

AD REINHARDT:

ARTNESS OR
ARTLESSNESS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Early in his career, Ad Reinhardt had made a decision to direct his artistic interests exclusively towards abstraction. His dedication to a non-representational art was the basis for the formulation of his art theory which became one of the most polemic stances in the history of contemporary American Art.

Reinhardt's involvements during the thirties, forties and fifties are an indication of his direction. After graduating from Columbia University in 1935 with a liberal arts degree, he became a member of the American Abstract Artists' group. He further expanded his studies under Meyer Shapiro in the thirties and under Alfred Salmony, the eminent Orientalist, in the forties. He wrote reviews and articles and designed cartoons for Art News in the forties and fifties as well as teaching art and art history. These studies, interests and activities provided Reinhardt with a thorough understanding of art systems. This background was a sound foundation for Reinhardt's own ideas which he began publishing early in his career. From his first writings upholding modern art to his more precise Art-as-Art Dogma, Reinhardt staunchly defended a pure fine art method. The increasing exclusiveness of his approach can best be realized through a chronological analysis of

his writings. The first chapter will therefore be devoted to an examination of Reinhardt's art theory as it developed in his writing.

The succeeding chapters, two through five, question the originality and distinction of Reinhardt's Art-as-Art Dogma by considering certain influential theorists, artists and movements as major contributors to Reinhardt. The selection of comparisons in these chapters was based upon the sporadic comments Reinhardt made about their work suggesting a correspondence of their ideas. In Chapter two the theorists Clive Bell, Henri Focillon, André Malraux and George Kubler are related to Reinhardt. In Chapter three and four, the theory and art of Piet Mondrian and Kasimir Malevich are contrasted to his theory and art. Mondrian and Malevich were chosen because they are usually cited as the first examples of an extremely simple or pure art form. Reinhardt's contribution beyond their early twentieth century efforts is assessed in this section of the thesis. Chapter five is devoted to Reinhardt's involvements in the thirties and forties, in particular his participation in the American Abstract Artists and other artistic groups. The artists Josef Albers and Barnett Newman, also members of these groups, are compared with Reinhardt while their work seems very similar in style to his and may be interpreted as an important influence for the Black Paintings.

The body of the thesis is thus spent analyzing

Reinhardt's work with past and contemporary influences, in order to make an accurate summary of his relationship to the ideas of others. From this appraisal a better understanding of Reinhardt's work is possible. The stress in all comparisons is upon Reinhardt's mature work, that is, his Art-as-Art Dogma and Black Paintings. With the insight obtained from these comparisons, Chapter six deals exclusively with Reinhardt. A description of Reinhardt's painting with emphasis on the late black paintings begins the chapter. Since the black paintings are Reinhardt's mature statement, they must be evaluated in terms of his fully developed Art-as-Art theory. The correspondence between the theory and painting is a significant consideration leading to a basic understanding of Reinhardt's intentions. Does his art depend upon the theory for meaning or clarity? Does he achieve visually what he states theoretically? How closely do the art and theory relate? Are they symbiotic or separate in their functioning? Answers to these questions help explain what Reinhardt's art and theory are. After presenting various interpretations of content in Reinhardt's work, some conclusions concerning the purpose and meaning of his mature efforts will be offered. Through this analysis the singularity of Reinhardt's contribution to twentieth century abstraction will be presented. Hopefully this assessment will expose some of the limitations of Reinhardt's

fine art system. Since Reinhardt frequently used irony and satire it is not always possible to accept his pronouncements literally, although it is evident that he is seriously committed to his art-as-art idea because of the continuous effort in his work and writing. The resulting dichotomy between his idea and his art places a questionable value on Reinhardt's efforts.

An enormous problem in dealing with Reinhardt is the very limited past scholarship on his work. Sporadic reviews have occurred from the beginning of his career in the 1930's. However, not until the Jewish Museum show in 1967 was there an attempt to interpret his purpose, ideas and results. Lucy Lippard did an admirable job analyzing his work in the very short catalogue article. This meagre scholarship necessitated very involved primary research. The source of most of the material was derived from Reinhardt's numerous published articles. These were supplemented by microfilmed papers at the Archives of American Art. Due to the fortunate circumstances of the donation of these papers which are exceedingly prolific records of his writing and career, a comprehensive study of his work is available to the researcher. These materials were the foundation for the secondary research which ultimately demanded a personal examination and interpretation of Reinhardt's work. The wide spectrum of Reinhardt's interests, capabilities and directions was exceedingly difficult to narrow, particularly

since they are significantly interrelated. Hence, it is the purpose of this thesis to present an art historical analysis of Reinhardt in the hopes of explaining some of the complexities of his exclusive, fine art system.

CHAPTER ONE Reinhardt's Art Theory:

The Development of his Mature Dogma

The wealth of written material which Ad Reinhardt left as a record of his ideas, is a significant aid for analysis of his work. These writings disclose the development of a perceptive and inquiring mind. Reinhardt's increasing awareness is exposed in his mature and sophisticated ideas. In the earliest writings Reinhardt claimed abstraction was the modern expression. His series of collage cartoons which followed in the mid-forties, were critical commentaries on the art of this time. From this critical approach Reinhardt discovered the value of using a negative viewpoint in his writing, which made it easier for him to repudiate unnecessary dependencies. Reinhardt eventually adopted this negative method as a means of defining his own art. The theory which resulted is based upon a series of rejections with the ultimate aim of Art in Art-as-Art. The repetitive nature of a dogmatic art form of essentials is the achievement of Reinhardt's mature theory.

This brief summary of the development of thought in Reinhardt's writing indicates that his ideas matured in a structured pattern. The building process in his writing is evident not only technically in style but ideologically. In the early forties Reinhardt's opinions were conventionally

based upon the distinction between a painting and a picture. The truly modern painting is abstract, a private and personal statement while a picture is primarily a representational recording of objects. The most abstract painting is free, that is, unconcerned with communicating associative information. Reinhardt admittedly stated that free art abstraction is difficult to describe because its content is not subject matter but the painting activity. For Reinhardt "there's no need to bring a 'painting-reason' and a 'picture-purpose' together anymore"¹ because the fine artist is not interested in a photographable image. Further confusion of the true artist's concern resulted when advertisers, engineers, photographers and designers developed a concern for aesthetic values. The modern artist had to become more of an artist than the professional businessman who merely had good taste. A commercial artist's work cannot affect aesthetic sensibilities as the creative artist's. Thus the true artist's painting had to become a new object exploring new forms, colors and rhythms and his limitations recognized as conceptual not technical. Reinhardt believed that abstraction was the modern expression of today's modern world and the fine artist had to realize he could best fulfill his role as the fine artist.²

In 1946 Reinhardt, already the defender of the fine artist and abstract art, became an arbiter of modern art when he composed a series of cartoons for the newspaper P.M.

(Appendix 1). This series, which included suggestions on "How to Look at Iconography," "How to Look at Surrealist Art," "How to Look at Modern Painting," and "How to Look at Abstract Art," etc., is Reinhardt's initiation into art criticism. The collage effect and cut out characters of these cartoons make them seem light-hearted, as jabblings at the current art scene. But, his attitude is more serious than is first suggested for he was trying to expose fraudulent art activities and the increasing business in art.

In the late forties he continued his activities in reaction to the growing institution of an art establishment. He joined the activities of the Artist's Club and thus became one of the founders of the New York School. Along with Hans Hofmann, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Theodore Stamos and Clifford Still, he exhibited at the Betty Parsons Gallery. In 1950 he was one of the eighteen artists to boycott the Museum of Modern Art for its hostile attitude towards modern art. In 1951 he co-edited with Robert Motherwell The Modern Art Annual, a documentary anthology of art events in New York from 1949 to 1951 including sessions from Studio 35.

Reinhardt's activities in the late forties were paralleled in his writing by an increasingly aggressive opinion. A group of unpublished writings (available in the Archives of American Art but not dated exactly) show that a change in his approach and attitude did occur during this

time. Attempting to define reality, art-content and meaning, Reinhardt continued to use his earlier distinction of a painting and a picture, again stating that a painting did not have to represent or communicate anything to have meaning or reality. With Cezanne and Cubism as examples, he recognized their aim as that of his in being concerned with creation itself, not merely a rearrangement of life but a totally new relationship. This permitted him to believe that surrealist as well as abstract painting could be considered as one of the main movements in twentieth century art. He personally preferred abstraction over surrealism because it led to the achievement of a conscious unity, totality, order and discipline.

An abstract painting stands as a challenge to disorder and disintegration and its activity implies a conviction of something constructive in our own time.³

As early as the forties Reinhardt was concerned with an ordered and controlled art.

With science pretty much out of this world and politics in the realm of surrealism and fantasy, doesn't modern art loom large as a most real and reasonable, concrete and most reputable human activity? Isn't the most vital field of aesthetic research and the most significant art today in the rich variety of non-objective and intra-subjective symbolic and imagistic, logical and psychological impressionist and expressionist abstraction? 4

He approached abstract art as a realist, considering it a reasonable, concrete and orderly activity. In 1945 he began to advocate a pure art, professing that a pure painting was...

...no part of the still life, landscape, nude or portrait business...no transcendental nonsense and the picturing of a reality behind reality best left to inner-eye artists, magic realists, dream photographers...Perhaps pure painting is a direct experience and an honest communication. Perhaps it is a creative completeness and total sensitivity related to personal wholeness and social order because it is clear and without extra-aesthetic elements.⁵

By 1952 he had personally broken all his group associations and isolated himself. He later stated that this year was the beginning of his art dogma, the germ of which is found in his early writings which so strongly professed abstract art as the most relevant twentieth century art statement. The writings of the early fifties are actually more of a transition nature. Some of his later ideas appear but have not the dogmatic structure and quality that they eventually are to acquire.

A statement made for the Contemporary American Painting exhibit in Illinois in 1952 is Reinhardt's first rejective comment. These comments relate to the pure painting statement but show a definite advancement of his ideas. This listing began the long roster of what artists like Reinhardt refused to be concerned with. It included such things as:

...no fooling-the-eye, no window-hole-in-the-wall, no illusions, no representations, no associations, no distortions, no paint-caricaturing, no dream pictures or dippings...no poetry or drama or theatre, no entertainment business...no art history in American of ashcan-regional-WPA-pepsi-cola-styles, no professionalism...no bargain-art-commodity, no juries, no contests, no masterpieces, no prizes, no mannerisms or techniques, no

communication or information...no structure, no paint qualities, no impasto, no plasticity, no relationships, no experiments, no rules...no reality-reducing, no life-mirroring, no abstracting from anything, no confusing painting with everything that is not painting. 6

It is easy to see that Reinhardt planned gradually to eliminate all unnecessary elements that hinder most artists in their work. The end result was still unknown.

Reinhardt defined this goal in a two part article for the Art Journal in spring 1953 and summer 1954 as "The Artist in Search of an Academy." In the first part he commented that an artist does not need an art education, although he readily admitted his schooling in art history, aesthetics, art criticism as well as in art education had been helpful to him. He also felt his experiences in artist's groups had been of value but not essential. Reinhardt attempted to expose the degree to which art and the artist were exploited and institutionalized by all formal groups. Lashing out at the art operations of the day, he was repelled by the business attitude which was infiltrating the art world and puzzled by the artists who were accepting this state of affairs. He pleaded for a modern academy of abstraction which would free art and the artist.⁷

The second section of the argument (Part II in the summer 1954 Art Journal) led him to question who the modern artists are. Reinhardt felt the term artist was used too loosely and should be limited to the modern fine artist. In

defining types he categorized the artist in four ways:

First, left over from the twenties...the Ashcan-Armory-Regionalist who finally got the Ladies-Home-Journal-cover-job...

Second, left over from the forties...the honest-artist-worker and atomic-age-art-reporter, the Life-art-correspondent and summer-art-colony peasant, the Fortune-magazine-Fourteenth-street-naturalist...

Third, a contribution of the forties...the cafe-and-club-primitive and neo-Zen-bohemian, the Vogue-magazine-cold-water-flat-fauve and Harpers-Bazaar-bum, the Eighth-street-existentialist and Easthampton-aesthetè, the Modern-museum pauper and international-set-sufferer, the abstract Hesspressionist and Kootzenjammer-Kid-Jungian...

Fourth, the latest up-to-date popular image of the early fifties...the artist-professor and traveling-design-salesman, the Art-Digest-philosopher-poet and Bauhaus-exerciser, the avant-garde-huckster-handicraftsman and educational-shop-keeper, the holy-roller-explainer-entertainer in residence...8

Reinhardt thought that none of these were fine artists and did not want any part of their activities. Thus he implied that he was a fine artist. In this article Reinhardt never defined what or who the fine artist was, merely what or who he was not.

More important than this subtractive implication of a fine artist is Reinhardt's conscious attitude and concern for the problem of the artist's role. This self-awareness becomes a more obvious consideration as he questions his own participation.

To be part of things or not to be part of having been part of things as they've become, to part from that part that was part of things as they are or not to part? Part of life is more than life. Part of an artist is more than an artist. Everyman in the everyday today part of things lives like everyman. So do I. Part of myself is separate from my separate selves. Painting is special, separate...a matter of meditation and contemplation, for me, no

physical action or social sport. As much consciousness as possible. Clarity, completeness, quintessence, quiet...Perfection, passiveness, consonance, consummateness,...Spirituality, serenity, absoluteness, coherence...Detachment, disinterestedness, thoughtfulness, transcendence...⁹

Reinhardt expanded his role from artist to artist-critic to artist-historian-critic and now was to begin an even higher level of artist-historian-critic-theoretician. In 1947 he had stated that painting could not be the only activity of a mature artist. Complying with the expansive needs of a maturing artist, Reinhardt diversified his talents in realizing his art role. Recognizing that his direction in painting was towards a pure formal abstraction, he began to formulate his theory.

After years of deliberation and indecision, Reinhardt finally in 1957 ended his artistic search and stated his "Twelve Rules for a New Academy." (Appendix 5) This is the first appearance in a complete form of Reinhardt's rules and regulations to guide the fineartist. Returning to the idea of an Academy, he stated his concept of the one true art as academic, fine and free. Reinhardt is a classicist of abstract art, stating purity as the greatest concern of twentieth century art. Fine art is an art purified of all other meanings. Therefore fine art, whose highest and freest form is painting must be:

...exclusive, negative, absolute, and timeless. It is not practical, useful, related, applicable or subservient to anything else. Fine art has its

own thought, its own history and tradition, its own reason, its own discipline...Fine art is not "a means of making a living" or "a way of living a life"...Art is art, life is life...The more uses...the less pure it is...¹⁰

The set factors within this regulated system include six traditions, six canons and twelve rules. The six traditions worth studying are the pure icon, pure landscape, pure still life, pure portrait, pure form and pure perspective. The six canons to be aware of are no realism or existentialism, no impressionism, no expressionism or surrealism, no fauvism, no constructivism and no trompe-l'oeil. The twelve technical rules (better define as things to avoid) include no texture, no brushwork or calligraphy, no sketching or drawing, no forms, no design, no colors, no light, no space, no time, no size or scale, no movement, and no object, subject or matter. Thus "a picture is finished when all traces of the means used bring about the end have disappeared."¹¹

In addition knowledge of certain physical factors and practical tools should be known, so Reinhardt described those practices most operable for his methods. An easel or palette is unnecessary for him. In addition one inch brushes are most functional and paint stored in jars. Linen canvas is the best for his type of painting and completed paintings are stored away - out of sight. The best studio should have a raintight roof, twelve foot ceilings and be at least 25 by 30 feet in dimension. Also the studio should be separate from living quarters.

Reinhardt intentionally overstated these physical factors, technical rules and canons to make his position clear. While he was ridiculing the public and their desire to know how the artist works, he was also defining a guideline for the true artist who desires to produce fine painting. Free from all superfluous stimuli, the artist is in complete control of all things from the beginning to the end. In rejecting such broad concepts as realism, impressionism and expressionism, Reinhardt felt the artist could gradually eliminate any reliance on past traditions. Left with a consideration of the pure tradition, he would be able to achieve an ultimate painting style. By eliminating or negating the elements of design the absolute can theoretically be attained.

Reinhardt was reaching for what he considered the highest, most unique painting statement. His art in theory seems possible. He is defining an ultimate to the pure painting tradition. He was too sophisticated to think his would be the last painting to be painted, but vain enough to state he was working on the first of the last pure paintings. The fine line of distinction is always necessary in understanding Reinhardt's art and theory. The superlative qualities of finest, freest, most absolute, etc., are balanced by the most rejective qualities of no content, no meaning, no purpose, etc. These extremes were desirable for their own end which is essentially indefinable except in

Reinhardt's terms.

Reinhardt again used his wit and punning ability in an article for the spring 1958 issue of It Is entitled "44 Titles for Articles for Artists Under 45," in which he glibly reviewed his own set of rules. Some of the ideas in the article are obviously related to his theory, others criticize and others are merely jest. Sorting out these different elements, one sees that Reinhardt was professing a repetitive, simplistic art theory ("The more art changes, the more it stays the same. The more art stays the same, the more it changes.") with minimum expression ("What no words can paint. What no paints can word."). This art does not relate to life ("Slice of art Life. The art of the life of art.") and its worst enemy is itself ("Save art from the artist"). As for his own art he makes a few comments. One statement alluded to a set of art rules ("The golden rules and unwritten laws of true art") to guide the artist towards the only true and fine abstract art. More definite rules are contained in two statements concerning color" ... "and the heavens above be black" and "Note to Louise N. a.Sculpture is white (light). b.Architecture is space (color). c.Painting is black." These ideas are subtly interspersed among the more preponderant comments which ridicule the art scene ("An inquiry into the causes which obstruct the progress of the fine arts in New York and America and the formation of a society of Arcadians or an Apollo association to propose remedies for the degeneracy

of American Arts and Letters"). Reinhardt mocked art run by government officials ("Government in Art. Federal Bureau of Art Standards and Fair Trade Practices. Department of Art-Markets and Sanitation. Port of Art Authority. Under-Secretary of Fine Arts. Commissioner of Art Pollution.") and business manoeuvred art ("Business cycle in artists' sales pitches in three acts. a.Social-Genri (Expansion) (Archaic). b.Nature (Prosperity)(Classic). c. Mysticism (Recession)(Late Baroque Illusionism)"). He asks "Whose better? Lawyers who paint or doctors who paint?" and who is to give prizes in a "Nationwide competition open to all critics, curators and collectors?" This type of jesting turns into complete folly in such statements as:

The day the West Coast art renaissance came East and died.
 Artists who get the "call." Call-artists.
 The Americanization of German expressionism with
 Protestant painting as synagogue decoration.
 A toot for a toot, an aye for an aye, and a finger in
 the pie in the sky when you die, bye and bye. 12

The real intention of this article is partially obscured by the various levels Reinhardt included. Its impact has been reduced because it is difficult to separate jest from theory. In fact one of the listings even stated that "Art is too serious to be taken seriously."¹³ If this is the case how seriously can one accept these comments which satirize his work as well as others?

In the same issue of It Is, in an article entitled "25 Lines of Words on Art," Reinhardt made a series of more

serious comments on his art beliefs. In numbered fashion, one through twenty-five, he professed that "Art is Art" and "Not a likeness of anything on earth." "Everything else is everything else." He implies a distinction between "Art as Art" and other forms such as "Art from Art. Art on Art. Art of Art. Art for Art. Art beyond Art." Just as there are these different forms of art, there are different forms of painters and paintings. ("Painters' Painting. Painting's Painters. Painters' Painters"). Reinhardt also explained a true painting as indefinable, invisible, useless, unsaleable and meaningless. Yet the painting is basically like an icon having absolute symmetry, pure reason, rightness, and being central, frontal, regular, repetitive. Its repetition is a preformularization of uniform forms which become formless through recurrence. In the painting light should be dull; color black and empty; space divided but one so as to produce stasis regardless of its geometric division; and outlines and brushwork invisible. The intended effect is blankness, quintessence and premeditation. If these things are actually achieved in a painting, then the artist has produced a work of art which is a most unique spectacle of paradox. Reinhardt implied this as his aim in the last six lines of the article:

The strictest formula for the freest artistic freedom.
 The easiest routine to the difficult.
 The most common means to the most uncommon end.
 The most extremely impersonal way for the truly personal.
 The completest control for the purest spontaneity.

The most universal path to the most unique and
vice versa. 14

It seems impossible to have a formularized freedom, an easy difficulty, an ordinary unique ending, an impersonal personal and a controlled spontaneity. Yet Reinhardt felt it was possible and the only recourse in order to achieve a most unique universal art statement.

Reinhardt felt a failure to maintain these high standards resulted in art corruption. The art conscience of his times, he was impervious to such dependencies as life, fate, reality, sensations, irrationality and romance which weakened other artists. Guided by ethics and morality in a world which is structured on law and order, he could only envision a return to the "neo-classic virtues of detachment, honesty, rationality, clarity, coldness, emptiness, sterility, formalism, intellectuality, idealism, meaninglessness and contentlessness."¹⁵ He believed there is a history of art morality, a moral art history, and a code of art ethics. Some artists (artists-as-artists) maintain these standards and others (artists-as-something-else) succumb to the corruption. It was for the benefit of both kinds of artists that Reinhardt defined a "Code of Ethics" in 1960. These thirteen rules of conduct were dedicated to the eighteen artists who participated in the 1950 Museum of Modern Art boycott (and have since sold out to the establishment). These rules of conduct include:

- It is not right for an artist to:
- 1) pretend ignorance of his art
 - 2) mis-state its content or purpose
 - 3) rely on nature as an explanation for his art
 - 4) deny the truth of abstraction and the falseness of representation
 - 5) integrate all arts to the ruin of fine free art
 - 6) claim his art has contemporary social content
 - 7) overstate the significance of his art
 - 8) glamorize the role of the artist
 - 9) play the role of an entertainer
 - 10) falsely influence public opinion that nothing is something
 - 11) think that painting is something other than painting and misuse it as something else.
 - 12) sell-out i.e. fight establishment when young and poor then join the establishment when old, rich and settled
 - 13) "not to tell artists who don't know what's not right, what not to do..."¹⁶

Thus Reinhardt recognized that the artist had certain responsibilities to himself and to art. The blame for any art corruption is the burden of the individual artist. Reinhardt promoted these ideas again in his June 1962 AIA Journal article "Who Is Responsible for Ugliness?" or What is ugly? The listing of what is ugly begins with art as a commodity, entertainment or livelihood. Art dealing, art collecting, art manipulating, art jobbing, art commercialism, art careerism, art moneymaking, are ugly. A hierarchy of ugliness makes the artist as businessman uglier than the businessman as artist, ugly geometric art uglier than government sponsorship of art. Art confused with life, nature, society, politics, religion, or as a sure thing is ugly. In Reinhardt's estimation artists concerned with these things are the artists responsible for ugliness.¹⁷

Reinhardt's disgust for corrupted art practices had an important effect upon his decision to develop a fine, free, pure and true art. His role as the conscientious objector against corrupted art ideas reached a high point in the early sixties when he began to set his beliefs down in more precise notations in preparation for his series called an Art-as-Art Dogma (some portions of which never were to be published). It is the material for this series which is at the heart of his theory. A great majority of the ideas are not new, having already been stated in earlier writings. In addition, many parts of the series (one and two, three through six, seven and eight, nine through eleven, twelve to the end) are so similar to each other that they become repetitive to mere duplication.

The main goal of Reinhardt's dogma is to substantiate his belief that art-as-art is art. This was his aim in his first article in this dogma series entitled "Art-as-Art." In this article he stated the basis of his dogma, the succeeding parts being amplifications and simplifications of these ideas. In the article Reinhardt stated that a hundred years of modern art had made art aware of itself and its historical process and destiny. He saw the art-historical evolution as a struggle towards art's freedom, dignity, reason, morality, essence and conscience. In the seventeenth century the challenge had been the academy, in the eighteenth century aesthetics, in the nineteenth century

independence, and in the twentieth century it was purity. Art had gradually lost its need of realism, naturalism, socialism, mysticism and all other isms. It had retained the one factor of its history. The significance or meaning of the art-as-art object is its own art-meaning, which is tested by separation from its original time, place and use. Placed in an art museum (out of its original context) the art object loses all meaning but its art-meaning.

It is the job of a fine museum of art-as-art to preserve past art as historical evidence of art's existence. Past art can not and should not be remade. In this sense, the museum is then a "treasure-house and tomb" and should exclude all but the fine arts. It should not promote any private motive of the curator, collector or art historian which would be the disruption of its "soundlessness, timelessness, airlessness, and lifelessness." Neither the art museum or university should try to teach a love of life via art instead it should advance the idea of art-as-art and the artist-as-artist.

The artist-as-artist must contend with other "artists-as-man, -animal, or -vegetable" that is, artists who are concerned with nature, reality, life in their art work. The artist-as-artist is concerned with an art that is purified of these reliances. The one art of the artist-as-artist is pure abstract painting which is the only styleless universality. It has taken fifty years of purifying abstract art to bring it to this level. This

process of elimination is therefore the best means of defining what art-as-art is.

Art is art and life is life. A "slice-of-life" art is no better or worse than a "slice-of-art" life...and an artist who dedicates his life to his art or his art to his life, burdens his art with his life and his life with his art.¹⁸

Fine art has no other end but itself while false art is concerned with emotion, illusion, action, etc., by combining, mixing, adding ideas. False art is servile while fine art is free but not a free for all.

The late stages of any art evolution can be marked by this free for all attitude which claims anything goes or can be art or anyone can be an artist. This last stage was reached by a linear progression from "early archaic schematization," to "classic formulation and decay" to the "late endless variety of illusionisms." The history of painting moves from...

...the painting of a variety of ideas with a variety of subjects and objects, to one idea with a variety of subjects and objects, to one subject with a variety of objects, to one object with a variety of subjects, then to one object with one subject, to one object with no subject, and to one subject with no object, then to the idea of no object and no subject and no variety at all. There is nothing less significant in art...than endless variety.¹⁹

Thus if any progress is to be made in fine art it will be from working and reworking the same idea over and over again. Painting comes from painting and only when painting, does the artist discover how much more there is left to do. Through this strict art discipline, intense attention and

studio ritual, the artist becomes master of his originality and approaches perfection through the minutest changes in repetition. Thus the standardized form must become part of his formula of the imageless and formless as also the repetition of the...

...one-size-canvas, the single-scheme, one color-monochrome, one linear-division in each direction, one symmetry, one texture, one formal device, one free-hand brushing, one rhythm, one working everything into one dissolution and one indivisibility, painting everything into one overall uniformity and nonirregularity. No lines or imaginings, no shapes or composings or representations, no visions or sensations, no impulses, no symbols or signs or impastos, no decorating or coloring or picturing, no pleasures or pangs, no accidents or readymades, no things, no ideas, no relations, no attributes, no qualities --- nothing that is not of the essence. Everything into irreducibility, unreproducibility, imperceptibility. Nothing useable, saleable, collectable...(for) art is not the spiritual side of business. 20

In analyzing what art is, and all of its facets including the role of the artist, university, museum, art historical considerations and individual painting concerns, Reinhardt in his Art-as-Art article acted as the protector of fine and good art against the crass art-business world. His goals are ethical and nonprofitable. He defined his art standard as concerned with "oneness and fineness, rightness and purity, abstractness and evanescence. The one thing to say about the best art is the breathlessness, lifelessness, deathlessness, contentlessness, formlessness, spacelessness and timelessness. This is always the end of art."21

An unpublished addition to the first part of this art-as-art dogma is a tautological argument of the nature, meaning, reality and art of art-as-art. Reinhardt spoke of art's essential nature, essential non-nature, essential reality, essential non-reality, essential universality as being just the Art of Art. He concluded with a statement concerning the next revolution in art which will be the defeat of art-as-something-else by art-as-only-itself.²²

This last consideration of the "Next Revolution in Art" is the basis for Part II of Reinhardt's Dogma. Part I had been more of a statement of facts concerning pure art. In Part II Reinhardt becomes protective of his belief and attempts to defend his art position. To him, Art-as-Art is a battle cry and a non-violent protest against other art. The artist-as-artist has definite enemies because he and his art-as-art is a thorn to other-artists-as-something-other-than-artist, art-dealers, art-collectors, and the "utilitarian, acquisitive, exploiting society." These groups cannot accept art for its own sake or for its own reason. Hence, battles have and will be fought for the recognition of a free kind of art. Reinhardt wanted art to be emancipated from bourgeois goals. The next revolution in art will result in a declaration of art independence recognizing "the inalienable right of each art to be free from all other arts, to be free to be itself, and to be free of itself."²³

From this part of the series, it would seem that Reinhardt intended to fight the cause of fine art, alone if necessary, until it became liberated. Suprisingly his next segment of the dogma is very different from the attack of Part II. He seems to retreat from rhetorical criticism to a more poetic statement. In Parts III through VI he uses a poetic structure, stating in short quick sentences what art is and is not. Instead of amplifying on his ideas of the first two parts, Reinhardt repeated in very short and abrupt fashion the ideas he considered more pertinent. The best key to his intention in this section is derived from a dialogue which he wrote to himself that prefaces Part V (which is the most complete in this dogma section and will be used as the definitive article). Giving recognition to his avant garde participation and to early influences of Cubism, Abstraction, Clive Bell, Henri Focillon and George Kubler, he then asked himself:

This new part of your Art-as-Art Dogma looks like the same old thing. Are you still saying the one thing you say needs to be said over and over again and that this thing is the only thing for an artist to say?

Yes, he said.

There's nothing else to say?

No, he said. 24

The thing that needs to be stated again and again is Art is Art-as-Art. In abandoning a prose style and adopting a poetic form to state this idea, the endless variety and repetition he used is noticeable. Internal repetition in a line is often followed by repetition in a succeeding line as seen in the following:

Nature in art is not nature.
 Art in nature is not nature.
 Art in life is not life.²⁵
 Life in art is not life.

Reinhardt stated again very succinctly his opposition to commercialism or business in art:

Business in art is business.
 Art in business is business.
 The business of art is not business.

as well as his opposition to the dependence upon other meanings and purposes in art:

Knowledge in art is not knowledge.
 Ignorance in art is ignorance.
 Art-schooling is not schooling.
 Unlearning in art is learning.
 Wisdom in art is not wisdom.
 The psychology of art is not psychology.
 The philosophy of art is not philosophy.
 The history of art is not history.
 Art in history is not history. 26

He was not only stating that art connected with any phenomena does not make it that phenomena but also that art can only be what it is and nothing more. To imply more than this is absurd because "more in art is not more," "too large in art is too large," and "too much in art is too much." With a great deal of elaboration he listed those things he considered superfluous in art and many of these items (i.e. such things as color, symmetry, line, shape) he had listed as elements to avoid in his twelve rules of art.

That a certain amount of contradiction seems to exist from one statement to another results from an attempt to correspond similar terms which in turn results in an erratic pairing of seemingly opposite ideas.

Form in art is not form.
The formlessness of art is not formlessness.

People in art are not people.
Figures in art are figures.

Limits in art are not limits.
No limits in art are limits.

Poetry in art is poetry.
Poetry in art is not poetry.

A sign in art is a sign.
The sign of art is not a sign.

The beginning of art is not the beginning.
The end of art is not the end. 28

Although the contradictory nature of these statements appears obvious, distinctions do exist. Reinhardt very carefully defined things in an ambiguous format. In commenting that a sign, limits, poetry, figures, etc., in art are not negative or positive, he was indirectly stating that art is only itself. The immediate reaction of contradiction ultimately is resolved in the comprehension of his major idea that art is art-as-art.

Further analysis indicates that Reinhardt purposely used a structure of intertwined comments, that is, statements of what art should be and is (to him) are interspersed between statements of what art should not be and actually is. Thus differentiations like the following exist:

A circle is a circle.
A square is not a square.

White in art is white.
Matt black in art is not matt black.

Variety in art is not variety.
Sameness in art is not sameness.

Chaos in art is chaos.
Order in art is not order.²⁹

In this part of the dogma, Reinhardt was stressing that art is really none of these things. It is only art. Using a clever framework, he repeated his same ideas on art.

Reinhardt's next section of the dogma, Parts VII through IX, is similar in technique but different in structure. With a computer-like redundancy he listed "39 Planks or Programs for Program Painting." Reinhardt structured each listing by prefacing it with the hyphenated prefix re- thereby implying the repetition of an old concept. Obviously there is no such word as re-obliteration, re-dissolution, re-non-objectification or re-revocation. As a consequence, some of the headings seem to read as absurdities:

The re-materialization of pigment matter.
The re-evanescence of contrast and color.
The re-destruction of neo-constructivism.
The re-abstraction of abstraction of abstraction.
The re-de-mannerization of mannerism.
The re-demeaning of meaning in meaning in art.
The re-one-upping of up-ping of pop-ing.
The re-denigration of the product of the reproduction of the reproduction of the production.³⁰

In this criticism of non-innovative artistic concerns, Reinhardt did not remove himself completely. The last listing which reads "the re-negation of the neo-negation of neo-art-as-art"³¹ is a reference to his own art and its repetition by himself as well as past or future artists. However, the real message is not lost in the ludicrous word play. The relevance of redoing what already had been done is thereby brought to question. Since Reinhardt did repeat

his same idea, it is unavoidable to question the relevance of his efforts. As stated earlier Reinhardt felt he was saying the one thing that was necessary, the one thing that had to be repeated over and over again. However, repetition does not have value in itself, as art or polemic. If the substance of the statement is a measure of significance, it is evident that Reinhardt's art-as-art idea is a highly acceptable theory. Yet his base statement of this concept is still questionable because he may have simplified it too radically, thereby removing its meaning.

The commentary made in the last Dogma segment is succeeded in the next section by a more personal statement (which may not necessarily be part of the Dogma series but chronologically and stylistically fits in at this point in Reinhardt's writing). The topic of this article is the collective concept of his "Abstract Painting, Sixty by Sixty Inches Square, 1960." Reinhardt began with the self-explanatory statement that:

This painting is my painting if I paint it.
 This painting is your painting if you paint it.
 This painting is any painter's painting.
 This painting is anyone's painting, with few exceptions³²:

Having established the painter of the painting, Reinhardt considered the qualities of this painting. Although the painting is not copyrighted and may be reproduced, the technical nature of the painting does not render duplication easy. Likewise, this painting is so unique it does not fit

easily in group exhibitions. It is not a commodity but is free and can belong to anyone who wants it. Unsaleable and priceless, it can still be attained and is given freely as a fine and free art.

It is difficult to sense any greater meaning beyond the apparent one in this article. Reinhardt seems to have been stating that his abstract painting does and does not render itself to things. An equivocal quality is inherent in his painting and the more important realization is that the painting is merely itself and nothing more.

The final segment of the Art-as-Art Dogma series Parts XI to the end can easily be considered as a summation, for in content it repeats many of the same things already stated in Part I. Definitely not prose, the statements are lengthy but more like a free verse form. Reinhardt patiently reminds us there is just one art, art-as-art, which is fine, free and abstract. There is one museum of fine art, one art history, one aesthetics. There is only one artist, the artist-as-artist, who does the one art-work or painting in the one art process. This one painting has just one size, form, formula, image, color, light, space, time, style, etc. There is just one perception, one way, one task, and just one negation, one means, one statement, one standard, and one end for the one artist. The one art has but one art-morality which is based upon the one art.³³

Thus, Reinhardt recognized only one approach in art.

He had anticipated the idea of "Oneness" in the first part of the Art-as-Art series but the polemics of his early ideas had become a form of dogmatism in the later work. The change in his writing style has some bearing on the transformation. The ideas in the narrative prose of the earlier material became more abrupt and then reduced into short exclamatory comments. The repetition of these brief and pointed remarks seems an elementary way to communicate the same basic ideas. It does however, change the context giving a more decisive impact to his statements on art. The brevity of the late writing indicates that Reinhardt's viewpoint had become increasingly singular. Dealing with extremes in an extreme way, he strove for an ideal and pure art. His art attempts to be not only pure but also absolute, negative, perfect and universal. Using a rational system with rules and routine, Reinhardt thought it possible to combine these extreme qualities in a formulized academicism. Once the formula of the one true art was established he simplified the basic ideas and continually repeated the more pertinent facts.

In isolation from other art ideas, Reinhardt's approach seems startling and unique. His viewpoint appears original because of its extreme nature. Yet a more critical eye should be used to evaluate his efforts. A better estimate of Reinhardt's contribution therefore can be obtained through a chronological study of theories and ideas comparable to Reinhardt's.

NOTES CHAPTER 1

- 1
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 355, 415-16, Lecture notes, dated 1943-44.
- 2
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 416-20, Lecture notes, not dated.
- 3
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 322, Lecture notes, not dated.
- 4
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 356, Notations, not dated.
- 5
Maurice Tuchman, editor, New York School, First Generation (L.A.: Museum of Art, 1965), p. 27.
- 6
Ibid, p. 28.
- 7
Ad Reinhardt, "The Artist in Search of an Academy," Art Journal, (Spring, 1953), pp. 249-50.
- 8
Ad Reinhardt, "The Artist in Search of an Academy, Part II: Who Are the Artists?," Art Journal, (Summer, 1954), pp. 314-15.
- 9
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 396, Notations, not dated.
- 10
Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," Art News, (May, 1957), p. 38+. (Reproduced in Appendix 5)
- 11
Ibid, p. 56.
- 12
Ad Reinhardt, "44 Titles for Articles for Artists Under 45," It Is, (Spring, 1958), pp. 22-23.

13
Ibid, p. 23.

14
Ad Reinhardt, "25 Lines of Words on Art," It Is,
(Spring, 1958), p. 42.

15
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 430, From a paper read at the College Art Association
meeting in New York January 28, 1960.

16
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
numbers 430-31.

17
Ad Reinhardt, "Who Is Responsible for Ugliness?,"
AIA Journal, (June, 1962), pp. 60-1.

18
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," Art International,
(December, 1962), p. 37.

19
Ibid, p. 37.

20
Ibid, p. 37.

21
Ibid, p. 37.

22
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 436, Addition made to Part I of Dogma, unpublished
and not dated.

23
Ad Reinhardt, "The Next Revolution in Art, Art-as-
Art Dogma Part II," Art News, (February, 1964), p. 49.
(Also appeared in Art International, (March, 1964), p. 58.)

24
Ad Reinhardt, "Reinhardt Paints a Picture, Part V
Art-as-Art Dogma," Art News, (March, 1965), p. 40.

25
Ibid, p. 66.

26
Ibid, p. 41.

27
Ibid, p. 66.

28
Ibid, p. 66.

29
Ibid, p. 66.

30
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 451, unpublished section of Dogma Part VII, not dated.

31
Ibid.

32
Ad Reinhardt, "Three Statements," Art Forum, (March, 1966), p. 34. A discussion of his paintings will follow in another chapter but for now it is sufficient to know that he began the black square paintings in 1960 about the time he began his dogma series. The remaking of these paintings was his entire artistic output until his death in 1967.

33
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 454-59, 282-83, Notations, some of which are titled as Dogma segments, others very similar in structure are untitled, all unpublished and not dated.

CHAPTER TWO Theoretical Predecessors

Ad Reinhardt's Art-as-Art Dogma can be considered his manifesto for a pure and absolute art. His "fine art" system is founded on a premise of new, contemporary classicism. The precise nature of his art dogma represents a conscious effort to develop a modern academic painting style which would contain such absolutes as universality, neutrality, perfection and the eternal. The formidable task of establishing an art and theory which could incorporate all these qualities had to result from a thorough knowledge of twentieth century aestheticians. In absorbing such information Reinhardt carefully improved on those ideas best related to his purposes.

The range of possible theoretical antecedents for Reinhardt is very large. There are a great many who have made contributions to the art-for-art's sake theory. But, selecting influential theorists for Reinhardt is guided by Reinhardt himself. Within his many writings and notes, certain names and terms appear with noticeable frequency. One particular comprehensive jotting significantly reads as follows:

Art-as-Art, aesthetics, absolute, right, fine art, free, abstract, Bell, Focillon, Kubler, Sonntag, Mondrian, Malevich, Malraux, Museum of Fine Art, one, separate, Formalism...¹

In this listing of names and terms Reinhardt has given us

not only terms which define his art (such as Art-as-Art, absolute, right, fine, free, etc...) but also the names of artists and theorists who were involved with these same concepts. Furthermore, the names of Bell, Focillon, Kubler, and Malraux, as well as their principal writings, were mentioned by Reinhardt in other publications and interviews. In this chapter these theorists will be considered as contributing to Reinhardt's own Art-as-Art system.

The grouping of Clive Bell's Art, Henri Focillon's The Life of Forms in Art, André Malraux's Voices of Silence, and George Kubler's The Shape of Time is feasible because they all believed in the autonomy of art and that art develops according to its internal structure. It is on this foundation that each built a system to explain various aspects of art and artistic production. By appraising Reinhardt's response to each of these writers, a better understanding of their influence is possible as well as a more complete comprehension of Reinhardt's work.

The theorist with whom to start the analysis is most logically Clive Bell since he was one of the earliest exponents of art-for-art's sake. A statement by Reinhardt gives us additional reasons.

I've been an abstract artist now for about thirty years and I think of myself, I guess, as a child of abstract art. I think the history of abstract art is about the same age as I am. I was born in the year 1913, which was a kind of climax, not only of Cubism but the certain kind of painting Mondrian was doing. There was the Armory show, and Clive Bell published his book

called Art and it's roughly my point of view.
So I'm not going to say anything new or
radical about it.²

The fact that Reinhardt associated 1913, the year of his birth, with these other events indicated his complete involvement with art and its importance in his life. He mentions Clive Bell so casually that it may be misleading. Bell is of considerable significance for many of his ideas are the basis of Reinhardt's theory.

Clive Bell made it clear that there was an aesthetic emotion that was not any other kind of emotion. And³ probably you could define that negatively.

This aesthetic emotion according to Bell is produced by artistic sensibility and clear thinking. A common quality which he called "significant form" is identical to the essential element in a work of art which arouses aesthetic emotion. He defined "significant form" as "lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, (that) stir our emotions."⁴ Making a distinction between aesthetic and natural beauty, he stated that natural beauty leaves aesthetic emotion untouched because we are affected by the suggested ideas not the forms. Representation is not bad but it is too easy and irrelevant. It restricts the more intellectual as well as the emotional potential of the artist. Reinhardt was to develop this idea in the following:

As early as 1913, Clive Bell wrote that representation was a "sign of weakness in an artist," and "of defective sensibility." His statement

that "every sacrifice made to representation is something stolen from art" has been true for this half century. Any combining, mixing, adding, adulterating, diluting, exploiting, vulgarizing or popularizing of abstract art deprives art of its essence and truth, and is a corruption of the artists' artistic conscience.⁵

The combining and mixing to which Reinhardt alluded as depriving art of its essence and truth were symptomatic of confusing art and life. Reinhardt stated in the first part of his Art-as-Art Dogma that a slice-of-life art was no better than a slice-of-art life. He advocated isolating art from life. To Reinhardt life is not art but life is life and art is art. This same attitude is basic to Bell's aesthetic theory.

To appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. ⁶

To Bell (as to Reinhardt) the work of art is a reality in itself and a means to its own ends. It should not be dependent upon anything outside itself. Its value lies within and it is best enhanced by the development of elements which promote this independence. Reinhardt felt art must be pure, fine and academic. Both he and Bell would agree it should not relate to such activities as politics and business, which corrupt fine art and prevent it from reaching a pure, classic state. The closest comparison Bell found with art was religion; both he felt were means to similar states of mind.

Religion, like art, is concerned with the world of emotional reality, and with material

things only in so far as they are emotionally significant...both seem to express emotions different from and transcending the emotions of life...Art and Religion belong to the same world. 7

Reinhardt would never be able to accept this comparison. Much speculation exists about a mystical or Oriental basis of metaphysics for Reinhardt's work but he adamantly disavowed any exerted attempt to make a modern religious art out of his painting. It is easy to understand how this misinterpretation could occur since Reinhardt spoke about absolutes, eternal and essential qualities, as well as timelessness. Bell using the example of Cezanne as the modern standard, offers us some illumination about the idea of timelessness:

He who can feel the profound significance of form, is raised above the accidents of time and place...It is the mark of art that its appeal is universal and eternal. Great art remains stable and unobscure because the feelings that it awakens are independent of time and place, because its kingdom is not of this world.⁸

Reinhardt did not think of all art as "universal and eternal" but wanted to make his own art "universal and eternal." Then his painting would be timeless in both the physical and mental sense. Considering the possibility of a dual content, Bell said "we become aware of its (art's) essential reality, of the God in everything, of the universal in the particular, of the all-prevailing rhythm."⁹ Bell believed the eternal in art was achieved in some mysterious experience. Reinhardt thought quite differently:

The strictest formula for the freest artistic freedom.
 The completest control for the purest spontaneity.
 The most universal path to the most unique and vice
 versa. 10

In these statements Reinhardt was not only telling us of his desire for an eternal art form but the general means of achieving it. He considered a strict formula and complete control as necessary for achievement of a free, universal and pure art statement. Thus for Reinhardt art was beyond the physical, but not necessarily of the mystical. Art has its own realm separate from all others.

Bell and Reinhardt developed these convoluted ideas from the basic idea of simplification. Simplification eliminates that which is not "significant form," leaving only the essential. Only that which is aesthetically significant remains and is seen as a greater whole. This process Bell interpreted in his first commandment "Thou shalt create form!"¹¹ But more than creation of form, Bell felt the gradual elimination was logically a negative and destructive creed. In art no creed is healthy that is anything else. You cannot give men genius; you can only give them freedom -- freedom from supersition."¹² Bell's comment seems dated because of the reference to Post-Impressionism but is actually perceptive for 1913. Reinhardt's earlier remark about Bell's aesthetic emotion as negative becomes a more meaningful commentary since Reinhardt used the idea of a negative approach to develop his theory. It was through a negative method Reinhardt thought a fine free art could

evolve. Bell had advocated a free art but did not distinguish between a fine free art and a fine free life.

If you would have a fine art and fine appreciation of art, you must have a fine free life for your artists and for yourselves. 13

The more completely the artist is free from the pressures of the public with its opinions, rewards and restrictions the better for everyone. Bell felt art was too important to be dependent upon criticism for its development. Reinhardt agreed that public acceptance was not vital to art. He refrained from too much public exposure, showing only at Betty Parsons Gallery, accepting no prize money and taking little heed of critical appraisal of his work. Since Reinhardt began to receive some recognition for his work only in the last few years of his life, we do not know how graciously he may have accepted popularity. But it is hard to believe that he would not have reacted to protect the purity of his art since he agreed so vehemently with Bell that "so soon as we consider a work of art as anything else than an end in itself we leave the world of art."¹⁴

The idea of "significant form" as the basis of an art-for-art's sake theory finds a different expression from the theorist Henri Focillon in his book The Life of Forms in Art. In fact, Focillon's ideas vary significantly from Clive Bell's and he is to provide another dimension which influenced Reinhardt in formulating his own art-as-art system. Barbara Rose observes that most of...

...Reinhardt's generation were directly or indirectly influenced by Kandinsky's theory of expressionsim which stressed the communication of interior states, (while) Reinhardt was far more drawn to Focillon's approach. In On the Life of Forms in Art Focillon emphasized objective formal relationships as opposed to the subjective states that were the content of the various forms of expression. 15

Reinhardt gave little indication of the degree of importance that Focillon had in the formation of his ideas. He mentioned Focillon's name from time to time but never more than that. Reinhardt's relationship to Focillon seems to be one in which he derived a framework to construct his own ideas and not specific information.

Focillon's book, The Life of Forms in Art, is a short, highly abstract consideration analyzing the phenomenon of form in art. The basis of this investigation of form rests on concepts of space, matter, mind and time in the life of forms. Beginning with the most basic of statements, Focillon defined a work of art as "an attempt to express something unique...an affirmation of something that is whole, complete, absolute."¹⁶ Creating an immutable order, the art work must go beyond mere illustration. Further a work of art is the result of a multitude of relationships and belongs to eternity because of its specific, individual, but universal qualities. According to Focillon the basis of an art work is form. Quoting Balzac's "everything is form and life itself is form," Focillon arrived at his basic thesis that "life itself is essentially a creation

of forms."¹⁷ Explaining the relationship of life and forms in art he said:

The relationships that bind forms together in nature cannot be pure chance and what we call "natural life" is in effect a relationship between forms, so inexorable that without it this natural life would not exist. So it is with art as well. The formal relationships within a work of art and among different works of art constitute an order for, and a metaphor of, the entire universe.¹⁸

Much of the above is exceedingly similar to not only Clive Bell but to the art theory of Piet Mondrian as well as to Reinhardt. Absolute, universal, immutable order (Mondrian - constancy), form (Bell - significant form) are all familiar and recurring terms. Focillon's ideas of the formal relationships constituting a metaphor of the entire universe recalls Mondrian's attempts to define the cosmic forces in Neo-Plastic laws. However, further comments by Focillon prove his ideas are not extensively connected with the mystical.

Nature as well as life creates forms. Organic life designs spirals, orbs, meanders, and stars, and if I wish to study this life, I must have recourse to form and to number. But the instant these shapes invade the space and the materials specific to art, they acquire an entirely new value and give rise to entirely new systems.¹⁹

These "new art systems" are based upon the formal relationships as explained by Focillon in the following:

A work of art exists only insofar as it is form. In other words, a work of art...is art itself. It does not design art; it creates it. Art is made up, not of the artist's intentions, but of works of art.²⁰

Reinhardt said essentially the same thing in a very similar way:

The one thing to say about art is that it is one thing. Art is art-as-art and everything else is everything else. Art-as-art is nothing but art.

and in the same article:

Just as artists come from artists and art-forms from art-forms, painting comes from painting.²¹

Focillon clarified his usage of form by distinguishing it from image and sign. "An image implies the representation of an object, and a sign signifies an object, form signifies only itself."²² To Focillon form is a structured, stable element and not a free and open manner of classification. It is also the base element or unit which cannot be reduced to mere formula or theory. Comparing Reinhardt's point of view we see that he believed that...

Art comes from art only, everywhere, never from life, reality, nature, earth or heaven. Art has its own formal problems and attentions. Visions, images, symbols, representations, sensations, impulses, are as they were in medieval times, still for "the minds of the ignorant" and for "the poor in spirit." ²³

Reinhardt went beyond Focillon's definitions of sign, image and form and claimed that any confusion of formal problems was an indication of ignorance. Reinhardt's attempted connection of art to a strictly cerebral effort is made apparent.

Since forms constitute an order of existence which by its very nature is subject to change, a work of art is

born of change and leads to more change. This idea of metamorphosis of forms as a continual process is evident in style. Focillon distinguished between "style" as an absolute and "a style" as a variable.

The word "style" in its generic sense indicates a special and superior quality in a work of art: the quality, the peculiarly eternal value, that allows it to escape the bondage of time. Conceived as an absolute, style is not only a model, but also something whose validity is changeless.

"A style" is a development, a coherent grouping of forms united by a reciprocal fitness, whose essential harmony is nevertheless in many ways testing itself, building itself, and annihilating itself. 24

Reinhardt agreed with Focillon's definition of "style" for his theory and his last paintings seem to fit into this category of changelessness. Just as with Bell's definition of an eternal and timeless quality in all of art, now also with Focillon's definition of style, Reinhardt wanted to embody his individual art within the superior and absolute qualities of an eternal art "style."

Focillon made further comments about the functioning of style. Passing through various stages and phases, style recycles in erratic patterns and does not follow a single ascending line. Nonetheless four successive stages of forms are determinable - experimental, classic, refinement and baroque. Although not novel classifications, they afford an interesting comparison with the following from Reinhardt:

The evolution of art-forms unfolds in one straight logical line of negative actions and

reactions, in one predestined, eternally, recurrent stylistic cycle, in the same all-over pattern, in all times and places, taking different times in different places, always beginning with an "early" archaic schematization, achieving a climax with a "classic" formulation, and decaying with a "late endless variety" of illusionisms and expressionisms. When late stages wash away all lines of demarcation, framework and fabric, with anything can be art, "anybody can be an artist,"...the artists' world is a mannerist and primitivist art-trade...²⁵

Reinhardt's single line of style unfolds as "negative" actions in a predetermined course and not along the erratic cyclical patterns Focillon talked about. His scheme retained the familiar archaic, classic, late style divisions. The latter were also recognized as an elaboration on the earlier parts of the cycle occurring when "form no longer signifies itself alone, it signifies as well a wholly deliberate content, and form is tortured to fit a meaning."²⁶

The next portion of Focillon's theory is concerned with the world of forms, its properties and attributes within the realms of space, matter, mind and time. Since the life of forms is not determined by chance but has its own rules, Focillon considered the interrelationship of space, matter, mind and time as his four rules. The idea of correlation was also significant for Reinhardt. He used it as a basis for the practical application of his own "Twelve Rules for a New Academy." Thus the four factors of Focillon are easily comparable to the twelve rules of Reinhardt.

Focillon's first consideration was his statement on the role of space. He felt space and form were inseparably united.

A work of art is the measure of space. It is form, and as form it must first make itself known to us. A work of art is situated in space. But it will not do to say it simply exists in space: a work of art treats space according to its own needs, defines space and even creates such space as may be necessary to it...²⁷

Focillon observes that in painting the illusion of space was created with lighting and form. Color, weight, and density are additional factors which determine space sensation. Form is realized in space and matter is the inevitable product.

Without matter art could not exist...Unless and until it actually exists in matter, form is little better than a vista of the mind. ²⁸

Matter controls form imposing its own form upon visualized form. Having its own laws, matter is changed radically when it takes on the form of art. Specifically "in painting it is more than plain that the interpretation of space is a function of matter, which sometimes limits space, and sometimes destroys its limits."²⁹ To Focillon form, space and matter exist dependent upon each other. Reinhardt also believed the combination of form, space and matter functioned dependent of each other - but in negative terms of a mutual exclusion. Reinhardt's rule four of no form, rule eight of no space, and rule twelve of no object clearly state his desire to negatively treat these elements. In order to

achieve these ends he also rejected color, light, line, drawing, etc. Thus his art is established on the negative interrelationships of elements while Focillon's ideas were limited to a mutual dependence of four elements.

Focillon's third element concerns mind as related to form.

These forms that live in space and in matter
live first in the mind. 30

As expressed in the third rule of his twelve rules, Reinhardt complies with Focillon's idea concerning the mind:

Everything, where to begin and where to end,
should be worked out in the mind beforehand. In
painting the idea should exist in the mind before
the brush is taken up. 31

Another short phrase "matter only to the mind"³² by Reinhardt completes the extent of his response to Focillon's statement. Matter does not exist in Reinhardt's theory. There is no room for it or any necessity. In his art he minimized the recognition of matter as much as possible and attempted to make the painting more equivalent to an idea than to a tangible object.

Focillon's last rule concerns form in terms of time or succession (but not implying a chronological division or historical segmentation). Focillon refuted the conventional time conception stating that:

Deep within ourselves, we know that time is a
"becoming"...fluid time i.e. one whose duration
has a plastic quality. 33

Focillon adopted this definition because he felt that

chronological or serial durations were confusing the life of forms with social life.

The artist inhabits a country in time that is by no means necessarily the history of his own time. 34

Reinhardt agreed with Focillon on this point:

...it is the nature of the artist to live, not in the world of which he is an effect but in the world of which he is the cause, the world of his own creation. 35

To Focillon the work of art is a result of a rupture in time.

It is not a question of breaking quietly in upon chronology, but of bursting suddenly in upon the moment. 36

This moment is a highly abrupt event in which form takes on a new and revolutionary character without being an event itself. A work of art therefore defies the normal conception of time.

Reinhardt has a very different concept of time as related to art. Rule nine of his twelve rules concisely states his position.

No time. Clock-time or man's time is inconsequential. There is no ancient or modern, no past or future in art. A work of art is always present. The present is the future of the past, not the past of the future. 37

It is apparent that Focillon was insisting on the interdependence of form, mind, space and matter as they are related to secondary factors of light, color, weight and density. What he could not consider was the possibility of a totally rejective approach which could ultimately eliminate these

considerations of design and composition. Reinhardt was perceptive in envisioning the negative interdependence of the elements of time, matter, form, space as well as size, light, color, subject and texture to achieve the most extreme, pure, art-for-art's sake statement. By striving to paint a work of art which contained no color, no form, no line, no objects, etc., Reinhardt felt he would achieve the most completely pure art, that is, art that was only art. Thus, his conclusions appear to be advanced from Focillon's.

The sum of Focillon's theory is a glorification of art, the artist, and artistic production. He placed much hope in these things, but not in...

The gesture that makes nothing, the gesture with no tomorrow, provokes and defines only the state of consciousness. The creative gesture exercises with continuous influence over the inner life. 38

It seems in the end that Focillon would look disapprovingly upon Reinhardt's attempt "to make paintings about nothing" which provide only their presence and state of consciousness. Reinhardt's paintings are a product of a theoretical, creative exercise but one which does not maintain an influence over the inner life. Instead they adhered to a very strict idea and discipline of art-as-art.

Reinhardt mentioned these same ideas in the following:

One idea, art is art-as-art, artist-as-artist. Just hold up a painting, Malraux's *Voices of Silence*. Art speaks for itself, what say, only speak to those who know? 39

This is another excerpt from the many illusive "non-talk notations" found in the archival material from Reinhardt's career. Certain facts are clearly evident in the statement, while there remains some question as to its entire meaning. Art-as-art is repeated once more but this time in connection with the name of André Malraux. In a cartoonless cartoon (Appendix 2) another statement "Art is the Voice of Silence" refers to Malraux's much discussed book of the same title.⁴⁰ In dealing with art from all places and all ages, Malraux was discussing the reality behind art and creative effort. It is through this broad spectrum that Malraux provided some insights into certain general questions. One critic, refuting the criticism that Malraux presented nothing new, stated:

Nothing, perhaps, except a range of knowledge almost unexampled among scholars of art history, a basic concept of art, and a sense of the modern significance of the history of art viewed as a totality. 41

Reinhardt was also a product of a wide range of knowledge. His career is marked with involvement in art criticism, art history, art education and art. However, his interest in these areas did not lead him into the lyrical verbal wanderings of Malraux. Instead Reinhardt expressed himself in an exclusive and repetitive art theory which was concerned with only art as itself. To Reinhardt there was just one art, as there was "just one art history, one art evolution, one art progress."⁴² Having reached his definition of art, he professed it was one approach to a pure and fine art. All his knowledge about progress and evolution

in art history led him to one true method. Further he stated:

Artists would have a kind of Malrauxian point of view, in which the whole history of art is known to and is part of them. Otherwise, they're idiots, children or romantics. 43

Reinhardt agreed with the intellectual format Malraux had developed to analyze the whole history of art. Both believed the contemporary artist should be aware of art history in order to use it to advance his own approach.

Understanding that by art we mean mostly museum art, Malraux realized that the museum could transform works of art and our relationship to them by isolating them from their original context, floating them in a vacuum of time, independent of history. The work of art is then no longer a social document. Works of art therefore "justify themselves in the presence of others, in competition and comparison with them."⁴⁴ They are separated from their original functions and promoted as ends in themselves. This fate is one of the factors contributing to (or reinforcing) the modern idea of art-for-art's sake.⁴⁵ Malraux took this idea one step further by presenting the concept of a "Museum without Walls." This imaginary museum of the mind is available through photography which provides the possibility of a museum having a scope otherwise impossible. Through fragmentation, lighting, juxtaposition and other photographic techniques a new visual experience is possible. This imaginary museum could provide more experiences than any real

museum. By destroying mass, color, scale, etc., the photograph could transform the work of art but still give emphasis to style as an essential element. Thus, photographs of art could disseminate more culture in a kind of photographic museum, making possible the comprehension of world culture as in one continuous evolution.⁴⁶

Reinhardt's opinion of Malraux's "Museum without Walls" was revealed during an interview when he was asked to define absolute standards.

Well, if they are not anything you can pin down easily, you can certainly say what they are not. This is the whole point of André Malraux's imaginary museum, the museum without walls. You have the twenty five thousand years of art and it's art and not anything else. When you try to place the art back into its time and place, you make it relative. But when you lift it out of that and put it into a museum of fine art, then you are making it absolute, timeless and meaningless.⁴⁷

Thus Reinhardt agreed with Malraux that the museum allowed art to function primarily on the basis of its art-meaning.

Certain romantic overtones in Malraux distinguish his ideas from the more realistic and idealistic efforts of Reinhardt. Malraux defined museums as the cathedrals of America⁴⁸ while Reinhardt saw the situation a little closer to the truth calling them "civilization's attic."⁴⁹ However, just as he visualized an ideal level for art so also for the fine art museum. Reinhardt defined it in the following:

The one place for art-as-art is the museum of fine art. The one reason for the museum of fine art is the preservation of ancient and modern art that cannot be made again and does not have to be

done again. A museum of fine art should exclude everything but fine art, and be separate from museums of ethnology, geology, archaeology, history, decorative-arts, military-arts and museums of other things. A museum is a treasure-house and tomb, not a counting-house or amusement-center. A museum that becomes an art-curator's personal-monument or an art-collector-sanctifying-establishment or an art-history-manufacturing-plant or an artist's market-block, is a disgrace. Any disturbance of a true museum's soundlessness, timelessness, airlessness and lifelessness is a disrespect. 50

In a chart which lists the six stages, levels or hierarchy in the life of art or art of life the second level which seems the highest feasible stage attainable for humans is listed as follows:

Artists as Artist	Age of Dogma	Art World as Museum
	Aesthetic	of Fine Art Without Walls

Reinhardt had obviously taken Malraux's idea of art meaning and purpose very seriously and applied these ideas in his art dogma. Thus Reinhardt hoped to give greater significance to the Malrauxian absolute forming one of the basic concepts of his own dogma.

The one meaning in art-as-art, past or present, is art-meaning. When an art-object is separated from its original time and place and use and is moved into the art-museum, it gets emptied and purified of all its meanings except one...No one in his right mind goes to an art-museum to worship anything but art, or to learn about anything else. 51

To this point the influence of Malraux seems vital to Reinhardt in forming his own theory. But Malraux was not the only influence on Reinhardt's ideas on meaning. Reinhardt

commented that he adopted many of these same ideas of meaninglessness, uselessness, timelessness, spacelessness, formlessness as a reaction to his peers who considered them bad terms.⁵² In this respect Reinhardt was not totally dependent upon Malraux for a source of inspiration and there is much more to Malraux than the Museum without Walls. In fact, it is in the remainder of his ideas that more similarities and differences to Reinhardt are observable.

In Part 2 of Voices of Silence, the "Metamorphosis of Apollo," Malraux traced the changes in Eastern and Western art cultures. By means of a study in the morphology of style he suggested that awareness of different styles enhanced man's physical world and created a new mental and emotional world. After discussing the evolution of styles in Part 2, the problem of artistic originality is considered in Part 3, "The Creative Process."

Malraux accepted the idea that the artist's artistic personality developed from many factors including formal art interests, nature inspiration, schooling, influential exposures as well as individual temperament. Although the artist is a product of his time and civilization (but not subservient to it), the "prime mover of the artist is not life but always another work of art."⁵³ The extent to which Reinhardt believed this statement is observable in the following:

I want to look at paintings as paintings...
In the past I was called a godless mystic or some

damn thing. But I take Malraux's point of view. Art comes from art. An artist is an artist because he is concerned with art work, not because of nature or because he loves or hates life. 54

This same idea of art separate from life can be found in some further excerpts from Malraux. They indicate further parallels with Reinhardt.

The artist's way of seeing differs because it is conditioned by the world of art.

Painting is -- just painting. But never perhaps until the present day has painting openly claimed to be no more than painting.

Art is not a mere embellishment of life.⁵⁵

Reinhardt stated these same ideas in a very similar fashion.

Just as artists come from artists and art-forms come from art-forms, painting comes from painting.

The one thing to say about art and life is that art is art and life is life. 56

Yet Malraux placed much more emphasis on the idea that we reconstruct the past in the light of the present knowledge and that the artist is always conditioned by the past. Reinhardt believed all art was neither past nor future but always present. Malraux never committed himself to the extreme attitude that Reinhardt was to adopt. Thomas Hess assessed it as follows:

The historical action, Reinhardt believes is one of purification, is towards a Malrauxian absolute. In the past, paintings related only to other paintings, in time present, only to themselves. History means a continuing process of elimination, distortion, distinction. 57

Although Malraux stated the fundamental value of modern art as the desire for an autonomous form reduced to itself, he was never wholly satisfied with this conclusion. To make formalistic art a comprehensible and acceptable concept for himself, Malraux attempted to explain it in terms of a faith (or belief), marked by the essence of the idea itself. To him, the absence of the sacred became a kind of spiritual quality. Instead of being oriented to God, the art is oriented to painting itself which Malraux felt was the expression of a "new agnostic culture."⁵⁸ Similar in tone to Malraux's comments is Reinhardt's statement "the religion of art is not religion."⁵⁹ But Reinhardt was against the explanation of art-for-art's sake in terms of any form of religion.

The function of style is another significant subject which Malraux considered. However, his definition is vague in that it becomes so abstract.

Painting centers much less on seeing the "real world," than on making of it another world; all things visible serve style, and style serves man and his gods. Thus, for us, a style no longer means a set of characteristics common to the works of a given school or period; on outcome or adornment of the artist's vision of the world; rather, we see it as the supreme object of the artist's activity, in which living forms are but the raw material. And so, to the question, "What is art?" we answer: "That whereby forms are transmuted into style." ⁶⁰

To Malraux style is the badge of a culture and is derived from a preceding style. Some additional comments by Malraux seem in opposition to Reinhardt's idea on style:

A "dead" style is one that is defined solely by what it is not a style that has come to be only negatively felt. 61

It seems Malraux would interpret Reinhardt's painting as dead, since Reinhardt defined his art in negations or in terms of what it is not. He did so because it was easier than defining what it is. But this does not necessarily mean his art is "dead." Reinhardt approached his art in negatives because it provided the most absolute of standards.

While the definition of style remains in ambiguous terms, Malraux offers some definite comments about the role of the artist. Regarding the history of the artist as genius, Malraux separates the artist from the work a day world. He feels that the masses perpetuate "art d'assouvissement" (art of gratification) which is primarily pleasurable, thus by-passing the more meaningful expression of man's metaphysical relation to the universe. Thus Malraux maintains modern art is involved with a non-Democratic humanism which only concerns itself with the best in the best of men.

Some similarity exists in Reinhardt's consideration of the artist as genius. However, Reinhardt's artist is a genius of a different nature.

The one struggle in art is the struggle of artists against artists, of artist against artist, of the artist-as-artist within and against the artist-as-man, -animal, or -vegetable. Artists who claim that their art-work comes from nature, as instruments of the universe...are rascals or rustics. 62

Reinhardt's elite figure is the artist-as-artist who is an intelligent and logical man, not the emotional and intuitive figure of Malraux. Reinhardt's ideal figure keeps his artistic world separate from the rest of his life both physically and mentally (the studios should be separate from the home and living, "away from the claims of concubinage and matrimony "⁶³). In some respects Reinhardt's artist is similar to Malraux's. To Malraux the artist in order to be true to his calling must love art rather than the world. He is greatest when he is mostly artist. Then he can begin in art and go beyond to destroy his inheritance by reshaping the world around him to new forms expressive of art itself. Thus Malraux's artist is the romantic image of a man dedicated to an artistic life. To Reinhardt the fine artist is the product of a strict discipline which is separated from his life activities.

To Malraux an artist's most significant work of art is "not the one in best accord with any tradition -- not even his most personal work, the one from which he has stripped all that is not his very own, and in which his style reaches its climax."⁶⁴ This seems a good definition of Reinhardt. His black paintings are certainly the height of his achievement in demonstrating or fulfilling his theory. They are far from personal but at the same time retain completely his ideas. That is, they seem austere, rigid, and impersonal; yet reflect his academic, pure and intellectual statement of

art. Thus an artist's activity is to a degree personal, but he lives at least partly in a very private world.

Malraux devised a revolutionary role for his artist-type in the characters of his earlier novels. He later changed the figure to the charismatic artist who (in the light of his earlier writings) should more accurately be called the Malrauxian hero.⁶⁵ In his work, the hero-artist comes close to an absolute figure-type, thereby stating the power and dignity of being human. According to Malraux his creative power is indicative of an international humanism because it is based upon an idea of a universal. This universal statement has been made in such various methods of art as representation, primitive, baroque, abstract. Independent of artistic function and sufficiently free, the artist can create art which defies time.

The Time of art is not the same as the Time of history. It is inasmuch as the work of art, even if inseparable from some given moment of the past, stakes out a claim for itself in the artistic present, that our culture is assuming its actual form; the past of a picture does not wholly belong to the present.

Malraux also asked:

What is really meant by "an art that stands outside of Time?" An art that employs for conquering the future the time-proved methods employed by the Masters of the past? But we cannot reduce these methods to any unity of forms...Is then, this timeless art one which is somehow related to that spark of the eternal immanent in man? ...an art of no time and of all time? 66

The possibility of a timeless art was also a concern of Reinhardt. But Reinhardt hoped to achieve timelessness

in his art form by avoiding any associative qualities. Malraux was less concerned with a specific art form and concentrated upon the timeless effects of all art upon mankind. That is to say, Malraux felt art was simply the sign of man's passage on earth. Death robs man of life and from it there is no escape. However, the artist can rob death of its finality by creating something immortal through his art. His art denies the oppression of change and decay and is a victory over man's destiny because he has imparted a permanent life to something which embodies the best of him.

To Malraux destiny is everything that imposes an awareness of the human condition upon man. Since art attains a kind of immortality defying an individual death, art is anti-destiny. In the eyes of Malraux art is a conquest!

...while history aims merely at transposing destiny on to the plane of consciousness, art transmutes it into freedom.

Each of the masterpieces is a purification of the world, but their common message is that of their existence and the victory of each individual artist over his servitude, spreading like ripples on the sea of time, implements art's eternal victory over the human situation.

All art is a revolt against man's fate.⁶⁷

Malraux does feel that the modern artist is aware of this condition much more than were his predecessors. It has led him on a more obvious search for an absolute, an order in the chaos of life. Reinhardt is an excellent example of this effort and is uniquely successful in both his painting

and writing. He credits his achievement in the following:

The one subject of a hundred years of modern art is that awareness of art itself, of art pre-occupied with its own process and means, with its own identity and distinction, art concerned with its own unique statement, art conscious of its own freedom, its own dignity, its own essence, its own reason, its own morality and its own conscience. 68

The difference lies in the individual -- Reinhardt was that single artist who tried to defy destiny while Malraux only talked about the idea of an artist denying fate its fortune. Malraux and Reinhardt used their knowledge of art history in different ways. Reinhardt devised a system creating a hybrid art form while Malraux chose to be the eloquent disseminator of information concerning the artist as the defier of time.

In an interview in 1954, Malraux offered some comments about contemporary artists which are an additional insight into the artist's effort and are especially relevant to Reinhardt:

The modern painter's wish is to become part of the deathless world of art by seizing and understanding present day reality and thereby achieving the same result as the Egyptian achieved by trying to represent eternity or the Hindu artist by trying to represent the absolute. The modern work of art is not done for the sake of the future, but it is created for the sake of joining right now, today, the life that is created in us by the contemplation of the works of art of the masterpieces of old, and to establish a link with that life. It is an attempt through creation to join this time beyond death in which all the masterpieces of mankind meet...These modern painters wanted their art to belong to the museum and to join

there the masterpieces of old and that indeed is what is happening today. 69

Reinhardt was a modern artist who was consciously striving for this goal by attempting to make an art which was breathless, lifeless, deathless, contentless, formless, spaceless and timeless.

The last theoretician to be considered is George Kubler and his book The Shape of Time. This topic presents very particular problems which separate it markedly from Bell, Focillon and Malraux. At the same time a number of factors make it pertinent for consideration. The fact that Kubler was a pupil of Henri Focillon may account for Reinhardt's interest in Kubler's ideas. However, it is tempting to disregard this relationship because Kubler is actually a contemporary of Reinhardt and not necessarily an influence. Instead this is a case in which the two share similar concepts. Reinhardt felt Kubler's book was significant enough to review it enthusiastically for Art News in early 1966. As Barbara Rose stated "he singled out a number of Kubler's conclusions and quoted them apparently because he agreed with them."⁷⁰ So it is that Reinhardt's own review provides us with a basis for analysis.

The review begins with a series of interrogatory statements which enlighten the reader as to Reinhardt's position in questioning the condition of art.

What every artist, fine or free, knows in our time, is that he has to know, to be able to forget, the whole timeless history of the whole world's art, East and West, all ten or twenty

thousand years of it, as art-as-art, not art as history or history as art, or art as anything else as art. What every artist over, or under, fifty knows is that there is something wrong with the way art history has been taught and written for over thirty years in and out of our university academies of art...How has the creation of works of art-as-art, abstract art, the historic art of the twentieth century, forced upon us a reassessment of all past and future art? 71

After these and numerous other general statements, Reinhardt asks:

What is there for artists in art-historian George Kubler's book The Shape of Time, which has been called a "manifesto" and described as having "something of the quality of a work of art" itself and which now is out in paperback?⁷²

Reinhardt's introductory questions can thus be considered his evaluation of Kubler's accomplishments. Whether Kubler's book is considered a "philosophy of history" or a "critique of twentieth century art historical theory and methodology," he is also proposing a new way of describing art historical change. Perhaps this is the new approach Reinhardt alluded to which will rectify teaching methods. Kubler wished "to go beyond preliminary classifications, conventional periodization, or mere description of objects and biographies of artists, and to find points of view from which the whole world of human art can be grasped as a visual manifestation of human history."⁷³ This would necessarily be accomplished after a reassessment of past and future art. Attempting to discover a universal method and to demonstrate it in a fundamental analysis, Kubler enlarged

his scope as a means of establishing laws which govern the visual form of all man-made things. Incorporating the history of art in the whole history of material things, he then concentrated on the visual form of the thing, not its function, significance, communicative aspects, etc. Kubler explained the term "history of things" as follows:

...the history of things is intended to reunite ideas and objects under the rubric of visual forms: the term includes both artifacts and works of art, both replicas and unique examples, both tools and expressions - in short all materials worked by human hands under the guidance of connected ideas developed in temporal sequence. From all these things a shape in time emerges. A visible portrait of a collective identity whether tribe, class, or nation, comes into being. This self-image reflected in things is a guide and a point of reference to the group for the future. 74

Reinhardt's consideration of these ideas takes form in the first four of his "thirteen randomly chosen, out of context" quotations from Kubler. These phrases and statements form the basis of the Reinhardt-Kubler comparison.

Conventional art histories...miss both the main and minute details of artistic activity.

Biographic, iconologic, and stylistic art histories do not fit the facts.

The definition of art as a system of formal relations matters more than meaning.

Art historians have neglected "mere formalism"...and left art historical problems unworked for over forty years. 75

From these statements it can be recognized that Reinhardt felt that the existing methods of art historical study were insufficient for present times. They neglected to consider formal

relations as more important than meaning. Meaning is usually understandable as purpose in relation to life. When actually the one meaning in art is its art-meaning. This is the problem of "mere formalism" which has remained unworked and which Reinhardt wanted considered.

Kubler presents a new system of analysis by considering the continuous story of history as composed of problems and their purposeful solutions.⁷⁶ The various solutions appear related in formal sequences or series which vary in form and relation according to their different stages in place and time. "Style describes a specific figure in space better than a type of existence in time."⁷⁷ As a result of this system, solutions are separated into early (promorphic) and late (neomorphic). The sequences are composed of prime objects and replications which are a mark of invention and duplication in time. The duration of sequences are indicated by slow and fast happenings. Thus there exist the various duration phenomena of continuous and arrested classes, extended and wandering series, guided and self-determining sequences. It is through this highly complex system that Kubler tries to avoid the typical division of period styling or of any regular cyclical patterning.

Reinhardt extracted from this section of Kubler data three quotes and cited them in his review.

A work of art takes its place in sequence before and after other works of art.

All art development is continuous and any periodization should be based on esthetic consideration.

We see interference that may disrupt the regular evolution of the formal system...interference from visual images. 78

In his own words written in 1960, Reinhardt provides us with a definition of his system in the following:

Only the art of painting can be abstract and pure enough to have the problem and possibility, in our time and timelessness, of the "one single grand original problem"...the forms of art are always an academic routine and sacred procedure. Everything is prescribed and proscribed. Only in this way is there no grasping or clinging to anything. Only a standard form can be imageless, only a stereotyped image can be formless, only a formula-ized art can be formulaless. There is no other way of getting rid of all qualities and substances. Finally there is nothing in the purest art to pin down or point out. 79

To Reinhardt the one grand, original problem in a work of art is "preformed and premeditated" and "part of an academic routine and sacred procedure." The artist is aware of his art's place in the sequence of other art development. Reinhardt was particularly enlightened by the ability to see his own art's position in the history of other contemporary art.

One of the major criticisms of Kubler is by Jan Bialostocki in his Art Bulletin review which observes that while Kubler did construct a new discipline for the history of things which allows insights into the general pattern of cultural development, this system does not encourage the study of the individual work of art. For example, Kubler repudiates iconology, a chief method of handling specific works. He gives individual attention to the artist versus tradition by considering the artist's moment of "entrance,"

which determines a disadvantageous or propitious development. The factors of social placement, technological innovation, revolutionary activity, individual achievement all figure differently in artist's careers. These can either stifle or provoke further progress in the individual artist. However, this empirical approach gives no consideration to the single work of art as a reflection of such things.

Lucy Lippard in the Jewish Museum catalogue for the 1967 Reinhardt show made an interesting analysis of Reinhardt and the idea of entrance.

His own (Reinhardt's) history is a study in George Kubler's theory of "entrance": "To the usual coordinates fixing the individual's position - his temperament and his training - there is also the moment of his entrance, this being the moment in the tradition - early, middle or late - with which his biological opportunity coincides." It was almost a case of entrance manqué for Reinhardt was in but not of the vanguard for some twenty years before his historical "placement" caught up with him. 80

Lucy Lippard referred to Reinhardt as having been ahead of his "historical placement." She may not have been aware of how accurate she was in her rather glib statement. For Reinhardt is an excellent example of an artist aware of his historical placement and able to control its development. The degree to which he believed this is realized in attempting to interpret Reinhardt's feelings towards Kubler's ideas. The last four citations for Reinhardt's review offer some insight as well as some indication of the validity of the Reinhardt-Kubler comparison.

Perhaps all the fundamental technical, formal and expressive combinations have already been marked out at one time or another permitting a total diagram of the natural resources of art.

Instead of our occupying an expanding universe of forms, which is the contemporary artists' happy but premature assumption, we would be seen to inhabit a finite world of limited possibilities, still largely unexplored...

Envisage a future with limited room for changes and these types to which the past already holds the key.

The history of art may eventually prove to contain unexpected potentialities as a predictive science. 81

What did Kubler mean by these? They must first be returned to their original context in order to find their ultimate meaning for Reinhardt. To Kubler the history of art was within the history of things and...

...because of its intermediate position between general history and linguistic science, the history of art may eventually prove to contain unexpected qualities of a predictive science, less productive than linguistics, but more so than can ever be possible in general history. 82

The exclusion of the underlined sections by Reinhardt has changed significantly Kubler's meaning. Having neglected to note the criteria and conditions Kubler cites as responsible for the reduction of art history to a predictive science, Reinhardt stressed not the possibility but the inevitability of it occurring. The fact that Reinhardt did believe that everything in the "one single grand problem" of painting was "prescribed and proscribed," "preformed and premeditated," suggests that he felt he had been able to achieve this

predictive quality in his own work.

Further Kubler stated:

Perhaps all the fundamental technical, formal, and expressive combinations have already been marked out at one time or another, permitting a total diagram of the natural resources of art... were this hypothesis to be verified, it would radically affect our conception of the history of art. Instead of our occupying an expanding universe of forms which is the contemporary artist's happy but premature assumption, we would be seen to inhabit a finite world of limited possibilities, still largely unexplored, yet still open to adventure and discovery, like the polar wastes long before their human settlement. 83

Once again Reinhardt has excluded those necessary qualifying phrases which make Kubler's statement very different. Kubler states that our conception of art history would be affected if all data had been analyzed and fitted precisely into a total diagram. Only then would the artist inhabit a "finite world of limited possibilities" which would "still (be) open to adventure and discovery." Kubler refuses to accept a totally premeditated art or a terminal art history. There is always just a little more insight and information which can be gained. In contrast, Reinhardt in his quoting led us to believe that a "total diagram" can be achieved and that the individual artist can eventually inhabit that "finite world of limited possibilities."

In addition, besides some of the limitations, Kubler saw some change in all things and some hope.

Everything varies both with time and by place, and we cannot fix anywhere upon an invariant quality such as the idea of style

supposes, even when we separate things from their settings. Both when duration and setting are retained in view, we have shifting relations, passing moments and changing places in historic life. 84

For Kubler the future changes may be more limited and the keys to the change will be the past. In this restricted framework conditioned change does exist and deals primarily with meaning. Kubler has some definite ideas about meaning.

The task of the present generation is to construct a history of things that will do justice both to meaning and being, both to the plan and to the fullness of existence, both to the scheme and to the thing. This purpose raises the familiar existential dilemma between meaning and being. We are discovering little by little all over again that what a thing means is not more important than what it is; that expression and form are equivalent challenges to the historian; and that to neglect either meaning or being, either essence or existence, deforms our comprehension of both. 85

Kubler is stressing the exploration of both meaning and being as providing a more complete comprehension of the history of things. The increasing precision and scope in the study of past meaning and form is remarkable and diminishes the need to continue the same historical process. Instead, a new approach must be found and used to amplify present knowledge and understanding. Kubler ends his book with this statement of purpose:

Not biography nor the idea of style nor again the analysis of meaning confronts the whole issue now raised by the historical study of things. Our principal objective has been to suggest other ways of aligning the main events... these pages have outlined the idea of a linked succession of prime works with replications all being distributed in time as recognizably early and late versions of the same kind of action. 86

Thus, Kubler's view of his own ideas differs significantly

from Reinhardt's interpretation, which is informally stated in the following:

So art history is not a general subdivision of history. It is not a product of society. It's as George Kubler recommends. You know that Shape of Time book? He's a reputable art historian and he argues for meaningless art history. For the last 40 or 50 years the formalist point of view has been ignored and consequently art historical problems have not been worked and it is primarily due to Cassirer's idea of art as symbolic language or the notion of art as having some kind of meaning, I guess. Anyway, this is a point of view and it's certainly not just mine but I've been stating it as extremely as possible so it sounds individual and eccentric and so on and yet, you know, its absolutely the only esthetic position and any other position or any other idea is about something else. 87

Reinhardt has completely reinterpreted Kubler to fit his own needs and ideas. In the above he stated that art history is not a subdivision of history or a product of society and implied that Kubler concurs in arguing a meaningless art history. When in fact, Kubler advocated a new meaning of art history within history which involved the challenge of understanding the existence as well as the essence of the thing. In addition, the indications of a personal interpretation by Reinhardt are clearly evident in such phrases as "I guess" and "a point of view and it's not just mine." To state further the individuality of his own position, Reinhardt commented that "I've been stating it as extremely as possible so it sounds individual and eccentric. . .it's absolutely the only esthetic position one can take. It's the esthetic position and any other position or any other idea

is about something else."

This last statement by Reinhardt is proof of the eccentricity of his theoretical position. His desire for a pure art, free from all other implications makes him like the fifth step in a development from Bell to Focillon to Malraux to Kubler. By analyzing each of these formalist's contributions to an art-for art's sake aesthetic, Reinhardt had arrived at the most current statement concerning such an approach to fine art.

Reinhardt seemed to accentuate those characteristics in each theorist who anticipated his ideas. The theories of these four--Bell, Focillon, Malraux, and Kubler--in many ways relate to each other as well as Reinhardt for a number of the same concepts reappear in each. For example, the concern for a knowledge of art history; its numerous aspects and dimensions was an important consideration for all of them. Also, the timeless, universal, eternal, and absolute art values were strongly stressed by each writer. Reinhardt manipulated certain of their ideas for his own benefit. Thus, Bell's belief in form as the basis of a negative creed which could free the artist, was amplified by Reinhardt who proclaimed a rejective approach was necessary for a fine art. Using Focillon's interdependence of form, space, mind, and matter, Reinhardt strove to achieve a fine free art by means of the relationship of his twelve elements but through a mutual exclusion. In Kubler and Malraux, Reinhardt manipulated

their ideas of time and meaning to develop the fundamental element of his theory, that is, the purpose of art or its art-meaning.

The divergence from these theorists is significant if we realize that Reinhardt was struggling to profess his own art system and his own theory. In this light, Bell's "significant form," Focillon's "life of forms," Malraux's "museum without walls," and Kubler's "history of things" become quite different in purpose. Reinhardt's approach arose from a combination of their ideas and was refined through his individual genius and dedication. Bell, Focillon, and Malraux provided a foundation on which Reinhardt could build while Kubler was a source for Reinhardt to measure his own concepts. Each was significant for Reinhardt, but none had accomplished as sophisticated a system as the exclusive and refined "Art-as-Art is Art" Dogma that Reinhardt eventually developed.

NOTES CHAPTER 2

1
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 316, Notations, not dated.

2
Ad Reinhardt, "Ad Reinhardt on His Art," Studio
International, (December, 1967), p. 265.

3
"Black," Arts Canada, (October, 1967), p. 13.

4
Clive Bell, Art (London: Chatto and Windus, 1914),
p. 8.

5
Irving Sandler, "In the Galleries," New York Times,
(August 12, 1963).

6
Bell, p. 25.

7
Bell, pp. 81-2.

8
Bell, pp. 36-7.

9
Bell, p. 69.

10
Ad Reinhardt, "25 Lines of Words on Art," It Is,
(Spring, 1958), p. 42.

11
Bell, p. 44.

12
Bell, pp. 47-8. It must be considered that Bell
had only the Post-Impressionist Cezanne to base his ideas
upon.

13
Bell, p. 273.

- 14
Bell, p. 102.
- 15
Barbara Rose, Ad Reinhardt Black Paintings 1951-1967, (New York: Marlborough-Geerson Gallery, March, 1970), p. 16.
- 16
Henri Focillon, The Life of Forms in Art, (New York: George Wittenborn, 1948), p. 2.
- 17
Focillon, p. 2.
- 18
Focillon, p. 2.
- 19
Focillon, p. 3.
- 20
Focillon, p. 3.
- 21
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," Art International, (December, 1962), pp. 36-7.
- 22
Focillon, p. 5.
23.
Ad Reinhardt, "Timeless in Asia," Art News, (January, 1960), p. 34.
- 24
Focillon, p. 10.
- 25
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 372, Notations, not dated.
- 26
Focillon, p. 13.
- 27
Focillon, pp. 2, 17.
- 28
Focillon, p. 31.

30
Focillon, p. 44.

31
Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy,"
Art News, (May, 1957), p. 28.

32
Ad Reinhardt, "25 Lines of Words on Art," p. 42.

33
Focillon, p. 55.

34
Focillon, p. 62.

35
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 281, Notations, not dated.

36
Focillon, p. 63

37
Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy,"
p. 56.

38
Focillon, p. 78.

39
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 316, Notations, not dated.

40
So many questions surround this book that it seems a grand task to discuss it. It seems significant to mention a number of these problems although they figure little in relation to Reinhardt. Les Voix du Silence was the result of a rewriting of an earlier volume called The Psychology of Art. Much criticism had been made of this earlier volume because of the discursive nature of the material. In rewriting, Malraux did much revision, enlarging the text one-third and clarifying many ideas. However, the book still suffered from more criticism. One of the major attacks was that it lacked scholarship; there is no index or footnotes to indicate sources. In addition, much of the factual data is questionable, as well as the grandiose generalizations which result. The book is further criticized for its lack of original ideas as well as for its literary style.

It is not my intention to refute the adverse criticisms of Malraux's book, since I hardly feel capable of the wide range of material that he covered. Nonetheless, I do agree that these faults exist in the text. I also recognize that the intention of the author was not to write a book of art history, a book of art criticism, nor a book of aesthetics, although it borders on all three. It should almost be considered a personal journal of appreciation and taste by and for the connoisseur. It is as a journal that the book's contribution should be assessed.

41

S. Lane Faison, Jr., "Book Reviews: André Malraux's The Voices of Silence," Art Bulletin, (March, 1954), p. 82.

42

Ad Reinhardt, "Ad Reinhardt: Three Statements," Art Forum, (March, 1966), p. 35.

43

"Mr. Pure," New York Times, (Sunday, November 18, 1966).

44

Kermit Lansner, "Malraux's Aesthetic," Kenyon Review, (1950), p. 340.

45

Joseph C. Sloane in his Art Bulletin review of December 1952 adds that Malraux does not consider other potential factors besides the museum and camera as significant in the formation of an art-for-art's sake viewpoint. He points out that the "results of a change in the outlook of the artist and the society" are important and should be considered. This is a valid criticism but I do not think Malraux was attempting to give causes of art-for-art. His theme is grander in scope.

46

Thomas Munro, "Reviews," Journal of Aesthetics, (June, 1957), p. 482. As a sidelight, it is interesting to note that Reinhardt was a world traveler and had a huge collection of photographs from his travels. Also it seems paradoxical that Reinhardt's paintings are nearly unreproducible.

47

Bruce Glaser, "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt," Art International, (December, 1966), p. 20.

48

Sam Hunter, "The Remarkable M. Malraux," Art Digest, (January 15, 1954), p. 4.

49

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 248, Notations, not dated.

50

Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37. An interesting addenda is the plan for an Ad Reinhardt museum of 1962. Without having enough information to make it more relevant in the text, I can only indicate the few meager facts at my disposal in Appendix 3.

51

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-104 frame number 361, Chart of six stages or levels of art.

52

Mary Fuller, "An Ad Reinhardt Monologue," Art Forum, (October, 1970), p. 36.

53

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 210, Reinhardt jotted down this quote in his notes of famous quotations to remember.

54

"Neither Love Nor Hate," Newsweek, (November 7, 1960), p. 118.

55

André Malraux, Voices of Silence (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1953), pp. 281, 346, 312.

56

Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," pp. 36-7.

57

Thomas B. Hess, "Reinhardt: Positions and Perils of Purity," Art News, (December, 1952), p. 59.

58

Malraux, p. 496. One critic Bertrand Davezac in the Journal of Aesthetics Winter, 1963 article stated that Malraux attempted to make his book a work of art itself.

59

Ad Reinhardt, "Art in Art is Art as Art," Lugano Review, (Summer, 1966), p. 89.

60

Malraux, p. 272.

- 61
Malraux, p. 20.
- 62
Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37.
- 63
Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," p. 56.
- 64
Malraux, p. 19.
- 65
Remy G. Saisselin, "Malraux: From the Hero to the Artist," Journal of Aesthetics, (December, 1957), p. 256.
- 66
Malraux, pp. 623, 407.
- 67
Malraux, pp. 623, 639.
- 68
Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37.
- 69
André Malraux, "Documents: Art Congress Excerpts," Art Digest, (February 1, 1954), pp. 4-5.
- 70
Barbara Rose, pp. 16-17.
- 71
Ad Reinhardt, "Art vs. History," Art News, (January, 1966), p. 19.
- 72
Ibid, p. 19.
- 73
Jan Bialostocki, "Book Reviews," Art Bulletin, (March, 1965), p. 135.
- 74
George Kubler, The Shape of Time (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 9.
- 75
Reinhardt, "Art vs. History," p. 61.

76

Reinhardt felt there was but one problem and one solution. From his Art-as-Art article p. 37 comes this excerpt: "The one work for the fine artist now, the one thing in painting to do, is to repeat the one size-canvas -- the single-scheme, one color-monochrome, one linear-division in each direction, one symmetry, one texture, one formal device, one free-hand-brushing, one rhythm, one working everything into one dissolution and one indivisibility, painting everything into one overall uniformity and non-irregularity..."

77

Kubler, p. 4.

78

Reinhardt, "Art vs. History," p. 61.

79

Reinhardt, "Timeless in Asia," p. 35.

80

Lucy Lippard, Ad Reinhardt Paintings (New York: Jewish Museum, 1966), p. 25.

81

Reinhardt, "Art vs. History," p. 61.

82

Kubler, p. 61.

83

Kubler, pp. 125-26.

84

Kubler, p. 129.

85

Kubler, p. 126.

86

Kubler, p. 130.

87

Fuller, p. 40.

CHAPTER THREE Mondrian and Reinhardt:

Two Purists

During the late fifties and into the sixties, the developing theory of Ad Reinhardt was in many ways an isolated example of an artist with a self-directed cause. It was during this time that he came to state what he considered the most absolute statement in purist painting. As already noted the development of his theory and art was a product of his experiences which encompassed the fields of art history, criticism and art education. In these areas numerous influences can be discerned as the bases for the creation of his ideas. With closer observation their degree of individual importance can be assessed. Through analysis of artistic predecessors a better understanding of Reinhardt is possible. It is with this intention that an extensive comparison with Piet Mondrian follows.

Many factors make the Mondrian-Reinhardt analysis an obvious one. First of all both artists are a part of the rational and controlled art tradition. Their "academic" views are attempts at a formal construction of basic principles to which art could adhere. As a result their paintings have similar rectangular formats and designs. It was Mondrian who is credited with having purified Cubism and having charted the course of abstract art towards its extinction.

However, later artistic development has caused a re-evaluation of Mondrian whose aesthetic viewpoint now seems overly complicated and associative. In contrast, Reinhardt can be seen as having purified Mondrian by removing all pictorial elements.

Concerning the influence of Mondrian specifically, Reinhardt admitted the following:

Mondrian is the one artist about whom there is no question...As for my relationship to Mondrian, I was never really part of any post-Mondrian group, though I knew him. 1

It is known that Reinhardt had been actively involved in the American Abstract Artists starting in the late thirties and that Mondrian also became involved in the group upon his arrival to New York City in 1940. A common bond may have occurred through this association. However, a more likely source for Reinhardt was through his own art historical studies. It must be remembered that Mondrian in the forties had changed significantly from his Neo-Plastic period of the 1917-1930+ phase and it is with the latter that Reinhardt's fully developed art-as-art dogma compares most convincingly.

The basis for Mondrian's work always had been realism, but by 1915 exclusively in a non-naturalistic sense. The exposure to Cubism was part of the directing force for Mondrian towards a more reductive statement, especially since he did not feel that Cubism was developing abstraction towards the ultimate goal of pure reality.² While still retaining the flat composition and horizontal-vertical

patterning of analytical Cubism, Mondrian chose to remove the remaining representational elements through a gradual simplification of the object (e.g. tree series) until it became a more objective statement of its form. By stressing the elements of the form (line and color), he eventually eliminated the object itself and was left only with the consideration of elements as they related to each other. These ideas led to the formation of the De Stijl group and magazine which publicized Neo-Plastic art. The Dutch word for plastic is equivalent to the German term derived from the verb root "to form." Hence by calling it a plastic art, Mondrian was implying formation.³

Skimming rapidly over Reinhardt's early development, a very different process is observable. He never used figures in his art (except in his collage cartoons) so his career is an example of refinement of abstract methods, not a refinement of representational form to abstraction. He credited himself with having taken all the bad terms of the thirties and making them not bad.

Like meaningless, useless, imageless - those kind of words. Words like inhuman, sterile, cold - well, they became cool, see. Everybody affected to be cold, inhuman sort of. And the others - academic, dogmatic, absolute - I picked them up and said, "Well, why not academic?"⁴

Reinhardt's formative stage thus seems a repudiation of associative qualities apparent in his contemporaries' works. Actually much of his painting during his early career looks

quite similar to his peers and only when he became more decisive in his theoretical stance did his painting follow suit.

Lucy Lippard provides the most accurate terms for a Mondrian-Reinhardt comparison in the catalogue for the Reinhardt show at the Jewish Museum in 1967. She states that Reinhardt could be more clearly understood in terms of the recent "rejective" type of art which is definable as being...

...concerned primarily with the specificity of esthetic object and esthetic experience. Rejection, does not, unlike reduction, suggest attrition, but rather a strengthening process by which excess and redundancy are shed and essence retained. 5

In view of comments already made concerning Mondrian, it is easy to see that he could readily be defined as reductive. His early career is a process of attrition in which his art slowly changed from the depiction of naturalistic objects to plastic form. The resultant product retains numerous associative and pictorial elements while the more subtle method of Reinhardt attempts to discard all associative abstract forms. This exemplifies a denial of unnecessary elements, many of which are only symbolic in the most remote fashion. This distinction may seem like a matter of terminology but its validity will become more apparent as the differences between Mondrian and Reinhardt unfold. Significantly the differences far outnumber the similarities.

Mondrian had a specific purpose in following a reductive course as Reinhardt was to have for his rejective direction. Mondrian intended to make a modern art statement, which would relate to the new level of objectivity observable in life and society. He felt that awareness of the technical advancements and the growing metropolis necessitated an art which would express the forces existing in this developing culture. At the same time consideration of his own Dutch tradition offered additional source material for his ideas. Combining these very diverse elements, Mondrian began to feel the need for a precise, clear, austere form. These factors precluded the omission of a subjective viewpoint which Mondrian wanted to minimize. Yet this abstract image could not be void of certain basic life forces. Along with the already mentioned elements, Mondrian saw the need to express harmony, equilibrium, and constancy, incorporated in an art form which would be a "true vision of reality."⁶ This reality was not definable in terms of life events but in terms of life forces, best described through plastic form. Thus, he felt plastic form had to reach beyond the figurative to the universal, neutral and free.

Mondrian denounced the representation of tangible ideas for natural forms, natural colors, and eventually all else but primary colors, non-colors, and the horizontal and vertical line. The right angle became the only constant relationship and came to express the two opposing forces

which exist everywhere and constitute life. From the geometric arrangement of these elements, he felt he could make the purist, impersonal creation and attain the highest level of objectivity. The idea was to work toward a larger unity.⁷

Reinhardt's efforts were also stimulated by a modern consciousness, but of a completely different nature. Having rejected American scene painting and social realism for his avowed enthusiasm for abstract art, Reinhardt had become the conscientious objector of his time. He envisioned himself conducting a one man campaign against disreputable art ideas and activities. He relished the title of himself as the "Great Demurer in the Times of Great Enthusiasms"⁸ and his ideas unfolded under the guise of his renown "Art-as-Art" dogma. The theory had developed to define the finite possibilities of painting through negative means. Thus he had gradually rejected all those things that his contemporaries had been concerned with (i.e. color, line, form, meaning, etc.). What remained was the most basic of qualities far more elementary than Mondrian had ever considered. There remained only the Art itself. Reinhardt wanted to make the most absolute and pure statement, but it also had to be rational and controlled. It had to be stated in the most extreme way, a fine art which by definition is separated from everything else and therefore nothing but itself. Thus the cause, purpose and reason of Reinhardt's art form was a thing in

itself - a meaning unto itself - related to no thing but itself.⁹

In the process of reaching this extreme aesthetic viewpoint, Reinhardt set down a certain code of ethics and a set of rules for the artist. He facetiously paralleled his ideas as a search for a new academy. By 1957 this academy had become a mental actuality for which he defined the rules very precisely (Appendix 5).

Fine art can only be defined as exclusive, negative, absolute and timeless.

The first rule and absolute standard of fine art and painting, which is the highest and freest art, is the purity of it. 10

Reinhardt did consider art education as relevant for "artists must learn and learn to forget their learning."¹¹ They should study the six traditions of the pure icon, perspective, landscape, portrait, still life and pure form. The artist has to learn that "more is less" and "less is more." He must remember to avoid realism, impressionism, fauvism, constructivism and trompe-l'oeil. In addition to these regulations, Reinhardt provided twelve technical rules which include no texture, no brushwork, no sketching, no forms, no design, no colors, no light, no space, no time, no size, no movement, no object and subject.

Reinhardt's viewpoint is comparable to a document written by Mondrian in 1926 which contains the fundamental ideas of Neo-Plasticism (Appendix 6). In this text Mondrian stated that painting should be used as a flat plane in

primary and non-colors. These must be so arranged as to balance harmoniously but not symmetrically. Also a "duality of opposing elements" would be created through an opposition of the straight line forming the right angle. Mondrian felt that these factors combined would create "the living rhythm."

The painting which best exemplifies Reinhardt's ideas is his black square paintings, the first of which he painted in the mid-fifties and exclusively after 1960. For purposes of comparison any painting executed in the early twenties by Mondrian is typical of his ideas (Figure 1). The easiest and most thorough way to approach the comparison is to describe the Black Square Painting (Figure 2) in terms of Reinhardt's twelve technical rules and in the process show how Mondrian differs. His first two rules are "no texture and no brushwork." Since both of these elements implied a personal touch or expression that Reinhardt found distasteful, he meticulously worked to remove all trace of texture and brushwork. Mondrian's lines and color spaces contain visible brushwork. Since Mondrian was less concerned with a strict discipline, he did not consider that these would distract from the expression of his idea. In addition, Mondrian would sign his paintings, something Reinhardt felt was an unnecessary trademark, for the painting itself is a signature of the artist.

"No sketching or drawing," as everything should exist in the mind beforehand, was advocated by Reinhardt as rule

number three. Having repeated the same painting for over ten years, there was no need for any preliminary layout. In contrast, Mondrian executed sketches and plans for proposed paintings. Proud of his drawing ability, he exhibited in his studio the drawing master's diplomas he received from his early studies. The second portion of Reinhardt's rule three is "no line or outline." The "no line" portion provides a serious problem for Reinhardt as well as Mondrian. In the black paintings Reinhardt attempted to minimize the presence of line through the abolition of color and color change. However, although barely visible a boundary does exist where the color areas meet. In Mondrian's paintings line is essential to its content, not only dividing the canvas and its colored areas but also in forming the right angle as symbolic of the opposing forces.

To Mondrian and Reinhardt the function of line is closely related to that of form. According to Reinhardt's rule four, the finest art has no form, no volume or mass, no shape and no figure-ground relationship. Reinhardt chose the basic square form (60 x 60 inches) for his canvases because of its non-directional orientation. His earlier black paintings had been vertical rectangles and were too often misinterpreted as abstract scrolls. He simplified the black symmetrical and geometrical vertical paintings by dividing the surface into nine equal parts on a square canvas that has since been misinterpreted as a cross. Actually it

is a "horizontal form negating a vertical form"¹² which lacks design (rule five) because there is no color (rule six) to create any patterned effects. The black monochrome disguises not only form but also line leaving the perception of both on the marginal level. The form, just like the line, is almost not there. You can and can not see it; this mutable quality is partially responsible for the success of Reinhardt's ideas.

In sharp contrast is Mondrian's use of these same elements. Forms definitely exist in his Compositions implying a design composed of his color forms divided by the vertical and horizontal lines. The asymmetrical arrangement (rule six of Neo-Plasticism) of lines and colors create the rhythm and dynamic balance necessary for the plastic expression of life forces. To Mondrian symmetry did not necessarily provide order but instead marked things as being separated.¹³ Within the horizontal and vertical lines the use of the primary and non-colored areas in asymmetrical patterns enhances spatial illusions creating a definite figure-ground relationship. This is a new spatial perception but still observable in terms of depth extensions. Mondrian explained it as "space-determination" which was the "dividing (of) empty space into unequal but equivalent parts by means of forms or lines. It is not understood as space limitations."¹⁴

Reinhardt's projects are of an entirely different nature. He avoided the pictorial abstraction of Mondrian's

Compositions by using only a black symmetrical canvas. By using mat-black paint he avoided reflections of the environment but created different associations, for although black is not really a color, it has definite implications. Black has been interpreted as evil, sexual, witchcraft, mystery, night, etc. Any of these could be seen as giving added meaning to the paintings. Also the "no light" (rule seven) idea of the mat surface may prevent gloss effects but creates instead an absorbing quality which heightens the mystical effect. When actually viewing a canvas, the spectator is completely aware of the presence of the painting but at the same time of an indefinable space illusion. The "no space" (rule eight) actually becomes an empty and indefinite space. It is quite different from the space-form of Mondrian. It defies time (rule nine) (with which Mondrian was not concerned) at the same time seeming to go beyond normal time consideration. Reinhardt wanted his painting to be not of the past nor the future, but of the present.

The number ten rule of "no size and scale" was similarly treated in both artists' paintings. The controlled rationale of their purest paintings makes size undeterminable. They could be physically small but still grand in concept. This would necessarily be true since both artists intended to make a universal form.

"No movement" (rule eleven) may seem easily avoidable. However, the black monochrome may disguise line and

obscure form while it creates an optical play in a subtle fluctuation between visible and invisible. With Mondrian the movement is an entirely different matter. The dynamic interplay of the opposing forces and the intense primaries can be interpreted as creating a psychological tension and visual intensity which Mondrian wanted viewers to interpret as the approximation of life forces. The fact that he worked so diligently to perfect the balance in his compositions is proof that he feared an unharmonious imbalance.

The last rule of "no object, no subject, no matter" is certainly in keeping with Reinhardt's attempt to present no thing but art. Whether Reinhardt achieved this is debatable. It would seem that he comes exceedingly close. As for Mondrian his paintings are full of pictorial associations. H.L.C. Jaffé correctly assessed it as being "non-objective only in so far as it is not concerned with objects. It lacks subject-matter but does not lack a subject-which is a pictorial nature, an aesthetical balance, of unity and harmony in a higher sense."¹⁵

Reinhardt's purpose and summation of his painting is stated clearly in the following description he gave of his black square painting:

...a pure, abstract, non-objective, timeless, spaceless, changeless, relationless, disinterested painting-an object that is self-conscious (no unconsciousness) ideal, transcendent, aware of no thing but Art (absolutely no anti-art).

A clearly defined object, independent and separate from all other objects and circumstances, in which we cannot see whatever we choose or make of it anything we want, whose meaning is not detachable or translateable. A free, unmanipulated and unmanipulatable, useless, unmarketable, irreducible, inexplicable, icon. A non-entertainment, not for art commerce or mass-art-publics, non-expressionist, not for oneself. 16

Thus, even the most simple of Mondrian's paintings are more associative than Reinhardt's. In the early thirties, Mondrian had painted a number of square shaped canvases which he turned up on one corner (Figure 3 and 4). They have only a few vertical and horizontal lines on a white ground. Just as in the earlier more complex Compositions, the opposition of line is present. But in these, the contrast is more sharply made because the line appears so severely isolated. The vertical-horizontal lines are played against the contrasting shape of the canvas and the black (or sometimes colored) lines seem to project strongly from the white ground. Often the lines are placed on the projecting peaks of the tilted square shape and therefore, do not meet inside the canvas. Although a more sparse design, these still contain the same meanings and purpose as the more complex Compositions of Mondrian's earlier career.

Taking the last statements of Reinhardt in comparison to a deeper analysis of Mondrian's purpose, the two artists become no closer in concept, Mondrian's philosophy sprang from the desire to express the fundamental dualism or irreducible opposition of life forces in balance. This was

resolved in the realization that a single primordial relation could be defined by the opposition of two extremes and expressed in the two positions which form a right angle. This balanced position was the most harmonious and perfect and contained all other relations (i.e. the ideas of male-female, mind-matter, interior-exterior, etc.).¹⁷ This resolution of dualism in life reached beyond the representational level of nature. To Mondrian this principle was a summation of the laws of the universe in an abstract format. The rhythm of these abstract elements could express the manifestation of universal harmony. The dynamic equilibrium must be created in a stable balance of forms to prevent the tragic. The more the tragic (i.e. imbalance) disappears; the more pure the form.¹⁸

Reinhardt also worked with the hopes of expressing a universal principle. He recognized the dualisms which existed in life as stated in the Yin-Yang principle (as evidenced in innumerable notations which chart these various oppositions-See Appendix 7).¹⁹ However, the manifestation of this dualism did not take on the contrary nature of Mondrian. Instead the consciousness of existing polarities for Reinhardt forced him to accept a far more extreme attitude. To Reinhardt the opposites were good/bad, right/wrong, art/anti-art, etc. Hence his desire to produce a fine art led him to the expression of the one extreme, the true and the good, not a dual principle. He felt this

extreme could be defined best in terms of the negative, thereby isolating and separating from all that is bad. Reinhardt selected the most effective means of visually presenting an extreme view through negative means without making concessions by masking the unattainable, self-destructive extreme in ambiguity. Therefore, we witness the near line and the near form in the almost colorless black paintings.

This negative approach with its philosophical overtones has presented another problem concerning Reinhardt. It has prompted many critics to claim that Reinhardt is involved in a negative theology or Eastern philosophy. It has induced critics to call him a black monk, godless mystic, Purist, Taoist and many other religious-related names; and his paintings have been likened to icons or religious experiences.²⁰ This is a reasonably confusing point since Reinhardt was a student of Eastern art history. However, he adamantly denied any nihilistic intention or extensive religious influence in his painting. The nature of his theory and art had led him to his extreme aesthetics which necessitated a pseudo-philosophical and nihilistic method. He sincerely felt that he could only make his absolute statement in such a fashion.²¹ Combatting the idea that his art is negative, he admits that he was rebelling but maintained his position was positive "because I am anti-anti-art and in science two negatives make a positive."²²

In contrast, Mondrian is more definitely influenced

by the religious experiences in his lifetime. His early life had been heavily marked by Calvinism which was later replaced by an interest in Theosophy (the Society of which he joined in 1909).²³ In addition, the catalyst for Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism was the theoretical principles as found in Dr. Schoenmaecker's positive mysticism. Dr. Schoenmaecker's books, Plastic Mathematics and The New Image of the World, were basic sources for Mondrian's ideas. H.L.C. Jaffé has done a scholarly job in analyzing the ideas as well as exact phrasing and terminology that Mondrian drew from these writings. Even the term Neo-Plastics was taken from Schoenmaecker.²⁴ An extensive consideration of Dr. Schoenmaecker's influence is not valid in this text but a few basic similarities between the two will make the point clear. In positive mysticism the initiate is able to penetrate into the hidden construction of reality-an idea which Mondrian felt was the basis for his art. Also from Dr. Schoenmaecker, Mondrian derived the idea of contraries:

The two fundamental complete contraries which shape our earth and all that is of the earth are the horizontal line of power, that is the course of the earth around the sun and the vertical, profoundly spacial movement of rays that originates in the sun. 25

Dr. Schoenmaecker's equations of plastic mathematics reads:

space = concrete evolution = vertical
time = concrete history = horizontal

Mondrian's are exceedingly similar:

vertical=male=space=statics=harmony
horizontal=female=time=dynamics=melody²⁶

For Dr. Schoenmaeker, as also Mondrian, the three principal colors which are the only existing colors are yellow, blue and red. These principles were derived from Plastic Mathematics and visually applied in De Stijl painting. However, in addition to these technical guidelines a social purpose which combined ethical and Utopian ideals is found in Dr. Schoenmaeker's writings and is the source of Mondrian's belief in the construction of a better world through the application of neo-plastics.²⁷ Mondrian stated these ideas in a simpler and clearer style connecting art and the universe; with art making its contribution toward a Utopian future where perfect harmony would reign.²⁸ The association of an ethical with an aesthetic ideal is the fundamental theme in Mondrian's art (and will be mentioned again in relation to Reinhardt's art-as-art position).

Just like Reinhardt, Mondrian was accused of being nihilistic. Dali amusingly called Reinhardt "Niet Mondrian."²⁹ Though vastly different both Mondrian and Reinhardt suffer from the naive criticisms which analyze any purist, objective attempt as an end to art. They are envisioned as trying to create void, nothingness, absolute negation because their objective approach attempted an expression of essence. In addition, the fact that both involved themselves in writing their theory to the excess of redundancy led many to believe they had reached a dead end. The symbolic pictorial content of Mondrian's paintings plus the variation upon the same

technical themes gives them more variety than the repetitive square paintings which Reinhardt painted over and over again. Similarly Reinhardt's writings and lectures followed the same repetitive course-only changing by taking on a more poetic structure-because he felt he was saying the one thing that had to be said. So it would seem that Reinhardt is the more obtuse of the two and more deserving of criticism. Yet he claimed that he was only involved with painting the first of the last paintings³⁰ and the future of his efforts was involved with the perfection of his ideal.

The idea that Mondrian and Reinhardt were involved in a negative process of art may be a result of their involvement in an independent art of revolutionary aesthetics. Their attitude was a concern for modern abstract art as liberated from past dependencies and a movement toward an absolute. Mondrian felt freedom would result from the reaction to oppression which retards advancement. With freedom (or what Mondrian called the liberation of oppression in art and life) comes reconstruction, thus the statement "destruction is followed by construction." According to Mondrian "the destructive element is too much neglected in art."³¹ Further he believed that "destruction would only increase the need for harmony through integration and construction thus spreading man's evolution."³² In terms of his art, this constructive idea was best described in plastic forms through balance, unity and equilibrium. Abstract art is not merely an abstraction of forms from nature but "rather construction

after decomposition of forms. Avoiding the formation of limiting form, it can approach an objective expression of reality."³³

Reinhardt reversed these ideas, thereby subtly changing the meaning. According to Reinhardt, "construction is followed by destruction."³⁴ For him negation is liberation, not ~~the~~ means of attaining freedom. "Most people think that "positive" is "good" and "negative" is "bad." I don't feel that way...Creation requires destruction...Non-being is as important as Being...Fine art-Freedom-are negatives...it's freedom from something."³⁵ Fine art is freedom from everything else ~~or~~ art-as-art. The next artistic revolution would achieve this "inalienable right of each art to be free from all other arts, to be free to be itself and to be free of itself."³⁶ Thus Reinhardt's idea of fine art is not founded on the building process of Mondrian, but a rejective process which eliminates all dependencies.

It is important to realize that Mondrian felt that artistic intuition was responsible for the harmonious equilibrium which is achieved in painting. In this manner the true content of art (unification of man with the universe) could be expressed.³⁷ Reinhardt felt the process did not involve chance at all, but was a matter of complete control and total consciousness.

To be, to feel oneself a victim is in itself not to be an artist, for it is the nature of the artist to live, not in the world of which he is an effect but in the world of which he is

the cause, the world of his own creation.³⁸

If the artist has total control of his activity and production, he is master of his direction and fate. This predetermined attitude permeates Reinhardt's writing and is a basis for understanding his ideas.

Reinhardt seemed enlightened by the idea that the purpose of art is art. Hence, his total involvement and dedication was in the pursuit of this concept. In order to achieve this purist aesthetic, he excluded everything from art.

I'm against the mixture of the arts.

Art is not part of the world. Life is not art. Life is life. Art is art. ³⁹

Separating art from the rest of the world, he raised it to a sublime level. Too often art had suffered by association with life, social purpose, constructive ideal, etc. Reinhardt wanted to save art from being subordinated to the vulgar and the mundane. He stated this intent clearly in the following:

The one thing to say about art and life is that art is art and life is life. A "slice-of-life" art is no better or worse than a "slice-of-art" life. Fine art is not a "means of making a living" or a "way of living a life," and an artist who dedicated his life to his art or his art to his life, burdens his art with his life and his life with his art. Art that is a matter of life and death is neither fine nor free.⁴⁰

As a consequence of this opinion, Reinhardt's perfection has been seen as an ivory tower ultimate, which is readily interpreted from the following:

The one Art is just the Art of Art-as-Art, not the Art of reality or super-reality or non-reality, not the art of life or living, not the art of nature, not the art of humanity, not the art of religion, not the art of creation, just the Art of Art of Artists-as-Artists.⁴¹

Mondrian also wanted to save art from being bastardized. However, he had hoped for a visible Utopian expression of harmony which man claimed to have found in the laws of the cosmos.⁴² The universal equilibrium had to be expressed in tangible ways. A new life could be constructed through group effort; a Neo-Plastic environment would be created and expressed in a variety of forms including painting, sculpture, architecture, town planning, poetry, interior design, etc. Mondrian himself planned his surroundings according to the austere ideas of the Neo-Plastic laws. Thus art and life were inseparable expressions and based on the same universal principles.

Art is only a "substitute" as long as the beauty of life is deficient. It will disappear in proportion as life gains in equilibrium. Today art is still of the greatest importance because it demonstrates plastically in a direct way, liberated of individual conceptions the laws of equilibrium.⁴³

This did not imply that art would be lowered to mere utilitarianism but instead that everyday objects would be raised to the level of art. The results of this development were imagined for us by Mondrian in the following:

A new aesthetic for our actual environment, which exerts such a profound influence on our mentality, can be deduced from the principles of pure plastic expression in art. In the future, the realization of pure plastic

expression in palpable reality will replace the work of art. But in order to achieve this, orientation toward a universal conception and detachment from the oppression of nature is necessary. Then we will no longer have the need of pictures and sculpture, for we will live in realized art. 44

Mondrian sincerely believed that this was the expression of the spirit of our age and building for the future.

The work of art is no more considered as an aim in itself, as a peak of human evolution but as a means for the future evolution of mankind.⁴⁵

This absolute idealism which envisioned the union of art, life and the universe is far removed from the pure aesthetics of Reinhardt. In part this simplistic view of Mondrian's paralleling the factors of life, art and the universe was feasible in the twenties. The increasing complexity of science and world activities have eliminated any rational corollation of Universal laws applicable in the visual and verbal expression of elementary means.⁴⁶ The world of the sixties is more sophisticated and hesitant to accept such an encompassing viewpoint. Reinhardt seemed therefore more a product of his own time and environment in rejecting such a potential. As a consequence, Reinhardt offered us a rational approach to understanding art not life. He used the ambiguous approach out of necessity for he was dealing with a vast principle. The ultimate decision of the degree of his success is in great part up to the future. However, the viewer can make a contemporary judgement. One can unfortunately so easily misunderstand Reinhardt's intentions. The contemplative and quietistic aspects of the

works may seem too personal, too contrived, too pretentious, too nearly perfect. Some call them almost paintings because they almost make it. Actually they give nothing for nothing and are a dominant non-violent element and expression in our highly active and neurotic society. Reinhardt raised art far above the ethical level that Mondrian envisioned to a sublime plateau that is difficult to define except in his own terms as the "highest freedom of the effortless creation."⁴⁷

NOTES CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER FOUR Malevich and Reinhardt:

The Supreme vs. the Extreme

Twentieth century abstract art has evidenced many examples of extreme statements in art. These attempts have been stated in numerous ways with such factors as monochromatic coloring, simplified form, basic elements and aesthetic theory being the basis of their extremist stance. Kasimir Malevich and Ad Reinhardt are two artists who have pressed art to this margin of viability. In the second decade of the twentieth century, Malevich is credited with having painted some of the first examples of extremist painting which he termed Suprematist while Reinhardt has been recognized as making the latest statement in extreme painting in the sixties. Both realized the timeliness of their efforts and wanted to make a new and vital contribution to the extremist trend.

Both define their position as a search for the new. To Malevich the art situation was subject to changing conditions, making "a return to the past inconceivable."¹ Reinhardt measured the role of an art tradition "as the antique-present model of what has been achieved and what does not need to be achieved again."² The events of the forty intervening years between Malevich and Reinhardt, presented new problems and the need for new solutions in a pure art

approach. Reinhardt with his thorough knowledge of art systems had insight into these contemporary purist problems. Therefore, his art is not a reiteration of Malevich, nor an updated version of Suprematism. Actually Reinhardt's work bears little resemblance to any stage of Malevich's work. Reinhardt admitted some association when he stated that "there may be a relation to Malevich and Mondrian, but it would be the exact opposite of Duchamp."³

An investigation of Malevich exposes us to his art and theory, while providing a means of measuring the sophisticated advancements and uniqueness of Reinhardt's artistic contribution. Both Reinhardt's and Malevich's art and theory will be discussed conjointly as both the art and theory relate very closely, providing the best and most accurate explanation of their approach to an art system.

Malevich's early involvements (so also Reinhardt's) were with the avant garde faction of his time. Connection with the founders of Russian abstract art eventually drew Malevich into a kind of Cubo-Futurism, which dealt with the cylindrical form in art and certain ideas about the machine age. This influence eventually resulted in a meeting with Ferdinand Leger in 1913-14, when Leger delivered two lectures at the Académie Russe. In these lectures, he stressed that the artist must be guided by a new, completely subjective sensibility. Further he stated that although the artist "has broken an object or placed a red or yellow square in the

centre of his canvas (it) will not make his work new; what will make his work new is his grasp of the creative spirit infusing this outer appearance."⁴ The theoretical beginnings of Malevich's Suprematism thus are traceable to Leger.

The visual beginnings stem from a black and white square backcloth design for Kruchenikh's Futurist opera Victory over the Sun. Despite the 1913 dating of the initiation of Suprematist ideas, Malevich continued to paint and exhibit Cubo-Futurist works. It was not until the Futurist painting exhibition titled 0.10 in late 1915 that Malevich publically showed thirty-six Suprematist paintings.⁵ But, the number and variety of paintings in the exhibit is proof that his simplest compositions with the square, circle and cross were probably done in 1913.

The beginning of Suprematism is usually cited as the Black Square (Figure 5). It is the simplest of Malevich's works and is considered (along with the other basic forms of the circle, cross and variations) as the basis for the more complex compositions. Malevich described the process of his discovery of the square in the following:

I transformed myself in the zero of form and emerged from nothing to creation, that is to Suprematism, to the new realism in painting - to non-objective creation... The square is not a subconscious form. It is the creation of intuitive reason. It is the face of the new art. The square is a living, royal infant. It is the first step of pure creation in art. Before it, there were naive deformities and copies of nature... The truly creative element in art - the aesthetic-artistic - is, obviously, of a

distinctly subjective nature; it creates new artistic realities not found in "objective nature." 6

He further explained his intention by using the black square to compress all of painting into one black square on a white canvas.

I invented nothing. I felt night within me and it was then that I conceived the new art, which I called Suprematism. The square of the Suprematists...can be compared to the symbols of primitive men. It was not their intent to produce ornaments but to express the feeling of rhythm. 7

For Malevich his feeling had assumed the external form of the square. Numerous square compositions were to follow the first Black Square. Each was a different statement creating a new form which was dependent upon the feeling that gave rise to them. These various forms were masses which floated on a formless ground. More specifically the original black square on a white field was defined by Malevich as equaling feeling and the white field as the void beyond that feeling. For Malevich, the painting was "by no means an empty square but the feeling of the absence of an object." 8

A revealing comparison is Malevich's Black Square c. 1913 (Figure 5) with Reinhardt's Black Painting c. 1960 (Figure 2). Both compressed their artistic theory and method into these works. However, for Malevich the black square was an ultimate form to express pure sensation (feeling) while for Reinhardt it was an ultimate statement of his Art is Art-as-Art Dogma (pure unassociative art). Visually an

obvious basis of similarity between their works seems to be their use of a common color and shape. However, Malevich used the solid black space to define one void floating in the white space of another void. Thus infinity is the intended expression. Reinhardt's purpose is quite different. Thoroughly opposed to emotive purposes, he wanted to present a non-referential art. His black square was a self-contained nothingness not a black suspended void. Reinhardt was dealing with presence not infinity. Dividing the square into nine parts arranged in a symmetrical cruciform, Reinhardt eliminated sharp oppositions in an effort to stabilize elements. He neutralized the form by painting the black of one area in very close values to the next area. As a result, no figure-ground relationship exists because the cross form is not detached from the field but is embedded in it. In contrast, Malevich had severely delineated the black on the white.

Malevich described his black as the "zero of form," "night within me," a nothing emerging into creation, a void and the symbol of primitive men while Reinhardt defined black as negation, an absence of all color, a token of absolute principles, insoluble mystery, sophistication. The darkness of black absorbed all "natural forms like a sponge. Calm and changeless like any black night varying only in the subtlest ways"⁹ - not only defines black but gives a very accurate description of Reinhardt's own painting. The form

ceases to exist in the amorphous color of soft atmospheric black while in Malevich the sharp shape stands apart from the background. Space is therefore treated differently in both. Although both suggest spatial sensations. Malevich dealt with suspension of forms in a void while Reinhardt with an absorbing invisibility through subtle changes in the black colors.

The basis for both artists' attempts was a search for universal values and a meaning beyond the reality of the canvas surface. Malevich defined his search for a basic meaning in art as part of the universe.

The plane, forming a square, was the source of Suprematism, new colour realism, as non-objective creation. The system is constructed in time and space, independently of all aesthetic beauties, experiences and moods: it is more a philosophical system for realizing the latest achievements of my ideas, as knowledge. At present time man's path lies through space, and Suprematism is a colour semaphore in its infinite abyss. 10

The color forms were a ~~sy~~system of visual signals existing in an undefinable time and space vacuum. For Malevich, this represented a new direct form to feeling which existed in everything. "Every work of art-every picture-is the reproduction, so to speak, of a subjective state of mind-the representation of a phenomenon seen through a subjective prism."¹¹ In contrast, Reinhardt saw art as expressing nothing, referring to nothing and communicating nothing but itself. For Reinhardt, art did not relate to life's dynamic rhythm, vitality or order. A static balance or consistency

is the underlying force in Reinhardt's work, not the subjective sensation of Malevich.

The critics responded negatively to both Reinhardt and Malevich's works for much the same reasons. Of Malevich they stated "everything we have loved in art is lost. We are in a desert...Before us is nothing but a black square on a white ground."¹² This same type of criticism was applied to Reinhardt fifty years later. Both Malevich and Reinhardt extracted all objects from the work of art and all visible signs. It is easy to understand the public's bafflement for they might easily feel nothing remained. This opinion would have pleased Reinhardt for he wanted to paint nothing but art. But the critics felt nothing was left-especially art. Malevich was more timid than Reinhardt about the critics' abuse (possibly because his ideas were so radical for c.1915) and he defended himself as follows:

I felt a kind of timidity bordering on fear when I was called upon to leave the "world of will and idea" in which I had believed. But the blissful feeling of liberating non-objectivity drew me into the "desert" where nothing is real but feeling and feeling became the content of my life. This was no "empty square" which I had exhibited but rather the sensation of non-objectivity. ¹³

Malevich was romantically drawn into a non-objective realm. This mesmerized trance differed vastly from Reinhardt's conscious and ordered approach. Since Reinhardt knew he was working in the direction which would lead him to his perfected ends, he ignored the critics remarks. His effort was

a thoroughly disciplined process not dictated by feeling, chance or accident. His decisive nature as well as the purpose of his efforts (which is pure art, not the sensation of non-objectivity) is stated in the following:

The one object of 50 years of abstract art is to present art-as-art, and as nothing else, to make it into the one thing it is only, separating and defining it purer and emptier, more absolute and more exclusive - non-objective, non-representational, non-figurative, non-¹⁴ imagist, non-expressionist, non-subjective.

Reinhardt rejected both the objective and subjective leaving only art. Admittedly, this is an extremist solution in pure modern art, but Reinhardt did believe that anyone who used art "to further any other purpose than itself was out of his mind." For Reinhardt, "art needs no justification in our day with 'realism' or 'naturalism,' 'regionalism' or 'nationalism,' 'individualism' or 'socialism,' or 'mysticism,' or with any other ideas."¹⁵ Malevich did feel that art by necessity must be liberated from certain functions of life which do not belong to art and do not create an artistic form "as such." For him, art was divided into the two categories of applied (productive-technical) and pure (artistic-aesthetic). The applied art of utilitarian objects results in transitory values. Pure art is sacred and deals with absolute, enduring values because the essence of things is grasped. Thus applied art is based upon the concrete elements of conscious and practical activity while pure art activity stems from the sub- or superconscious pursued by

abstract thinking. For Malevich, there was no choice between the two. He despised industrial art and felt the state employed art as propaganda for political gain (Malevich held to these beliefs until approximately 1921 at which time he changed a number of his ideas). He believed society could achieve an absolute order through creation as an end in itself. Further he felt that "life will not be the content of art, but rather that art becomes the content of life, since only thus can life be beautiful."¹⁶

Reinhardt also rejected the need for utilitarian functions of art, but further refused to accept art dependent upon life. To him, the content of art was art and the content of life was life. Reinhardt wanted to show that life and art could function separately by creating an art and theory which was founded only on an art-meaning and purpose. To combine art with anything else was to confuse it as well as adulterate art's purity. Although Malevich did state that art no longer had to serve the state, religion or history, he qualified his statement by adding that it should also have nothing "to do with the object, as such, and (I) believe that it can exist in and for itself, without things. Feeling is always and everywhere the one and only source of creation."¹⁷ Thus Malevich could speak of eliminating the object "as such" and having art exist for itself, but he would not remove feeling from art. The human element or emotion was always present and in the foreground of his

efforts. In contrast, Reinhardt tried to avoid all human elements in his art and especially hoped to eliminate all feeling (or at least all show of feeling). The following shows to what extent:

I'm against the art of images and gimmicks.
I'm a Puritan, negativist, absolutist, non-objectivist and all the other iconoclasts.
I've rejected the meaning of nature, reality, spirituality, individuality, mysticism, symbolism, romanticism and any other ideas in art. 18

Although rhetorically overstated and therefore suspiciously so much polemics, this statement by Reinhardt is consistently true to his position.

For Malevich, it was sufficient to abandon representation and natural objects finding "new symbols with which to render direct feelings (rather than externalized reflections of feelings), for the Suprematist does not observe and does not touch-he feels."¹⁹ Dealing with an expression of the idea of feeling not merely the expression of feeling, Malevich was presenting a symbolic and indirect approach. To Reinhardt, this kind of dependency on feeling was the worst kind of corruption.

When Malevich used the cross form in his sensory abstraction, more meanings became involved. Malevich admitted that the cross form was a spiritual symbol for him. He used many cross forms which varied in size from thick to thin and shape from the greek to the latin type (Figures 6 and 7). Some fill the canvas with four white squares in the corners, others float in a white field. All represent the

spiritual in the material void. Contrast Reinhardt's use (or nonuse) of the cross form (Figure 2). Reinhardt never varied the form in size-always five feet by five feet. He described it as a horizontal negating a vertical, refusing to define it as a cross form. Filling the square canvas, the form becomes essentially irrelevant for the canvas is painted in subtle variations of black which make it difficult to see the change from one area to the next. Unlike the sharp precise line of Malevich, Reinhardt's form merges to near indivisibility as the black color locks the areas together. Thus Reinhardt's cross became shapeless as well as imageless and formless as the form became the color.

Besides the cross Malevich used other more complex shapes and relationships. Overlay, repetition, shadowing were combined with cut-out forms and arrows. Secondary and tertiary colors were used. All were significant in creating a variety of geometric combinations defining sensations of the dynamic, the static, the mechanical, etc. These interests are reflected in such titles as Sensation of Elements of Diminution, Sensation of Destroying of Constructive Form, Sensation of a Mystical Wave Coming from Earth, Sensation of the Space of the Universe and Sensation of Infinity. These descriptive titles with literary overtones contrast to Reinhardt's more abstract labeling of Timeless Painting, Ultimate Painting No. 39, Untitled, Abstract Painting and Black Painting. Reinhardt's titles suggest a neutrality and an

anonymous identity. Malevich strongly stressed feelings, believing these sensations drew him to a greater understanding of the Universe as a whole. His forms were symbols of infinity which were harmoniously combined in conscious arrangements to the disorderly activities of nature. Reinhardt strongly objected to these associations stating:

The nature of art has not to do with the nature of perception or with the nature of space or with the nature of time or with the nature of mankind or with the nature of the universe or with the nature of the creation or with the nature of nature.

and

...artists who claim that their art-work comes from nature, life, reality, earth or heaven, as "mirrors of the soul" or "reflections of conditions" or "instruments of the universe"...are subjectively and objectively, rascals or rustics. 20

Malevich believed he was dealing with a key to the mystical world of harmony. Expressing his subconscious, intuitive feelings, the "painting was the link between the artist and the universe via his sensations."²¹ Art became objects for meditation delving into the mystique of physical phenomena and of divine revelation. His canvases evoke an indefinite sense of infinity and freedom of spirit in a kind of detached poetry.

Reinhardt was accused of many of the above associations. He did admit that painting was "special, separate, a matter of meditation and contemplation for me..."²² but would not claim them as containing emotion. An aloof and

detached quality is far from a universal harmony through contemplation. In the simplicity and purity of the Black Paintings, Reinhardt pushed the visible toward the invisible, logic toward illogic, the material toward immateriality and so is inevitably linked with the transcendental. Although his painting seemed to state the superiority of art over every aspect of life, they should be seen as means to a specific end not to supreme levels of a mystical state. More than the indefinable qualities of his art, he admired the prescribed proportions, codified process and organized creation of his efforts. Quite differently, Malevich was completely tied to the mystical element because it was the "sensation of infinity, of the new space in which there is no human measure...It is a corner of the cosmos caught on its journey through time."²³ Still Malevich felt he had taken art to its most extreme and supreme level. This implied further associations.

Now, that art, thanks to Suprematism, has come into its own-that is attained its pure, unapplied form-and has recognized the infallibility of non-objective feeling, it is attempting to set up a genuine world order, a new philosophy of life, it recognized the non-objectivity of the world and is no longer concerned with providing illustrations of the history of manners. ²⁴

Even though Reinhardt's work has the power of a supreme art, he responded negatively to any Utopian philosophy as a basis for his art. He felt art could not be "burdened with the spiritual regeneration of mankind."²⁵

In 1918 Malevich introduced a new phase of Suprematism at the Tenth State Exhibition: Abstract Creation and Suprematism, when he showed a series of white on white compositions. In the example available, White Square on White (Figure 8), he removed all color, leaving only a pure simple form of a faintly visible tilted square on a larger square. In this work, he stated his highest form of the ultimate, expressing the supremacy of pure feeling in creative art. The dynamic quality of the titled square is intensified by the absolute simplification of color. In contrast, the Black Square (Figure 5) which began Suprematism seems very static. The subjective nature of both the black and white paintings differ markedly from Reinhardt. Reinhardt's black paintings' major claim is their presence. They exist as a work of art, neither static nor dynamic. Their over-powering strength is expressed in a sense of stability. Yet a certain inconstancy of color and form which seems visible and then disappears in the blackness saves them from being static. Its dynamism is underplayed by the subtle absorbent black which diminishes all but the smallest contrasts. The selection of the black color was a very conscious choice for Reinhardt. His earlier red and blue paintings had seemed too pretty and too impure. Having symmetricized the shape and monochromized the color was not enough. "Then I moved to the ultimate-black-and black is no color. Now I have reached the non-emotive, non-anecdotal, purely aesthetic

non-objective, the absolute, I cannot conceive of going back."²⁶

White could not create the ultimate for Reinhardt as it had for Malevich. Reinhardt described his opposition to white in rule six of his twelve rules for a new academy:

No colors...No white. "White is a color, and all colors." White is "antiseptic and not artistic, appropriate and pleasing for kitchen fixtures and hardly the medium for expressing truth and beauty." White on white is "a transition from pigment to light" and "a screen for the projection of light" and "moving" pictures. ²⁷

Reinhardt therefore would have felt that Malevich's white on white painting was impure and stressed certain undesirable design elements. This stress did not coincide with Reinhardt's attempt to neutralize all elements to a kind of stasis.

Likewise, Reinhardt would have reacted negatively to the subjective nature of Malevich's system. Speaking specifically about the white painting, Malevich explained his feelings in the following:

The blue colour of the sky has been defeated by the Suprematist system, has broken through and entered white, as the true real conception of infinity and therefore liberated from the colour background of the sky. ²⁸

The sensation of infinity was created by the purified light-on-light white. A philosophical concept of non-thinking was ~~the~~ basis for Malevich's infinity in his field of white.

Man distinguishes himself as a thinking being and removed himself from the perfection of God's creation. Having left the non-thinking state,

he strives by means of his perfected objects to be again embodied in the perfection of absolute non-thinking life. 29

This perfected state of non-thinking appears to be the basic statement in Malevich's paintings. The culminating comment was then made in the white on white series. Interestingly, Reinhardt's Black Paintings, more than Malevich's white, seem to approximate this perfected state. Reinhardt's paintings demand a longer span of attention because the recognition of the inconstant form is not instantaneous. Dependence upon the minutest and subtlest change can raise the spectator to a hypersensitive level of appreciation but no burst of any emotion ever occurs because of the rigid order and contained effect of the painting. Although the viewers' reactions fluctuate as he responds to the painting, the painting itself remains purely static and non-referential. It seems Malevich was striving for these non-thinking ends but fell short of reaching them because of his own associative definitions which limited him. Hilton Kramer presented this idea in his article entitled Art:

The forms of Malevich speak to us today less as a transcendental utterance than as an expression of a practical time, place and milieu. They are a testimony, not to an achieved timeless identity, but to the shape that the yearning for such an ideality may sometimes take under extreme historical conditions. 30

If this is true, it seems all the more understandable that another artist would try to respond to Malevich's critical but deficient statement. This reply was made by Alexander

Rodchenko who sent several Black on Black paintings to the Tenth State Exhibition in 1918 (Figures 9 and 10). With the black paintings, Rodchenko presented a manifesto composed of famous quotations such as the "basis for my work I put nothing" and "colors drop out, everything is mixed in black."³¹

Rodchenko's commentary on Malevich's work provokes the inevitable question of Reinhardt being influenced by a combination of these two Russians' efforts. However, as already pointed out, the idea of the pure sensations of infinity and cosmic forces in Malevich is a strong contrast to the formal attempts of Reinhardt. In addition, Rodchenko's black paintings are to some degree a black version of Malevich's white painting ideas. Rodchenko was influenced not only by Malevich and his dynamic abstractions in two and three-dimensional compositions but also by Vladimir Tatlin and his use of modern materials in space constructions. Using the circle and arc (which were subsidiary forms for Malevich), Rodchenko combined these oblique accents with the more solid and complex forms favored by Tatlin. When Rodchenko exhibited the black paintings in 1918, they were a conscious effort on his part to complement the extreme of Malevich's statement and therefore are not a sharp criticism of the white compositions.

From the two Rodchenko Black Paintings (Figures 9 and 10) available, it is easy to see that they hold little

comparison visually to Reinhardt, except for the idea of painting on black painting. The curved black on black forms in Rodchenko's paintings are more romantic versions of Malevich's straight line white on white forms. Both the black of Rodchenko and the white of Malevich bear little resemblance to Reinhardt's unadulterated black. Although Rodchenko stated the basis of his work as nothing, he retained the combination of Malevich and Tatlin influences in these works. Reinhardt made a similar claim of painting nothing and more successfully achieved this through the rejective process of his theory and painting.

There are another group of works by Rodchenko which seem similar to Reinhardt. The space constructions made of wood scraps which Rodchenko began in 1919 (Figure 11) look much like spacial versions of Reinhardt's early black vertical canvases (Figure 12). However, the simple structure and rudimentary geometrics of these configurations by Rodchenko are still products of his Tatlin influence. The influence on Reinhardt seems therefore minute if not non-existing.

The efforts of Rodchenko in his black paintings and space constructions led him to question the social and artistic nature of the exclusive and radical statements made by Malevich. Rodchenko's investigation led him to reconsider the role of the artist in a revolutionary society and to eventually abandon "fine art." In 1921 under pressure of the state, he declared the death of fine art and in 1922 he

stopped painting.³² This end of painting was realized even earlier by Malevich. At the end of 1919, Malevich had a one man show "From Impressionism to Suprematism" in which he summed up his work by exhibiting 153 pieces. Announcing that Suprematism as a movement in painting had come to an end, Malevich stated that the cross (a recurring and dominant symbol which was also a basis for a white on white painting) was his cross, so personally did he feel the death of painting.³³ The emotions which had been the foundation of his art, figured strongly in the culmination of Malevich's efforts. Thus the death of painting was appropriately visualized in the white on white (possible Eastern influence, white being their color of mourning and death). Russia's most modern icon could thus be seen as a symbolic gesture on Malevich's part. In contrast, Reinhardt in his black paintings (which also have been frequently called icons) did not recognize an end to art. Although critics felt Reinhardt's art led him close to the discovery that not an essence but a void lays at the end of his search, Reinhardt believed much more had to be done. After many years of frustrated searching for a depersonalized art, Reinhardt knew he was close to the pure positive statement of nothing but art. Thus he would admit only that he had reached the end of the beginning. He stated that he was responsible for the following:

I made the ultimate painting first.
I'm the most extreme in the world.

What's more, this is the end of the beginning.
I made the first of the last, that's all.
I made the last of the first paintings, what's more.³⁴

Reinhardt was too sophisticated to think he was painting the last painting. He believed that future artists might come closer to the supreme art statement but he believed that his art was a vital contribution and the most extreme to date. He also knew his contribution was unfinished because there was still the "endless repetition of infinite sameness and absence of all meaning"³⁵ to be achieved. In this same vein he stated:

How long will it take artists to realize there's nothing to do except to do the same thing they've always done endlessly? If you don't have anything to repeat endlessly you should have quit long ago. 36

Reinhardt expected an artist always to feel the necessity to rework an art idea in order to come closer to perfection. This may be interpreted as Reinhardt's refusal to abandon his idea of a fine art. Thus, he staunchly held to the one painting and theory which became ~~the~~ only pertinent one. Reinhardt consciously stated his intentions when he wrote about "oneness." As far as he was concerned, there was only one art, one style, one painting, one art process, one technique, one method, one artist, one spirituality, one problem, one art history, etc.³⁷ Believing in this oneness thus brought him by necessity to paint the black square again and again.

A distillation process brought Malevich and Reinhardt to completely opposite poles. Reinhardt saw some hope and possibility through repetition even in the perfected level he had achieved. In the white paintings, Malevich stated and ended the practical application of his theory. However, the forces which prompted Reinhardt's and Malevich's attitudes must be contrasted. Reinhardt considered it vital to continue to say the one thing that had to be said and that was "Art is art as art." The process by which he developed this stance was slow and laborious. When Reinhardt reached a solution he worked on variations and refinement, looking for possible perfections. Malevich's course is vastly different. Suprematism had a very abrupt life. It was impoverished from the beginning by the immediacy of the Black Square. The first statement seemed too extreme to have much continued development. Complexity in forms followed and then the advancement of extreme simplicity with the white on white series. Not much remained to be said in this structured pattern of development. In addition, his theoretical system is based on a questionable concept. The subjective logic of his method was not necessarily true. He realized that images were results of the mind and its reality, then assumed non-objectivity existed in his compressed symbolism. Malevich failed to recognize the idea developed from his perception of the image, which may or may not be recreated in another's perception. Malevich

valued the idea over the painting thus he reduced the painting to an intellectual gesture which can be more interesting to write about than to look at. In addition, the exclusive nature of Malevich's universalism was too structured for his time. With the Russian revolution in 1918, the situation changed and Malevich declined in influence as social realism began to triumph. This is no doubt another important reason for the timeliness of Malevich's declaration of the death of non-objective painting and Suprematism.

Malevich did not completely halt his artistic activities after 1918. Although government pressure forced him to modify his non-objective philosophy, he held strongly to many of the subjective ideals in Suprematism. Since he had declared the death of painting, he turned to architecture establishing the group "Unovis" to develop a volume Suprematism. The Unovis instruction of art was based on a series of lectures, starting with Cezanne and ending with Suprematism (written by Malevich and later published as articles on modern art). In the twenties, Malevich devoted most of his time to explaining his ideas on the history and nature of modern art and attempting to create a philosophical basis for Suprematism. Almost all explanations of Suprematism by Malevich were written during this time. The fact that he reached his visual ideas in one bound and abruptly completed its statement a few years later, left much of his purpose to be explained at a later time.³⁸

Reinhardt's writings are quite a different matter. As early as the forties, he had written criticisms and created cartoons of the art scene. His own art theory developed out of these articles and developed simultaneously with his painting until one became the explanation of the other-so close was their connection and their purpose.

How then can one finally assess Malevich's work in relation to Reinhardt's? Unquestionably Reinhardt belongs to the modern classical stream which includes Malevich and Mondrian for he is the "legitimate heir of a half century old tradition of formalist abstraction."³⁹ Lucy Lippard's analysis of the history of monotonal painting in an article titled Silent Art provides a very logical way of summarizing. She divided monochrome activity into three categories of artists involved in 1) the evocative, romantic or mystical; 2) the formally rejective and non-associative and 3) the gesture of defiance, absolution or comment.⁴⁰ Without a doubt, Malevich was involved with the mystical in his paintings of pure sensations. Rodchenko commented on those white paintings with his black on black works. It was Reinhardt who produced the rejective and non-referential type of silent art in his black paintings. Reinhardt never was interested in the evocative or defiant gesture. In addition, it has been shown that at no point in Malevich's career do any of his ideas entirely anticipate Reinhardt. In fact, the emotional and Utopian ideals of Malevich's art are very

far from Reinhardt's pure attempts. By working continually towards purity, Reinhardt thus went far beyond Malevich in making a completely pure art statement.

NOTES CHAPTER 4

- 1
Kasimir Malevich, Essays on Art Part I (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1968), p. 85.
- 2
Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," Art News, (May, 1957), p. 38.
- 3
Bruce Glaser, "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt," Art International, (December, 1966), p. 19.
- 4
Troels Andersen, "Malevich on New Art," Studio International, (September, 1967), p. 102.
- 5
Camilla Gray, The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922 (New York: Abrams, 1962), p. 136.
- 6
Malevich, p. 37.
- 7
Kasimir Malevich, The Non-Objective World (Chicago: Theobald, 1959), p. 8.
- 8
Ella Winter, "The Lost Leadership of Malevitch," Art News, (December, 1958), p. 58.
- 9
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 598 and 264, Listings Entitled Black, not dated.
- 10
Malevich, Essays on Art Part I, p. 120.
- 11
Malevich, The Non-Objective World, p. 40.
- 12
L. Hilbersheimer, "Kasimir Malevich and the Non-Objective World," Art Journal, (Winter, 1960-61), p. 83.

- 13
Malevich, The Non-Objective World, p. 68.
- 14
Sam Hunter, "Ad Reinhardt and the Aesthetics of Boredom," Minneapolis Tribune, (November 20, 1966), p. 32.
- 15
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," Art International, (December, 1962), p. 37.
- 16
Malevich, Essays on Art Part II, p. 18.
- 17
Malevich, The Non-Objective World, p. 74.
- 18
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 626, Notations, not dated.
- 19
Malevich, The Non-Objective World, p. 94.
- 20
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37.
- 21
Malevich, Essays on Art Part II, p. 139.
- 22
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 396, Notations, not dated.
- 23
Gray, p. 138.
- 24
Malevich, The Non-Objective World, p. 100. In the search for an ideal, Malevich is closely allied with Mondrian, for both believed in a religious justification for their abstraction. Malevich felt a link existed between the Dutch Purist movement and his ideas. In a letter addressed to Dutch artists (to be published in a magazine), Malevich had stated: "We, of course, are also against all that is constructive and objective, for the constructiveness of Art is non-objective. We wish to build the world up according to a non-objective system, departing further and further from the subject, like the cosmos creation of nature. Developing new forms and leaving behind the laws of objective necessities we see the complete freedom of man when he is cosmic in his action."

- 25
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-104 frame number 382, Notations, not dated.
- 26
"The Black Monk," Newsweek, (March 15, 1965), p. 90.
- 27
Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," p. 38.
- 28
Malevich, Essays on Art Part I, p. 121.
- 29
"Exhibitions," Architectural Review, (January, 1960), pp. 65-66.
- 30
Hilton Kramer, "Art," The Nation, (June 22, 1963), p. 533.
- 31
Gray, p. 226.
- 32
Jennifer Licht, "Rodchenko, Practicing Constructivist," Art News, (April, 1971), p. 62.
- 33
Gray, p. 226.
- 34
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 327, Reinhardt categorized his development in an adaption of Willie Sypher's "Four Stages of Renaissance Style." Reinhardt titled his listing as the Five Stages of Reinhardt's Timeless Stylistic Art-Historical Cycle. It was divided as follows:
 - a. Late-Classical-mannerist post-Cubist geometric- abstractions of the late 30's.
 - b. Rococo-demi-surrealist fragmentation and "all-over" baroque-geometric-expressionist patterns of the early 40's.
 - c. Archaic color-brick brushwork impressionism and black-and-white constructivist calligraphies of the late 40's.
 - d. Early-classical hieratical red, blue, black monochrome square-cross-beam symmetries of the early 50's.

- e. Classical black square uniform five-foot timeless trisected evanescences of the early 60's.
- etc.

He made an addition to the five divisions which reads:

- f. Late Black Square uniform five-foot timeless trisected evanescences of the late 60's.
- g. Archaic Black Square uniform five-foot timeless trisected evanescences of the early 70's.

The nearly exact duplication of terms to describe his paintings in the early 60's, late 60's and early 70's indicates that Reinhardt envisioned the repetition of the same idea with small variation toward perfection.

35

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 272, Notations, not dated.

36

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 375, Lecture Notes, not dated.

37

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 454, 456-59, Unpublished segments of the last part of Dogma, not dated.

38

The shortcomings of Malevich's writings are many. The majority of his work reflects his unsystematic education because of their confused thought and language. Likewise, his ideas are based more on intuition than scientific thought. His writings are a strange mixture of philosophy, religion, poetry and aesthetic thought. For this reason, his articles have dubious value in completely explaining his ideas. They are still the major source for his ideas and therefore cannot be ignored completely, but must be approached with a critical viewpoint.

39

Priscilla Colt, "Notes on Ad Reinhardt," Art International, (October, 1964), p. 32.

40

Lucy Lippard, "Silent Art," Art in America, (January, 1967), p. 58.

CHAPTER FIVE Reinhardt's Contemporary Influences:

The AAA, Albers, and Newman

In previous chapters much effort has been spent analyzing Ad Reinhardt's relationship to artistic and theoretical predecessors. These artists and writers form a good foundation for understanding Reinhardt's unique theory but there are other equally important forces which must be considered. Reinhardt's early career involvements show the direction of his interests and explain his development of a rejective method. Reinhardt frequently made reference to specific facts concerning his contemporaries which he felt were significant to him. In particular, his activity as a painter among painters was important. He stated these involvements in a 1953 article as follows:

I was on a federal easel project and present at the beginnings of the various artists' unions and congresses in the thirties, and around during the early years of the organization of the American Abstract Artists. In the late forties, I belonged to some group of painters centered around a few galleries who have been called, among other things, "avant-garde" and "New York School"...I emphasize these three movements not only because they were the most important movements of ideas in the last two decades but because, in their beginnings they were the genuine attempts of the time to create a real community of modern artists. 1

It is the purpose of this chapter to consider Reinhardt's participation in the American Abstract Artists

and the "avant-garde" gallery groups. In addition, comparison will be made to the artists, Josef Albers and Barnett Newman, who were closely affiliated to Reinhardt through their membership in these various groups. The alliances of these artists provides an opportunity to view the abstract art "scene" in the thirties and forties, which in turn provides a convenient framework in which to study the influences on Reinhardt.

The more recognized art activities of the thirties included Social Realism and American Scene Painting. The abstract artists were definitely in the minority and scorned for their irrelevant activity. The Depression and the European prospect of war had created a group of socially conscious artists, while the abstractionists were castigated as ivory tower escapists. Reinhardt later analyzed this situation stating that...

In the thirties, it was wrong for artists to think that a good social idea would correct bad art or that a good social conscience would fix up a bad artistic conscience. It was wrong for artists to claim that their work could educate the public politically or that their work would beautify public buildings. 2

The abstract artists had a difficult time, in that they were ignored or sharply criticized having few supporting critics, dealers, museums, patrons and little public interest. Furthermore, the artists were for the most part isolated from each other. Although unrecognized by the majority of art conscious people, certain groups concerned

with abstraction were forming. The Living Gallery came into existence in 1927; the Museum of Modern Art in 1929; the Whitney began exhibiting some abstractionists in the thirties. The Bauhaus was disbanded and the migration to America of European artists and teachers began; while the Art Student League's influential teacher Hans Hofmann advanced an interest for abstraction in his students.³ These developments were propitious for the founding of an abstract art group.

Certain informal gatherings in the mid-thirties expanded into the structured organization of the American Abstract Artists. It was not the purpose of the AAA to negate past representational art but to prove that abstract art was a legitimate and authentic expression of a developing American culture. Their first exhibition was held in 1937 and given journalistic recognition in the small article "Abstractionists Unite" in the April 1, 1937 Art Digest:

An organization of American artists who paint in the "abstract" idiom has recently been formed for the purpose of promoting public organization for this form of art and to afford an opportunity for the artists to become familiar with each others' efforts. 4

Further, its purposes were recognized as...

...upholding a valiant spirit the principle that abstract, non-objective art has had a life through all of civilization ~~a~~ separate life of its own in the art stream-and that it deserves a separate life in America. 5

For a while in the late thirties, leadership of the AAA was under Carl Holty. No doubt, he was responsible for

introducing his pupil, Ad Reinhardt, into the group. Reinhardt had just graduated from college and was working on the W.P.A. project. About his experiences in the thirties, Reinhardt said:

I've had a long history but there was something gratuitous about all the elements in the paintings of that time. I was influenced by Stuart Davis and Carl Holty and a few others in the 1930's...⁶

I got out of school in the middle thirties and right on to W.P.A., which was the government sponsored project for paupers in the late thirties. I was involved with a group of abstract painters, maybe forty or fifty, and that was almost all the abstract painters there were in America at the time. It included all the refugees like Mondrian, and Leger, who was there too, and so on, and I exhibited with them and I felt like an Old Master then. ⁷

Reinhardt's informal apprenticeship with such artists as Mondrian, Leger, Albers, and Moholy Nagy was no doubt to his advantage, as an important incentive for his own efforts. As an articulate activist member of the group, he enthusiastically joined the marching and picketing which the group sponsored. For example, in 1940 the Museum of Modern Art was their target for protest...

...provoked by its sponsoring an illustration exhibition for the tabloid P.M. Ad Reinhardt, our genial Aretino of the Art world, reached for his scissors and montaged a series of bizarre typefaces. "How Modern is the MOMA?"⁸ (Appendix 8)

That same year in the AAA's exhibition space at the World's Fair, a lecture-demonstration was given by Harry Holtzman, George McNeil and Ad Reinhardt.⁹ Thus Reinhardt was an

active and contributing member of the AAA.

The purpose of the AAA's crusade was to see abstract art accepted. They believed that their art was involved with the building of a modern American future as well as with a positive response to the chaotic Depression years. In 1941 the AAA published a manifesto against nationalism in art which defended their ideas so often criticized as anti-American.

Even after more than fifty years of its development, the habit is to allude to the advanced phases of modern art as merely European idioms, and to fail to see that art is not merely the expression of nationality...the real expression of art is always and everywhere profoundly the same: universal.. Esthetic values do not change with latitude and longitude, the cultural significance of art does not change with geographic movement. It is the concept of art that changes. To understand Abstract Art is in reality the problem of understanding any and all art from a qualitative viewpoint..."Abstract" signified a direct, untrammelled relationship of the elements of plastic expression. The abstract artist is concerned with the universal values, the real expression in art. Because it is the clearest effort to represent these values, Abstract Art is in the forefront of esthetic development. 10

The AAA kept working towards acceptance by the public, critics and museums, sponsoring traveling and exchange exhibitions as well as catalogue and book publications. In their annual exhibitions, stress was given to the more purist and doctrinaire abstract styles as derived from De Stijl and the Bauhaus. No doubt, this was partially due to the membership of such leaders as Mondrian and Albers. In fact, even the war effort could not push these abstractionists to become more socially conscious. Quite the

contrary (especially for Reinhardt), as is obvious in the following commentary:

It was wrong for artists to give the impression that their paintings were a valuable document of World War II or that they were helping defense or symbolizing victory in the Pepsi-Cola forties. It's wrong for artists to pass themselves off as visionaries of cosmic orders or seismographs of universal orders. 11

Reinhardt began individually to carry the banner for the cause of abstract art. Considering himself the conscientious objector of the troubled times, he hastened to expose the shortcomings of the art scene in his witty and polemical collage cartoons for P.M. newspaper. In numerous lectures given in 1943-44, he stressed that the basis of the artistic struggle was a result of the artist's inability to distinguish between a "picture" and a "painting." In both the time of war and peace, a "painting" was the true artist's effort.

If painting has been and is more than illustration, historical study, entertainment...then it needs some justification other than its decorative use in generally dreary surroundings... the fine artist can be important to the war effort as fine-artist. 12

As Reinhardt considered the role of the artist as a fine artist most important, he assessed his limitations as conceptual not technical.

This concern for the artist's role had undoubtedly been affected by the growing migration of famous European artists, critics, dealers and collectors to a New York which

now became more of a cultural center than merely a backwater of European art activity. Favorable signs indicated that abstraction was becoming acceptable. More galleries began to sponsor abstract artists. Some abstractionists were even being recognized as national figures. The AAA had paved the way for the subsequent formation of the Artist's Club and began to take a lesser role. In 1944, there was even a lot of discussion among its members of ending the group, now that their battle for recognition had been won. Some members felt that the AAA's impact had dwindled and that it no longer supported the avant-garde. Reinhardt's opinion is unknown. However, since he was a secretary of the AAA during the forties and exhibited with the group until at least 1952, it seems he considered its continuation worthwhile.¹³

The group continued its activities through the fifties and into the sixties until it became looked upon as an academy of respectable abstract artists holding dignified exhibitions. However, even during the declining period of the AAA some members who were recognized artists continued to exhibit in the annual shows. One such person was Josef Albers, who never broke his AAA ties, dating back to the days of its founding. His involvement as well as the nature of his work in the forties onward, are of particular interest in relation to Reinhardt. Since Albers dealt with a severe simplicity in his major Homage to the Square series,

his work appears a possible source for Reinhardt's black square paintings.

The basis of Josef Albers' ideas derive from his experience at the Bauhaus where he taught the fundamental design course stressing functional aesthetics. Migrating to the U.S. in 1933, Albers joined the staff of Black Mountain College where he continued to develop his sophisticated ideas. In commenting on his later American associates, he states:

I traveled on occasion to New York and Boston. The AAA invited me. They were so hard edge. I was showing whenever I had a chance. 14

Regarding the AAA's interest in geometric painting, the group did cater to purer abstraction. Reinhardt looked at it this way: "The Bauhaus was logical coming right after social protest painting because it looked like abstract painting and had a great many social uses."¹⁵ The AAA's interest in purer abstraction was also a reflection of their desire to prevent the more Surrealistic and symbolic abstractionists from joining their group.

The possibility of a Reinhardt-Albers association under the AAA's emphasis on pure abstraction is strengthened by their simultaneous showing at Betty Parsons Gallery in March 1955.¹⁶ This exhibition included four of Albers' Homage to the Square series (Figures 13 and 14) as well as samples of his variant series (Figures 15 and 16) while

Reinhardt was probably showing his red and blue monochromes (Figures 27 and 28). It had been around 1954 that Reinhardt's work and writing showed signs of change and the fact that Albers' variant series resembles Reinhardt's red and blue paintings invites further speculation. Albers had begun the variant series in the late forties, although they are more complex in their structuring than the square series begun about the same time. Often described as adobe-like constructions, the variants seem like romantic landscapes. Reinhardt's close-valued red and blue paintings are actually quite different with a strict emphasis on monochrome color, unlike Albers' more decorative use of colors. Although Reinhardt used an overlapping or basic weaving of flat areas to define the geometric shapes, he attempted to reduce space through close color values. In contrast, Albers utilized the color variety to accentuate spacial recession in an overlay of flat geometric forms which seemed to diminish in size. As a consequence, the paintings of the two are only superficially similar.

The idea of repetition was as significant for Reinhardt as Albers. Reinhardt indulged in variations of his ideas in the fifties in color monochrome and rectangular shapes (Figure 29). By 1960, he had decided upon the black square as the formula for his theory. Repetition followed because Reinhardt felt it was necessary to convey his basic idea. Albers was also fascinated with making refinements

on his square concept. He believed that science dealt with solving problems of life while art depended on unsolved problems. Thus to him, each painting was a variant not a final solution.¹⁷ Unlike Reinhardt, Albers' paintings have more variety in color; making each appear strikingly different from another. Albers defined his efforts in repetition as a concern for the interaction of color.

The arrangement of squares in my Homage to the Square paintings and prints has become a convenient carrier of what I consider my color instrumentation. It is a container for and a dish to serve my color cooking in.¹⁸

Albers decided to use the square because it was not a nature form but one of man's construction. Because it is a neutral shape, the square has no directional illusions. To include variety for his color, Albers selected to use successively smaller squares contained and parallel to the basic square.

There is plenty of leeway for me. There are sometimes three squares, sometimes four, and maybe sometimes two. They are not automatic. They do not come by themselves.¹⁹

On the other hand, Reinhardt's choice of the square was guided by its static, lifeless, inert and inactive qualities. The square's symmetry invited repetition as well as neutrality. Unlike Albers' successively smaller squares, Reinhardt divided the square canvas into nine equal parts by means of a central horizontal band bisecting a vertical band. Thus nine squares exist but only through the spectator's mental

addition of line divisions. Both Albers and Reinhardt use horizontal and vertical lines as Mondrian had done in Neo-Plasticism (Figure 1). But Mondrian's lines had loose ends as if to extend beyond the canvas edge. Albers' lines meet to form contained squares which float inside each other. Reinhardt's lines continue to the edge but link with an implied right angle line at the canvas edge. Thus Reinhardt's line is neither contained and floating like Albers' or loose like Mondrian's but is both extended to and contained at the edge.

Reinhardt's structure is a symmetrical checkerboard pattern, in contrast to the mathematical structure of Albers' square-on-square division. In the latter the horizontal proportions between square distances read 1 to 2 to 4 to 2 to 1. The horizontal symmetry is not repeated in the vertical proportions from bottom to top which read 1/2 to 1 to 4 to 3 to 1/2. The side-to-side, two dimensional symmetry is shifted on the vertical in a below-center asymmetry which implies a three dimensionality through diminution. Within this rigid format, Albers saw infinite possibilities resulting from the use of color. The square form is only the outer, physical structure for the inner functioning of color action. The balanced logic of the square is exploited by the tension established between the actual size and the suggested dimensions through color. Albers said: "I want color and form to have contradictory functions."²⁰ Thus

geometry or the hard edge of the square is secondary to Albers' concern for color. Using the constant square form, color relationships change it into fields of optical color movement. The fluctuating nature of constant form and inconstant color, as a favorite device of Albers, is expressed in his favorite term "and/or."

And/or: square overlaps square in playing-card fashion, until the picture proposes avenues that recede, portals opening on vistas. And/or: shapes will pile up in the semblance of houses, cubic with flat azoteas, but form melts into form, or bilocates with amœeba-like motion. And/or: pyramidal shapes will be at first convex, as monuments surveyed from a plane in flight only to reverse themselves, become concave...21

The balancing of masses of color result in movement of squares back and forth, in and out, up and down, near and far, enlarged and diminished. The color de-emphasizes the form for the sake of depth illusions. Reinhardt sought to avoid this interplay of color and form by neutralizing both as completely as possible. Removing all color and maintaining strict symmetry, Reinhardt in the black paintings achieved a subtle interaction through the mental elimination of color and form. His reaction to Albers' work is evident in an interview segment which reads as follows:

Reinhardt: I suppose my preoccupation with symmetry and colorlessness is the great change from Mondrian's asymmetry and color. But this change isn't mine entirely. Maybe the combination of symmetry and monochrome. Albers has been symmetrical for a long time.

Interviewer: Not when you turn his canvases on their side though.

Reinhardt: No. That would be my criticism of them. And the illusionism of the color, the color tends to make them Surrealist. Some of them look like Magrittes, like windows or tunnels. 22

For Albers, the more square spatial illusions of color play were a measure of the "discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect."²³ Albers recognized that it is almost impossible to remember distinct colors because they change constantly in relation to neighboring colors. Since nature does not allow the isolation of one color, a color can lose its identity. This multiple content of color can result in fascinating effects - colors can echo each other, support or oppose, contrast or clash, embrace or penetrate, float above or underneath each other or remain side by side. Reinhardt wanted to negate these inconstant effects. Colors were too pretty, too impure, too decorative or too emotive for him. He felt that...

There is something wrong, irresponsible and mindless about colour, something impossible to control. Control and rationality are part of any morality. 24

and

Preference for colour has nothing to do with the painting itself. You can like a yellow Albers, or a blue Albers...I naturally went into colourlessness. It's hardt to use a light blue and not have it become a window or a sky. 25

Albers purified painting as much as he was capable through the use of neutral form and unmixed paint. He could not reject color because for him, color effects were the dominant rule in painting. For Reinhardt, on the

contrary "colour had nothing to do with art."²⁶ However, when the Black Paintings are carefully scrutinized a ghost of color remains. Having used "color to paint out color," Reinhardt's blacks vary subtly in value with the addition of small amounts of color. Reinhardt can thus be recognized as having utilized a nuanced palette of blacks while Albers dealt with a wider scope of color interactions.

In 1963 Albers published a book Interaction of Color which is a class schedule for a color design course. To Albers the book was...

...a record of an experimental way of studying color and of teaching color. In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is-as it physically is. This fact makes color the most relative medium in art. 27

With paintings as teaching devices he wanted to train his students and the spectators of his art to see - TO THINK WITH THEIR EYES. His square paintings have been criticized as exercises of an intelligent teacher well versed in the color theories of Goethe, Chevreul and Ostwald. Or, he has been accused of painting merely designs. Reinhardt wanted to avoid the design accusations and teacher associations in his art and although he made his living teaching, he vigorously kept his painting activity away from the school in order to keep them separate activities. "There is nothing deadlier than to be called a good teacher like Hofmann or Albers..."²⁸

Both men were disciplined thinkers addicted to

reasoned principles of artistic production. Albers felt his academic background and family of craftsmen were responsible for his predisposition for a meticulous process of pre-planning. He made blue-print sketches of the exact work before the final execution with the tube colors recorded on the back of the painting for precise description. The entire working process was exactly adhered to, like a laboratory activity with a detailed formula. He always used a masonite board, only one coat of primary white base, unmixed colors applied in one coat with no medium, and blotted to remove excess oil. These are only parts of his precise approach. Similarly, Reinhardt had his set of rules for the process of painting. He defined the exact dimensions desirable for a studio, its furnishings as well as the best methods of using that room. Belgian linen was the best canvas material, one inch brushes best for application of the Mars black paint from which all oils had been removed. No easel was necessary because Reinhardt could best paint with the canvas flat instead of vertical. These were all important parts of the preliminary stages for his painting.

This superconscious attitude and compulsive concern by both Albers and Reinhardt for an economy of means and method seems unnecessarily rigid. It is prompted by their desire to remove all hazards of personal touch. Their astringent methods prevent all improvizing, chance and accident while maintaining complete control and clarity of

purpose. Awareness is the method and rational the means. However, Albers and Reinhardt differ when it comes to the purpose of these methods. Reinhardt chose this approach because it eliminated all traces of emotional and personal involvement. Albers believed quite differently.

Clear thinking and seeing won't spoil emotions;
just gets them in the right place. 29

and

I believe that thinking is necessary in art as everything else and that a clear head is never in the way of genuine feelings. 30

Albers humanized geometry believing that every visible form and color had meaning. To him, art and life were compatible forces with parallel activity.

Art is needed everywhere, in private and public life, from the home to the city hall, from religion to business. Art is not only a measure of culture but also an educational means toward culture. Art, as a visual formulation of our reaction to life, embraces all facets of life. 31

Reinhardt attempted to rid art of all associations with life, believing them to be separate functions best unrelated and not dependent on each other for their existence. He wanted to keep his art activity apart from his life activities, allowing both to develop more completely in their own realm;

Final analysis of major objectives in the work of Albers and Reinhardt indicates that their common bond of AAA membership resulted in only a surface similarity in the direction of their work. Albers' interest in color and its

potential meaning and relationships through form is far removed from Reinhardt's purposes. Yet the AAA was obviously an important involvement for both artists as a means of stimulation and awareness of recent artistic events and developments. The importance of this opportunity is registered in Reinhardt's comments on the shortcomings of the time.

Abstract art versus representational art in the thirties was a good idea. The only trouble with it was the "lousy" abstract artists loused it up. But the lousiest abstract artists seemed better than the best representational artists. 32

Another important activity was Reinhardt's alliance after 1945 with the Betty Parsons Gallery. This gallery was a rallying point for such artists as Pollock, Rothko, Hofmann, Still, Newman, Tomlin, and Poussette-Dart, most of whom exhibited there at least until 1951. As 1946-1952 were crucial years of development for Reinhardt, his work contained many qualities of the above mentioned artists. Eventually Reinhardt's painting became closely related to that of Newman, Rothko and Still, the color field painters of the New York School. Asked about this relationship, Reinhardt replied: "Not any more. I had a relation once, and I showed in the same gallery and the same groups but the others were up to something else."³³ Although all four dealt with nearly monochromatic painting, there are more differences than similarities in their work. The closest and most potential influence for Reinhardt was Barnett Newman.

Certain comments and interests of both prior to 1950 are some indication of their association. In 1947 Newman had organized the Ideographic Show at Betty Parsons in which Reinhardt had exhibited paintings entitled Dark Symbol and Cosmic Sign.³⁴ These titles imply a relationship and concern for abstract surrealism or abstract mysticism. By 1948 Reinhardt had repudiated these works as transcendental non-sense and clarified his approach in the notation on an exhibition handout for his 1948 show at Parsons. He stated that although the paintings were done in the Virgin Islands...

They contain no sea shells or undersea caves, no blinding sand or wild winds or superstitions, no terror of the deep, no West-Indian magic, no zombies, no sea urchins...no abstractings from nature, high or low still-life, no camouflaged Caribbean stories...local racial or political myths. 35

One of Reinhardt's first writings in a series of negatives, his interest in a pure art form is noticeable at this date. This purpose is further substantiated in a 1948 comment that "perhaps pure painting is a direct experience and an honest communication."³⁶ The following statement by Newman points out his ideas about a pure art form.

The basis of an aesthetic act is the pure idea...that makes contact with mystery of life, of man, of nature, of the hard, black chaos that is death, or the greyer, softer chaos that is tragedy. For it is only the pure idea that has meaning. Everything else has everything else. 37

Thus both Newman and Reinhardt expounded on the idea of a pure art. However, Newman, unlike Reinhardt, retained an

interest of mystery as an important part of a pure art idea.

Speaking about the significant moment of discovery, Newman described the change of direction for American artists as follows:

In 1940, some of us woke up to find ourselves without hope-to find that painting did not really exist. The awakening had the exaltation of a revolution. It was that awakening that inspired the aspiration-the high purpose-quite different a thing from ambition-to start from scratch, to paint as if painting never existed before. It was that naked revolutionary moment that made painters out of painters. 38

In 1950 Newman and Reinhardt participated in a boycott of the "American Painting-Today" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum. With eighteen others, they protested the jury's hostility towards modern avant-garde art.

The dilettante efforts of Newman and Reinhardt are partially observable in their painting of this time. Reinhardt's investigation of methods led him to explore pure geometric interests as well as certain all-over tapestry effects in his brick-like formations of the late forties. Newman, in his work of this time, combined Surrealism and abstraction with primitive sexual illusions, unstructured dream spaces, and dramatic abstract paint gestures. Then in 1947 he struck upon an idea which contained the fruitful development of his mature style. In his article "The First Man Was an Artist." Newman wrote:

Undoubtedly the first man was an artist...
the aesthetic act always precedes the social

one...Just as man's first speech was poetic before it became utilitarian, so man first made an idol of mud before he fashioned an axe. Man's hand traced the stick through the mud to make a line before he learned to throw the stick as a javelin. 39

The painting which followed this statement, appeared as Onement No. 1 1948 (Figure 17) and included a primitive, plastic, vertical line. Bisecting the canvas, the impasto edged line overlays the ground color while relating to the rectangular canvas shape. Of the painting Newman commented: "It was a planet and grew into a world."⁴⁰ This modest painting and the succeeding Genetic Moment and Euclidean Abyss were a significant shift in Newman's work, especially with their idea of artistic scale. Thus, experimentation with this concept led Newman to use the vertical line in larger sized formats.

In 1950 and 1951, Newman had one man shows at Parsons Gallery which contained examples of his recently formulated style and indicated the subjective nature of his translucent color fields accentuated by expressionistic line marks. (Figure 18). The importance of these exhibitions can not be underrated for they were the first extensive showings of Newman's vertical line paintings and the last until 1958. (Another example of work of this period is Figure 19.) The austerity and coolness of his approach baffled and surprised fellow artists and critics. One can only speculate the influence they may have had on Reinhardt who knew of Newman's developments through their Betty

Parsons association. Thomas B. Hess suggests the following:

It seems that he (Reinhardt) got the ideas of blackness and symmetry from Barnett Newman, whose first show, which included an all-black painting, he helped to hang at Betty Parsons in 1950. 41

This seems a naive conclusion, for Newman did not deal exclusively with black or symmetry. No doubt, Hess made this observation because Reinhardt was not to begin his black paintings until 1954, while Newman was to continue to paint the vertical line paintings into the fifties and sixties. However, in order to make a fair assessment of Newman's influence on Reinhardt, the basic ideas underlying Newman's style must be carefully considered. Using the three elements of line, color and space (which were Newman's means of manipulating scale) as a comparative basis, a more comprehensible view of Reinhardt and Newman results. It shows a striking dissimilarity of purpose.

By enlarging to eight feet the size of the line paintings for the 1950-51 Parsons' shows, Newman definitely began to deal directly with space in a larger than life realm. This indicated his concern for abstract space on a vast scale and an undefined expanse of light, color and plane. This atmospheric continuum is intensified by a formless and boundless quality in the one color ground, creating an environment of emptiness or open spatiality with no suggestion of compositional limitation. There is an implied freedom to extend mentally the physical limits of the canvas.

Not implying void (which repelled Newman), the paintings were instead full of color, which defined space and varied according to spatial needs. Newman clarified his idea of space in the following:

I don't manipulate or play with space. I declare it. It is by my declaration that my paintings become full...the sense of space created by my paintings should make one feel, I hope, full and alive in a spatial dome of 180 degrees going in all four directions. This is the only real sensation of space... Instead of working with the remnants of space, I work with the whole space. 42

Reinhardt worked with no space and was in favor of emptiness for the sake of bland wholeness and unity. Reinhardt's conception of space was neither defined nor definable, contained or constrained, open or closed and a nebulous uninvolvedness with spatial sensations was his purpose. Lucy Lippard defined the spatial difference of Reinhardt and Newman very clearly:

Barnett Newman minimizes the painting process and detail in order to emphasize broad metaphysical implications. His canvases expand into Elysian openness, space and light...(while) Reinhardt's with equally spare means, reverses the procedure, making closed, dark, impassive, and specific paintings whose complete detachment can incite an equally complete involvement by the viewer. 43

The viewer's involvement in a Reinhardt painting is the result of contemplation or meditation on its nothingness while Newman creates an environment to encompass the spectator. Both strove for a totality in their painting which would eliminate the diffuse shape relationships of precise

geometry. Reinhardt chose to reach this unity by using no referential points in his painting. Avoiding all elements of design-line, color, space, form, etc., he thought it possible to achieve a wholeness. In contrast, Newman decided to control his vast expanses of color by vertical bands.

Reinhardt was engaged with minimizing the existence of space in his overlapping forms by painting them very close in value and greying their edges. The viewer must decide whether this marginal extent of color, space, line, etc. convincingly diminishes the play of design elements or if it merely reduces them to a subtler level. Newman's method of unification presents us with an opposite approach. The variation in the color, width, edge, and placement of line offers infinite possibilities. In fact, manipulation of the line provided Newman with just as many alternatives as the color squares did for Albers. In this respect, Newman is less concerned with the pure art interests of Reinhardt and closer in spirit to the color interaction of Albers. About color Newman said:

I have always worked with color without regard for existing rules concerning intensity, value or non-value. Also I have never manipulated colors, I have tried to create color. 44

Thus Newman's use of color, as well as line, is indication of his more expressionistic interests. His structural use of the vertical as a means of division had innumerable uses. Placed at intervals, the lines could prevent a large solid color area from being oppressively

expansive. The stripes, all of which extended from the bottom to the top, could be pulled taut on the surface. They could jump out from the ground color or rip beneath the surface. Against the ground color, the lines could emphasize its continuousness or become distinct forms or color shapes. Such variety of line reflects a personal touch, a quality which Reinhardt disliked and found unnecessary, professing to hate line as well as colors, shapes and form. In rule three of his twelve rules for a new academy, he stated that madmen draw outlines and that all lines were figures. At a later time, he spoke of the "re-destruction of the vertical stripe and horizontal band in art."⁴⁵

Further he commented:

I exclude the visual image because of its weakness. I also would exclude sensations and impulses, and lines and colors...especially wiggly lines. ⁴⁶

The most cogent remark Reinhardt made concerning line follows (it also explains another reason for his choice of an overlapping cross form):

I certainly trisect the canvas to get away from posing or arranging, so I did once say that I have a horizontal band that negates painters who work in vertical stripe as the vertical stripe negates horizontal band painters. ⁴⁷

Even more offensive than the straight line was the wiggly line which meant sloppy emotionalism to Reinhardt. Newman's lines often have a rough edge which Reinhardt no doubt despised. The ruffled edges of the "zips" (as Newman pre-

ferred to call them) often seem to vibrate and imply movement, while the jagged nature of the line can seem to screech up and down the surface. The slightest brush mark becomes blatantly apparent on the vast color ground or the line can act as a lateral intrusion slashing across the surface, terminated only by the canvas edge. Thus, Newman seems to defy both hard edge painters as well as gestural with a kind of restrained expressionism. This non-committed attitude is contrary to Reinhardt's adherence to a strict and rigid, pure art code. The textural quality inevitable in Newman's zips was the kind of calligraphy and brushwork Reinhardt avoided in his own work.

Another potential function of Newman's line is contained as an element mirroring the canvas support.⁴⁸ Because the edge is continually repeated in the lines his paintings become all frame, especially in a work entitled The Wild which is only 2 1/2 inches wide and 8 feet tall. It is all support. Thus, Newman's paintings can more accurately be interpreted as shaped canvases because of their vertical stress which dominates and qualifies the horizontal space. Reinhardt avoided this dichotomy of vertical versus horizontal dimension by using the neutral square form. Just as Newman stressed the repetition of edge in the internal lines, Reinhardt repeated the square shape by internally dividing it into nine equal squares. However, Newman's vertical has a directional, partially

unstable stress and Reinhardt's square is non-directional. Reinhardt's exclusion of color to minimize line and form distinction was an attempt to de-emphasize shape, while Newman accentuated the play of vertical against horizontal expanse.

The comparison of Newman's shaped canvas to Reinhardt's neutralized canvas is significant in order more accurately to define each as a form of monotonal painting. The shaped canvas is not the perfect vehicle for monochrome as it forces too sharp a contrast as an image hung on a wall. The whole point of monotone is to deny exaggerated shapes and de-emphasize surface and contour and with this Reinhardt obviously seems more concerned than Newman.⁴⁹

The basic nature of both artists' paintings have impelled critics to search for symbolic meanings in their works. Reinhardt's horizontal negating a vertical form has been seen as the Christian cross symbol. The meaning of his black paintings have thus been assumed as proclaiming the death of painting. Another explanation relates him to Eastern philosophy because he taught Oriental art history. Newman underwent equally varied interpretations. Because of his Tiger's Eye article, claiming the first man as an artist, his vertical stripes have been claimed as symbolic of a Universal Man's image, geometricized primordial figures, masculine symbols of a he-man cult and surrogates for the modern man. A more sophisticated analysis of the heiroglyphic

character of the line has resulted in their interpretation as acephalous crosses.⁵⁰ Many of Newman's painting titles support these reasonings. The heroic seems evident in such titles as Ulysses, Achilles, Prometheus Bound; the cosmic in End of Silence, Pagan Void; the mythological in Dionysus and Queen of Night and the primitive in Genesis, The Beginning, Day One, Adam and Eve.

These titles do indicate some desired symbolic associations. Newman admitted he had a "great admiration for raw, boundless energy" because for him "the truly passionate exists on a different level."⁵¹ Thus, he involved himself in painting an ardent romanticism in search of pictorial equivalents for the sublime. His color spaces with vertical divisions have been interpreted as forms of the sublime.

We are asserting man's natural desire for the exalted for a concern with our relationship to the absolute emotions...We are creating images whose reality is self-evident and which are devoid of props and crutches that evoke associations with outmoded images...We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, associations, nostalgia, legend, myth...The image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete...⁵²

Reinhardt disclaimed this need for the exalted stating that "sublimity in art is not sublimity."⁵³ He worked to remove the angst out of art along with all display of emotion because he believed that abstract art should always be rational and self-conscious. Newman proclaimed the opposite:

I am an intuitive painter, a direct painter...
I don't consider myself in terms of labels but
if I am anything, I am romantic. 54

Taking an anti-romantic point of view, Reinhardt
insisted he was a realist and a classicist.

Anything irrational, momentary, spontan-
eous, unconscious, primitive, expressionistic,
accidental or informal, cannot be called ser-
ious art. Only blankness, complete awareness,
disinterestedness, the "artist as artist" only,
of one and rational mind, "vacant and spiritual,
empty and marvelous," in symmetries and regular-
ities only...55

He struggled to create a controlled creative process, esta-
blishing rules and regulations, method and theory as essen-
tial guidelines to his art and his art dogma became signifi-
cant as an integral part of the painting. Newman saw no
need for this rigid approach denying dogmatic principles
and repudiating all need of dogmatic painting.

I present no dogma, no system, no demon-
strations. I have no formal solutions. I
have no interest in the "finished" painting.
I work only out of high passion. 56

Newman, although not as excessively as many of his contem-
poraries, loosened up abstract art while Reinhardt reacted
against what seemed unstructured and was distressed by
associations which suggested otherwise.

The humiliation and trivialization of art
in America during the last three decades have
been the easy exploitations and eager popular-
izations of art by the American artists them-
selves. Ashean-and-Armory-Expressionists
mixed up with life-muckraking and art marketing.
Social-and-Surreal-Expressionists of the 'thirties
used art as an "action-on-the-public," but suc-
ceeded mainly in expressing themselves, and Ab-
stract-Expressionists of the 'forties and 'fifties

using art initially as a "self-expression succeeded in acting upon the whole world."⁵⁷

What Reinhardt found most repulsive was that art suddenly became an avant garde business and a huge entertainment. He grieved over the loss of honest art activity and the rising pollution of the art world. As early as 1953 in an article "The Artist in Search of an Academy," he wrote a plea for a change toward a new modern academy. Reinhardt continued his attack, reflecting his disgust with art developments in an article "Who Is Responsible for Ugliness?" Ultimately, he decided that the artist was responsible. His decision to follow an intellectual and controlled direction was his resolution not to be part of the art-business. A process of repudiation was then followed by a concern for refinement and perfecting of a pure approach. Building towards an ideal which he felt most of his contemporaries ignored, Reinhardt devoted himself to the purification of art. This activity removed him theoretically from his fellow artists but in his isolation he hoped to find a true fine art.

Notes Chapter 5

1

Ad Reinhardt, "The Artist in Search of an Academy," Art Journal, (Spring, 1953), p. 249.

2

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 470. Concerning this same subject, Reinhardt also stated that "the fact that the attempts to integrate individual aesthetic expression socially and democratically by means of emphasis on specific subject matter (American scene, social content) and technique (academic, impressionistic, Cezannistic, expressionistic, etc.) have been not only unsuccessful, but very confusing to the public."

3

Andrew C. Ritchie, Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), p. 9.

4

"Abstractionists Unite," Art Digest, (April 1, 1937), p. 9.

5

"Who Trains Abstract Artists?" Art Digest, (April 1, 1939), p. 19.

6

Bruce Glaser, "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt," Art International, (December, 1966), p. 21.

7

"Ad Reinhardt," Studio International, (December, 1967), p. 265.

8

George McNeil, "American Abstractionists Venerable at Twenty," Art News, (May, 1956), p. 65.

9

American Abstract Artists 1936-66, (New York: Wittenborn, 1966), no page numbers.

10

Clement Greenberg, "America Takes the Lead 1945-65: The Artist Speaks," Art in America, (August, 1965), pp. 110-11.

11

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 470, Panel Discussion, no date given.

12

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame numbers 417-418, Lecture notes, not dated.

13

To the best of my knowledge the AAA is still in existence. Reinhardt broke ties with them sometime in the early fifties. It seems that the AAA could not keep up with the changing times of abstract art. They still maintain their outmoded function of upholding abstract art. George L.K. Morris, an outspoken member who was and still is the critic and crusader for the group, believes that the AAA still fills a pressing need. However, the 1966 publication was merely a nostalgic chronicle of the AAA's more militant past. Now outmoded and ineffectual, the group defends a past ideal.

14

Neil Welliver, "Albers on Albers," Art News, (January, 1966), p. 51.

15

Mary Fuller, "An Ad Reinhardt Monologue," Art Forum, (October, 1970), p. 36.

16

"Reviews and Previews," Art News, (March, 1955), p. 52.

17

Josef Albers, Interaction of Color (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 75.

18

Lucy Lippard, "Homage to a Square," Art in America, (July, 1967), p. 52.

19

Welliver, p. 68.

20

Elaine de Kooning, "Albers Paints a Picture," Art News, (November, 1950), p. 57.

21

Jean Charlot, "Nature and the Art of Josef Albers," College Art Journal, (1956), p. 196.

22
Glaser, p. 20.

23
"Think!," Time, (June 18, 1956), p. 80.

24
Lucy Lippard, "The Silent Art," Art in America,
(January, 1967), p. 62.

25
"Ad Reinhardt," Studio International, (December,
1967), p. 272.

26
Ibid, p. 272.

27
Albers, p. 10.

28
Fuller, p. 36.

29
Welliver, p. 69.

30
"Think!," p. 80.

31
Josef Albers, "Present and/or Past," Design,
(April, 1946), p. 16.

32
Lawrence Campbell, "Is Today's Artist with or
Against the Past?," Art News, (Summer, 1958), p. 57.

33
Glaser, p. 21. A much repeated maxim about the
color field painters reads: "Rothko pulled down the shade,
Newman closed the door, and Reinhardt turned out the light."
As for Reinhardt's personal relationship to Newman, he
commented the following: "Newman was a very close friend
of mine and I went abroad and by the time I got back I had
difficulty seeing him. He didn't list his phone number or
something like that and then I found out he was involved
in suing me for \$100,000 because I put him in a group. I
had mentioned 54 painters in a kind of mandala..."

34
Irving Sandler, "Reinhardt, the Purist Blacklash,"
Art Forum, (December, 1966), p. 41.

35

Martin James, "Today's Artists: Reinhardt,"
Art News Annual no. 3, (December, 1966), p. 41.

36

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-104 frame
number 41, Notations, not dated.

37

Sandler, p. 41.

38

Barnett Newman, "Jackson Pollack: An Artist's
Symposium," Art News, (April, 1967), p. 29.

39

Barnett Newman, "The First Man Was an Artist,"
Tiger's Eye, (October, 1947), p. 59.

40

Ralph Pomeroy, "Barnett Newman: Painting in its
Idea," Art and Artist, (July, 1969), p. 52.

41

Thomas B. Hess, "Editorial," Art News, (October,
1967), p. 23. Newman designed his 1950 exhibition announce-
ment as a white card printed in white ink. This may indi-
cate his temporary fancy for a kind of monochrome but his
fascination with greater variation than monochrome offered,
was more to his liking. His disinterest in exhibiting in
the fifties may have been a reaction to the sharp criticism
of his 1950-51 shows. During this time, he seemed to have
developed many of the ideas on the vertical he presented in
these Parsons' exhibitions.

42

Dorothy Gees Seckler, "Frontiers of Space," Art
in America, (Summer, 1962), p. 86. Newman once expressed
a desire to visit the tundra, so that he might have the sen-
sation of being surrounded by four horizons in a total
surrender to spatial infinity. It appears he wanted to
create much the same spatial sensation in his paintings.

43

Two Decades of American Painting, (New York:
Museum of Modern Art, 1966-67), no page numbers.

44

Seckler, p. 86.

45

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 451, Part VII of dogma, unpublished and not dated.

46

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 470, Panel Discussion, not dated.

47

"Ad Reinhardt," Studio International, (December, 1967), p. 269.

48

Elizabeth C. Baker, "Barnett Newman in a New Light," Art News, (February, 1969), p. 61. This idea of Newman's vertical mirroring the support has been suggested by a number of critics (Greenberg included). I am unsure as to who proposed the idea first.

49

Lippard, "The Silent Art," p. 63.

50

Baker, p. 61.

51

Seckler, p. 86.

52

Barbara Rose, Readings in American Art Since 1900 (New York: Praeger, 1968), pp. 159-60. Newman's concern for the passionate is a frequently repeated theme in his writing. In particular, "For Impassioned Criticism," Art News (Summer, 1968), pp. 26-7+ is an excellent source for further information and remarks about this.

53

Ad Reinhardt, "Reinhardt Paints a Picture," Art News, (March, 1965), p. 66.

54

Seckler, pp. 85-6.

55

Ad Reinhardt, "Timeless in Asia," Art News, (January, 1960), p. 35.

56

Seckler, p. 83.

57

Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," Art News, (May, 1957), pp. 37-8.

CHAPTER SIX An Exclusive Artistic Approach

Having discussed Reinhardt's dogma and many of the influential forces behind his ideas, it is now possible to consider more fully Reinhardt's art statement and contribution. It has been frequently stated in this text that Reinhardt was involved with a fine art. To him, the concept of art as "fine," "high," "noble," "free," "liberal," and "ideal" was academic. His aesthetic approach to art was an academic or classical artistic method. For him, the major twentieth century consideration in art was an uncompromising position toward the purity of art and the consciousness that art is only art and nothing else. Reinhardt stated that the abstract idiom was the best means of achieving an art-as-art.

The word "abstract" is synonymous with "pure," "absolute," "free" or "fine." The morality of art lies in its purity or abstractness, in the awareness of the "artist as artist" and of "art as art." 1

Reinhardt took a highly moral and didactic position in support of a new academy of fine art. He stated "esthetics is the ethics of the future and art-as-art is the ethics of the present. Art representing anything else is artistically immoral."² As far as Reinhardt was concerned, there was only one artistic position, one view, an absolute right or wrong. He was a purist opposed to corruption of the classical and fine style of painting.

What would corruption be in art? And my answer would be in the work that's too available, too loose, too open, too poetic. I would say it permits too many people to project their own ideas in it, and I don't like to see art that open, so that at some point anything goes, almost anyone could do it. I think that whole idea is corrupt. I think the idea of the artist making believe he doesn't know what he is doing is a corrupt one.³

Reinhardt said no to the mundane, vulgar, irrational, spontaneous, unconscious, expressionist, informal and accidental in favor of complete awareness, rational, uselessness, the absolute and the universal. His concern for art whose subject is art therefore sparked by his dissatisfaction with the corrupt art world. Increasingly, his work appears to be one of the more rational, formalistic attempts in the melee of styles which developed in the fifties and sixties.

Reinhardt's career was a systematic elimination of everything extraneous to his art. It is interesting and informative to parallel the following quote to Reinhardt's activity for it seems to indicate the same rejective course of his ideas.

The one history of painting progresses from the painting of a variety of ideas with a variety of subjects and objects, to one idea with a variety of subjects and objects, to one subject with a variety of objects, to one object with a variety of subjects, then to one object with one subject, to one object with no subject, and to one subject with no object, then to the idea of no object and no subject and no variety at all. There is nothing less significant in art, nothing more exhausting and immediately exhausted, then "endless variety."⁴

In this quote, Reinhardt envisioned the process of a more

encompassing view narrowed down to near extinction.

As already observed in the first chapter which analyzed the development in Reinhardt's writing, the structure, style and content of Reinhardt's ideas followed a distillation process similar to the above quote. This approach was his method of presenting his art-as-art theory. Hence, it is not surprising to discover that his art developed in the same manner. A survey of his art work proves the validity of this comparison.

During Reinhardt's early career in the thirties, he was strongly influenced by Stuart Davis and Carl Holty and painted semi-abstractions of a synthetic cubist nature (Figures 20 and 21). These were followed by loosely organized compositions that were complex, busy and colorful (Figure 22). In the early forties, an interest in an all-over tapestry effect changed his work into a textural writing style (Figure 23). At the same time, he experimented with the more brutal brush stroke in black and white abstractions (Figure 24). Eventually both the calligraphy and thick brush marks gave way to a more structured and close knit surface of irregular dashes of color (Figure 25). The dashes became larger strokes of bright colors in a brick like surface quality. The denser mosaic effect slowly disappeared as the vertical and horizontals became larger, more rectilinear and solid (Figure 26). The interest in color-space-shape relationships was at its height in these

1951 abstract paintings. The paintings were largely decorative panels and quite similar to the work of many of Reinhardt's contemporaries.

It was about this time that Reinhardt became increasingly dissatisfied with his peers' activities. He felt they were becoming overly concerned with their success. His work continued to change and significantly towards a more individual expression. It seems as if Reinhardt went through the earlier style changes as a repudiation process. A more distinctive style in which he continued to get rid of unnecessary elements ensued.

By 1952 the block shapes had become well defined bar or band shapes, which were very precise geometric forms. The colors were less saturated and tended to close values (Figures 27 and 28). The compositions were very flat geometric patterns in nearly monochromatic reds and blues on rectangular shaped canvases. These works seem like formal geometric color studies utilizing a subtle orchestration of color and optical play. The color values got closer and darker while the shapes became larger, fewer and more symmetrical. Although the first all-black painting appeared in 1954-55, Reinhardt continued to paint the red and blue abstract paintings into the late fifties. In the late fifties, the dark vertical canvas whose low values made forms less and less discernible predominated (Figures 29 and 30). In 1960 the vertical shape (which prompted critics to liken them to Eastern scrolls) was discarded in favor of the

black symmetrical square. The cross-like division of the square was to become all but invisible because of the blacks. The changes in the black square compositions were minute as Reinhardt continued to perfect this same painting until his death in 1967.

Thus, the painting and theory coincided in a structure of refinement. It is also logical to consider if they are parallel in content, although the relationship of the work and the word is less clearly definable. The most obvious similarity in content is observable at certain critical junctures in Reinhardt's writing. When Reinhardt made his first rejective statement in 1952, he also began to paint the first of his distinctive works. In the 1953-55 period as he was writing about the artist's search for a new academy, he struck upon the idea of a pure process and consequently strove to simplify his paintings. Just as the black paintings appeared so did his "Twelve Rules for a New Academy." He now had a system of rules to adhere to in his painting. During a brief period in the late fifties, Reinhardt's writings were disjointed in their purpose combining satire with paradox. Significantly, his painting activity was also in an ambivalent state, that is, he was doing not only black paintings but also red, blue and green monochromes. About 1960, he re-affirmed his own belief in his pure art method, writing a code of ethics for artists to re-establish the old classic virtues. What ensued was

an awareness that the artist was responsible for the direction of his activities. By the time of the publication of the first part of the art-as-art dogma, Reinhardt had dedicated himself to the one effort of the black square painting. This painting was a sign of his complete repudiation of all else but his own ideal of art-as-art. For him, painting became synonymous with the term art-as-art. Dogmatic in content, both the painting and writing continued in a process of a more simplified approach. As he repeatedly painted black square painting after black square painting with only minute changes toward perfection, he stated more succinctly his idea of a most extreme art form. The endless repetition of the black paintings paralleled Reinhardt's now staunch affirmations of the only viable painting (art) activity.

Thus, his entire artistic career can be seen as a step by step empirical process of distillation. Apparently, he was concentrating on discovering how far he could develop this idea short of abandoning art. His intention was to isolate and deal directly with the artness of art. We have seen that in reducing art to pure aesthetics, Reinhardt's art was a sum of renunciations. It is now time to evaluate on this level of content those rejections specifically to the black paintings to decide if and how Reinhardt achieved his aim.

It is evident that Reinhardt's work evolved with an

almost fanatical logic, expressed in ambiguous terms, toward an irreducible state. The black paintings are undoubtedly a part of the monotonal art tradition in which a minimum amount of visual material produces the extraordinary full artistic statement and minute changes significantly alter the painting. The painting demands of the viewer a complete involvement because of its nearly inaccessible comprehension. This effort is easily questionable because the paintings appear so empty. Reinhardt seems to have eliminated too much. Yet, if the paintings are analyzed we realize that Reinhardt reduced all the elements of line, color, form, volume, etc. as far as possible, thereby almost eliminating them. However, the fact that these elements still remain-although difficult to discern-is important.

The major element responsible for producing this marginal effect is the use of black. The blacks seem so maddeningly close that they almost deny change. The close values reluctantly expose the horizontal overlapping a vertical form. The subtle variations gradually indicate the minimum geometry of a central image-a black horizontal articulated on a black vertical on a black ground. Thus, the black aided in de-emphasizing all design elements and distractions.

Consequently, if we now analyze the black square painting according to Reinhardt's twelve rules for a new

academy we realize that in an absolute sense he achieved few of his specifications. There is a soft texture, a fine brushwork, a central cross image and design. The blacks are really red, blue and green blacks which have a hazy quality or dark atmosphere. Space is absorbing and indefinable. Time is suspended. Size is physically limited to 60 by 60 inches (approximate size of a man with his arms outstretched), but grand in concept. Movement is suggested in the optical play and inconstancy of form.

The following description of the black painting by Reinhardt indicates how he reconciled the ambivalent presence of design elements.

A square (neutral, shapeless) canvas, five feet wide, five feet high, as high as a man, as wide as a man's outstretched arms (not large, not small, sizeless) trisected (no composition) one horizontal form negating one vertical form (formless, no top, no bottom, directionless), three (more or less) dark (lightless) non-contrasting (colorless) colors, brushwork brushed out to remove brushwork, a mat, flat, freehand painted surface (glossless, textureless, non-linear, no hard edge) which does not reflect its surroundings—a pure, abstract, non-objective, timeless, spaceless, changeless, relationless, disinterested painting—an object that is self-conscious (no unconsciousness) ideal, transcendent, aware of no thing but Art (absolutely no anti-art). 5

Reinhardt felt he had sufficiently neutralized his art to negate the existence of design elements. He further substantiated this neutralization through the repetition which he considered working toward his fine art method.

The one work for a fine artist now, the one thing in painting to do, is to repeat the one-

size-canvas-the single-scheme, one colour-monochrome, one linear-division in each direction, one symmetry, one texture, one formal device, one free-hand-brushing, one rhythm, one working everything into one dissolution and one indivisibility, painting everything into one overall uniformity and non-irregularity...nothing that is not of the essence. 6

To Reinhardt, "no form" was the repetition of the same directionless form, "no color" was the repetition of the same black and near black colors, "no size" was the standard 60 by 60 inch canvas, "no image" was the use of the same stable square image, etc. The repetitive formula became the means of realizing the absolute essence of art. Reinhardt became a technically excellent craftsman of a ritualized painting process. He stated that "art is always made by craftsmen- it's never a spontaneous expression... art is involved with a certain perfection."⁷ Further amplification of Reinhardt's formularized methods is evident in the following:

The forms of art are always preformed and premeditated. The creative process is always an academic routine and sacred procedure. Everything is prescribed and proscribed. Only in this way there is no grasping or clinging to anything. Only a standard form can be imageless, only a stereotyped image can be formless, only a formula-ized art can be formulaless. There is no other way of getting rid of all qualities and substances. Finally there is nothing in the purest art to pin down or point out. 8

It is clearly evident that Reinhardt believed formula was the means of attaining his art-as-art. Having established his rules for an academy, he need only to

repeat and perfect to reach his ultimate goal. His statements that "the strictest formula for the finest artistic freedom" and "the completest control for the purest spontaneity"⁹ are more comprehensible if it is realized that the ritual is his process of striving for the ideal of a fine art.

It is relatively easy to accept the idea that Reinhardt was working with a formularized structure to attain an essence of art. However, the problem of his success cannot be overlooked. Many questions arise concerning the resultant product of the black paintings. They have been interpreted as austere and restrained, aloof and inaccessible, simple and symmetrical, harmonious and complex. This paradoxical response is the result of a radical method repudiating conventional notions of style, content and expression. The black paintings thus seem difficult to discuss because they attempt to relate to nothing except art. Yet their ambiguity invites interpretation while defying clear comprehension.

Depending upon the spectator's viewpoint, the paintings can seem reduced to complete stasis or suggestive of innumerable romantic associations. They have been seen as a kind of flat Cubism, subtle optical painting, serial art and conceptual painting. Barbara Rose has taken a middle of the road view and stated that they were a synthesis of the traditional rational and romantic polarities of

Western art.¹⁰ This wide variation in interpretation occurs because the paintings come as close to nothing as painting can. Yet the viewer is plagued by the tenuous connection with something and searches for a more associative solution than just art is art.

On the other hand, there are those who accept the paintings as Reinhardt's achievement of an art-as-art. Yet they are troubled because his art seems too pat, too finished, too contrived, too closed, and too pretentious with its formularized structure. Reinhardt's system is also cited as a moralizing form of art by an artist committed to one concept. He has been further accused of preaching an uncompromising position and profound intellectual dicta. Yet he proselytizes without expecting converts, thus the claim that Reinhardt must therefore be presenting a fraudulent or a satirical art form. The inevitable questions arise: Is there still enough art there to appreciate? Does a void not an essence exist at the end of Reinhardt's search? These interrogations indicate that the public fears they are being duped by an empty art. In actuality, Reinhardt attempted an art of the expressionless not of the least expression.

Reinhardt wanted to make a significant statement in the recent history of purist painting. He came to the viable conclusion that in these modern times "only by specializing in the artness of art-by purifying the

aesthetic factor to the exclusion of all others-that art can hope to remain a meaningful mode of expression."¹¹ By definition the formalist (or art-as-art) strain has the "suicidal tendency to narrow itself down, to zero in on specific problems to the exclusion of all others."¹² Each time this happens, it looks as if the end of art has arrived. More truthfully, Reinhardt has not heralded the end of art, but instead has defined the periphery beyond which purism cannot advance without repeating the past. The paintings are examples of a nearly perfect means of putting a principle of perfection into practice. They are demonstrations that painting can be reduced to near anonymity. Reinhardt relished being called the most "modern" modern artist and the most "abstract" abstract painter.

Valuing the painting over the idea, technique, style or theory, Reinhardt meant the black paintings to be experienced aesthetically. They are products of a grand, original problem.

The painting has only to do with the essence of art and nothing else.

Paintings that do not concern themselves with this essence are paintings that are other things, not fine art or perhaps partly art or pseudo art.

There is no aesthetic reason to make a part-art-art or a partly-art-art or a half-art as art.

Only a complete work of art that is completely a work of art and not anything else, partly or completely, can be called a fine work of fine art. ¹³

Reinhardt's strict adherence to an art which is wholly art

led him to recognize but one method, one process, one technique, one style, one painting.

There is only this painting to make
 There is only this painting of mine to make
 and there is only this painting for every artist to make
 and each artist makes this painting his own painting
 There is no reason to make any other painting
 There is only this one thing to do for fine artists.¹⁴

Reinhardt's experience of only one kind of painting as valid seems alarmingly shortsighted. However, he was more than willing to recognize that "I made the ultimate painting first, that's all."¹⁵ Hence, he only considered himself the first to make an art of finite possibilities not the last. For himself, he saw no reason to paint any other painting for the only problem of painting has only to do with essence. Anything else is besides the point.

Besides being the first artist to get rid of everything and the painter who rejected the most, Reinhardt felt he was the most extreme, oldest, new abstractionist, most negative, most avant-garde, most absolute, most logical, most academic, most critical, most satirical, most moral and most artist. Considering the artist's worst enemy to be himself, Reinhardt stated "the less an artist thinks in non-artistic terms and the less he exploits the easy, common skills, the more of an artist he is."¹⁶ In Reinhardt's estimation the true artist-as-artist was concerned with art-as-art and other artists-as-something else dealt with art-as-something other than just art. Further he stated:

The classic idea of an artist is somebody who knows what he's doing and who is a separate person. Even as an artist, he is separate from himself as a human being. I never go anywhere except as an artist. 17

To Reinhardt the art-as-art artist is always rational and self-conscious. The rejection of everything but the art-for-art concept allows the true artist to be more potently for an art which is conscious of its goals. Reinhardt considered art the "supreme affirmation of self-sufficiency, separateness attributed to objects as distinct from self."¹⁸ Reinhardt made even stronger statements of his beliefs that an artist should be his own master.

To be, to feel oneself a victim is in itself not to be an artist, for it is the nature of the artist to live, not in the world of which he is an effect but in the world of which he is the cause, the world of his own creation.¹⁹

Thus the artist through his art could inhabit a world of his own choosing-separate from anything other than art and where his art could become...

...progressively conscious of itself, return upon itself, continual return to beginning, end, questioning, working on itself, deepening consciousness, penetrate itself, know itself, renew itself, arrive at its soul.²⁰

Logical questions to arise from this concern for awareness are: Was Reinhardt conscious of his own role? of his own activity? The answer to these questions must be yes if we accept Reinhardt's statement that the highest level of artist is that of art-as-artist or the completely conscious artist. He stated so emphatically his art-for-art

position that it is difficult not to believe he was aware of his position.

I believe in one art, the master almighty, maker of all art in heaven and on earth, and of art works visible and invisible; and in one art, the only work, begotten before all worlds, art of art, very art of very art, made. 21

He may have been desirous of a conscious attitude. But just how aware was he of his own originality and absolute art standards? How much did he depend on others' aesthetic principles? And what new ideas did Reinhardt contribute to pure art? Reinhardt answered a number of these questions in the following interview excerpts:

I didn't set up these rules. You find these all through time. I haven't made one original statement. These have all come from artists who have said something like this as artists.

Sometimes someone asked me why I picked these ideas, and I would answer that I was forced into them. I have absolutely no desire to present my point of view at all. This is an absolute aesthetic point of view, and aesthetic ideology if you want. 22

It isn't possible to be original and not possible to do something that isn't original. It isn't a real issue. 23

Thus, he admitted he was a product of his influences and background. His experiences encompassing the realms of art education, criticism, theory and the artist were invaluable for the creation of his art system. What resulted was a hybrid art and artist—one whose knowledge and genius reflected the past but also was a statement of the present. He was not concerned with originality but with painting the

most art. Taking his ideas from the past, he strove to perfect ideas which promoted his art-as-art concept.

How aware was Reinhardt of his own importance and historical placement? Since Reinhardt subscribed to the idea that art forms were developed in one predestined recurrent stylistic cycle, it is not surprising that he professed all arts as part of "one consistent evolution mirror(ing) man's diversity in space."²⁴ It is also known that he believed in "as much consciousness as possible" in order to develop "historical awareness as part of artistic creation itself."²⁵ Further he stated:

The one subject of a hundred years of modern art is that awareness of art of itself, of art preoccupied with its own process and means, with its own identity and distinction, art concerned with its own unique statement, art conscious of its own evolution and history and destiny, toward its own freedom, its own dignity, its own essence, its own reason, its own morality, and its own conscience. 26

Thus, Reinhardt was a firm advocate of the artist being conscious of his own art and of art history, of the artist being aware of art history and of his role in history.

The artist is responsible for his history and his nature
His history is part of his nature
His nature as artist is part of his art-history.²⁷

The extent to which he believed in this art-historical kind of art and art activity is supported by such comments as "making art history," His Journal for Some Future Art Historian (Appendix 9) is further evidence of his stance as well as his statement that his black paintings

"are a logical development of a personal art history."²⁸

The different levels that Reinhardt developed in his art-historical approach are revealing. He defined art history as follows:

The history of art is the history of art not the history of the universe or the history of the earth or the history of man-or the history of society or the history of individuals or the history of history. The history of art is the history of art-forms, art-objects, art-worlds, art-artists. ²⁹

Thus his definition of art history has the same structure as his art-as-art definition, that is, it is nothing but itself. The paralleled nature of these definitions becomes more incriminating in the following in which Reinhardt includes as another definition of art history his art-as-art form.

History of Art is a fixed point, essentially immovable, changeless, square, dark, unreflecting, timeless its space is in the mind and in the museum in styles and schools and categories. and names. ³⁰

Further, his paintings have been read as historical commentaries and criticisms because they do not hang easily next to other paintings. The black canvases make other paintings appear too colorful, too pretty, too nice, too frivolous, too unnecessary. At the same time, the black paintings seem to make a definite historical comment visually stating that art is art and comes only from art. Reinhardt readily accepted the judgement of his paintings as criticisms and as art historicism (one of the few

evaluations he did not disclaim). Yet, he was definitely not ridiculing art for he had a deep respect for it.

The one content and one matter of the art-historical process is the doctrine of a historical immaterialism-art is a super structure, a grand pattern and noble manner and quiet grandeur and will never wither away. 31

Accepting the fact that Reinhardt believed his art was an art-historical art leads to the further claim that he was the first art-historical artist. He states such in the following:

I'm the last historic artist
And the first post-historic artist.
I was born for abstract art, into it in the year of
its origin and it was born for me in the year of
my birth.

The post-historic artist is the timeless artist-as-artist
The artist-as-artist is the post-historic artist
The post-historic artist is the artist aware of himself
as artist, aware of art-as-artist, aware of everything that is not art in art, inside or outside.
The artist-as-artist is the complete artist, the completely conscious artist, totally aware. 32

The art-historical-artist aware of his art-historical-art of necessity was conscious of his art history. Thus, Reinhardt said:

Find one's art in the whole history of art
and in history of art find one's own entire
art history. 33

To Reinhardt, art's historical awareness is part of artistic creation itself.

It may seem that this assumption of Reinhardt as an art-historical-artist painting an art-historical-art is

merely a case of eloquent rhetoric. To what purpose and goal could Reinhardt hope to achieve an art aware of itself? Was the enlightenment of his own position in history of any real benefit? Or was it merely a case of his confusing his roles of artist, historian, educator and writer?

A positive advantage of his historically aware position was that it allowed him to determine with complete control the development and direction of his art. Yet, this raises the problem of his art being considered a pre-determined art reduced to a predictive science. Also, one could speculate that Reinhardt's commitment to his ideal made him a victim of his own art-as-art philosophy. It would then seem that he was forced to continue repeating his art-as-art statements along with his black paintings or refute his own artistic efforts. This last seems much too contrived a solution. Also, it is difficult to accept because Reinhardt's rational approach was founded on total awareness of his objectives. Since complete consciousness was part of his historical method, he would have had to recognize his loss of art as a sacrifice to a purified art cause. This admission has no bearing in Reinhardt's art system which strove to free art from all such dependencies and purposes.

Then what better answer could there be to understand Reinhardt's purely intellectual art process? Basically, it was a rational approach of an art-historical art as a

fundamental means of understanding art. Emptied and purified by an historical awareness, an art-as-art could occur. It would then be free of all other meanings but its art meaning, all other purposes but its art purpose, all other content but its art content, etc. In making an art only of art as he defined it, Reinhardt hoped to deal with a truly fine and pure art. He was presenting a means of comprehending art not life or anything else.

One last consideration remains, that is, how seriously can one take Reinhardt? All too often he tends to mock art and the art scene with his own art and himself included. This verbal play is a case of masking sincerity in irony and satire. A master of wit, Reinhardt's glib statements might seem merely a "put on" to the hasty reader. In actuality, they are his means of clarifying the present position of the art world which he felt had become a commercial enterprise and a movie star business. By scoffing at the idea of headline art, he inevitably used the same tactics to describe his hyper-refined art-as-art. Thus, he plays with these ideas in a form of gamesmanship, making it difficult to accept his pronouncements literally. Yet, his continued efforts in painting and writing are evidence of his seriousness and dedication to a fine art ideal. It therefore seems he became seriously committed to irony and satire as a means of stating the true fine art. Because of this method. the ultimate value of Reinhardt's efforts as

an aesthetic or conceptual product remains questionable. His uniqueness may finally be recognized in his eccentricity through which he made one of the most unusual statements in the art for art tradition.

Notes Chapter 6

1
Irving Sandler, "In the Galleries," New York Post,
(August 12, 1962).

2
Ibid.

3
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 473, Resnick-Reinhardt Discussion, 1961.

4
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," Art International,
(December, 1962), p. 37.

5
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6
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37.

7
"Black," Art Canada, (October, 1967), p. 13.

8
Ad Reinhardt, "Timeless in Asia," Art News, (Jan-
uary, 1960), p. 35.

9
Ad Reinhardt, "25 Lines of Words on Art," It Is,
(Spring, 1958), p. 42.

10
Barbara Rose, Ad Reinhardt's Black Paintings
1951-1967, (New York: Marlborough-Geerson Gallery, March,
1970), p. 16.

11
Hilton Kramer, "Art," Nation, (June 22, 1963),
p. 533.

12
Lucy Lippard, "Silent Art," Art in America,
(January, 1967), p. 58.

13

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 283, Segments from last portion of dogma, unpublished and not dated.

14

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 282, Segments from last portion of dogma, unpublished and not dated.

15

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 327, Segments from last portion of dogma, unpublished and not dated.

16

Ad Reinhardt, "Twelve Rules for a New Academy," Art News, (May, 1957), p. 37.

17

Mary Fuller, "An Ad Reinhardt Monologue," Art Forum, (October, 1970), p. 40. Supporting his confirmed attitude, he further stated: "It is not right for an artist who knows what's not right, and especially who is without sin, not to tell artists who don't know what's not right, what not to do, and not to cast the first stone."

18

Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 273, Notations, not dated.

19

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20

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22

Bruce Glaser, "An Interview with Ad Reinhardt," Art International, (December, 1966), p. 20.

23

"Ad Reinhardt," Studio International, (December, 1967), p. 272.

- 24
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- 25
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 294, Notations, not dated.
- 26
Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," p. 37.
- 27
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 258, Notations, not dated.
- 28
Ad Reinhardt, "Three Statements," Art Forum,
(March, 1966), p. 35.
- 29
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 197, Notations, not dated.
- 30
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 197, Notations, not dated.
- 31
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
number 197, Notations, not dated.
- 32
Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame
numbers 283 and 286, Segment of last portion of dogma,
unpublished and not dated.
- 33
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Archives of American Art microfilms N69-100, N69-101, N69-102, N69-103, N69-104, N69-105, N69-106. The information contained in these microfilms, particularly N69-103 and N69-104, were a primary source for this thesis. The materials in the films were donated at Reinhardt's death by his estate and include every item in his possession concerning his art career. Reinhardt's pack-rat nature led him to preserve an enormous amount of papers including his membership cards in artist's groups, college fee cards, scrapbooks, letters, notes, and newspaper clippings. Scanning through the material, one can obtain a comprehensive view of the man and his career. Of specific importance were microfilms N69-103 and N69-104. These contained not only newspaper articles and clippings which reviewed his work but also his private notebooks and lecture notes. To this date, a great majority of this information is unpublished and for the most part ~~is~~ not precisely dated but easily categorized. These unpublished writings were vital aids for understanding Reinhardt's efforts and gave innumerable clues for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The entire list of the series included all of the below listing. I discovered this listing (although not all of these cartoons) in the Archives of American Art microfilm N69-104 frame number 356. It appears Reinhardt intended to compile all of the cartoons for a book. As far as I know, no such book was ever published.

TITLE?

INTRODUCTION - HOW TO LOOK AT THIS BOOK (cast of characters)

PREFACE - HOW TO LOOK AT A DODO (looking at a picture vs.
looking at a painting)

HOW TO LOOK AT AN ARTIST (the artist as a special human being)

HOW TO LOOK AT LOOKING (optica, object, subject, spectator, etc.)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART-TALK (art terminology, semantics, definitions, etc.)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART AND NATURE (art as imitation of nature, music, etc.)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART AND LIFE (anthropomorphism -- art as giving life to things)

HOW TO LOOK AT THINGS (dissolution of the object (wine-glass) in painting)

HOW TO LOOK AT SPACE-TIME (things in space, space in things, space in history, light-space, etc.)

HOW TO LOOK AT CREATION (fundamental points of view, east vs. west)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART-REPORTAGE (artist as reporter and recorder)

HOW TO LOOK AT ICONOGRAPHY (how to make signs, symbols, and picture-writing yourself)

HOW TO LOOK AT A SPIRAL (history and meanings of the spiral and its uses)

HOW TO LOOK AT HERALDRY (how to make your own coat of arms, how to look at a theme)

HOW TO LOOK AT AN OPTICAL ILLUSION (how to look out, traditional visual stunts)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART & INDUSTRY (business as art-patron, art in advertising, commercialism)

HOW TO LOOK AT ART & POLITICS (how to make political cartoons at home)

HOW TO LOOK AT AN ART-CRITIC (how to read art-criticism)

- HOW TO LOOK AT A HOUSE (a short history of architecture, wells to windows, etc.)
- HOW TO LOOK AT A STATUE (a collection of sculptures of nudes with explanations)
- HOW TO LOOK AT CHILDREN'S PAINTING (how children create)
- HOW TO LOOK AT A MOVIE (relation of aesthetics to painting)
- HOW TO LOOK AT A MURAL (an explanation of Picasso's "Guernica")

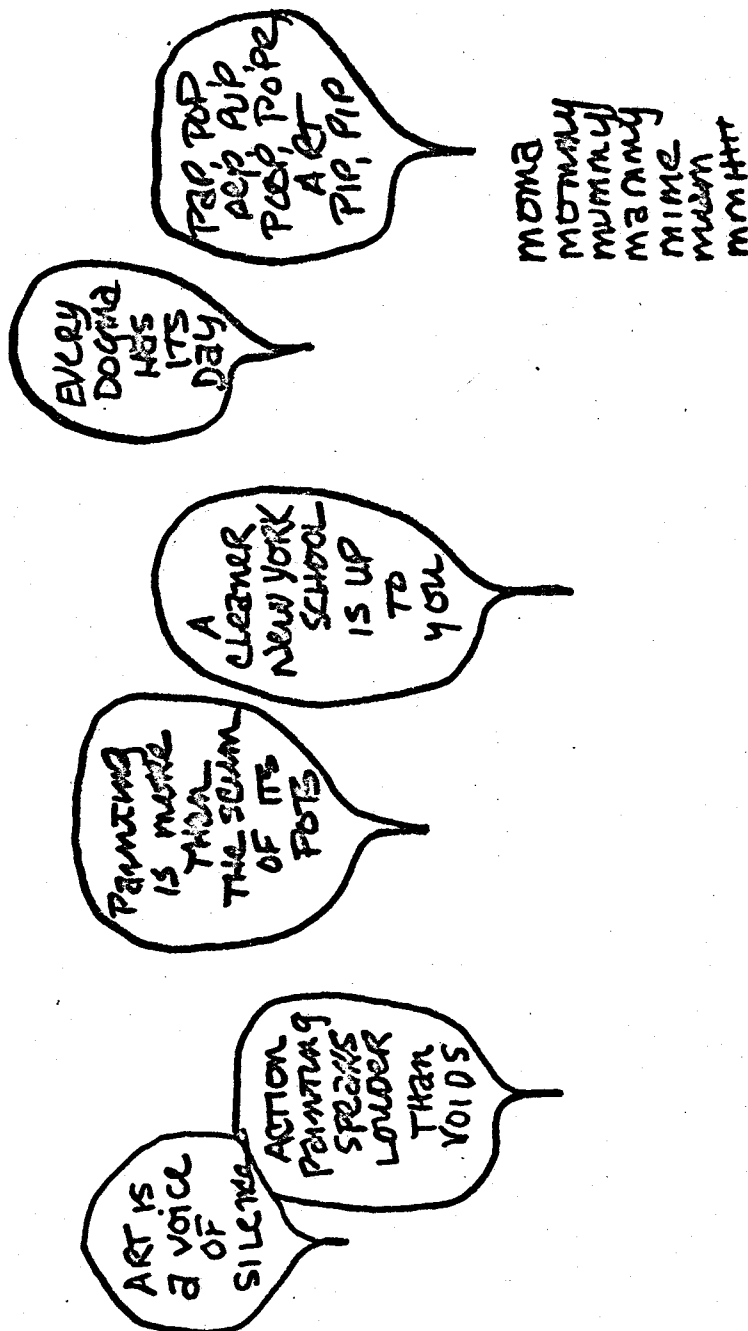
- HOW TO LOOK AT AN OUTLOOK (philosophies in painting, materialism vs. idealism, etc.)
- HOW TO LOOK AT COLOR (psychology, symbolic meanings, associations, etc.)
- HOW TO LOOK AT STRUCTURE (form, relationship, design)
- HOW TO LOOK AT A TRADITIONAL PICTURE (how to look at objects in museums)
- HOW TO LOOK AT MODERN PAINTING (recent painting traditions)
- HOW TO LOOK AT SURREALIST ART (subconscious, irrational, etc.)
- HOW TO LOOK AT ABSTRACT ART (balance, rhythm, unity, variety, proportion, harmony)

- HOW TO LOOK AT PEOPLE (races of mankind)
- HOW TO LOOK AT YOURSELF (psycho-analysis)
- HOW TO LOOK AT YOUR OWN PICTURE (how to use a camera)
- HOW TO LOOK AT YOUR OWN PAINTING (materials and techniques of painting - how to stretch a canvas, hold a brush, squeeze a tube, mix a color, etc -- "studio secrets," how to look like an artist)

- END PAPERS - - - (The tree of modern art in America brought up to date)

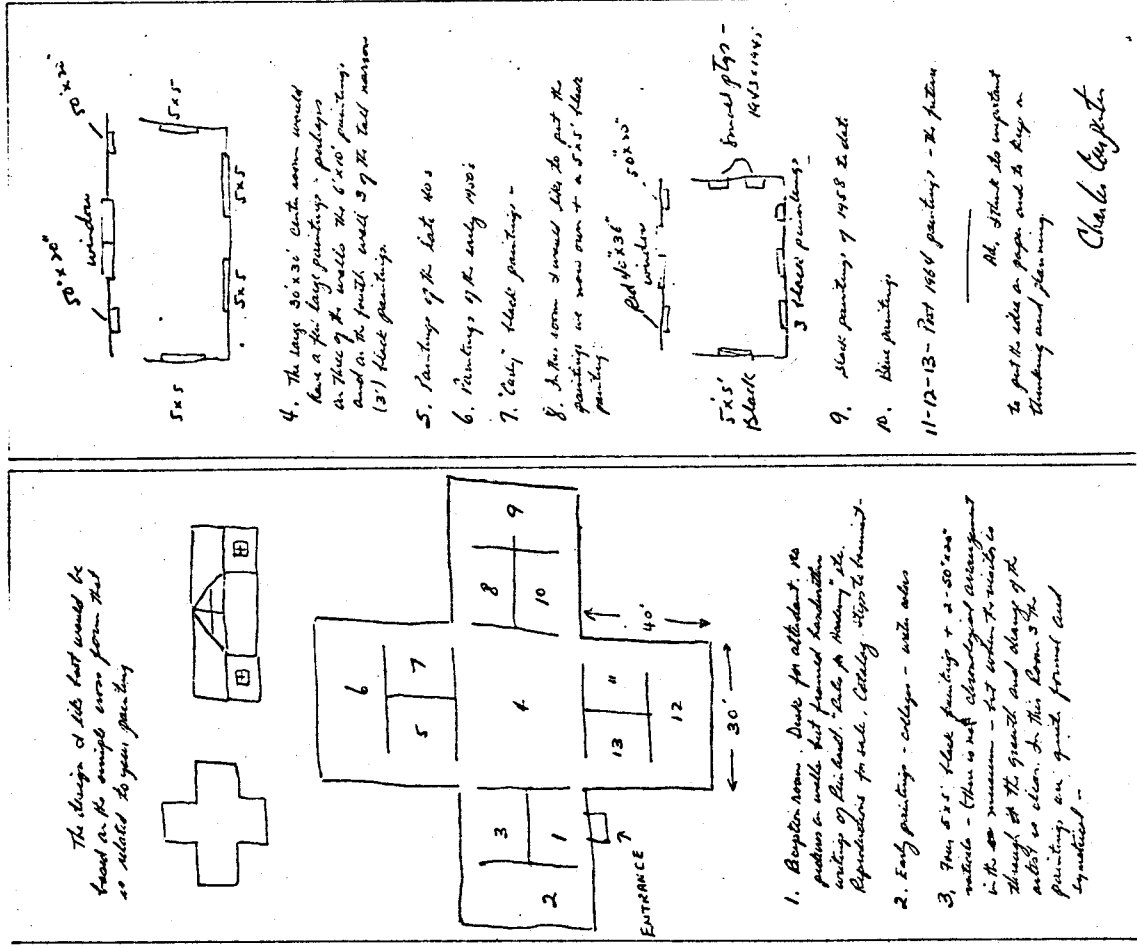
Appendix 2

This cartoonless cartoon was a scribbling by Reinhardt which was preserved in the Archives of American Art microfilm N69-104 frame number 685.



Appendix 3

This plan for an "Ad Reinhardt Museum" by Charles Carpenter was made in 1962. It is reproduced from the catalogue from the Jewish Museum show in 1967 written by Lucy R. Lippard



Notated dated
August 7, 1962

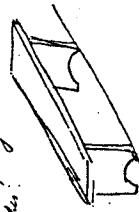
Dear Al,
I've had an idea for a long time and I'm
very sure I know how to build it in the past I dream
on paper. Here:

THE AD REINHARDT MUSEUM.

One always felt that "collections" like the
Museum of Modern Art performed a real purpose
but this always began for a museum coming
on a site. The only thought I can think of the
Ad Reinhardt Museum in Philadelphia - and so there
a thought museum some other in the west?
The existing museum has one or perhaps a few
examples of a series of artists - but here a
museum of "modernism". It's too little about
any one artist.

Your paintings would be included in such
a setting. I am thinking that the museum should
be in a country or suburban setting - but not
and alone. The building should not be "modern"
country. Perhaps on the top of a gentle rise in
an open field. No trees near. No view. No
landscaping. Parking for a few cars beyond
the field. And a quiet gate across the open
field to a somewhat picturesque, traditional
building. No suggestion for the art inside.

Inside, dark stained wood floors - plain
white plaster walls. A minimum of lighting.
Use of natural light, lighting with
its constant change. Only furniture
in rooms single, black, modern -
most completely made with natural wood
panels.



I've thought a lot about the
building, its arrangement and the number
of pictures. The whole idea is a lot of thought
planning and the idea of a good building (and
to do with an anonymous building).

Appendix 4

Reinhardt included an analysis of Mondrian in a lecture which he gave in the forties. The notes from this lecture can be found in the Archives of American Art microfilm N69-103 frame number 418, unpublished and not dated. Because the photostat of the original document is nearly unreadable, I have transcribed the section of the text in which Reinhardt analyzes Mondrian. This text (the only indication of dating being the statement about World War II) provides an excellent example of Reinhardt's early writing which is not overly startling or perceptive. Some awareness of aesthetics and art problems is evident. However, none of the wit and imaginativeness of his later writings exist. Also, it gives little insight into the complexity of Mondrian. For these reasons, I did not include an extensive analysis of it in the body of the paper. Nonetheless, I do think it is significant for secondary purposes.

Consider the recent Mondrian exhibition. These paintings, sensuous and concrete manifestations of a certain kind of thinking and understanding, which pretended to be architecture and sculpture too, and conceivably biology and engineering (biotechnics, psycho-physics). etc., demanded in their limited and concentrated area direct, first-hand experience for its appreciation; a key or secret entrance (the trap) being unavailable because it wasn't there. No glib or easy explanations for the art-critic-writer was possible here either, for if anything "looked" what it "did," here it was. The intellectual and emotional content was in precisely what the lines, colors, and spaces told, and not in anything else, (the form and content being one).

This artist, feeling very keenly (as artist) the implications and potentialities of our aesthetic and

scientific knowledge, stated recently that "all our homes should be so beautiful we would not want to leave them." And in a social structure which permitted the artist only an independent and selfish relation to art, this work claims to have been the most objective approach possible -- the recognition of the limitations of the medium and the development of individual sensibility to lines, colors, spaces, in this instance, a preference for the horizontal and vertical lines as the stronger, and for the primary colors, as the most dynamic, (curved, continuous forms in other dimensions or the creations of an aesthetic environment would require a completely new approach and solution). But the concrete result, not the philosophical pretension, does the trick. What greater challenge today, (in subjective and two dimensions) to disorder and insensitivity; what greater propaganda for integration, than this emotionally intense, dramatic, division of space?

How can fine plastic artists pretend to less? How can we avoid demanding even harshly, of an artist whose concern should be with the lives of our people at war today, that he should do all the political, social, and aesthetic thinking and communicating of which he is capable?

Ad Reinhardt

Twelve rules for a new academy

by Ad Reinhardt

Appendix 5

How a well-known abstract painter would

'give certain rules to

our art" in order to "render it pure"

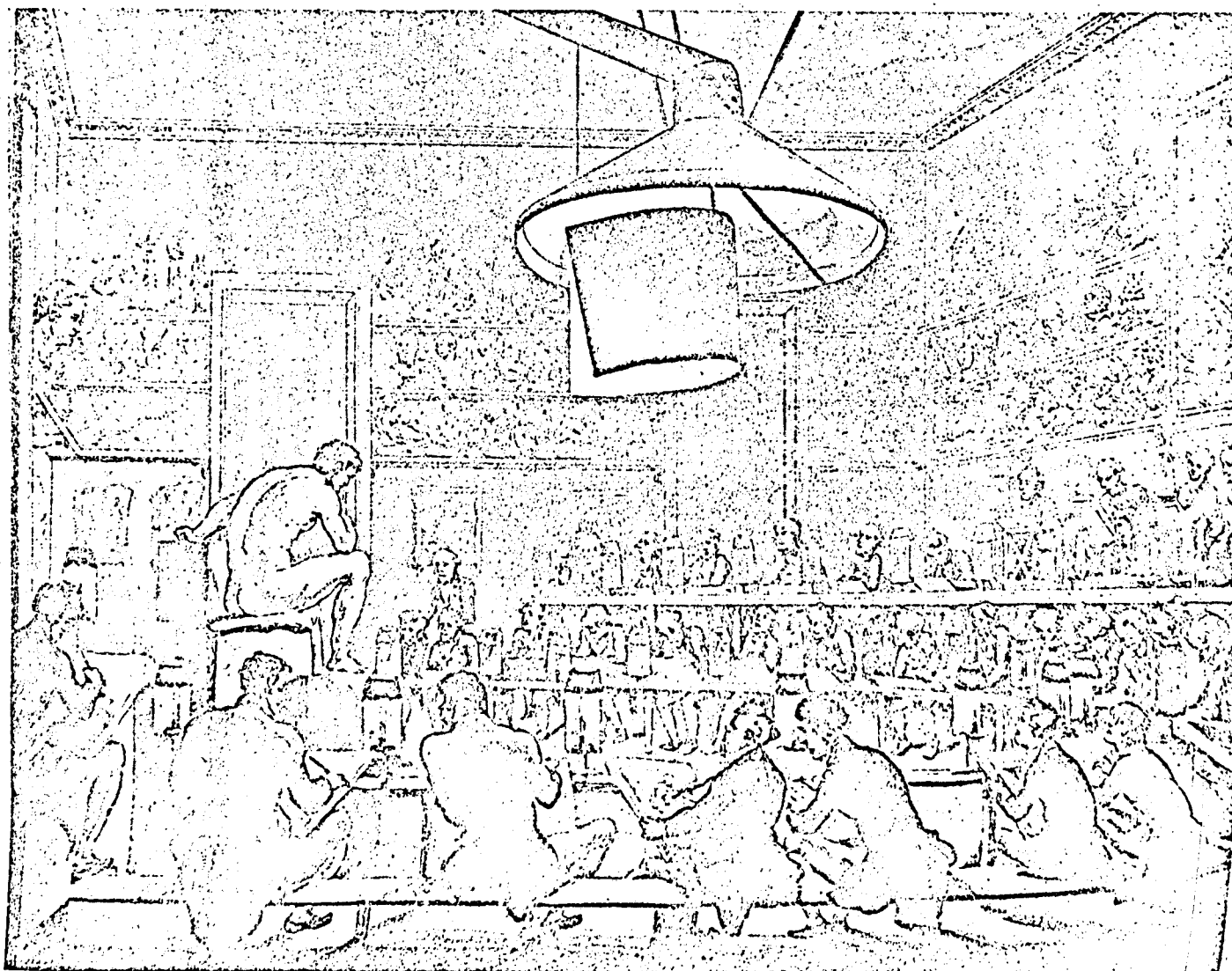
This article was published in
Art News volume 57 May, 1957
on pages 37-8+.

Evil and error in art are art's own "uses" and "actions." The sins and sufferings of art are always its own improper involvements and mixtures, its own mindless realisms and expressionisms.

The humiliation and trivialization of art in America during the last three decades have been the easy exploitations and eager popularizations of art by the American artists themselves.

Ashcan- and Armory-Expressionists mixed their art up with life-muck-raking and art-marketing. Social- and Surreal-Expressionists of the 'thirties used art as an "action-on-the-public," but succeeded mainly in expressing themselves; and Abstract-Expressionists of the 'forties and 'fifties using art initially as a "self-expression," succeeded in acting upon the whole world. The business boom of the 'twenties orphaned the alienated

Practicing rules in the old academy: *Drawing from Life at the Royal Academy, 1808*, by Rowlandson and Pugin, aquatint.



artist but the great depression of the 'thirties witnessed the tender engagement of art to government. Ten years after that, the ardent marriage of art and business and war was celebrated with Pepsi-Cola in ceremonial contests called "Artists for Victory" at America's greatest museum of art. By the 'fifties, armies of art's offsprings were off to school and Sunday school, crusading for art-education and religious decoration.

From "Artists for Ashcan and Dust-Bowl" to "Artist for America-First and Social Security" to "Artists for Victory" to "Artists for Action in Business, Religion and Education," the portrait of the artist in America in the twentieth century shapes up into a figure resembling Al Capp's "Available Jones," who is always available to anyone, any time, for anything at all, at any price.

(The "ice has been broken," the ivory-tower flooded by unschooled professionals, the walls of the academy washed out by schooled primitives, and the sanctum-sanctorum blasphemed by Fauve-Folk, Bauhaus-Bacchuses and house-broken Samurai.)

The conception of art as "fine," "high," "noble," "free," "liberal" and "ideal" has always been academic. The argument of free or fine artists has never been between art and something else, but "between true art and art submitted to some other, quite different, values." "There are not two arts, there is only one." "No man can embrace true art till he has explored and cast out false art." The academy of art, whether the Western or Eastern ideal, has always aimed at "the correction of the artist," not "the enlightenment of the public." The idea of the "academy" of art in the seventeenth century, of "esthetics" in the eighteenth, of the "independence" of art in the nineteenth, and of the "purity" of art in the twentieth, restate, in those centuries in Europe and America, the same "one point of view." Fine art can only be defined as exclusive, negative, absolute and timeless. It is not practical, useful, related, applicable or subservient to anything else. Fine art has its own thought, its own history and tradition, its own reason, its own discipline. It has its own "integrity" and not someone else's "integration" with something else.

Fine art is not "a means of making a living" or "a way of living a life." Art that is a matter of life and death cannot be fine or free art. An artist who dedicates his life to art, burdens his art with his life and his life with his art. "Art is Art, and Life is Life."

The "tradition" of art is art "out of time," art made fine, art emptied and purified of all other-than-art meanings, and a museum of fine art should exclude everything but fine art. The art tradition stands as the antique-present model of what has been achieved and what does not need to be achieved again. Tradition shows the artist what not to do. "Reason" in art shows what art is not. "Higher Education for the artist should be 'liberal,' 'free' and the 'learning of greatness.'" "To teach and enlighten is the task of wise and virtuous men." "No great painter was ever self-taught." "Artists must learn and learn to forget their learning." "The way to know is to forget."

"The Guardian of the True Tradition in Art" is the Academy of Fine Art: "to give certain rules to our art and to render it pure." The first rule and absolute standard of fine art, and paint-

ing, which is the highest and freest art, is the purity of it. The more uses, relations and "additions" a painting has, the less pure it is. The more stuff in it, the busier the work of art, the worse it is. "More is less."

The less an artist thinks in non-artistic terms and the less he exploits the easy, common skills, the more of an artist he is. "The less an artist obtrudes himself in his painting, the purer and clearer his aims." The less exposed a painting is to a chance public, the better. "Less is more."

The Six Traditions to be studied are: (1) the pure icon, (2) pure perspective, pure line and pure brushwork, (3) the pure landscape, (4) the pure portrait, (5) the pure still-life, (6) pure form, pure color and pure monochrome. "Study ten thousand paintings and walk ten thousand miles." "Externally keep yourself away from all relationships, and internally, have no hankerings in your heart." "The pure old men of old slept without dreams and waked without anxiety."

The Six General Canons or the Six Noes to be memorized are: (1) No Realism or Existentialism. "When the vulgar and commonplace dominate, the spirit subsides." (2) No Impressionism. "The artist should once and forever emancipate himself from the bondage of appearance." "The eye is a menace to clear sight." (3) No Expressionism or Surrealism. "The laying bare of oneself," autobiographically or socially, "is obscene." (4) No Fauvism, primitivism or brute art. "Art begins with the getting-rid of nature." (5) No Constructivism, sculpture, plasticism or graphic arts. No collage, paste, paper, sand or string. "Sculpture is a very mechanical exercise causing much perspiration, which mingling with grit, turns into mud." (6) No "trompe-l'oeil," interior decoration or architecture. The ordinary qualities and common sensitivities of these activities lie outside free and intellectual art.

The Twelve Technical Rules (or How to Achieve the Twelve Things to Avoid) to be followed are:

1. No texture. Texture is naturalistic or mechanical and is a vulgar quality, especially pigment-texture or impasto. Palette-knifing, canvas-stabbing, paint-scumbling and other action-techniques are unintelligent and to be avoided. No accidents or automatism.

2. No brushwork or calligraphy. Hand-writing, hand-working and hand-jerking are personal and in poor taste. No signature or trade-marking. "Brushwork should be invisible." "One should never let the influence of evil demons gain control of the brush."

3. No sketching or drawing. Everything, where to begin and where to end, should be worked out in the mind beforehand. "In painting the idea should exist in the mind before the brush is taken up." No line or outline. "Madmen see outlines and therefore they draw them." A line is a figure, a "square is a face." No shading or streaking.

4. No forms. "The finest has no shape." No figure or fore- or background. No volume or mass, no cylinder, sphere or cone, or cube or boogie-woogie. No push or pull. "No shape or substance."

5. No design. "Design is everywhere."

6. No colors. "Color blinds." "Colors [Continued on page 56]

Twelve rules continued from page 38

are an aspect of appearance and so only of the surface," and are "a distracting embellishment." Colors are barbaric, unstable, suggest life, "cannot be completely controlled" and "should be concealed." No white. "White is a color, and all colors." White is "antiseptic and not artistic, appropriate and pleasing for kitchen fixtures, and hardly the medium for expressing truth and beauty." White on white is "a transition from pigment to light" and "a screen for the projection of light" and "moving" pictures.

7. No light. No bright or direct light in or over the painting. Dim, late afternoon, non-reflecting twilight is best outside. No *chiaroscuro*, "the malodorous reality of craftsmen, beggars, toppers with rags and wrinkles."

8. No space. Space should be empty, should not project, and should not be flat. "The painting should be behind the picture frame." The frame should isolate and protect the painting from its surroundings. Space divisions within the painting should not be seen.

9. No time. "Clock-time or man's time is inconsequential." "There is no ancient or modern, no past or future in art. A work of art is always present." The present is the future of the past, not the past of the future.

10. No size or scale. Breadth and depth of thought and feeling in art have no relation to physical size. Large sizes are aggressive, positivist, intemperate, venal and graceless.

11. No movement. "Everything is on the move. Art should be still."

12. No object, no subject, no matter. No symbols, images or signs. Neither pleasure nor pain. No mindless working or mindless non-working. No chessplaying.

Supplementary regulations are: No easel or palette. Low, flat, sturdy benches work well. Brushes should be new, clean, flat, even, 1 inch wide, and strong. "If the heart is upright, the brush is firm." No noise. "The brush should pass over the surface lightly and smoothly" and quietly. No rubbing or scraping. Paint should be permanent, free of impurities, mixed and stored in jars. The scent should be of "pure spirits of turpentine, unadulterated and freshly distilled." "The glue should be as clean and clear as possible." Canvas is better than silk or paper, linen better than cotton. There should be no shine in the finish. Gloss reflects and relates to the changing surroundings. "A picture is finished when all traces of the means used to bring about the end have disappeared."

The fine art studio should have a "rain-tight roof" and be 25 feet wide and 30 feet long, with extra space for storage and sink. Paintings should be stored away and not continually looked at. The ceiling should be 12 feet high. The studio should be separate from the home and living, "away from the claims of concubinage and matrimony." A fine art department should be separate from the rest of the school.

The fine artist should have a fine mind, "free of all passion, ill-will and delusion".

The fine artist need not sit cross-legged.

This essay is based on a paper read at the 45th annual meeting of the College Art Association at the Detroit Institute of Art, Saturday morning, January 26, 1957, a clear sunny morning.

1. Sources of quotations from the ancient will be supplied by the author upon written request.

Appendix 6

Principles of Neo-Plasticism were reproduced from Michel Seuphor's, Piet Mondrian, published in

London by Thames and Hudson

with no publishing date given.

I. General Principles of Neo-Plasticism.

1. The plastic medium should be the flat plane or the rectangular prism in primary colors (red, blue, and yellow) and in non-color (white, black, and gray). In architecture, empty space counts as non-color. The material can count as color.

2. There must be an equivalence of plastic means. Different in size and color, they should nevertheless have equal value. In general, equilibrium involves a large uncolored surface or an empty space, and a rather small colored surface or space filled with matter.

3. The duality of opposing elements in the plastic medium is also required in the composition.

4. Abiding equilibrium is achieved through opposition and is expressed by the straight line (limit of the plastic means) in its principal opposition, i. e., the right angle.

5. The equilibrium that neutralizes and annihilates the plastic means is achieved through the proportions within which the plastic means are placed, and which create the living rhythm.

6. All symmetry shall be excluded.

II. Neo-Plasticism and Form.

In nature, relations are veiled by matter appearing as form, color, or its natural properties. This "morphoplasticism" was unconsciously followed in the past by all the arts. Thus in the past, art was "after nature." For centuries painting plastically expressed relations through natural form and color until it came in our day to the plasticism of relations alone. For centuries, painters composed by means of natural form and color; at present the composition itself is the plastic expression, the image.

III. Neo-Plasticism and Color.

Despite its "interiorized" plastic expression, Neo-Plasticism still is painting. Its means of expression is pure and definite color, in planes which remain equivalent to the surface of the picture; in other words, color remains flat on a flat surface. It is not weakened by having to follow the modulations of the form; thus it is stronger than in morphoplasticism. Color finds its equivalent opposition in non-color, that is, in white, black, and gray.

IV. Psychological and Social Consequences of Neo-Plasticism.

Balance through the equivalence of nature and mind, of that which is individual and that which is universal, of the feminine and the masculine – this general principle of Neo-Plasticism can be achieved not only in plastic art, but also in man and in society. In society, the equivalence of what relates to matter and of what relates to mind can create a harmony beyond anything hitherto known.

By the interiorization of what is known as matter, and by the externalization of what is known as mind – until now, the two have been kept pretty far apart! – mind-matter becomes a unity.

Neo-Plasticism demonstrates the exact order. It stands for equity, because the equivalence of the plastic means in the composition demonstrates that it is possible for each, despite differences, to have the same value as the others.

Equilibrium, through a contrasting and neutralizing opposition, annihilates individuals as particular personalities and thus creates the future society as a real unity.

Appendix 7

This example of Reinhardt's charting of polarities is from Volume 65 of Art News, November, 1966 pp. 33-5+ in an article entitled "Black Pastures" by Harris Rosenstein.

[illegible]

This flier was xeroxed from the files of the Museum of

Modern Art. The bottom half appears on the next page. p. 9 "An Effort to Secure \$3,250,000 April, 1931"

THE MODERN IS THE MUSEUM of MODERN ART

Lets look at the record

In 1939 the Museum professed to show ART IN OUR TIME—

Whose time Sargent, Homer, La Farge and Flaxenett?

Or Picasso, Braque, Leger and Mondrian? Which time?

If the descendants of Sargent and Homer, what about the descendants of Picasso and Mondrian? What about American abstract art?

If he had been in America, what dizzy successes for Repin? Even for Meissonier?

Or J. L. Gerome? What about Towne and Ward—British cattle painters—turned loose on a Missouri farm? A Minnesota grain elevator painted by Daubigny? Bellows' 'Stag at Sharkey's' done by Henri Regnault? The Nebraska prairies by Eugene Boudin? The Bowery by Eugene Carriere?

And MODERN MASTERS (to counterbalance the Italian Masters, as this feeble demonstration from a great period was advertised) Eakins, Homer, Ryder, Whistler—died in 1916, 1910, 1917, 1903. These are the only Americans included. Are they the grandfathers of the Europeans they are shown with? Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Lautrec—died in 1886, 1890, 1903, 1881. These are the older Europeans represented.

ITALIAN MASTERS! — Caravaggio, Raphael, Bronzino! And such examples!

How easy to justify a Praxiteles show! How revolutionary the Egyptians! And an Eighteenth Century JAPANESE!

47 DOES "MODERN" MEAN? Does it mean ALL THE GREAT ART OF ALL TIME?
Then why the hundreds of living Americans?
Does it mean the POPULAR ART PRODUCED IN OUR TIME?
Then why the old masters?
Does it mean METROPOLITAN PLUS WHITNEY MUSEUM?
Then why a Museum of Modern Art?

and now the art of the three alarm fire!

The Artist a Reporter?

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

What about the P.M. contest and exhibition? What is journalistic art? Why should this evening tell-tale fail try to revive it? What is the Museum trying to revive? Will the Museum sponsor the Police Gazette? What about Eastman, Lurie, and Fatio Hews?

Why and what does a modern museum depart from presenting 'the Art of Today' to promoting the art of yesterday?

Why not day-before-yesterday? Why not Resurrections, Adorations and Madonnas?

Why not build Pyramids? Why not tear down the Museum and build a pyramid! As big as Radio City! With 100,000 slaves! Think of the publicity!

What is this - ?
CRUS?
a three ring

ART DEPT.: Nelson Rockefeller, head of the Museum of Modern Art, told a group that the Museum is spending more money than it is receiving—that this was the first time he ever was engaged in show-business, but that the office balance wasn't worrying him... "It's all right," Rockefeller assured. "The Greatest Showman of our times—a man in Washington—works on the same principle."

Leonard Lyons
 MARCH 23, 1940
 NEW YORK POST

How about Billy (Aquacade) Rose as the next trustee?

Shouldn't "modern" conceivably include the "Avant Garde"?
 Why not a show of the English Abstractionists?
 How about the younger European experimenters:

Hartung, Gerin, Magnelli, Helion, Eggeling, Taeuber-Arp, Riemer, Seuphor, Schwab, Nebel, Sima, Max Bill, Stazewski, Erni, Tutundjian, Prinmer?

What about the hundreds (literally) of modern and non-objective artists in America?

April 15, 1940

American Abstract Artists 13 West 17th Street, New York City

JOSEF ALBERS	A. E. GALLATIN	AGNES LYALL	FLORENCE SWIFT
ROSALIND BENGELSDORF	FRITZ GLARNER	GEORGE McNEIL	ALBERT SWINDER
ILYA BOLOTOWSKY	BALCOMB GREENE	ALICE MASON	E. O. SCHNEEVIND
BYRON BROWNE	GERTRUDE GREENE	GEORGE L. K. MORRIS	R. D. TURNBULL
JEANNE CARLES	HANNAH HARRI	L. KOLONY-RIAGY	VACLAV VYTLACL
GEORGE CAVAILLOH	HARRY HOLTZMAN	I. RICE FERREIRA	RUDOLPH WEISENECK
A. H. CHRISTIE	CARL HOLTY	MARGARET PETERSON	WARREN WHITELOCK
ANNA COHEN	DOROTHY JORALEMON	RALPH M. ROSENBERG	FREDERICK WHITMAN
WERNER DREVES	RAY KAISER	A. D. F. REINHARDT	HARRY WILDERBERG
ELEANOR DE LAITRE	FREDERICK P. KANN	LOUIS SCHAMBER	ROBERT JAY WOLFF
HERZL EMANUEL	PAUL KELSE	CHARLES G. SHAW	PEGHARD YOUNG
JOHN FINEST	LEO LANCES	ESMYR SLODZKINA	JANET YOUNG
SUSIE FREELINGHUYSEN	IRVING LACSAW	DAVID SMITH	W. H. ZOGRAFF

Appendix 9

This document was reproduced from Maurice Tuchman's New York School: First Generation, p. 27 published in 1965 from a show at the L.A. Museum of Art.

A Contribution to a Journal of Some Future Art-Historian

Almost fifteen years ago, in the early forties, after he had made some paintings that were described as "abstract all-over patterns that didn't represent anything," Ad Reinhardt became interested in the "all-over" as a pure-painting idea.

Almost ten years ago, in the late forties, he lost interest in this clear and distinct idea, which, I understand, everyone understands now.

What was this pure-painting idea? * Where did it come from?

Impressionism, with uniformity of brushstrokes, unity of paint texture, suffused light, pervasive color, but without luminosity, sensuousness, impasto, without impressionist subjects?

Cubism, with brushwork like brickwork, dulled colors, rectilinear handbrush marking, but without composition or decomposition, without cubist objects?

Post-plus-and-minus-Mondrianism, with consistency of deliberate and random repetition of identical elements but without scotch-taping-shifting-balancing-spacing-cezanneism?

Prehistoric, historic, functional, organic, symbolic decoration—design in building, carpet, textile, pot? (No.)

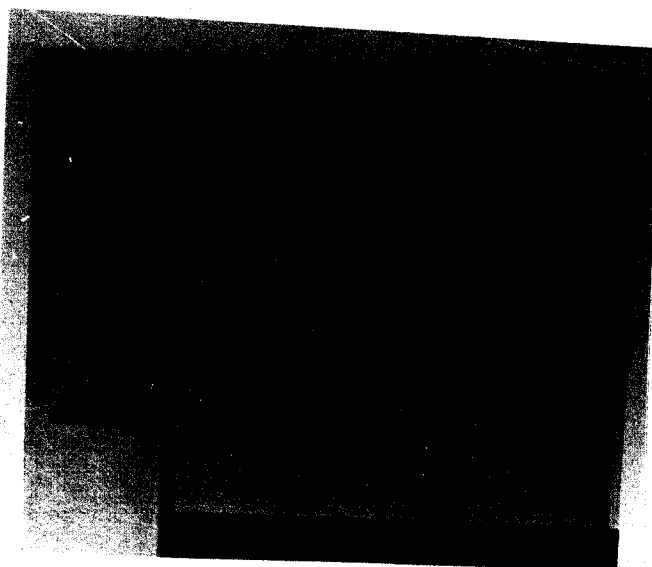
Medieval, migration beast-interlaces, arabesque alphabets, floral scroll-work? (No.)

Metaphysical=aesthetic speculation, negative=positive space, depth=surface time, object=subject, presence=absence, micro-macrocosm, yin and yang, zemin u zemain? (No.)

Iconoclasm, with "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness," and images are "primitive, immoral, offensive," "used solely for instructing the minds of the ignorant," and "images are for the poor in spirit"? (Maybe.)

*For expressionists, surrealist, obscurantists. This idea includes no blood stains, sore spots, pimply skeins, mad hairs, sharp points, slash dashes, cold cuts, side swipes, hand sleights, leg pulls, back bites, false fronts, hind sights, hay seeds, polly wogs, nose drops, head aches, heart sleeves, intestinal flows, dry runs, whet washes, black eyes, purple patches, green horns, yellow bellies, grape vines, forest fears, jungle jiggles, fate leavings, death struggles, life businesses, soft soaps, hard cash, hot cakes, etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS



12" Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue 1922

Figure 1 Piet Mondrian Composition with Red,
Yellow and Blue 1922

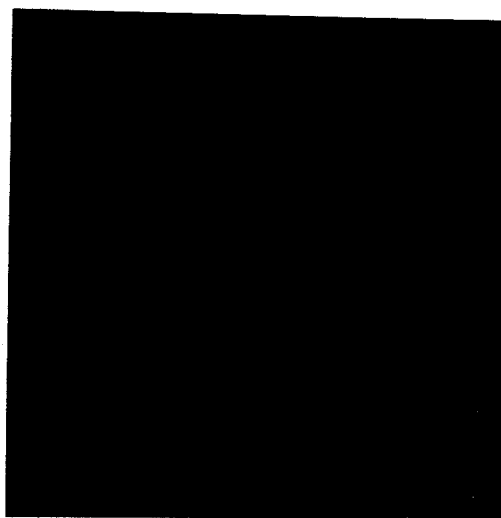


Figure 2 Ad Reinhardt Black Square c.1960

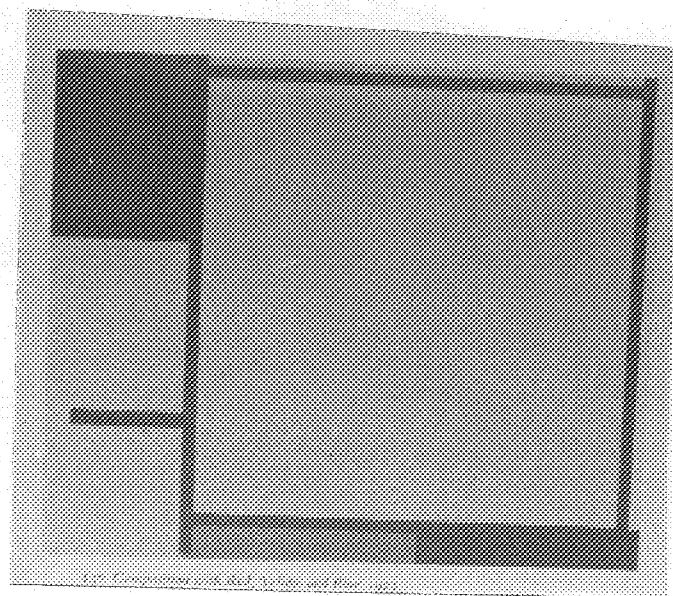


Figure 1 Piet Mondrian Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue 1922

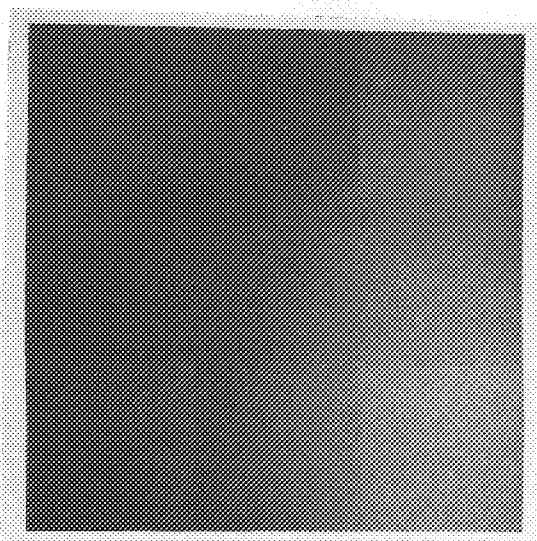


Figure 2 Ad Reinhardt Black Square c.1960

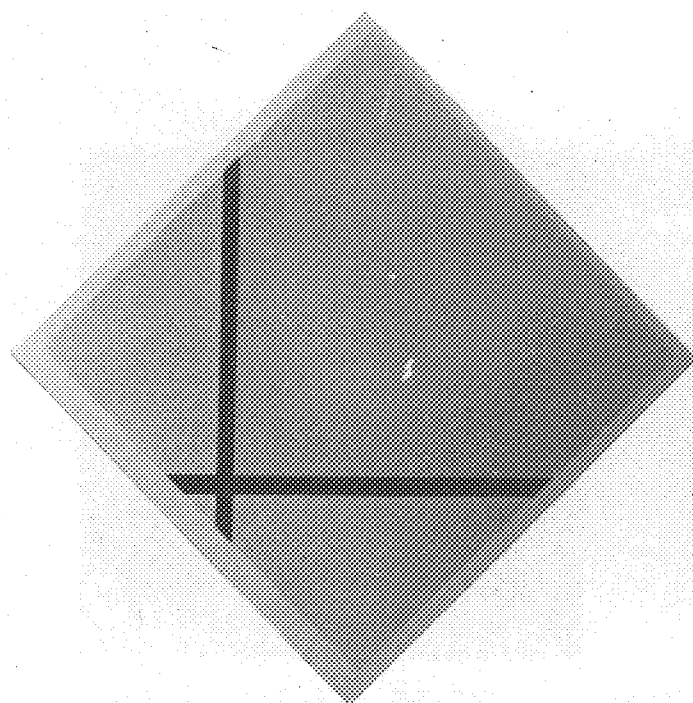


Figure 3 Piet Mondrian Composition 1931

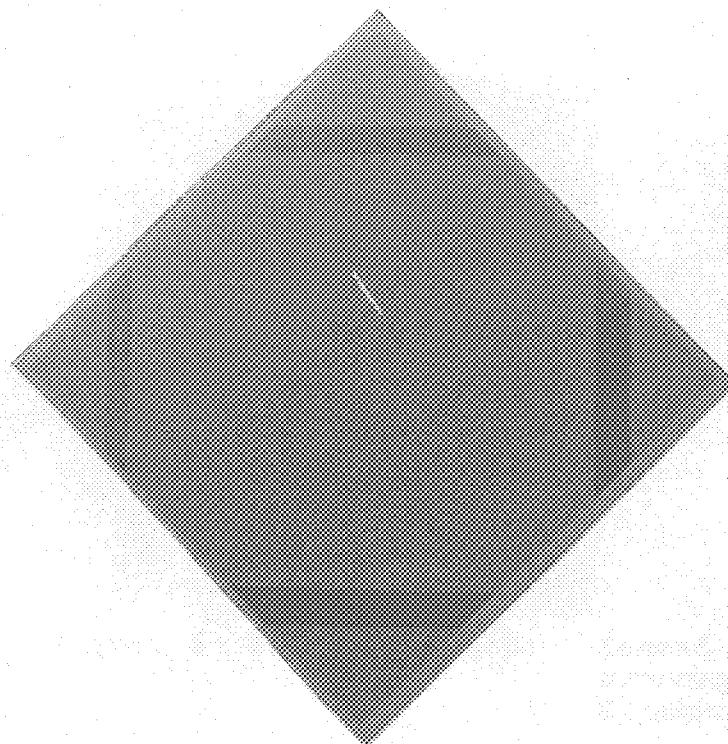


Figure 4 Piet Mondrian Composition 1933

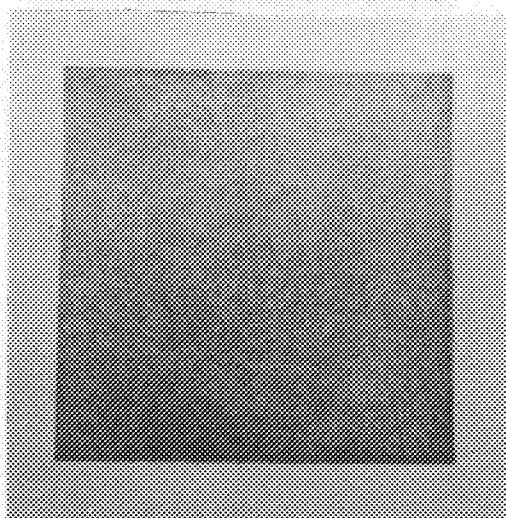


Figure 5 Kasimir Malevich Basic Suprematist
Element: The
Square 1913

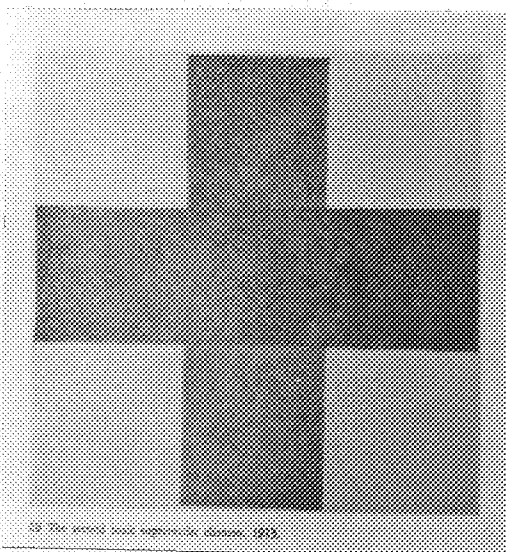


Figure 6 Kasimir Malevich Second Basic
Suprematist
Element 1913

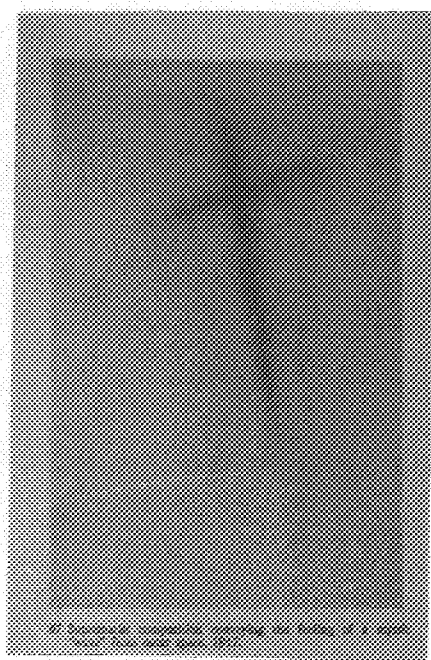


Figure 7 Kasimir Malevich Suprematist Composition Conveying the Feeling of a Mystic Wave from Outer Space 1917

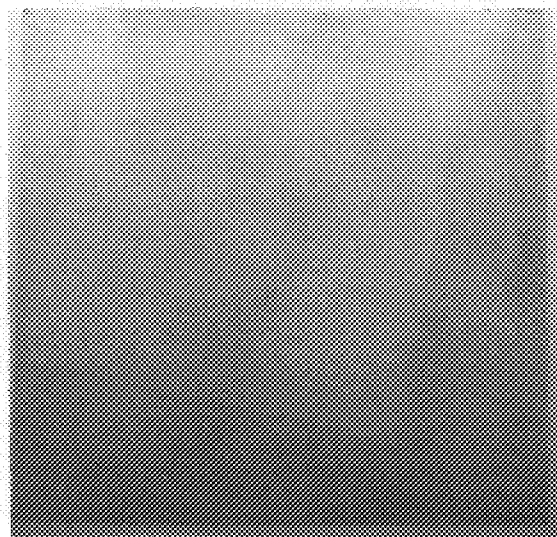
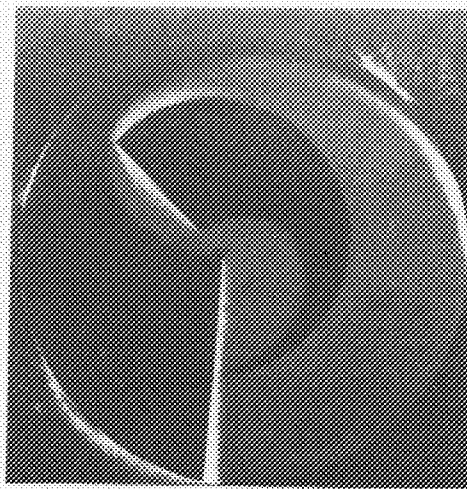


Figure 8 Kasimir Malevich White on White 1918



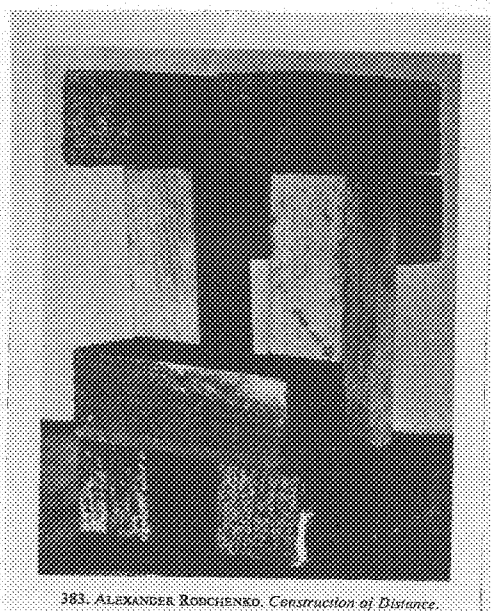
Non-Objective Painting: Black on Black, 1918.
33 1/2 inches high. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Figure 9 Alexander Rodchenko Black on Black
1918



Fig. Alexander Rodchenko
Black on Black, 1918

Figure 10 Alexander Rodchenko Black on Black
1918



183. ALEXANDER RODCHENKO. *Construction of Distance*.

Figure 11 Alexander Rodchenko Construction
of Distance
1919

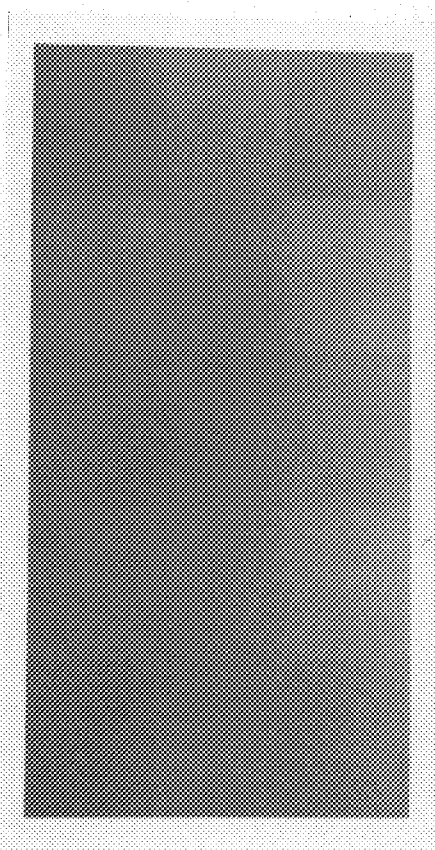


Figure 12 Ad Reinhardt Black Painting
c. 1956-57

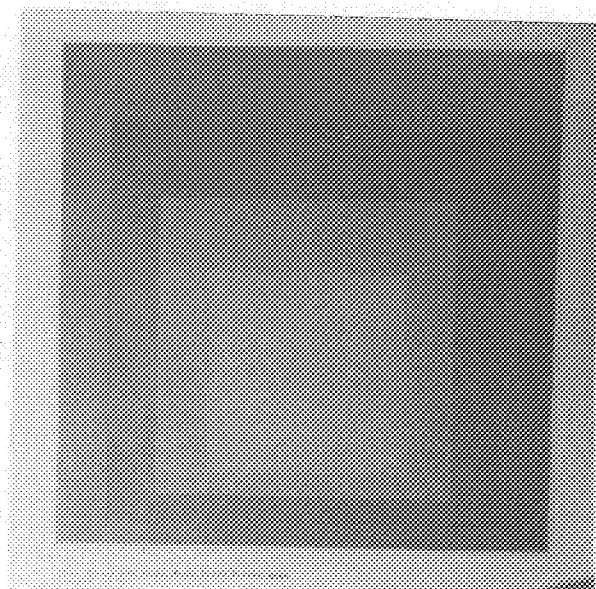


Figure 13 Josef Albers Homage to the Square
1951-55

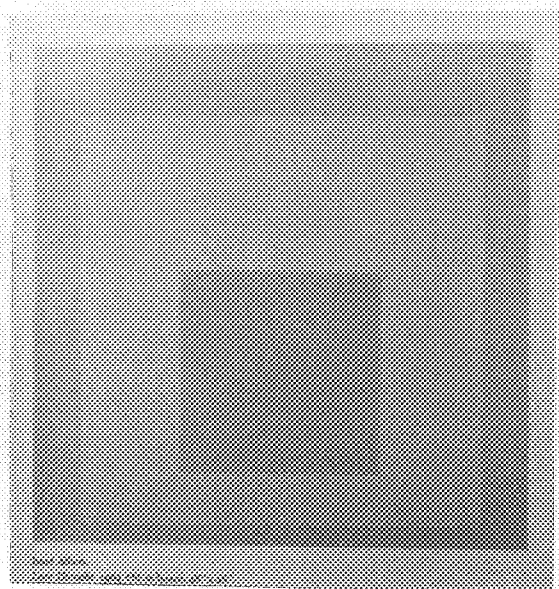


Figure 14 Josef Albers Late Thought 1964

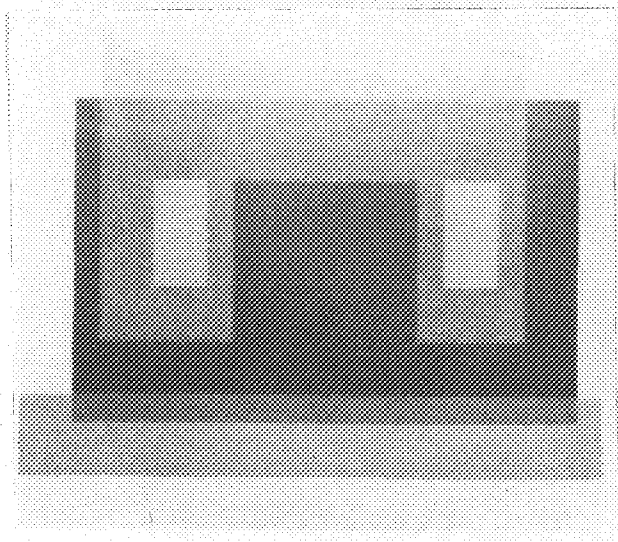


Figure 15 Josef Albers Variant 1948-57

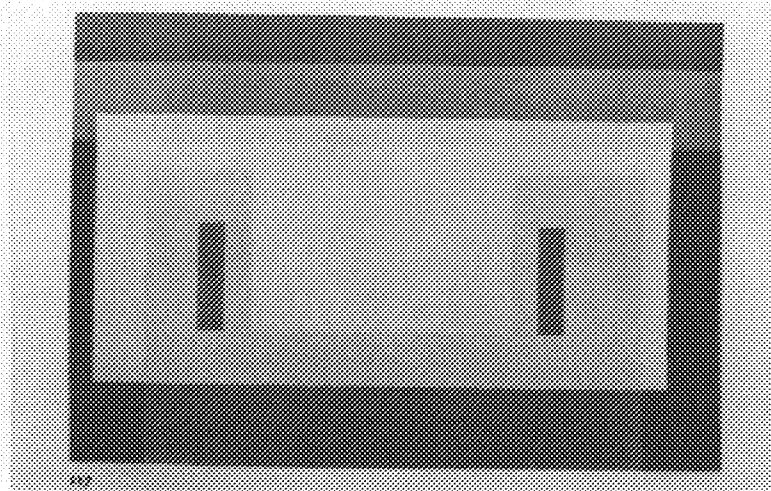


Figure 16 Josef Albers Variant 1948-57

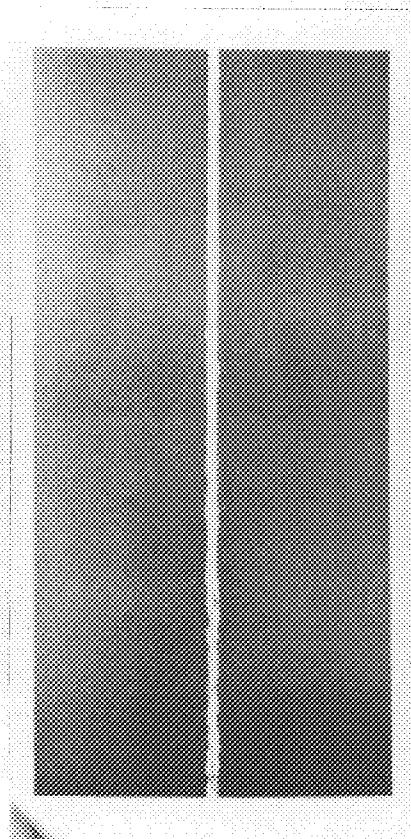


Figure 17 Barnett Newman Onement 1948

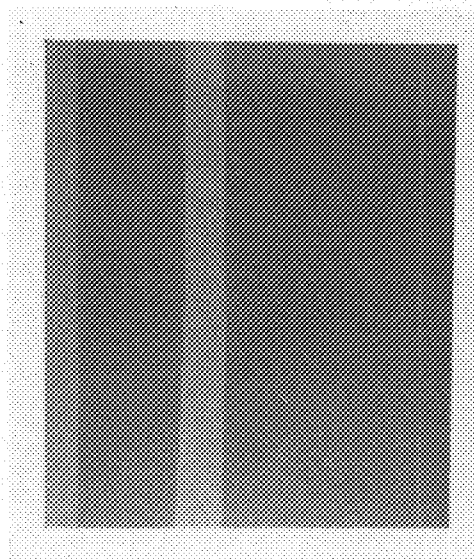


Figure 18 Barnett Newman Adam 1950

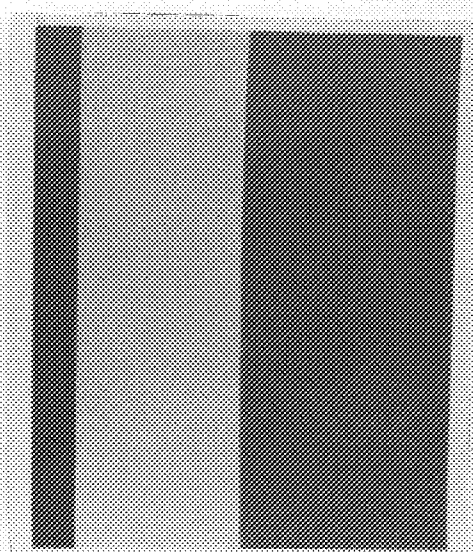


Figure 19 Barnett Newman Gate 1954

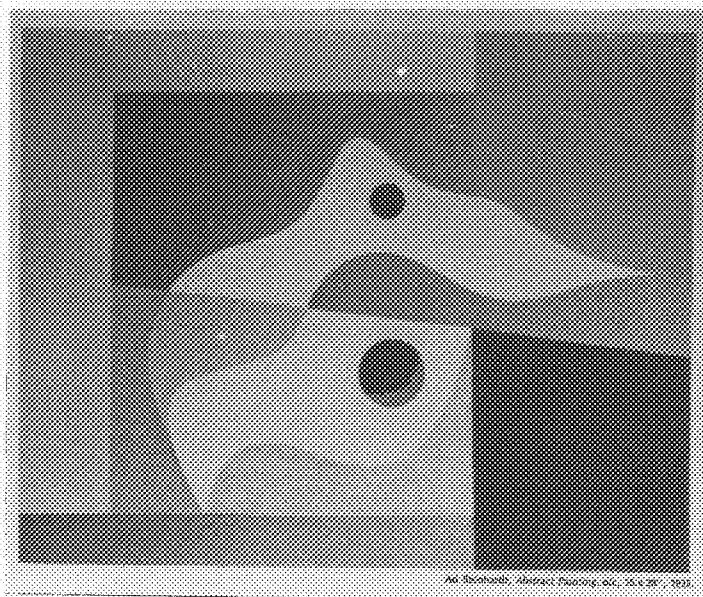


Figure 20 Ad Reinhardt Abstract Painting 1935

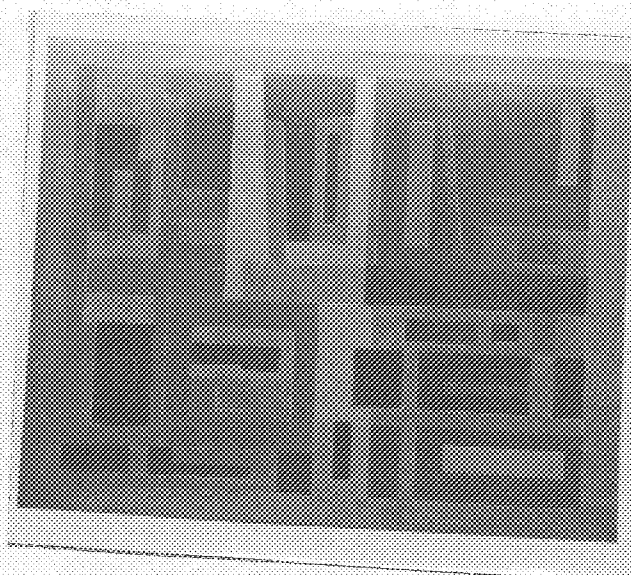


Figure 21 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1938



Figure 22 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1947



Figure 23 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1946



Figure 24 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1950

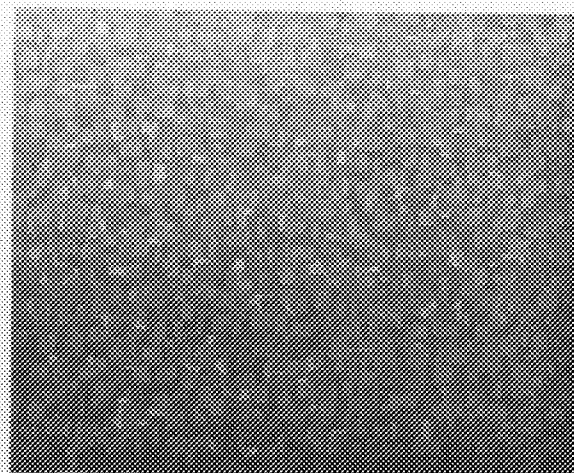


Figure 25 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1949

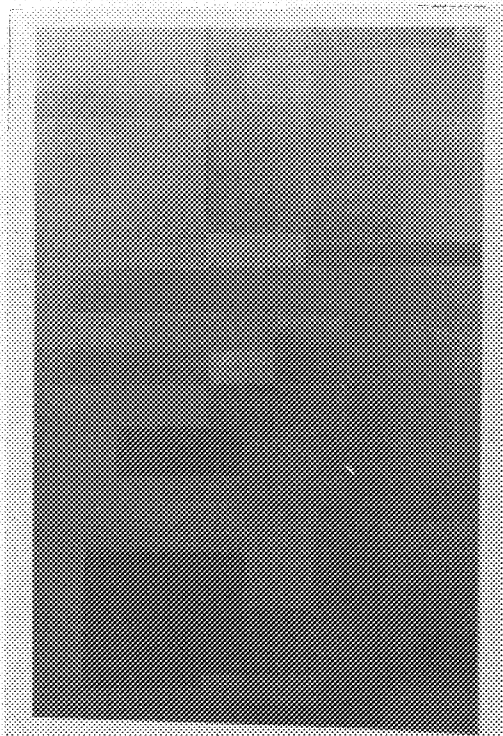


Figure 26 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1950

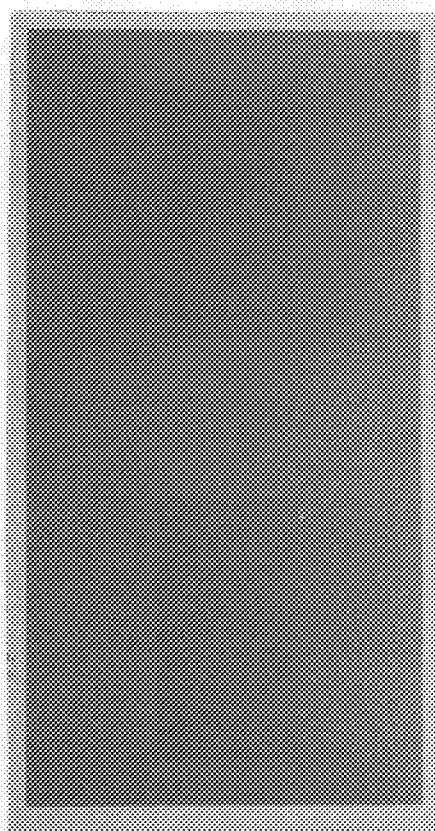


Figure 27 Ad Reinhardt Red
Painting 1952

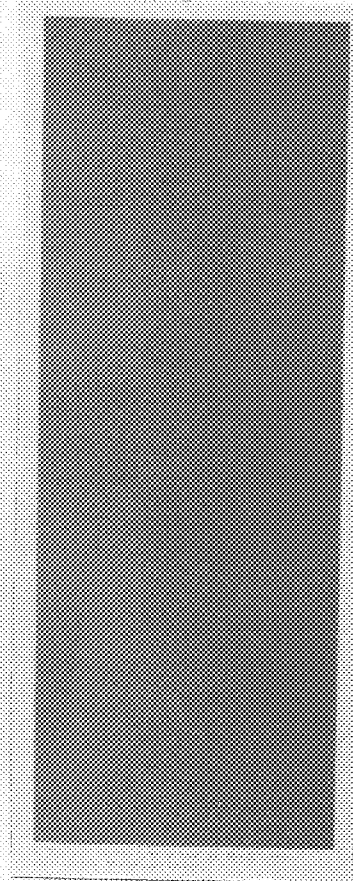


Figure 28 Ad Reinhardt Ab-
stract Painting
1952

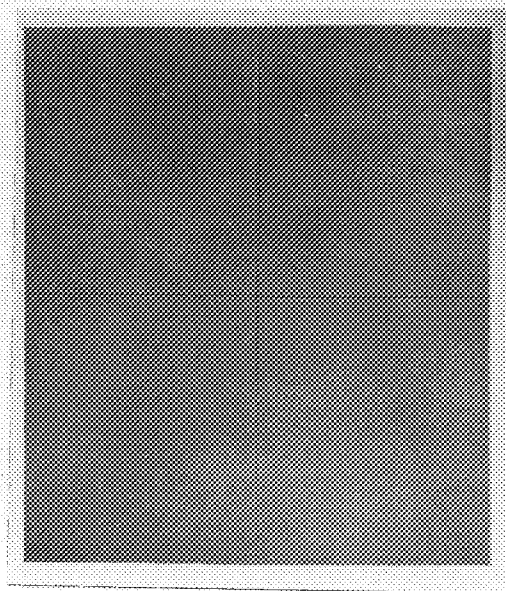


Figure 29 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1955

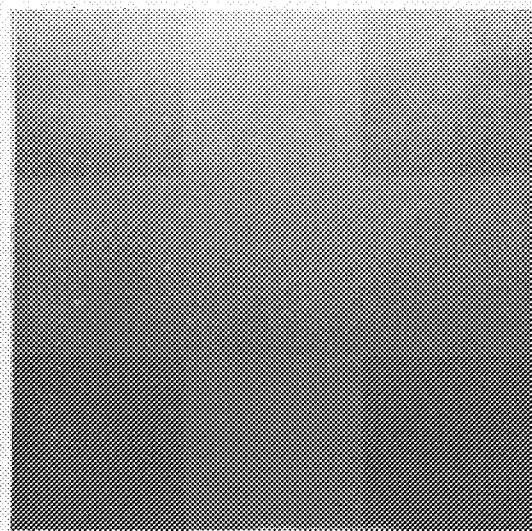


Figure 30 Ad Reinhardt Untitled 1960-66

Approved *Samuel H. Dennis*

Date January 19, 1972