was not seen by most of his contemporaries as a great artist, just as an excellent practitioner of music. Indeed, medieval Europeans saw everything from the more functional, craft-orientated point of view because they saw art integrated into all aspects of life. Art was a part of the greater whole and had to be judged as such. From our perspective we would, for instance, judge New York City a major center for the visual arts purely on the basis of what hangs on the walls in the art

<sup>2</sup> In the film and music industries these technically-orientated criteria have been augmented by a technological one, namely that only the specialists have access to the expensive technology that is needed to produce the art in a popular form.

museums and galleries there. The fact that the city itself is widely perceived to be ugly and dirty isn't considered of importance. York, England, on the other hand is considered to be a minor city in the visual arts because of the paucity of famous works on its museum's walls. However, it is also a beautiful city with a number of splendidly designed buildings which are well-integrated into the landscape. In contrast to us, a medieval person comparing the two wouldn't be impressed with some isolated paintings hanging on museum walls and would judge York, England the artistically more significant place.

These differing perceptions affect the very nature of the practitioners' work and their role in society. A painter such as Pablo Picasso had the freedom to create whatever he wanted, with unlimited choice as to materials, style and form. His work served no functional purpose and was intended to be a work unto itself, hanging in the rarified (and intentionally sterile) atmosphere of the art gallery, where even an avid art-goer will see it only a few times a year on special trips. The craftsman and domestic handicraftsperson, on the other hand, in having to make something that was actually functional, was not able to experiment as freely with form or material in the same way a Picasso could, and so concentrated on the integration of the work into the everyday context. Therefore, the work of artisans such as cabinet-makers, clock-makers, stone masons, domestic weavers and embroiderers was always present and aesthetically enhancing the living environment. If, as a result of this, their artistic vision was less intense, it was also far more pervasive. To judge one as being superior to the other would be like trying to maintain that a roomful of Gauguins is artistically superior to the Notre Dame Cathedral. And yet, in essence, this is exactly what we do, thereby striking another blow against those artistic forms that would allow for more people to participate in the making of art.

### 3. SEPARATE FROM LIFE

For artistic-expression to play a significant role in people's lives once again, it must be thoroughly integrated into the framework of society, becoming a part of people's daily work, home and social routine. But in our society even those non-specialists who do try to be artistically expressive find that they have little opportunity to do so in these contexts. These amateurs are expected to join formal organizations such as choirs or community theaters if they want to sing or act, or go to a disco if they want to dance. In effect, they have to remove themselves from their daily routine to be artistically-expressive. However, not surprisingly, there is no such restriction on art commodities. They are not only expected but encouraged to find their way into all aspects of our daily lives. Televisions, V.C.R.'s, home, car and Walkman-type stereos blare forth a never-ending stream of art-commodities while the printing presses are kept busy churning out reproductions of famous paintings and fashionable poster art.

All of this is the logical result of a commodity culture. If participatory art was a part of our everyday lives, large numbers of people would be actively involved in the making of art. This, however, would severely limit the potential sales of art-commodities and the celebrity status of the specialist. For example, if people started playing and singing their own music, what would happen to record, tape and C.D. sales?<sup>3</sup> We have seen how pre-capitalist societies succeeded in being artistically-expressive because of the wide variety of situations in which people could make art, which included dancing on the neighborhood or village green, singing while at work, and making music in the home. But for us, social dancing means getting dressed up, driving to a disco and then paying admission to get in. Obviously people in our society would dance more if they could simply do it in their own neighborhood, but if they actually tried to do so, they would be risking arrest for disturbing the peace. In the case of work songs we simply don't sing them anymore, even though the work song has been an integral part of human culture for thousands of years (as we saw earlier with the role it played in the life of the peasantry). For us it is something that is forbidden, even in work situations that would allow the playing of a radio. Of course, even if work-songs weren't forbidden there is little actual likelihood of people singing on the job. We have so completely lost our traditional, everyday art-culture (the singing of "Happy Birthday" and Christmas carols being among the last remaining remnants of this) that we no longer think of singing, dancing or storytelling in everyday situations because there is no longer any conception that it should or could be done in them. And, as a result of this, even if people were to think of singing work-songs they likely would lack the skill and appropriate material to enable them to do it. If, for instance, a group of ten or so clerical workers were to attempt singing work-songs while doing something that would lend itself to it (such as stuffing envelopes for a mass mailing), they would likely find that at least a few of the members would be unable or unwilling to sing due to a lack of practice. After all, if there is little or no opportunity for people to sing how can they acquire skill at it, or become comfortable in doing it? Even those members of our hypothetical group able to sing would find they lacked musically appropriate material since the popular music of today, as I discussed earlier, is neither written for, nor suitable, to be sung on such occasions.

<sup>3</sup> To the argument that the capitalist would then simply make his profit from selling musical instruments, I would answer that there is far less profit involved in selling a piano or saxophone, which might well last a lifetime, than a stereo system with not only a very limited lifespan but constantly facing obsolescence. As far as the selling of sheet music being a substitute for pre-recorded music is concerned, I can only point out that learning how to play a piece of music takes time. Time to learn it, play it right and then commit it to memory. The same is obviously not true for pre-recorded music where all one has to do is listen to the music. The time differential in experiencing the two will obviously affect volume of sales. The comparative shallowness of listening to music as opposed to actually playing it also creates a need to consume more from an experiential point-of-view; putting more pressure on the listener to experience an every widening circle of sounds and sensations even when it is mere novelty.

Also, it is likely that there would be no shared material; one person might like and know soul music, another classical, another rock, another jazz, etc. In other words, it is likely that no two people in the group would know the same songs.<sup>4</sup>

These same problems of skill and repertoire would be encountered in making music with one's family or friends at home. We are far removed from the domestic music-making of the seventeenth century and it is no longer standard to teach all family members how to sing and play an instrument. The ideal of the family-consort is long dead. Further, our most popular composers, whether they be Prince, Bruce Springsteen or Phillip Glass, hardly write material that is appropriate for the living room. Not only does the melodic and rhythmic structure resist such playing, but the instrumentation represents a major stumbling block. Seventeenth century composers wrote for instruments such as the harpsichord and viol, which are certainly more compatible with domestic music making than the drums, synthesizers, amplified bass and electric guitars that are the popular instruments today.

Obviously the scenario of a family consort gathered in their living room playing and singing "Born in the U.S.A." is an unlikely one to say the least. And so, unfortunately, is any other kind of artistic activity in the context of everyday life. The various art-forms prevalent in traditional societies that allowed for such ready participation have almost entirely disappeared. The performance of art in the context of home, neighborhood or work, where it occurs at all, has therefore become a solitary experience. Some individuals struggle along on their own, possibly playing a little guitar and singing to themselves, while others might write some poetry, or do some embroidery or other handicraft (obviously dance and theater are totally incompatible as a solitary activity). Within the sphere of work, social, and family life, however, artistic-expression has almost entirely disappeared as a group activity.

The only place a non-specialist can go to be artistically involved with other people is into the various amateur groups: concert bands, amateur choral groups, community theaters, etc. But as has already been mentioned these activities suffer badly because they, in addition to being removed from everyday life, exist outside the specialist-dominated art world and so lack that all important context, the popular one. The modern concert band, for instance, is the descendant of the turn-of-the-century village band; but the village band was playing some of the most popular music of the time (for instance, that of John Phillip Sousa) and people would flock to its concerts. The same was true of the singing societies, the forerunners of amateur choral groups, and for many smaller towns across the country (before movies and television) amateur theater was truly the only show in town. In all these cases the amateurs were at the focus of public attention, unlike the situation today. How much different it must have been to have played in a village band in 1900, with well-attended and enthusiastic audiences, compared to the present reality of playing for a concert band in front of what is usually a small, captive audience (such as a school assembly). The effect this has on the enthusiasm and vigor of amateurs is considerable as they come to feel marginal, isolated and even degraded.

And so it will remain as long as the styles, fashions and forms of art are dictated by the art-specialist. Ever since the rise of capitalism and commodity culture, we have seen western society go from a situation where the artistic control lay with the people themselves to one where

<sup>4</sup> English sailors of the 18th and 19th centuries also had this problem. They came from a variety of geographic areas with different musical traditions and didn't necessarily all know the same songs either. In addition, the folk and popular songs they knew would have been musically inappropriate to their work situation anyway. But because musical participation was a relevant and important part of their lives they created the sea shanties, which were specifically sung at sea (and only at sea) while working. They were structured to fit the specific work occasion, i.e., rhythmically free when working the capstan, rhythmically regular when pulling or hauling. Thus, the music was specific to and musically appropriate to the work of sailors, and all sailors held the repertoire in common. As a result these sailors did a great deal of singing in the course of their work life, where we do none.

it is entirely dominated by specialists. Medieval peasants created and performed their own music, dances, stories and designed and made their own clothes and crafts. Sometimes these things would be entirely of their own invention; other times they would modify styles passed down from previous generations to suit their own needs and tastes. In either case they were always, one might say, in the forefront of their own art. Even in medieval towns and courts, where we see clearly defined specialists doing much of the composing, choreography and design, we find that there was still a direct interaction between specialist and amateur. Though the amateurs didn't always directly control the artistic life of the time, their own talents, ideas and limitations played a direct and critical role. Now, of course, the leading art-specialists are superstar celebrities, so distant and removed from the public that they are often surrounded by a team of body guards that would do a head of state proud. There is certainly no direct artistic interaction between the amateur public and professional performer, except that of the manufacturer and alienated consumer.

**PART FIVE**

**OVERCOMING ARTISTIC ALIENATION**

## 1. OVERCOMING ARTISTIC ALIENATION

Various attempts have been made in the past to overcome our artistic alienation by re-integrating the making of art back into people's lives. In the context of popular culture such efforts have usually been focused on music, especially singing. In England during the 1920's, for instance, there was a brief "sing-a-long" movement that encouraged people in large groups (i.e., during sporting events) to sing together. Later, during the 1930's (and also in the 1950's and 60's) a modern folk music movement arose in the United States and England that encouraged musical participation as did 'skiffle', a precursor to rock and roll, that flourished in England during the 1950's. Within an institutional framework the efforts to overcome artistic-alienation have revolved around trying to involve children in the making of art through the school-system. This has involved investing large sums of money in such areas as the hiring of art teachers and purchase of band equipment, the idea being to educate the children in art so that when they grow up they will continue to make it.

Unfortunately, all of these attempts have failed. The reasons for these failures lay in the basic economic and social structures of our society, structures which encourage people to consume rather than create art. For example, the efforts of the modern folk music movements to encourage participation through 'sing-a-longs' fail on their most popular level because some of the movement's leading figures, such as Pete Seeger or Joan Baez, are themselves popular, media-oriented art-specialists. In this vein, they produce art-products in the form of recordings that are intended for mass consumption and give concerts largely indistinguishable in structure and format from concerts given by popular or classical musicians. The only exception to this would be the folk singers occasional encouragement to have the audience sing with them at their performances. However, having to pay ten or fifteen dollars for a ticket just to get into a situation where there might be a chance to sing is hardly a solution to the artistic alienation that permeates our society. More grassroots attempts by the folk music revivalists to create a new folk music have also failed. This failure is caused not only by the socio-economic structure of our society, but also by the fact that folk music hasn't been popular, in any form, for many years. It is not, therefore, the music most people identify with or desire to play. This is not unlike the problem faced by our schools in the teaching of art; they tend to emphasize forms of art (classical and band music instead of rock, country or soul; ballet instead of disco, theater instead of movies, etc.) that are not in the popular mainstream, and are therefore less likely to get the students interested in making art in the first place. Even for those students whose curiosity about art is piqued by a school arts program the question remains as to what the child will do with their love of art after they have grown up. Because, unless the child fanatically devotes him or herself to becoming a professional art-specialist and then succeeds in this endeavor as an adult (which is by no means guaranteed), he or she will have to maintain an interest in making art as a hobby. This means that, in the adult world, art will be regarded as a secondary activity, taking place in relative isolation, and susceptible to being displaced by pressures of work, family, and time. In addition, people that pursue art in this manner often do so under the implication that making art is a frivolous and extraneous activity, an 'indulgence' of the person that does it. As a result of these various pressures few schoolchildren succeed in consistently making their own art once they move into the adult world. To fill the void caused by this lack of artistic-participation they will instead be encouraged to become art-consumers.

It is clear, then, that superficial attempts at correcting the situation are inadequate. This is because of the self-perpetuating nature of our artistic alienation, a self-perpetuation that goes beyond the various structural aspects of capitalist society into the very heart of its ideology. An ideology, held in common by millions of people, that honestly believes that most, or even all, of

our needs can be met by the purchase of commodities. Whether it be a better personality, happier life or artistic fulfillment our commodity culture believes that they can *all* be achieved through the purchase of a commodity, either directly as a manufactured product or indirectly by way of professional services (as provided by psychotherapists, teachers, etc.).

Of course, such a belief is not without some legitimacy, certain important needs can indeed be satisfied through the purchase of commodities. The quality and quantity of one's food, shelter and basic transportation can certainly make a critical difference in one's well-being. Further, various forms of mass-production and automation can increase the quantity and quality of many of these basic goods (both agricultural and industrial), while greatly reducing the labor time necessary to make them. But when mass-production of commodities starts to replace personal forms of expression, it becomes quite a different matter. We cannot, for example, 'manufacture' interpersonal relationships; we cannot substitute the watching of professional sports for exercise; and we cannot substitute mass produced art-commodities for personal artistic-expression.

Our mistake comes, then, in thinking that the same forces of science, technology and manufacture that liberate many of us from the grinding, subsistence living our pre-capitalist forebears had to tolerate can also satisfy our personal and expressive needs. It is a mistake because in these areas only a convivial solution will work. For artistic-expression this means that people must be involved themselves in the actual process of creating and performing art, not endlessly trying to make more money to purchase even more of what alienates them in the first place, namely art-commodities.<sup>1</sup>

We must, then, recognize this fundamental difference between the way our basic needs are met and the way our expressive, personal, and individual needs are met. A society that recognizes this duality will recognize two different types of labor. The first of these is labor that is related to the production of basic goods necessary to meeting the more fundamental material needs of the society (food, shelter, health care, transport, etc.). This type of labor can be facilitated through the use of the mass-production techniques developed since the industrial revolution. The second type of labor is of a personal, artistic, recreational or community nature; this includes everything from sports, gardening and group discussions to the making of music, crafts, dance and drama. It is the products of this type of labor, including the more artistically-oriented ones, which can be produced in a manner more reminiscent of pre-capitalist societies. In other words, they can be done by the people themselves, for themselves. In a society that recognized this duality of labor, the mass-manufacture of basic goods would have to remain in some form in order to supply all members of the society with their basic material needs. This would free them of the necessity of toiling for long hours at menial and boring jobs to meet these basic needs. The second type of labor, however, could and should cease to exist on a large scale. In the artistic realm there would thus be no music, fashion, film or television industry, no corporate manufacturers of decorative pottery or ceramics, and so on. Instead, the need for such products would be met in a more satisfying and participatory fashion among the people themselves. If our great, great, great, great grandparents could fill their lives with singing, quilting, amateur dramatics, storytelling and social dance, surely we could do the same with our

<sup>1</sup> It is no surprise, in this sense, that some of the poorest people in our society have the richest and most participatory art culture (the gospel singing of poor southern African-Americans, the quilting and 'hill' music of the Appalachians, etc.) while middle and upper-class people have the least artistically-participatory culture. The reasons for this are simple. The better off a group of people are, the more they can afford quality stereos, V.C.R.'s, televisions, etc., devices which only alienate their real artistic needs. Thus, while the rich can support, through lessons and tuition the occasional child who aspires and succeeds in becoming a professional artist, they have no organic, participatory culture of their own.

contemporary art-forms (after altering them to allow for more participation). Indeed, as was the case then, every town and neighborhood could have its own bands, dance halls (or dancing greens), artisans, seamstresses, theater groups and such which would be central to the artistic life of their community, allowing all who wanted to participate to readily do so.<sup>2</sup>

If the elimination of mass-manufactured art commodities seems a radical solution to our artistic alienation, it is because only a radical solution will work. Obviously such a thing would not come to pass on its own but rather as part of a broad-based social and political movement challenging many of the other precepts of our society (not to mention economic structures) as, for instance, the 'counter-culture' of the 1960's briefly did. Without such a movement and challenge to the basic assumption of art as commodity, we will have no real outlet for the making of art, and so we will remain in a perennial state of artistic alienation.

<sup>2</sup>For more on the division between the "heteronomous" sphere (where we work to meet our basic, material needs) and the "autonomous" sphere (where we meet our more subjective needs), see Andre Gorz's *Paths to Paradise: On the Liberation from Work* (London: Pluto Press, 1983). Especially important is Gorz's consideration of the importance of non-work time (what is now called "leisure" time) as a key to the development of a radical society where people have the opportunity to reach their full personal and human potential.

### *Appendix: How Many People Make Their Own Art?*

There are two different methods that can be used to estimate the total number of people who make their own art. The first method is by conducting a head count, and the second method involves conducting a public survey. Doing a head count involves counting the actual number of people who make their own art by adding up the total membership of relevant professional and amateur organizations. Only in theater, however, is this method applicable. This is because theater is the only field where one must belong to a formal organization (the theater company) in order to be active in the field. This is unlike music, dance and the visual arts where so many participants exist outside of formal organizations. A complication quickly arises, however, because there are no complete listings of active community theater groups in the United States. The American Theater Association (ATA), for example, listed 222 community theater groups as members in their 1985 annual directory. However, since many active community theater groups are not members of the ATA this listing has little meaning. Since it would be extraordinarily difficult to examine every community of a few hundred people or more to see whether or not they had a community theater, I have taken a sizable metropolitan area (that of Chicago and its suburbs) and examined all the relevant local listings of theater groups for the area. This includes the major dailies, the city monthly magazine, the weekly publication that provides the major listing of cultural activities in the Chicago area, various local and neighborhood papers as well as the membership listings of various organizations, including the League of Chicago Theaters. Based on these sources, I counted a total of 114 active theater groups in the Chicago metropolitan area during the 1988-89 season. Of this total, 38 were either university or community college theater departments or full-fledged professional theater companies. Of the remaining 76 theater companies, about half were semi-professional (a mixture of professional or aspiring professionals and amateurs) companies and the remainder were true community theater companies (mostly or all amateur). If we assume 30 active members for each theater group (including the people responsible for the sets, lighting, etc.) we come out with a total of approximately 3,500 adults active in all forms of theater in the Chicago metropolitan area. This figure represents 0.01% of the adults in the Chicago area, and if we translate this nationally we find that there is a total of 120,000 adults active in theater in the United States. This is admittedly a very rough projection, but one that does show that relatively few people are active in theater.

For the areas of music, dance and the visual arts we have to turn to surveys of popular preferences regarding leisure time. Here, too, we find real problems in trying to unearth relevant information. The reason for this is the slipshod way most of the surveys have been conducted. A good example of this is "Americans and the Arts V", conducted by The National Research Center of the Arts (1988). This is the leading survey of Americans attitudes and habits regarding the arts, and while it is very specific in its questions regarding American's consumption of the arts, it is the exact opposite regarding their participation in them. For instance, when it asks about going to museums, movies, concerts, ballets, and so forth the survey asks a quantifiable question, namely, "How many times did you go ... [to the event in question] ... in the past 12 months". However, when it asks about people's actual participation in the arts the survey simply asks "Let me read you some activities that some people do at least every once in a while. Please tell me whether you yourself do each of these activities at least every once in a while, or not." As anybody familiar with survey methods well knows, a non-specific question such as this is next to meaningless. The question leaves it up entirely up to the respondent what "every once in a while" means. If the respondent thinks that engaging in an artistic activity once every five years is something that they do "every once in while", then they will answer yes as surely as the person who does it every week. Therefore the survey is largely useless for the purposes of this essay, as it gives no indication as to whether the person is actively involved in making art (such that it is as integral and meaningful part of their life) or just superficially involved.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>How often does one need to make art for it to be an integral part of their life? My arbitrary answer to this would be participating, in a reasonably serious manner, in some art-form, at least two to three hours a week, most weeks of the year. This would therefore include the clarinetist who plays with a concert band once a week, the dancer who goes to a disco every Saturday night, and the amateur photographer with his/her own darkroom. For these people the making of art is a constant factor in their life, something they do often enough so that they can truly identify themselves as a musician, dancer or photographer even though they are not professional. On the other hand, this definition would exclude the people who only go out dancing every so often (once every few weeks or months), only take pictures on special occasions (like a family get-together or on a vacation), or strum a guitar occasionally. For these people art is an incidental part of their life, something they only do on very certain occasions or when they happen to have some extra time.

If we go back to the first "Americans and the Arts" survey, back in 1972, the additional question is at least asked as to whether the respondent does a given activity "Often", "Sometimes", "Hardly Ever" or "Never." However, the poll taker still does not define what "often" means. Does it mean once a month, once a week or once a day? The answer will obviously depend on the whims of the respondent, and the poll remains of limited value.

What is clearly needed, then, is a survey that would put some kind of quantifiable measurement on questions regarding artistic participation. There is, however, apparently no such survey available for public dissemination in the United States. We have to turn to Great Britain for such a survey, namely to the General Household Survey that is conducted every three years.<sup>2</sup> This survey has a very large sample, nearly 20,000 respondents, and asks the respondent which of a list of activities they have engaged in during the 4 weeks before the interview. Because this survey doesn't ask the respondent how often he/she did the activity within the four week period, it will not tell us whether the respondent is involved in art on a weekly basis (and is therefore a truly meaningful part of their life), but at least it will tell us whether they do it on a monthly basis. Four areas of concern to this essay were listed for the respondent: amateur music/drama (lumped together), dancing, and needlework/knitting. The answers were as follows:

Engaged in activity in previous 4 weeks	Males 16 and over	Females 16 and over
Amateur Music and Drama	3%	3%
Dancing	10%	12%
Needlework/knitting	2%	48%

The figure for dancing is inflated somewhat by the pre-adult group (16-19) included in the survey, as we can see from the following age breakdowns in these categories (with the sexes combined):

	16-19	20-34	35-59	60+
Amateur Music/ Drama	6%	4%	3%	2%
Dancing	33%	14%	10%	4%
Needlework/ Knitting	19%	26%	28%	23%

These figures are interesting in a number of different ways. The first is that they clearly illustrate how few people are actively involved in music, drama and dancing, what could be called the performing arts. A full 86% of the British population didn't do any of these things even once in the previous four-week period. This figure is consistent with surveys from other industrial countries. For instance, in the first "American and the Arts" survey 69% of the respondents said that they never "Sing, dance, or perform for the entertainment of friends or at social gatherings" and an additional 10 percent said

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<sup>2</sup> Results of the General Household survey, and other U.K. figures used in this section, are reported in Ramprakash, Deo, ed., *Social Trends No. 16*, London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1986, p. 160, or the other relevant annual editions of this periodical.

that they hardly ever do. Similarly, in a 1987 survey taken in France a full 83% of the respondents said that they never played a musical instrument and 13% responded that they only occasionally do.<sup>3</sup> It would appear that a good 80% of the adults in industrialized countries rarely or never engage in the performing arts, and only a little over half of the remaining 20% engage in them as often as once a month.<sup>4</sup> By comparison, over 90% of the population of the U.K. reports watching at least some television every week, and 78% listens to at least some radio on a weekly basis. Similarly, 57% of the men and 68% of the women in the U. K. reported typically listening to an hour or more of music on a daily basis.<sup>5</sup>

Also of note in the figures from the General Household Survey is the noticeable decline in the number of participants as they enter the 'adult' world. A large number of the respondents in the 16-19 age group are still in school, or at least not caught up fully in the work world, and therefore clearly have more opportunity, time and perhaps determination to make their own art. The extremely high figures for dancing in the 16-19 age group also seems to prove that it may well be the last of the performing arts where actually doing an artistic activity, instead of just watching it, is common within at least a segment (late teenagers) of mainstream society.

The one area where this decline in artistic-participation with increasing age doesn't occur, needlework/knitting, emphasizes another point. Namely, that where art retains a place in people's daily lives or routines, it survives to a greater degree. Now obviously a good share of the respondents who reported doing some needlework or knitting during the previous four weeks were not actually artistically engaged, being mainly engaged in the mending of clothes. However, the fact that there is a ready possibility to make art means more will actually do it. The same could be said of another category, house repairs/do-it-yourself, that was also a part of the survey. Obviously house repairs is not artistic work, but a certain proportion of the do-it-yourselfers are engaged in true craft-like work.<sup>6</sup> As with needlework/knitting a large number (nearly 38% of respondents reported engaging in some form of house repair or D.I.Y. activity during the previous four weeks) are active in this category, with most of these being adults. This again emphasizes the importance of making art an integral part of people's lives.

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<sup>3</sup> Hastings, Elizabeth Hann and Hastings, Philip K., *Index to International Public Opinion 1987-1988*, Greenwood, N.Y., 1989, p. 435.

<sup>4</sup> There is a U.S survey in existence that would tell us how many people make certain art-forms on a near-weekly basis, but unfortunately it is a serialized publication that is intended for the use of its clients only. As a result the consumer research company that produced it would not give permission for its figures to be used in this essay. However, it can be stated that in each of the four fields of artistic endeavor that the survey asked about -- dancing, photography, visual arts (painting and drawing) and woodworking -- only between 1 % and 2% reported doing a particular activity on a near-weekly basis. Meanwhile, between 80% (for dancing) and 95% (for painting and drawing) reported that *they* hadn't engaged in the activity for at least a year.

<sup>5</sup> The television figure is from a 1987 survey, and the music listening figure is from a 1973 survey, as reported in *Social Trends*.

<sup>6</sup> According to the survey mentioned in Footnote #4, about 3% of the respondents engaged in woodworking (which is certainly a true craft-like activity that quite likely goes beyond simple home repair) every month or so, with about a third of these (about 1 %) doing it on a near-weekly basis.