pas une dont l'action[120] n'ait rapport à l'état où étoit alors le peuple Juif, qui au milieu du Desert se trouvoit dans une extrême nécessité, et dans une langueur épouvantable, mais qui dans ce moment se vit soulagé par le secours du Ciel."[121] Le Brun then proceeds to demonstrate how the dramatic event causes the expression of such varied emotions among the Israelites as admiration, joy, benevolence, fear, surprise, religious awe, and even feminine vanity of a sort, and he insists again that out of this diversity of psycho-physical reactions to the dramatic event Poussin has achieved pictorial unity not only because the different movements and facial expressions of the figures are always referred to the principal subject, but because the painter has selected his "expressions" in such a way that the picture has this further claim to impeccable logic of structure: like a drama on the stage, it observes the Aristotelian unity of action in having a beginning, a middle, and an end.[122] We shall discuss later this curious analogy between painting and dramatic poetry,—an analogy of more than doubtful validity yet a perfectly natural development of the doctrine *ut pictura poesis* under the impulse of the Cartesian passion for order and clarity.

Here we may note that Poussin himself evidently set great store by the diversity of emotional expression in this painting, for when after long labor to finish it, he finally despatched it to Chantelou, he wrote his friend that he would easily recognize those figures "qui languissent, qui admirent, celles qui ont pitié, qui font acte de charité, de grande necessité, de désir de se repaître, de consolation et autres, car les sept premières figures à main gauche vous diront tout ce qui est ici écrit et tout le reste est de la même étoffe." "Lisez l'histoire et le tableau," he adds, "afin de connaître si chaque chose est appropriée au sujet."[123] According to Poussin, then, the way in which to understand this painting is to "read" it, comparing it at the same time with the story in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. And although the critics would have looked carefully to see if the painter had been properly faithful to his text, Poussin does not advise Chantelou to "read" his picture merely that his friend may test his accuracy as an historical painter. This reading is rather to be a discriminating exercise of the intellect that will result in a judgment of the painting's excellence on more important grounds. A most fundamental condition of this excellence is the painter's ability to represent human emotions that are clearly appropriate to the sub-

120. By the general term action Le Brun means any movement of the body, including facial movement, that expresses inward emotion. See his explanation of "action" in Appendix 4.

121. Jouin, *Conférences*, pp. 55–56. The notion that expression must be strictly related to the central dramatic event—rendered "secondo che richiede il caso"—had been clearly stated by Leonardo (see note 101). And Lomazzo in selecting the Crucifixion as typical of a scene of human sorrow for which he is attempting to prescribe a good composition (*Trattato*, VI, 34, p. 363), tells how the grief in the painting, motivated by the dead figure on the cross, must vary according to the closeness of the relationship of the different figures to Christ. The figures will be arranged in the picture to form a kind of emotional crescendo as one moves from those at the greatest distance from the cross whose grief is the least, if it exists at all, to the overwhelming grief of John, and even more of Mary, at the foot of the cross in the center. The Academicians take over and develop the psychological implications of Leonardo's doctrine. For them "expressions" are not only "what the event requires"—not only have this strict dramatic relationship to the event—but are also external signs of a variety of emotions, typical of the male or female sex at various ages or in different conditions of life, which the dramatic event as a kind of efficient cause has stimulated into activity. For the Academicians, then, with their interest in the passions of the soul, the "expressions" in Poussin's *Fall of the Manna* (Fig. 4) are not only dramatically related to the event by a direct causal connection (as the emotions in Leonardo's *Last Supper*, for instance, are related to the dramatic pronouncement of Christ) but each expression has also, as Le Brun says, its "cause particulière"—in the character or condition, that is, of the different persons represented. Poussin's painting is thus not only a pictorial drama, but within the dramatic frame of reference, it is also an analysis of the passions. The same might be said of Leonardo's *Last Supper* or his *Adoration of the Magi*, but in Leonardo the dramatic intensity and concentration are greater—the central composition forces one to view the passions almost entirely as rendered "secondo che richiede il caso"; whereas frequently in Poussin, the dramatic structure is looser, and the analysis of the passions appears to have something of its own excuse for being.

122. Jouin, *Conférences*, p. 64.

123. Letter of April 28, 1639. I quote from the modernized text in the edition of Pierre du Colombier, Paris, 1929, p. 12. For the original text see *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin*, ed. Ch. Jouanny, Paris, 1911, p. 21.

ject—that are, Poussin means, representative of the behavior of different types of human beings under particular dramatic conditions.[124] And in insisting on the logic with which Poussin relates his complex human material to the dominant dramatic idea of his painting, Félibien and Le Brun show themselves, as we have seen, loyal disciples of the Cartesian doctrine that the reason has the power to impose its own valid order on "toutes les choses qui peuvent tomber sous la connaissance des hommes." Thus when the critics commented on the diverse, yet ordered rendering of the emotions in a painting, it was this doctrine which by and large intervened to discipline, if not actually dispel, the application of those elaborate rules for expression, gathered together by Le Brun, that reflected the mechanistic aspect of the Cartesian philosophy.

Something closely akin to the Cartesian rationalism was strong in Poussin himself who, like Descartes, distrusted the mirage of sense perception[125] and valued only that selected and ordered knowledge which it was alone within the power of the clarifying reason to attain. "Mon naturel," he wrote to Chantelou in a famous letter of 1642, "me contraint de chercher et aimer les choses bien ordonnées, fuyant la confusion qui m'est contraire et ennemie, comme est la lumière des obscures ténèbres."[126] This passage written by a man who may never actually have read Descartes to express his sense of confusion at being requested to do within a given time a great deal more than he knew he could do well, might nevertheless have been written in another connection by Descartes himself.[127] Some thirty years later when the admirable Boileau was writing in his *L'art poétique* what was to be perhaps the most influential statement in the history of French classicism of the rules for good poetry, he admonished the poets to love reason which alone could bestow value and lustre upon their labors,[128] and in a passage of which both the thought and the imagery remind one of Poussin's confession to Chantelou, remarks that only clear conceptions born of the light-dispensing reason, well thought out—in Poussin's phrase, "bien ordonnées"—could result in clarity and precision of literary form:

> Il est certains Esprits, dont les sombres pensées
> Sont d'un nuage épais toûjours embarrassées.
> Le jour de la raison ne le sçauroit percer.
> Selon que nostre idée est plus ou moins obscure,
> L'expression la suit, ou moins nette, ou plus pure.
> Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement.
> Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément.[129]

When Boileau summed up the rules which the Académie Française regarded as essential for correct writing in the various literary genres, he had been anticipated by a few years by those who legislated for the sister art of painting. Du Fresnoy's *De arte graphica*, based pretty squarely on Dolce and other Italians, owed the Cartesian philosophy little if anything. The author remarks, in fact, that he would not "stifle the Genius, by a jumbled

124. When Poussin tells Chantelou to read his picture in order to see if "each thing is suited to the subject," he may well have meant to include other things (setting, drapery, etc.), besides the expressions. But the latter were evidently of paramount importance. In fact in an earlier letter to the painter Jacques Stella he had already emphasized those "attitudes naturelles" which made manifest the joy, lightness of heart, admiration, respect, and reverence of the Jews on the occasion of the Fall of the Manna (Félibien, *Entretiens* no. 8, IV, 26).

125. For Descartes on the senses see "Méditations" I and VI.

126. Letter of April 7, 1642; quoted from Du Colombier, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–72 (Jouanny, p. 134). See the fine essay of Paul Desjardins on Poussin in *La méthode des classiques français*, Paris, 1904, pp. 165–233, to which Professor Friedlaender has called my attention.

127. Cf. Descartes at the end of Part I of the *Discours de la méthode:* "Et j'avois toujours un extrême désir d'apprendre à distinguer le vrai d'avec le faux, pour voir clair en mes actions et marcher avec assurance en cette vie."

128. *L'art poétique*, 1674, I, 37–38:

> "Aimez donc la Raison. Que toujours vos écrits
> Empruntent d'elle seule et leur lustre et leur prix."

129. *Ibid.*, 147–53.

Heap of Rules: nor extinguish the Fire of a Vein which is lively and abundant."[130] But Félibien's preface to his report of six *conférences* of the Academy is, in its way, as complete a summary of the rules for painting as is Boileau's *L'art poétique* of the rules for poetry; and he is in perfect accord with Boileau's Cartesian dictum that clear writing attends upon the clear conception of what one will write about, when he remarks that if an artist would make a wise disposition in his mind of a work that he would execute, he must first "avoir une connaissance parfaite de la chose qu'on veut representer, de quelles parties elle doit être composée, et de quelle sorte l'on y doit procéder." And one could find no more thoroughly Cartesian definition of art than in the words which follow: "Et cette connaissance que l'on acquiert, et dont l'on fait des règles, est à mon avis ce que l'on peut nommer l'Art."[131] A perfect painting, then, like a perfect poem, is a logical construction of the human reason, an architectonic *pensée* with every least part causally related to the informing dramatic purpose of the whole. And within the abstract perfection of this edifice of the reason abide those rules which the mind may discover by the rational process of deduction—rules for invention, disposition, decorum, verisimilitude, expression, and the like—the whole Draconian code of the French Academy. To the question: In what art do you find that perfectly pure and cloudless *connaissance* from which you derive these rules? —Félibien, like Boileau would, of course, have answered: The antique; and as one legislating also for the art of painting, would have added Raphael, and, of course, Poussin. To the question: How binding are these excellent rules, and if you counsel the painter to observe them faithfully, in what does the originality of painting consist?—he might have answered, remembering Poussin, that within the precincts of the rules an intelligent and disciplined genius will always achieve "good and new disposition and expression." The eighteenth century was gradually to find this answer unsatisfactory, and in the end when the romantic imagination had outlawed the rational art of an earlier day, when nature no longer signified selected beauty or universal truth, and when genius had rejected forever the guiding hand of the rules, it would be repudiated altogether.

But since it is less the purpose of this essay to discuss the dissolution of the doctrine *ut pictura poesis* than to define its components and to sketch their development, it will be well to return to the central track of the argument and to consider some other elements of the doctrine that had their origin in the literary criticism of the ancients before they were incorporated by the Italians into their humanistic theory of painting and became, at length, essential elements of the aesthetic dogma of the French Academy. In the discussion that follows it will be further Horatian modifications of the Aristotelian theory of imitation that will engage our attention. Horace's encouragement of invention based on traditional forms and subjects, and his contribution to the doctrine of expression, have already been discussed.

IV—Instruction and Delight

Directly adapted from Horace who as a satirist had held up the mirror of his art to human foibles, and had a serious, if urbane and detached, concern for the improvement of human life, came the admonition that painting like poetry (Horace had been thinking of the effect of dramatic art on the audience) should instruct as well as delight.[132] This half-

130. Dryden's translation of ll.32–33. Du Fresnoy may well be thinking of the compendious "regole" of Lomazzo.

131. Pp. 307–8; cf. note 116.

132. *Ars poetica* 333 ff.:

"Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae
aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae.
* * * * *
omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
lectorem delectando pariterque monendo."

moralistic definition of the purpose of art might not be consistent with the Aristotelian position that art as ideal imitation is founded on its own principles of structure and has no conscious didactic intent; but it was accepted axiomatically, if uncritically, by most Renaissance and Baroque critics both of poetry and painting,[133] for the excellent reason that it provided an ethical sanction, fortunately in the words of an ancient critic, for those arts which, if the subject matter were profane, the Middle Ages had accepted only with the aid of allegorical or moral interpretation, and which the divine Plato had excoriated, in a way frequently embarrassing to the Renaissance, as feeding and watering the passions.[134] And in modern Italy, almost within the memory of those mid-sixteenth-century critics who were shaping the new theories of painting and of poetry, Savonarola with the energy and conviction of a St. Bernard had denounced the arts as hostile to the Christian way of life.[135]

Poussin had written Fréart de Chambray that the end of art is delectation,[136] but in this case the Academicians preferred the opinion of Horace and of those Italian critics both of

133. Castelvetro among the critics of literature was early a distinguished opponent of the Horatian definition of the function of poetry, and he was correct in believing that those who held "that poetry aims at teaching or at teaching and delighting together" ran counter to the authority of Aristotle. See H. B. Charlton, *Castelvetro's Theory of Poetry*, Manchester, 1913, pp. 66 ff.

134. *Republic* x. In his *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, XIV, 19 Boccaccio refuses to believe that Plato really intended to banish from his ideal state poets of the caliber of Homer, Ennius, and Virgil "who withal was so pure that he blushed in mind as well as in countenance when he overheard an indecent remark among his coevals or others, and thus won the nickname Partheinas, that is, 'virgin,' or more correctly, 'virginity'" (trans. C. G. Osgood, Princeton, 1930, p. 91). In XIV, 9, occurs his Horatian definition of the purpose of poetry, and the notion that the ancient poets were men of wisdom whose works are full of profit as well as pleasure to the reader informs the whole work. In XIV, 6, occurs an interesting reference to the figure arts when Boccaccio, indignant at those who condemn poetry as futile and empty because there occur poems that sing the adulteries of the gods, asks "if Praxiteles or Phidias, both experts in their art, should choose for a statue the immodest subject of Priapus on his way to Iole by night, instead of Diana glorified in her chastity; or if Apelles, or our own Giotto—whom Apelles in his time did not excel—should represent Venus in the embrace of Mars instead of the enthroned Jove dispensing laws unto the gods, shall we therefore condemn these arts? Downright stupidity, I should call it!" (*ibid.*, p. 38). If occasional lapses are, therefore, no reason for condemning sculpture and painting whose business, Boccaccio would imply, is to improve mankind, no more certainly are they reason for condemning poetry which "offers us so many incitements to virtue." In thus implying a comparison between the figure arts and poetry on the ground that the function of both is to instruct as well as delight, Boccaccio pays an unusual, if indirect, compliment to the former as liberal arts some fifty years before Alberti wrote his *apologia* for painting in 1436. For Plato's criticism of the arts and the Renaissance justification of poetry, see Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, pp. 16 ff. I do not know any critic of painting who feels it necessary to defend painting against Plato's moralistic criticism of the arts, but objection occurs to his famous metaphysical argument in *Republic* x, that art is thrice removed from the truth, in a passage in Comanini's *Il Figino*, Mantua, 1591 (quoted by Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 97): Plato, it is affirmed, degrades painting and poetry when he declares that their works are imitations not of truth, but of "apparenti imagini" [things of this world that are only copies of the world of ideas; only shadowy images, that is, of the truth]. The whole effort of Renaissance criticism was obviously to prove the contrary—that painting, like poetry, is an imitation of ideal truth, though not generally of the "ideas" in the a priori sense in which Plato conceived them. See Chapter II.

135. The idea that art should instruct mankind is found from the beginning in Renaissance criticism and is present in European criticism until the end of the eighteenth century. It is found in the observation of Alberti (*op. cit.*, p. 89) that painting is conducive to piety; Leonardo (*op. cit.*, I, 21) states that it can show "molti morali costumi," as in the *Calumny of Apelles;* Dolce (p. 208) does not mention instruction when he states that the poet's business is to delight, but his remarks on decorum (see notes 145, 159) are sufficient evidence that he was imbued with the Horatian maxim. At the end of the sixteenth century the critics reflect the spirit of the Counter-Reformation: Armenini (*op. cit.*, I, 3, pp. 38–40) writes of painting as furthering the cause of the Christian religion with its images, and Lomazzo (*Trattato*, VI, 1, p. 280) speaks of the greatest paintings as "non per altro dipinte che per mostrar di continuo per gl'occhi a gl'animi la vera strada che si ha da tenere per ben vivere, e passar questi nostri infelici giorni fatti di chiaro, e scuro, con timore, et amor di quel Signore, la cui bontà volse formarci a sembianza de la divinissima imagine sua." That painting should both delight and instruct was standard doctrine of the French Academy: see Félibien, preface to the *Conférences*, p. 317; Antoine Coypel, *L'excellence de la peinture*, 1721 (Jouin, *op. cit.*, p. 217). The notion was still strong in Diderot, for instance in his approval of Greuze's sentimental, sham morality (Salon of 1767). Early in the eighteenth century, writers on aesthetics began to drop the didactic conception of art and to attempt an explanation in psychological and emotional terms of the pleasure which it is the function of art to afford. So Addison in his series of essays in the *Spectator* on the "Pleasures of the Imagination" (June 21 to July 3, 1712) which are an important document for the study of *ut pictura poesis* from the point of view of literature. See also the theory of Du Bos (*Réflexions critiques*, I, 1 ff.) that the pleasure of art, which is most intense when the subject is painful or terrible, is a necessary relief from the boredom of human life. This theory had wide influence in the eighteenth century, e.g. on Burke and Hume in England. At the end of the century Sir Joshua Reynolds, at once the disciple and frank critic of the academic tradition, abandoned the didactic theory. "The end of the arts," he says, "is to make an impression on the imagination and the feelings"; and the ultimate test of the arts is whether they answer "the end of art, which is, to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind" (*Discourse* XIII).

136. Letter of March 1, 1665 (Jouanny, p. 462).

poetry and painting who found in the arts an incitement to virtuous conduct and even, as Lomazzo had maintained, a guide in this vale of tears to righteous living in the Christian faith.[137] Now the ideal representation of human life as Aristotle conceived it does not make the artist in any sense a conscious moralist; nevertheless the spectacle in a great tragedy of one of high station and of superior human capacities brought to inevitable ruin, yet made wise through suffering that is out of all proportion to his fault, and maintaining his moral dignity even in the extremes of fortune, results, no one can deny, in an elevation and purification of the spirit, in that "calm of mind, all passion spent" of which Milton, remembering the Aristotelian catharsis, wrote at the close of *Samson Agonistes*. And the Academicians, for whom the highest achievement in painting lay in the incorporation of the καλὸς κ'ἀγαθός of the antique within the dramatic delineation of a noble subject that would, in a Christian or a Stoic sense, proclaim the dignity of man, were profoundly conscious that the rules were the vessels of moral instruction, and that painting like poetry should as Horace and Boileau enjoined:

Partout joigne au plaisant le solide et l'utile.

And they would have added that the wise beholder of a painting like Boileau's "lecteur sage":

fuit un vain amusement
Et veut mettre à profit son divertissement.[138]

The didactic theory of art had among the writers and critics of literature an important corollary. When Sir Philip Sidney gave a moral interpretation to Aristotle's famous dictum that poetry is more philosophical than history by declaring that painting is a popular philosophy, teaching by example rather than by precept,[139] he had behind him not only the influential opinion of Horace but also, it must be remembered, the medieval view expressed by Dante[140] and others that poetry is a guide and teacher of men. And at closer range he had been anticipated in the mid-sixteenth century by the Italian critic Fracastoro who had written that if the poet "imitates those things which pertain to the will, since they can produce wisdom and other virtues, surely the usefulness of this imitation and representation is incomparable. For those examples which we see in life make us much more wise and experienced than precepts."[141] A half century after Sidney, Milton writing in the same vein was to pay the highest tribute of all to what the critics believed to be the didactic power of the arts, when he declared that the poet Edmund Spenser, in his graphic description of the dangers of lust in the bower of the enchantress Acrasia,[142] had proved himself a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.[143] No one had ever paid the art of painting so lofty and perhaps so doubtful a compliment, though since the time of Alberti the beneficial effects of painting on mankind had been pretty assiduously catalogued.

V—Decorum

Finally from Horace and closely related to his definition of the purpose of poetry came those ideas of decorum that fill many a dreary page of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century criticism and were, at least in part, responsible for the artificial and formulated expression of a Le Brun. And it may be useful at this point to sum up Horace's preponderant influence with the critics by remarking what the reader may have already observed—that it had the

137. See note 135.
138. *L'art poétique*, IV, 88–90.
139. *Defense of Poesy*, 1595, ed. Cook, Boston, 1890, p. 15.
140. See *ibid.*, p. XXXIII for citations from the *Vita Nuova*, the letter to Can Grande della Scala, etc.
141. *Naugerius*, trans. Kelso, p. 68.
142. *Faerie Queene*, II, canto 12.
143. *Areopagitica*, 1644.

general result, on the whole unfortunate, of directing the Aristotelian theory of imitation into channels of formalism or didacticism. In the case of decorum (*convenevolezza* or *decoro*), a word to conjure with in the history of criticism, the painter was admonished that in his art each age, each sex, each type of human being must display its representative character, and he must be scrupulous in giving the appropriate physique, gesture, bearing, and facial expression to each of his figures. Horace had given similar advice to the dramatic poet,[144] and this advice the Renaissance critics of poetry elaborately included in their own *Ars poetica* which they based upon the criticism of antiquity.[145] Like so much in the doctrine *ut pictura poesis*, the classical concept of decorum found its first expression among the critics of painting in Alberti, when for instance he remarks that the movement of figures in a painting must be appropriate to their various ages, or that the hands of Helen of Troy or of Iphigenia must not be withered and rough[146]—an example of indecorum at which the modern reader will be inclined to smile, but which may have seemed to Alberti, in an age

144. See especially *Ars poetica* 153–78, which Horace sums up in the concluding lines:

> "ne forte seniles
> mandentur iuveni partes pueroque viriles,
> semper in adiunctis aevoque morabimur aptis."

Besides warning against this kind of inappropriateness, Horace also advised both poet and painter to avoid deviations from nature represented by the monstrous or fantastic (see note 14), and the poet to avoid the unnaturally violent, e.g. Medea butchering her children on the stage (*op. cit.*, 182–88). Chiefly these passages from Horace and several from the rhetoricians, e.g. Quintilian *Inst. Orat.* XI. 3., 61 ff., were the sources for discussions of decorum from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century.

145. Daniello (*La poetica*, pp. 35 ff.) remarks that there must be decorum in the whole of a poem, which must not mix the serious and the light, that which is easy to understand with that which is profound, etc. One must not, in short, make a poem like one of the hybrid grotesques mentioned by Horace (see note 14). The following passage defines decorum very completely in terms of the appropriate and fitting: "Ne è solamente da vedere che le parti delle materie che si prendono a trattare, habbiano fra loro convenientia: ma che quelle anchora che alle persone si mandano, convenientissime, proprie, et accomodate siano. Et oltre accio, che il parlar che si da loro, sia di soavità, di mansuetudine, di gravità, d'allegrezza, di dolore, et finalmente pieno de' gli affetti tutti, secondo però la qualità, la degnità, l'habito, l'ufficio, et l'età di ciascuna . . . Et perchè questa convenevolezza non è altro che un cotal habito et proprietà dell'animo, è necessario che devendosi essa a ciascuna persona attribuire, si sappi somigliantemente et si conosca la consuetudine, et i costumi di ciascuna età." There follows a passage based squarely on the *Ars poetica* (153 ff.) about giving age and youth their appropriate characters; another to the effect that if one introduces "persone note," one must make them act as in previous authors (cf. *ibid.* 119 ff.); and a warning to the dramatic poet to avoid the cruel, impossible, and dishonest, in which Horace's example of Medea is mentioned.

Dolce published a translation of the *Ars poetica* in 1535, and his *Dialogo della pittura* of 1557 is, like Daniello's *Poetica*, steeped in Horace. On p. 162 Dolce quotes Horace (see note 14) on the fantastic creations that both poet and painter should avoid, and in another passage (pp. 152 ff.) in which he discusses *convenevolezza* he remembers several passages in the *Ars poetica* and probably Daniello (pp. 34–35) when, after remarking that Christ, and St. Paul preaching, are not to be rendered naked or clothed in a mean habit, and that the painter must have strict regard "alla qualità delle persone, ne meno alle nationi, a costumi, a luoghi, et a tempi" observes that the same kind of decorum should obtain in poetry, referring to Horace's remark (119–27) that the poet must adapt the language of the speaker to the character he would represent, as with Achilles, Orestes, Medea, etc. The notion of decorum is very strong in Lomazzo, for whom each type of place (cemetery, church, royal palace, garden, musical instruments (!) etc.) and of subject (compositions of war, rape, love, banquets, joy, sadness, etc.) has its appropriate iconography. The greater part of Book VI of the *Trattato* is devoted to decorum.

146. The notion of decorum is nearly as dominant in the second book of Alberti's *Della pittura* as in Horace's *Ars poetica*. Alberti explains at length (pp. 111 ff.) that in the art of painting each part of the body must conform in its proportions to the other parts, e.g. a big head and a small breast do not go together; each member must act in a way that is suitable to what it is supposed to perform, e.g. it is appropriate for a runner to move the hands not less than the feet, and if a body is dead or alive, every least part must appear dead or alive; each part must likewise be appropriate to the type of person represented, e.g. Helen and Iphigenia must not have hands that are "vecchizze et gotiche," nor Ganymede a wrinkled brow, nor the legs of a porter; finally each part must conform in color to the other parts, e.g. a lovely face of fair complexion does not match a breast and limbs that are ugly and dirty-colored. And just as each part of the body must conform to the others in size, function, type, and color, so each figure in a composition must have the proper size as compared with the others and act in a suitable manner: e.g. at a brawl of centaurs, it would be silly if one of them should lie asleep overcome with wine in the midst of such tumult, and it would be wrong to put a man in a house the size of a jewel case where he could scarcely sit down ("which I often see," says Alberti, having in mind a habit of Trecento and early Quattrocento painters). The passage on the movements appropriate to virgins and to boys, mature men, and old men (pp. 127 ff.) reads like an adaptation of Horace's advice to the poet concerning the appropriate portrayal of the different ages of man (*op. cit.*, 153 ff.): "Et conviensi alla pictura avere movimenti soavi et grati, convenienti ad quello ivi si facci. Siano alla vergini movimenti et posari ariosi, pieni di semplicità, in quali piu tosto sia dolcezza di quiete che galliardia; . . . Siano i movimenti ai garzonetti leggieri, jocondi, con una certa demostratione di grande animo et buone forze. Sia nell'huomo movimenti con piu fermezza ornati, con belli posari et artificiosi. Sia ad i vecchi loro movimenti et posari stracchi, non so̩o in su due piè, ma ancora si sostenghino su le mani."

that had but lately awakened to the ideal beauty of the antique, as shocking an example as he could imagine. It is somewhat surprising to discover that at the end of the fifteenth century Leonardo counsels the painter to observe decorum in a passage that more than most in the *Trattato* savors of traditional theory. For one does not easily associate the implications of propriety and formalism that the term suggests with Leonardo's eager interest in the infinite variety of nature. Decorum he defines as "appropriateness of gesture, dress, and locality" and urges the painter to have due regard for the dignity or lowliness of things, for instance in the depiction of a scene at court wherein the beard, mien, and habit of the king must have a becoming dignity, and a like appropriateness must appear among the courtiers and bystanders according to the loftiness or humbleness of their position; and he ends by maintaining, like Horace and Alberti, that gesture in painting must be appropriate to age, and also, he adds, to sex.[147] Now if remarks like these which were to become standard for later criticism could be construed simply as advice to the painter to follow in the path of the typical and representative, avoiding the improbable and adventitious, no one could take exception to them. Yet despite their implications of the typical, they could not be so interpreted, because the very notion of decorum is allied less to the Aristotelian doctrine of typical imitation than to that pseudo-Aristotelian theory, already discussed, of the imitation of models.[148] The advice to imitate the antique was, as we have seen, fraught with danger to the creative artist, because the imitation of models, however perfect they might be, was not the fresh imitation of nature. And the concept of decorum, for similar reasons, was not one to encourage artistic originality. For when the critics told the painters to observe decorum, they were not actually advising them to follow the typical in human action and expression (which, if the artist's work is to be alive must be fashioned after the living face of nature). Rather, they were enjoining them to follow the typical formalized, reduced to static and convenient patterns that a person of good taste and good sense (he need possess no great imagination) would accept as appropriate symbols for the actions and emotions of people of such and such an age, sex, profession, situation in life, or whatever it might be.[149] And if one had asked the Italian and French critics where those appropriate formulas for typical representation had been embodied in sculpture and painting, they would have answered that decorum, like ideal beauty, had been a particular virtue of the antique, and in modern times of Raphael; and, the French Academy would have added, of Poussin.[150] Thus the classical notion of the typical or representative is preserved in the concept of decorum, but in a conventionalized form, just as the concept of ideal

147. *Trattato*, III. 377: "Osserva il decoro, cioè della convenientia del atto, vestiggie, e sito, e circonspetti della degnità o'viltà delle cose, che tu voi figurare, cioè, ch'il Re sia di barba, aria et abito grave, et il sito ornato, e li circonstanti stieno con riverentia e admiratione, e abiti degni et convenienti alla gravità d'una corte Reale. Et li vili disornati, infinti et abbietti. Et li lor circonstanti habbian similitudine, con atti vili et prosuntuosi, et tutte le membra corispondino à tal componimento, et che li atti d'un vecchio non sieno simili à quelli del giovane, nè la femina con l'atto del maschio, nè quello del huomo con quello del fanciullo."

148. See Chapter II and note 43.

149. It should be noted that in Horace's concept of decorum the implications of the typical are strong, so strong in fact that it may seem at times (as in 153–78 where he gives advice to the poet concerning the portrayal of youth, manhood, and old age) that the concept of the typical is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the appropriate (cf. also 317–18, wherein Horace urges the poet to go directly to life for his materials—advice that would tend to counteract the formalistic implications of decorum); and it stands to reason that an artist who would represent the different ages of man in a fitting manner, must be aware of typical aspects of human life. Nevertheless, it is the notion of the appropriate that prevails in Horace, and the fact that he is conscious both of models in the art of the past and of the kind of thing his audience expects ("Tu quid ego et populus mecum desideret audi") is also characteristic of a mind that tends to think in terms of the conventional and becoming in art rather than of the profoundly imaginative and original. This would also be true of most Renaissance critics. See the remarks of Daniello and Dolce in note 145.

150. See Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura*, p. 160. Félibien in his reports of the fourth and sixth *Conférences* of the Academy records praise of Raphael's and of Poussin's decorum (Jouin, *Conférences de l'Académie*, p. 36 and p. 60). See note 183.

nature was preserved in the antique where it could always be found in convenient and invariable patterns.

There was another aspect of decorum not so specifically defined by Horace as were its connotations of the typical, but nevertheless present in the *Ars poetica*, and closely related to that inobtrusive tone of urbane admonition that informs much of the poem and changes to positive utterance near the end when the poet declares the didactic and moral uses of poetry,[151] and describes the noble rôle that the art has played in bringing civilization to mankind.[152] This was the notion, of great importance in the later history of criticism, that decorum means not only the suitable representation of typical aspects of human life, but also specific conformity to what is decent and proper in taste, and even more in morality and religion.[153] Although in this last sense it had been implicit in Alberti,[154] it is absent in the empirical Leonardo, for whom prescribed forms in morality and religion probably had little significance; but the examples of indecorum noted by the critics after 1550, and particularly towards the end of the century, nearly always suggest the immoral, irreverent, or undignified, rather than the unrepresentative or improbable; and the critics, mindful of what they consider the didactic function of art, are chiefly concerned that it shall be as edifying as possible. When Dolce in 1557 cites as reasonable and sound criticism Ghiberti's complaint to Donatello that when he made a crucifix he hung a peasant, not an ideal figure upon the cross,[155] or when he objects to Dürer's painting the Virgin and saints in German habits,[156] he speaks, one may believe, both as a man of classical taste who favored the generalizing, not the realistic, mode of representation, and as an apologist for propriety in religious painting. When Borghini, however, in 1584 blames Bronzino for the introduction of nudes into his *Christ in Limbo*,[157] he is no longer an aesthetic critic at all, but merely a moralist who sees in the irreverent treatment of the subject an incitement to carnal desire. But the most celebrated example of impropriety for the later sixteenth century was Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, and the age of the Counter-Reform nowhere expresses itself in criticism more directly than in those writers who in the name of Horatian decorum take the heroic artist to task, not only for the mild aesthetic and factual impropriety of failing to distinguish between the sexes in the rendering of muscles, but especially for the very

151. See note 132.

152. *Ars poetica*, 391 ff.

153. Medea's butchering her children, and Atreus' cooking human flesh on the stage are shocking to Horace as well as a tax on his credulity (*ibid.*, 185–88). Part of that wisdom which is the source of good writing consists in learning what is fitting in the sense of moral obligation: if the poet has learned what he owes his country and his friends, what love is due a parent, a brother and a guest, as well as the professional duties of a judge or a general, he knows, Horace says, how to render his characters appropriately (*ibid.*, 309 ff.). In this passage decorum means what is decent and becoming in conduct as well as what is appropriate to typical conditions of human life. In 153 ff. it has the latter significance.

154. He remarks (*op. cit.*, p. 119) that in representing the nude, or naked parts, the painter must have regard for decency and modesty: "Et se cosi ivi sia licito, sievi alcuno ignudo et alcuni parte nudi et parte vestiti, ma sempre si serva alla vergognia et alla pudicitia." He adds that ugly parts of the body or those that have little grace must be covered with drapery, leaves, or the hand, and then characteristically cites the antique example of Antigonus whom the ancients represented in profile lest one should see the blemish of his blind eye; and other antique examples of the same kind. Cf. note 40.

155. *Op. cit.*, p. 154.

156. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

157. Raffaello Borghini, *Il riposo*, Florence, 1730 (first ed., Florence, 1584), p. 84: "Di già abbiamo noi ragionato ... quanto mal fatto sia, le figure sacre fare così lascive. Ora di più vi dico, che non solamente nelle chiese, ma in ogni altro pubblico luogo discovengono; perciocchè danno cattivo esempio, e nella mente vani pensieri inducono: e gli artifici, che l'hanno fatte, nella vecchiezza dal tardo pentimento della coscienza sentono rodersi il cuore, come ben confessa Bartolommeo Ammanati scultore, in una sua lettera stampata, agli Accademici del Disegno, dove dice, aver malamente adoperato nell'aver fatto molte statue ignude. ... Perciò quanta poca laude meriti il Bronzino in cotesta opera, voi medesimo, dilettandovi nel rimirare quelle donne lascive, il confessate: ed io son sicuro, che ciascuno, che si ferma attento a rimirare questa pittura, considerando la morbidezza delle membra, e la vaghezza del viso di quelle giovani donne, non possa fare di non sentire qualche stimolo della carne: cosa tutta al contrario di quello, che nel santo tempio di Dio far si doverebbe." The Counter-Reform here speaks very clearly, as it does in Lomazzo's injunction that lascivious subjects are permissible only "in modo che nulla di lascivo si veda, ma si cuopra con destrezza, e gratia" (*op. cit.*, VI, 2, p. 284).

serious violation of modesty, decency, and sacred truth in turning a sublime religious subject into a display of anatomical invention. Already in 1557 Dolce, speaking through the mouth of Aretino who some ten years before in his brilliantly abusive letter had told Michelangelo that his art belonged in a brothel rather than in the Sistine,[158] declares that in the chapel of God's earthly representative the nakedness of sacred personages is intolerable, and that improper pictures, far more than improper books—a curious extension, if one likes, of the implications of *ut pictura poesis*—should be placed upon the Index.[159] This severity of judgment, while it echoes the ironic hyperbole of the irreligious Aretino, is yet entirely in keeping with the spirit of the age, although Dolce who admired the rich naturalism of Titian and considered the classicizing Raphael the paragon of decorum, really objects to Michelangelo more, one may believe, on the grounds of style than of propriety, finding the Florentine's muscularity and violent action greatly to his distaste. In the next decade, however, a less humanistic critic, the cleric Gilio da Fabriano, who writes a dialogue on painting that is in good part an actual commentary on various passages from the *Ars poetica*,[160] just as if Horace had written the poem in the first place for painters rather than for poets, identifies decorum not only with a sense of reverent propriety due the mysteries of the faith, but also with the strict observance of the truth of scriptural narrative.[161] He blames Michelangelo[162] not only for the gratuitous nakedness of his figures,[163] or because the angels who bear the Instruments of the Passion comport themselves like acrobats,[164] but also because the wind appears to move hair and garments when there could have been no wind, "for on that day the winds and tempests will have ceased";[165] or the Resurrection occurs gradually with people now skeletons, now half now fully clothed with flesh, when St. Paul had written that it would be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye;[166] or people rise

158. For Aretino's letter see G. Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti*, Florence, 1840, II, 332–35.

159. *Op. cit.*, p. 236.

160. *Due dialoghi di M. Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano. Nel primo si ragiona de le parti Morali et civili appartenenti a Letterati, Cortigiani . . . nel secondo si ragiona degli errori de' Pittori circa l'historie con molte annotatione fatte sopra il Giuditio di Michelangelo*, Camerino, 1564. For discussion of Gilio see E. Steinmann, *Die Sixtinische Kapella*, Munich, 1905, II, 554–58; J. Schlosser-Magnino, *La letteratura artistica*, pp. 370–72.

161. Gilio also urges the painter throughout to observe decorum in the more general sense of what is appropriate to the different ages, sexes, countries, etc., quoting Horace as his authority: If the painter has due regard for this precept, he will not fall into what is indecent or unbecoming in his treatment of religious subjects. See, for instance, *ibid.*, p. 89: "Prima deve avvertire à dar le parti tanto sostantiali, quanto accidentali che se li [the persons to be painted] convengono, acciò si conservi il decoro in tutte le cose, tanto de l'età, quanto del sesso, de la dignità, de la patria, de'costumi, de gli habiti, de gesti, e d'ogn'altra cosa propria a l'huomo, del che diceva Horatio [*Ars poetica* 156–57]:

> Tu dei notar d'ogni etade i costumi
> E dare a gli anni mobili, ò maturi;
> Et à le lor nature il suo decoro."

162. As a kind of introduction to his criticism of the *Last Judgment*, Gilio (pp. 83–84) notes other examples of historical error on the part of painters: e.g. it is wrong to represent St. Peter "decrepito," because from the time of the Crucifixion to the last year of Nero's reign when he was crucified, thirty-seven years had passed: nor should Joseph be so represented, because it is improbable (*non verisimile*) that God would have wished the Mother of His Son to be wedded to an aged man who could not endure the hardship of the flight into Egypt, etc.; nor should the Magdalen, no longer a sinner, be represented clean, perfumed, and covered with jewelry, at the foot of the cross; nor is it fitting to show St. Jerome in the habit of a cardinal when it was not until seven hundred years later that Pope Innocent IV gave cardinals this habit; and furthermore, if St. Jerome was a hermit, it is wrong to represent him in worldly pomp, for these glorious saints deliberately chose a solitary life in order to make the flesh obedient to the spirit. All such comments are extremely interesting as illustrating the spirit of the Counter-Reform.

163. *Ibid.*, p. 105: Gilio remarks that it is no scandal to behold the nakedness of innocent children, but that if to behold the nakedness of men and women causes shame, how much more shameful is it to behold the nakedness of saints: ". . . però io dico, che se quelle parti consideriamo in piccioli fanciulletti, non ci scandalezziamo, havendo riguardo, à l'innocenza e purità di quelli, sensa malitia, e peccato: non potendoci per naturale istinto cadere. Ma se la miriamo ne gli huomini, e ne le donne n'arreca vergogna, è scandolo, e piu quando le veggiamo in persone, ed in luoghi ove vedere non si doverebbe: perche ne santi, oltra l'erubescenza, ne da non so che di rimorso ne l'animo, considerando, che quel santo non solo, ad altri mostre non l'harebbe: ma ne anche esso stesso miratele."

164. *Ibid.*, p. 90: "Per questo [because an artist should represent his subject truthfully and appropriately] io non lodo gli sforzi che fanno gli Angeli nel giuditio di Michelagnolo, dico di quelli che sostengono la croce, la colonna, e gli altri sacrati misteri; i quali piu tosto rappresentano mattaccini, ò giocolieri, che Angeli: conciosia che l'Angelo sosterrebbe senza fatica tutto'l globo de la terra: non che una Croce, ò una colonna, ò simili."

165. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

166. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98; there is a long argument on this point in which Job, Ezekiel, and Horace are cited as well as St. Paul.

from the dead now decrepit and bald, now young, in fact of every age, when it is written that on the last day there shall be no age nor youth, nor any deformity of body;[167] or the Virgin turns away from Christ, as if fearing that she herself were unprotected from his wrath;[168] or Charon's bark appears without the sanction of historical truth even though Michelangelo owed its introduction to the greatest of Italian poets.[169] For poetry and theology, says Gilio, are sharply opposed, and when Michelangelo painted an important article of the faith, it was his business to imitate the theologians, not the poets.[170]

Gilio had, however, no objection to the poets provided the painter chose the proper moment to use them. And in the categorizing manner of his age he divides painters into three groups—poetical, historical, and mixed painters.[171] The first are like the poets in being free to invent their subjects provided they follow Horace's advice to follow nature and avoid the incongruous, whereas the second group, as we have seen, are not free to invent at all,[172] at least if one includes in a definition of invention any imaginative treatment of one's religious or historical subject. The third group, who have much in common, says Gilio, with the great epic poets of antiquity, mix fact with fiction in a delightful manner as Virgil did, for instance, when he added the purely fabulous account of Aeneas' sojourn with Dido to a story which in the main was historically correct.[173] And it is in the domain of allegory and symbolism where fact and fancy frequently mingle that the painters owe much to the antique poets, and even more to those sculptors who carved on the Roman triumphal arches personifications of Victory, Peace, and the City of Rome, whence the Christians learned to give human form to the theological virtues.[174] These are admitted in sacred art, Gilio characteristically adds, "for no other reason than because they are virtues, for the purity of religion wants nothing but what is virtuous, especially when it comes to allegorical figures."[175] There follows a warning to the painters that recalls the later sentiments of De Piles and Du Bos that the spectator must be able to understand these mixtures of truth and fiction without undue mental effort.[176] And it is worth noting that Gilio's threefold division of poetical, historical, and mixed painters has its later counterpart in the threefold activity already discussed which Félibien was to assign to the *grand peintre* of the seventeenth century.

167. *Ibid.*, p. 107: "L'altro capriccio è [by *capriccio* Gilio means Michelangelo's "caprice," his unwarranted freedom of imagination which results in the violation of sacred truth], che in quel giorno non ci sara ne vecchiezza, ne pueritia, ne calvitie, ne cosa alcuna che renda il corpo in qual si voglia parte difforme, e brutto, come dianzi vi dissi: e quivi si veggono decrepiti, calvi, fanciulli, e gente d'ogni etade."

168. *Ibid.*, p. 107. It is argued that on the last day, far from fulfilling her role of intercessor for humanity, she will condemn with her son. But Michelangelo is finally allowed to be in the realm of "fintioni concesse" when he renders the Virgin as she turns away from Christ, only because he thereby shows the ignorant that she is (when not assisting at the Last Judgment) the Mother of Mercy.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 108. Gilio fears that the ignorant will believe in the reality of poetic inventions: "L'altra cosa che mi dispiace è che in uno articolo di tanta importanza Michelagnolo haggia framessa la favola di Caronte, che con la sua alata barca passa l'anime de'dannati, per la Stigia Palude; alzando il remo per batter quelle che tardano ad entrare dentro, acciò dieno luogo a l'altre. Pensate voi che gli ignoranti non credano fermamente, che laggiù vi sieno fiumi, paludi, navi, giudici che rivedano i processi, el Cane da tre Teste che riscuote la gabella?"

170. *Ibid.*, p. 109: "Però Michelagnolo dovendo dipingere uno articolo de la nostra fede importantissimo doveva imitare i Teologi, e non i Poeti, che la Teologia, e la poesia si sono de diretto contrarie."

171. *Ibid.*, p. 75: "Perche doverebbono sapere, che il pittore a le volte è puro historico, à le volte puro poeta, ed à le volte è misto. Quando è puro poeta, penso che lecito gli sia dipingere tutto quello, che il capriccio gli detta; con quei gesti, con quei sforzi sieno però convenevoli a la figura, che egli fa." In the course of the next two pages Gilio translates a number of lines from the famous beginning of the *Ars poetica* in which Horace remarks that poets and painters have always had liberty of imagination, but that poets—and Gilio means that these lines shall apply as well to painters—must not make savage mate with tame, or serpents with birds, etc. (see note 14).

172. There were very rare "fintioni concesse," but only, it would seem, if these could be construed to have some bearing of their own on theological truth. See note 168.

173. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

174. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

175. *Ibid.:* "Però i Cristiani da questi esempi mossi hanno imparato a dar forma humana a la Religione, a la Fede, a la Speranza, a la Carità, ed a l'altre virtù che insieme con queste vanno mescolatamente con le cose sacre, e virtù Teologiche si chiamano; e non per altro fra le cose sacre si mettono, che per esser virtù, come che la purita de la religione altro che cose virtuose non richieda, e spetialmente queste."

176. See p. 216 and note 86.

But a few allegorical figures, and only because they are sanctioned by antique example, are almost the sole deviation from factual truth that the jealous theologians will allow in religious painting,[177] and they can hardly be said to afford much scope to the imagination. Otherwise the painter of religious subjects is, as we have seen, one who paints the literal facts of history, and it is evident that he must have sufficient learning, let alone orthodox habits of mind, to paint pictures that will pass muster with the most uncompromising theologians. The concept that a painter like a poet must be learned in the interest of decorum, will be discussed later. Here it may be further observed that criticism like Gilio's, although it shows no interest whatsoever in formal beauty and evinces in its theological pedantry a painful misunderstanding of the grandeur of Michelangelo's profoundly personal interpretation of his subject, has nevertheless this much to be said in its favor: when Gilio asserts that the immoderate contortions of Michelangelo's angels are to display the power of art (*la forza d'arte*),[178] and that Michelangelo has not erred through ignorance, but through a desire to serve art rather than the truths of religion,[179] he strikes not merely at the manneristic extravagance of Michelangelo's late style, but, what is more important, through Michelangelo at the general tendency in Mannerist art to sacrifice meaning to empty aestheticism. And in one of the most interesting of a number of passages in Gilio's book that might serve as texts for a lecture on the aesthetic extravagance of the Mannerist style, the author, after remarking that errors of fact in painting are due to ignorance and might be avoided if the painters were only men of letters and took the trouble to inform themselves about their subjects, adds that "they appear to think that they have paid their debt when they have made a saint and have put all their genius and diligence into twisting awry the legs, or the arms, or the neck; and in a violent manner that is both unseemly and ugly."[180] Through the dark glass, therefore, of crabbed and impercipient clericalism one may discern in Gilio not only the need of a deeper religious content in human life, but also the aesthetic need that the Baroque style later attempted to satisfy, of more adequate forms of expression.[181]

The dialogue is further significant as indicating along with other documents of the time[182] the temporary impoverishment of humanistic values that accompanied the breakdown of the Classical Renaissance in the sixteenth century, and the policy of the Church to press the arts into the service of morality and Christian dogma. For the student of the theory *ut pictura poesis*, it is illuminating as showing how the concept of artistic decorum which in Horace's own mind was not devoid of moral implication, could acquire under particular historical conditions a dogmatic significance in which its classical connotations of representative truth were entirely lost. Painting, since its content was that of poetry,

177. See note 172.

178. *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

179. *Ibid.*, p. 101: "Credo certo che Michelagnolo . . . per ignoranza non ha errato, ma piu tosto ha voluto abbellire il pennello, e compiacere a l'arte che al vero. Io penso certo, che piu sarebbe piaciuto, ed ammirato se questo mistero fatto havesse come l'historia richiedeva che come l'ha fatto."

180. *Op. cit.*, p. 84: "E se fussero considerati come dianzi diceste in fare i modelli, gli schizzi, i cartoni, informarsi bene d'ogni cosa, non gli avverrebbe questo; e par loro haver pagato il debito, quando hanno fatto un santo; e haver messo tutto l'ingegno, e la diligenza in torcerli le gambe, ò le braccia, ò'l collo torto; e farlo sforzato, di sforzo sconvenevole e brutto."

181. Despite his criticism of Michelangelo, Gilio pays tribute to him (*ibid.*, p. 110) because at a time when painting was lifeless (all the other sciences also being lifeless) he "non solo ha rilevata la quasi perduta scienza; ma l'ha in modo abbellita, ed à perfettione ridotta, che non possiamo haver invidia a gli antichi, e l'ha tanto col suo sapere illustrata, che se non passa aguaglia quella, per la quale gli Apelli, Timagori, i Zeusi, i Protogeni, i Pulignoti, e gli altri ne sono chiari e famosi al mondo. Onde dir possiamo, se egli stato non fusse sarebbe quasi di mano à gli artefici uscita." It is typical of the spiritual cross-currents of the century that Gilio should praise Michelangelo as the equal of the ancients just after he has condemned him severely for religious indecorum. In a later passage Raphael (*ibid.*, p. 116) is also included as one who helped bring art back to the fair estate which it had enjoyed among the ancients, but he receives no such praise as Michelangelo does here.

182. See the reference to Ammanati's famous letter of 1582 in note 157. It is published in Bottari, *Raccolta di lettere*, Milan, 1822, III, 532–39.

and since its effects on human emotion were the same, was subject to the same laws of decorum; and if it dealt with religious subjects, it had accordingly to be a categorically exact, as well as a vivid and moving, illustration of the facts of Christian history and the truths of theology. This specialized application of the Horatian concept did not outlast the Mannerist period, but it helped to encourage the view that persisted in the following century that decorum implied not only representative truth, but truth that was morally edifying as well. Herein for the seventeenth century, as for Horace, lay its connection with the precept that art should instruct as well as delight. In the preface to his *Conférences de l'Académie* Félibien, for instance, regarded decorum (*bienséance*) as "one of the most necessary elements in painting to instruct the ignorant, and one of the most agreeable in the eyes of the learned."[183]

That it might well be both is apparent from his remarks on decorum that immediately precede this thoroughly Horatian observation. For they reveal that close connection between learning and the ability to render things with strict appropriateness already remarked in Gilio da Fabriano. "Decorum must be observed," writes Félibien, out-Horacing Horace, "in regard to ages, sexes, countries, different professions, manners and customs, passions, and usages of dress appropriate to each nation. Herein is Raphael admirable, but not so Titian and Veronese."[184] The formalistic implications of a passage like this—and one will immediately think of the aridly conventional gestures and expression of much French painting of the late seventeenth century—are sufficiently obvious. It is clear, moreover, that if the artist is successfully to observe decorum in its diverse ramifications, he must get his facts straight about a great variety of men and nations, both ancient and modern; he must in short be possessed of a truly uncommon erudition. Hence it is that the critics frequently undertake to instruct the painters in what they must know if they are to be historical painters worthy of the name. What they tell them, often at great length, Boileau, instructing the poet concerning decorum, sums up in three lines:

> Conservez à chacun son propre caractère.
> Des siècles, des pais, étudiez les mœurs,
> Les climats font souvent les diverses humeurs.[185]

VI—The Learned Painter

The theory of the learned painter, twin brother of the learned poet whose prototype was the *doctus poeta* of antiquity, was an important element in the doctrine *ut pictura poesis*. Furthermore it was an element of great vitality which, gathering girth and momentum in the sixteenth century, had hardly spent its energy by the end of the eighteenth. Yet as fashioned by the Italian critics of the Cinquecento, the learned painter is a highly theoretical personage who, if he cannot be called an actual figment of the imagination, has never had more than a partial basis in reality; and much of the time he has had no basis there at all. Now no sympathetic student of the Renaissance will quarrel with the view already expressed in the fifteenth century by Alberti that the painter will do well to know the poets and historians who will supply him with subjects of universal interest, and to associate with poets and learned men of his own day and age who may provide interesting ideas.[186] But when in the later sixteenth century it is also insisted—and critics of literature were giving the same advice to the poet—that the painter be learned not only in sacred and profane

183. P. 317.
184. *Loc. cit.*
185. *L'art poétique*, III, 113–15.
186. See Chapter II and notes 73 and 74.

literature, but also in geography, climatology, geology, theology, and the manners and customs of various countries, for only with a fund of precise knowledge can a painter show the proper respect for those poetical and historical texts, often hallowed by antiquity or religion, which provide him with his subject matter; when the critics have thus elevated the painter to the rank of *maestro di color che sanno*—and Bellori actually applies to Raphael Dante's famous characterization of Aristotle[187]—one is aware that pedantry has intruded on good sense.

It has already been noted in the discussion of Gilio da Fabriano's estimate of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* that the critics associated a painter's observance of decorum with his knowledge of texts; for a violation of historical truth taken in its broadest sense to include the events of religious narrative, might mean in the latter case religious impropriety, or with other subject matter, the incongruity now slight, now serious enough to occasion loss of universal truth, that anachronism is likely to bring in its train. But in point of fact decorum (taken in its most inclusive sense to mean the observance in any subject of seriousness or magnitude of a certain propriety, not only for the sake of representative truth but also in one sense or another of decency or good form), although it will always depend to some extent on avoiding the picturesque use of contemporary costume and setting at the expense of emphasis on universal human content, simply does not depend on that total avoidance of the local and contemporary that the critics thought an accurate observance of texts would insure. In spite of the contemporary dress of the apostles and servants and the presence of a small dog under the table, no sensible critic of today would say, for instance, that Titian's *Supper at Emmaus* in the Louvre lacks decorum; for although the painter has given the religious theme a patrician character that is not in keeping with the Gospel, he has nevertheless treated it with becoming reverence and dignity. And with all due respect to Félibien who remarked, as we have seen, that Titian lacked decorum, genuine decorum in a picture depends not on the presence or absence of the realistic and contemporary, but on the painter's treatment of these elements. It depends, that is, on his personal attitude towards his subject which is embodied in his style, and one may say truly that if the dog under the table in Titian's *Supper at Emmaus* were prominently displayed as he is in Veronese's painting of the same subject—a painting, by the way, in which the French Academy, this time with good reason, refused to admit the existence of decorum[188]—or if the contemporary dress or landscape instead of taking their places easily in the monumental pattern of the picture intruded in any self-assertive manner on the importance and dignity of the human content, then to speak of indecorum might be justified. And that would be to admit that decorum is actually far more a matter of the artist's point of view as reflected in his style than of adherence to the truth of historical detail, and to give the lie to those sixteenth-century critics who in self-defense would have had logically and foolishly to declare that the decorum of the picture would at least be improved had the painter displayed a knowledge of Palestinian dress, architecture, landscape, and tableware of the first century A.D.

This is perhaps an overstatement of the case, but it is not without its foundation in

187. *Idea*, p. 6.

188. In the *Conférence* of October 1, 1667, in which Nocret discussed the picture, today in the Louvre, concentrating on its fine composition and color and generally abstaining from a discussion of the higher virtues of the historical painter in which Veronese in the Academy's eyes was obviously lacking. Some who attended the discussion attempted to justify all the well-dressed people in the picture who do not appear in the Bible on the ground that they might have been in the place where the disciples and Christ were to eat supper, and seeing something remarkable in Christ, have remained to look at him. But the Academy refused to accept this "charitable excuse" and, for obvious reasons, to discuss decorum further (see Jouin, *Conférences*, p. 47).

fact in the writing of the sixteenth century. Dolce, for instance, declares that for decorum's sake the painter must not only represent a traditional figure like Moses with due grandeur and majesty, but must also on all occasions "take into account the rank of the persons whom he will represent, and not less, the nations, customs, places and epochs: so that if he will paint a feat of arms of Caesar or of Alexander the Great, it would not be appropriate to arm the soldiers as they would be armed today; and in the one case he will depict Macedonian arms and, in the other, Roman; and if it shall be his task to represent a modern battle, he must not seek to dispose it in the antique manner. By the same tokens, if he wishes to represent Caesar, it would be ridiculous to put a Turkish turban on his head, or one of our caps, or yet one in the Venetian style."[189] And shortly thereafter he adds: "Not less must the painter fashion localities and buildings according to the nature of the countries in which they are found so that he will not attribute to one country what is appropriate to another. Wherefore that painter was not very wise who, when he painted Moses striking the rock with his rod and causing the water desired by the Hebrews miraculously to issue forth, imagined a country fertile, grassy, and girt with charming hills: because history has it that this miracle happened in the desert; and besides, in fertile places there is always plenty of water."[190] Now one will readily admit that in a subject of this sort the fertility and beauty of the countryside should not receive undue emphasis. Nevertheless, Dolce's remarks are an example of that literal reading of a picture at the expense of its significant dramatic content that criticism in the name of decorum, or perhaps of verisimilitude,[191] or simply of learning for its own sake, would for two centuries seek to encourage. And it is interesting to read in the *Poetica* of Daniello, published some twenty years before Dolce's treatise, a similar injunction to the poet to encompass in his mind a vast and diverse erudition; for since human and divine events are his province, the poet must have knowledge "if not of all sciences and doctrines, at least of the greater part" and this comprehensive requirement includes more specifically the principles of supernatural, natural, and moral philosophy (for *il sapere*, and here he translates Horace, *è principio e fonte dello scrivere bene*) of which the great Latin and modern poets are the repositories and which must, however, be supplemented by a "very wide experience of things that are done on land and sea"; and this practical experience of the nature of things includes within its own gigantic boundaries not only an expert knowledge of the conduct of land and naval warfare, but also the customs, modes of living, and habits of different peoples; "to put it briefly," as Daniello says with unconscious humor, "everything that has to do with the practical living of life."[192]

The reader with the leisure to compare the treatises of Daniello and Dolce will encounter a striking similarity between them not merely in their insistence on the erudition of poet and painter, but in the order which they observe in developing their theories, and in their specific comments on invention, decorum, the purpose of art, and the like.[193] Daniello's book, published in Venice in 1536, was of course readily accessible to Dolce, and it is not improbable that the latter modeled the general form of his theoretical exposition on that of the *Poetica*. In any event, it is scarcely hyperbole to say that in extended passages in both books a substitution of the word painter for poet, or vice versa, as the case required, would make no important difference in the sense. This fact alone, even if one ignored all the knowledge of Horace and Aristotle that Dolce patently displays, would give ample

189. *Dialogo della pittura*, p. 154.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
191. See Appendix 6, "Decorum and Verisimilitude."
192. P. 34: "tutte quelle cose che d'intorno alla pratica consistono."
193. See Appendices 2, 3; notes 73, 92, 145.

measure of the extent to which the doctrine *ut pictura poesis* was, alike in its origins and in its sixteenth-century development, a purely literary theory that a writer of humanistic temper could genially transfer to the sister art. But to return to Dolce's learned painter who finds his close parallel in Daniello's learned poet, it is interesting to see how at the end of the sixteenth century the critics influenced by the Counter-Reform exhort the painter to be well read above all in ecclesiastical literature. A painter dare not be ignorant of sacred history, writes Lomazzo in his last book, nor of matters pertaining to theology which he can at least learn by conversation with theologians; thus he will know how he should represent heaven and hell and their inhabitants; nor are the legends of the saints to be neglected.[194] Sacred literature then comes first, displacing the poetry of an earlier day, and Lomazzo's list that follows deserves some comment.[195] As one who had been a practicing artist he insists upon geometry and perspective which Dolce, as a cultivated connoisseur but no painter, did not; and on music and architecture, and on history which must be treated with absolute truth. Poetry appears rather ingloriously near the end of the list—further evidence of the temporary eclipse of humanism in the late Cinquecento—although Lomazzo is aware in a passage that has the familiar Horatian ring that painter and poet are most alike in possessing freedom of imagination (*la licenza del fingere e inventare*); and that a knowledge of poetry adds charm to the painter's inventions. After this rather conventional concession to the value of humane studies which seems to come almost as an afterthought, as if Lomazzo had suddenly remembered the humanistic compliments to painting in his earlier treatise,[196] he abruptly reverts to the Leonardesque by declaring that anatomy is more important to the painter than aught else. But he seems again to recall his earlier writing on expression when he observes that painters must know the "affetti humani" to which he had devoted a whole book of his earlier treatise, not to mention a round fifty pages of quotations from the poets, chiefly Ariosto, and the recently published *Gerusalemme liberata*, that might serve as touchstones for the painters in their own rendering of human emotions.[197] No one will object to Lomazzo's scientific requirements for the painter wherein he remembers Leonardo and Alberti, nor certainly what mention he makes of liberal studies. But it is the totality of the program, let alone the fact that it is set down as a program at all, that is appalling; and it should be remembered that Lomazzo's insistence on unmitigated accuracy in the rendering of history—such accuracy would be the logical result of the learned program—is the general point of view of the sixteenth century from Dolce onward. Very gratuitously Borghini makes assurance doubly sure by enjoining a like strictness in the rendering of fables from the poets, taking Titian seriously to task for a misreading of Ovid and others in a painting of Venus and Adonis.[198] Thus the painter, no matter what his source, must quote literally both chapter and verse.

The pedantry of the sixteenth-century critics was fortunately not so labored in the age of French classicism, but the critics still insisted in all sincerity that a painter must be a learned man and abide by the truth of the written word. Fréart de Chambray's first two rules for decorous composition are "that in Historical Composures the pure and rigid truth be always religiously observed"—a clear echo of the piety of the Counter-Reform—and

194. *Idea*, p. 33.

195. *Ibid.*, pp. 34–37. See in note 73 Armenini's list of books that the painter should read, and cf. the long list of De Piles in his commentary on Du Fresnoy (Dryden's translation, pp. 111 ff.).

196. See Appendix 3 and note 75.

197. *Trattato*, VI, 65, pp. 487 ff.

198. *Il riposo*, p. 49: "Perchè da essi è detto, che Adone, quando fu pregato da Venere, sele gittò ginocchioni a'piedi, ringraziandola d'essersi degnata di conceder la sua divina bellezza a uomo mortale e che era presto con riverenza a fare ogni suo piacere; per questo pare, che Tiziano nell'invenzione abbia mancato, fingendo Adone da Venere, che sta in atto di abbracciarlo, fuggire; dove egli molto disiderava i suoi abbracciamenti." The painting is in the Prado.

"that there be great consideration had of the place where 'tis to be represented."[199] John Dryden flatly tells painters and poets alike to follow texts of ancient authors,[200] and the famous English connoisseur and traveler John Evelyn, who translated Fréart de Chambray, remarks that the best painters are "learned men, good historians and [note the English touch!] generally skilled in the best antiquities," after which there follows a list of learned artists including Alberti, Rubens, Poussin, and finally Bernini, "who on one occasion built the theater, cut the figures, painted the scenes, wrote the play and composed the music." Evelyn then hastens to add patriotically that Sir Christopher Wren could have done even better had he tried![201]

Félibien pays tribute to Poussin's historical sense when he remarks in a passage certainly reminiscent of one lately quoted from Dolce that the great painters "did not fall into the errors and gross examples of ignorance of those painters who represent in fair and verdant landscapes actions that took place in arid and desert countries; who confound sacred history with fable, who clothe the ancient Greeks and Romans in modern dress";[202] and that Poussin himself was eager to observe historical truth appears in his reaction, recorded by Félibien, to some criticism of one of his paintings of *Moses Striking the Water from the Rock*. Some stickler for pictorial accuracy had remarked that the bed in which the stream of water flowed could not have become so deep in so little time, nor could nature have so ordained matters in a place so dry and arid as the desert. But Poussin responded in kind and defended himself by saying that he was "well enough instructed in what is permitted a painter in those things which he will represent, which can be taken and considered as they have been, as they still are, or as they ought to be:[203] that so far as he could see, the disposition of the place where the miracle took place ought to be of the sort that he depicted, because otherwise the water could not have been gathered together nor made use of in the need that so great a number of people had of it, but would have spread abroad on all sides."[204] This is an example of the casuistry in which in the name of historical truth the critics and even so intelligent a painter as Poussin were prone to indulge. That it has little to do with the final evaluation of a work of art is sufficiently obvious, and it should be again recorded to the credit of the French Academy that on some occasions at least, it justified Poussin for having taken liberties with historical fact because in so doing, it was argued, he attained a higher truth. Thus when he was accused of having violated truth in his painting of *Eliezer and Rebecca* by omitting the ten camels required by the biblical narrative,[205] Le Brun defended him, maintaining that he had showed great discrimination thereby; for by dispensing with what was dramatically irrelevant he had focused the interest of the spectator on the principal subject, and this he could not have done had a quantity of unlovely camels been present to debauch the eye. Furthermore, a whole caravan of camels in such a subject would have been a mingling of the comic with the serious quite as unwarranted as a mingling of contrary modes in music. Thus when Poussin omitted the camels, not only did he fail to violate history in any important sense, but his painting gained in unity of action and in decorum. And to clinch his argument Le Brun made the inevitable

199. Roland Fréart, Sieur de Chambray, *An Idea of the Perfection of Painting*, trans. John Evelyn, London, 1668, p. 72 (first French ed. 1662). His third rule is "that one never discover those Parts and Members of the body which cannot honestly be exposed," a clear echo of the piety of the Counter-Reform that recalls Lomazzo. Cf. note 157.

200. See the preface to his translation of Du Fresnoy, p. xxxviii.

201. Preface to his translation of Fréart de Chambray.

202. *Entretien* no. 8, IV, 93.

203. ". . . comme elles ont été, comme elles sont encore, ou comme elles doivent être;" Poussin seems here to have confused Aristotle with a temporal notion. Cf. notes 12, 64.

204. Félibien, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–61.

205. In Philippe de Champaigne's well-known analysis before the Academy of the picture today in the Louvre (see Jouin, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–95).

appeal to the sister art of poetry, quoting Poussin to the effect that poetry no more than painting allows the easy and familiar expression of comedy to be mingled with the pomp and gravity of the heroic.

But although the concept of the painter as an accurate historian could thus be subjected to intelligent criticism among the Academicians, and for several decades after the death of Le Brun was to decline in influence among the best painters, it persisted in criticism.[206] And in 1748 when Charles Coypel attempted to restore the Academy to the learned position of its brave days under Le Brun,[207] it was revived with new energy. It was not, however, a concept that would ultimately survive the impact of Rousseau on European thought, and although Delacroix was a distinguished and learned painter of fable whose journals bear witness to his belief in some important elements in the doctrine *ut pictura poesis*, he was cool to the notion that vast learning was essential for the painter, believing rightly that a thorough knowledge of the techniques and traditions of his own art were far more important.[208] But before the eighteenth century had ended, Reynolds with his usual good sense had divested the academic tradition which in the main he championed, of the nonsense of the learned painter, and with it much of the nonsense of decorum. Speaking of that "solid science" on which the art of painting is founded he remarks:

> Some writers upon art carry this point too far and suppose that such a body of universal and profound learning is requisite, that the very enumeration of its kinds is enough to frighten a beginner. Vitruvius after going through the many accomplishments of nature, and the many acquirements of learning, necessary to an architect, proceeds with great gravity to assert that he ought to be well skilled in the civil law, that he may not be cheated in the title of the ground he builds on. But without such exaggeration we may go so far as to assert that a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his palette, or collected by looking on his model, whether it be in life or in picture. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate.[209]

This is sensible middle ground and a *caveat* alike to academic pedantry and to untutored expressionism.

The idea of the encyclopedic painter has never among the great painters, and rarely at that, had more than an approximation in fact. Poussin who "transports us to the environs of ancient Rome with all the objects which a literary [and, Reynolds should have added, an archaeological] education makes so precious and interesting to man,"[210] comes as close as any, and even when the scenes of his paintings were laid in foreign places that he had never seen, he was frequently careful to include some distinguishing mark that would identify the country in which the event took place. Thus in scenes laid in Egypt he would often add a pyramid or an obelisk to an architecture that he otherwise based on classical or medieval forms, or a palm tree to his usual foliage;[211] and for the painting of the *Virgin in Egypt* made for Mme de Chantelou he tells us himself that for a procession of priests, and

206. Antoine Coypel in 1721 advises the painter to be instructed in history, in geography, in the variety of manners, religions, customs and dress, in the places where countries, seas and climates are found, adding that "the books of the voyagers will teach him the diversity of buildings, trees, animals, and of different characters necessary to expression" (see Jouin, *op. cit.*, p. 333).

207. See J. Locquin, *La peinture d'histoire en France*, Paris, 1912, pp. 3–13, pp. 87 ff.

208. *Journal*, ed. Joubin, Paris, 1932, III, 24.

209. *Discourse* VII, December 10, 1776. Reynolds goes on to say with Alberti, Lomazzo, and others that the painter must be "tolerably conversant with the poets in some language or other that he may imbibe a poetical spirit and enlarge his stock of ideas"; that he should compare and digest his notions, and not be wholly unacquainted with that part of philosophy which gives an insight into human nature. "He ought to know *something* concerning the mind, as well as *a great deal* concerning the body of man." (The italics are Reynolds'.)

210. *Discourse* XIII.

211. Pointed out by Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, I, 30, p. 274; see, for instance, the *Finding of the Infant Moses* of 1647 in the Louvre (illustrated in W. Friedlaender, *Nicolas Poussin*, Munich, 1914, p. 228; cf. p. 119).

other Egyptian local color, he had availed himself of the natural and moral history of the Egyptians displayed in the mosaic pavement of the Temple of Fortune in Palestrina.[212] And we have already seen that he could take an imputation of factual inaccuracy in his painting seriously enough to argue the point in an effort to prove himself a good historian. Yet for all his Roman learning and his conscientiousness he was far from being elaborately learned in what was called the science of *costume*[213]—that exact knowledge of the habits, customs, and local color of various peoples and countries, that the critics in the name of decorum or verisimilitude insisted upon as necessary to the painter of history. To be so he would have had to travel to other lands than Italy, as Delacroix and Decamps were to do in the nineteenth century, when curiously enough the Romantic Movement encouraged exact reproduction of the scene and dress of foreign lands that were far closer to what the academic critics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demanded than anything produced in their own time. But always in his great histories, and even in those cases in which, as we have just seen, he attempted to locate his scene geographically, Poussin's landscape, architecture, and dress are generalizations based on Italian or on classical forms with which the exact science of *costume* has little to do, and in which even his Roman learning is entirely subsumed. And this subordination of learning to artistic creation was as inevitable in Poussin as it must be in any great and learned painter who sees the forms of nature or the actions of men under the aspect of eternity. A less profound spirit like Le Brun who held by the rules and sponsored an academic program might, as Du Bos tells us, have someone draw Persian horses for him at Aleppo in order that he might observe *costume* in his histories of Alexander.[214] But if one turns to the great painters of the Renaissance who flourished before the doctrine of the learned painter developed, certainly it is true that when they illustrated the fables of the poets or subjects from history or scripture they were never, for all their association with humanists, primarily scholars themselves, nor concerned primarily with the scrupulous following of texts; but treated their literary material freely and imaginatively, adapting it to the possibilities of their own medium of expression and to the traditional language of their own art. Thus, one may repeat, the learned, nay pedantic painter, was never so much an actuality as he was an idea whom the sixteenth-century critics created far more in their own image than on the basis of knowledge actually revealed by the great painters in their art—some of whom, as we have seen, they occasionally took to task for what one might call their misquotation of poetic or historical texts. It is not surprising that this theory should first evolve in a century that saw a decline in the creative energy both of art and scholarship; and like much of the Mannerist art of the period it is a distortion of objective truth. What several critics required of the sixteenth-century painter in the way of erudition we have already seen. And from 1550 to 1750 a host of passages might be quoted in which the mantle of poet, historian, or sage, is made to descend upon the painter's innocent shoulders or in which he is enjoined to deal accurately with the printed word. Near the end of the critical tradition of the Renaissance the eighteenth-century English painter and critic, Jonathan Richardson, who was respected in his day, after remarking on the universal language of painting (by which he

212. Letter to Chantelou of November 25, 1658 (Jouanny, p. 448). See Friedlaender, *op. cit.*, p. 123 and drawing on p. 257. Rubens' antiquarian interests also led him to be conscientious in matters of historical detail, and he was praised for his historical exactitude even to the rendering of the nails in the boots of one of the chevaliers in a painting of the Constantine series. Professor A. M. Friend has called my attention to Peiresc's letter to Rubens in which this praise is recorded (see M. Rooses, *L'œuvre de P. P. Rubens*, Antwerp, 1890, III, 217).

213. See Félibien, Preface, p. 317, and Du Bos in Appendix 6.

214. *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

means its appeal to the sense of sight), makes the amazing observation that "men of all nations hear the poet, moralist, historian, divine, or whatever other character the painter assumes, speaking to them in their own mother tongue."[215] One may be permitted to ask whether the painter may not also assume the character of painter; and it may not be inappropriate to observe in this connection that Leonardo da Vinci two centuries before, near the beginning of Renaissance criticism, had strenuously objected to the poet on precisely the same grounds that Richardson near the end of the Renaissance tradition approves the painter, namely that the poet poaches so much on the alien territory of scientists, theologians, and philosophers that he may be said scarcely to exist in his character of poet at all.[216] And it is probable that Leonardo, enamored of the sense of sight, and seeing in the painter's art only direct and vivid imitation of nature uncontaminated by adventitious learning, would have regarded the doctrine of the erudite painter with a mortal disgust.

VII—Rinaldo and Armida

In the last chapter an attempt was made to demonstrate how artificial is the doctrine of the learned painter. And it may be further put to the test and found wanting, if one considers the illustration of a celebrated episode from Tasso's famous epic, the *Gerusalemme liberata*, that began to supply subjects for the painters some ten or fifteen years after its publication in 1581. It is hardly necessary to remark that the painter-illustrators of Tasso's poem of necessity fulfilled some of the more important tenets of the doctrine *ut pictura poesis*. In choosing subjects from an epic poem of high seriousness in which heroic history was mingled with the marvelous, they shared the poet's great invention, and like him were imitators of human action of more than common interest and significance. Expression, in which, according to Lomazzo, painting chiefly resembles poetry, would depend on the genius of the painter and on his interest in the human emotion portrayed in the poem. Decorum, a formalistic notion that was not likely, as we have seen, to make for freshness and originality, he would do well to leave to the critics, as indeed he generally did. He was equally unaware, it would seem, of the precept that painting like poetry should instruct as well as delight, for he resolutely eschewed the serious main action of the poem that had to do with the siege and capture of Jerusalem under the crusader Godfrey of Boulogne, and chose for the most part only those amorous and idyllic episodes wherein the lyric element is strong, and Tasso's idiosyncratic vein of tender melancholy finds unfettered expression. And his treatment of these could scarcely be said to disclose didactic intent. Such are the episodes of Erminia, the pagan princess, taking up her abode with the shepherds amid the simple pleasures of the country far from the iniquity of courts, and of Rinaldo's enchantment in the Fortunate Isles by the beautiful witch Armida, famous for its langorous voluptuousness. These subjects were immediately popular not only for their intrinsic beauty and human interest, but also because they had behind them a long tradition of pastoral art and literature extending back into antiquity, with its images of the country, its implications of escape from the weary, complex life of cities, and its haunting references to the Golden Age when an idly happy life prevailed. And such current exotic mythologies among the Renaissance painters as Venus and Adonis, Aura and Cephalus, or Diana and Endymion, and the general popularity of Ovid, helped to prepare particularly for the enthusiastic reception accorded the story of Rinaldo and Armida.

215. "Essay on the Art of Criticism" in *Works of Mr. Jonathan Richardson*, London, 1773, p. 2 (first ed. 1719).

216. *Trattato*, I, 14, 23 (near end).

We shall now consider briefly some aspects of the pictorial treatment of this episode.[217] And it should be very clearly stated at the beginning that the painters who illustrated Tasso's story were not the conscientious scholars that the critics for the sake of decorum or verisimilitude would have them be. For they not only took liberties with the text when pictorial exigency required it, as they were generally forbidden to do by the critics, but also employed traditional forms of composition or iconography that had served the painters and sculptors of antiquity or their own Renaissance predecessors for illustration of fables that, more often than not, bore some similarity to various episodes in Tasso's poem. Here was the use of another kind of knowledge that the critics, even while urging a thorough knowledge of the antique, and of the best art of the moderns, with their strong literary predilections scarcely took into account: a knowledge that the painter does not acquire from books, but from association with the traditional language of the arts of representation that his genius is forever evoking into new possibilities of composition and of interpretation.

The first scene in the episode, as it appears in Poussin's version in Leningrad, represents Armida falling in love with Rinaldo as he lies asleep on the bank of the river Orontes (Fig. 1). As she bends over to kill the Christian warrior who is her mortal enemy, her hate is suddenly transformed into love.[218] Now Poussin, who was in conscious sympathy with the humanistic doctrine *ut pictura poesis*, could be expected in his pictorial rendering of such an episode to be reasonably faithful to the spirit of his text, and he has even been careful, in addition to rendering Rinaldo in armor which would distinguish him from an Adonis or Endymion in a similar grouping,[219] to display at the right, as unmistakable means of identifying the subject, the column that bore the legend enjoining Rinaldo to discover the hidden marvels of the island in the midst of the river.[220] Poussin might indeed have pleased some of the critics by including as other painters did the nymphs whose song enchanted Rinaldo into slumber;[221] but these from considerations of formal composition and dramatic effectiveness he evidently rejected as superfluous to his composition. He might have satisfied an extreme purist among the critics by indicating that he had studied the geography and dress of Syria after the manner of the nineteenth-century romantic painters. But this would have been to call attention to adventitious and local detail at the expense of universal truth. Poussin's naturally abstemious genius, fortified by the teaching of antiquity, necessarily rejected any such conformity with pedantic theorizing; and for the student of *ut pictura poesis*, the influence of antiquity on this painting is particularly illuminating.

The picture dates between 1635 and 1640[222] and may be the earliest example of a scene never popular among Italian painters. It shows Poussin using various features of the story of Endymion which he could have seen represented on several antique sarcophagi in Rome during the years of his life there. A drawing by Poussin in Chantilly of a sarcophagus

217. I am engaged at present in preparing a book on the influence of this poem and of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* on the history of painting, in which the illustration of this episode will be treated with greater completeness.

218. Canto XIV, stanzas 65–67:

"Esce d'agguato allor la falsa maga,
E gli va sopra, di vendetta vaga.
Ma quando in lui fissò lo sguardo, e vide
Come placido in vista egli respira,
E ne'begli occhi un dolce atto che ride,
Ben che sian chiusi (or che fia s'ei li gira?)
Pria s'arresta sospesa, e gli s'asside
Poscia vicina, e placar sente ogn'ira
Mentre il risguarda; e in su la vaga fronte
Pende omai sì, che par Narciso al fonte.
E quei ch'ivi sorgean vivi sudori
Accoglie lievemente in un suo velo;
E, con un dolce ventilar, gli ardori
Gli va temprando de l'estivo cielo
Così (chi'l crederia?) sopiti ardori
D'occhi nascosi distemprâr quel gelo
Che s'indurava al cor più che diamante;
E, di nemica, ella divenne amante."

219. As in Poussin's own *Death of Adonis* in the Museum of Caen. See O. Grautoff, *Nicolas Poussin*, Munich, 1914, II, pl. 34.

220. Canto XIV, stanzas 57–58.

221. Simon Vouet painted such a version (see note 228).

222. See Friedlaender, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

already known in the second decade of the seventeenth century (Fig. 3)[223] illustrates the nightly visit of Selene to the Latmian shepherd who slumbers supported by the figure of Somnus. Here are already several elements of the Leningrad composition: the sleeping figure with the left arm raised and bent as the hand supports the head; the left leg drawn up to repeat the angle of the bent arm; the chariot and horses with the female figure of Aura holding the bridle; and the attendant putti. The figure of Selene stepping from her chariot advances towards the sleeping Endymion, while in the Leningrad picture Poussin, respecting Tasso's fable and sentiment, represents Armida bending over Rinaldo, her gaze fixed on his sleeping face. Another Endymion sarcophagus,[224] represented here by a drawing from the Dal Pozzo collection (Fig. 5), shows the horses rearing and the figure of Aura dynamically posed as in Poussin's painting, while a third example (Fig. 6) shows a like variety of comparable elements:[225] Selene at the right supported by a female figure about to bend over the sleeping Endymion; the chariot in the center, in this case with the unusual substitution of bulls for horses; the seated female figure behind—Robert calls her Venus—who, with her flying garment, and in the counterpoise of her figure as she swings her head in the direction of the central event, resembles the figure seated on the horse in Poussin's picture; and finally the reclining figure of Oceanus at the feet of Aura who may be compared with Poussin's personification of the river Orontes. This last sarcophagus not only displays all of the figure elements employed by Poussin in comparable poses, but the central triangle dominated by the figure of Venus, with the two reclining figures that balance one another at its base, also resembles Poussin's triangular composition. Now it is of course possible that Poussin could have found individual figures with poses similar to those in his picture on a variety of antique monuments, but he found practically all that he needed on the Endymion sarcophagi alone which illustrated, moreover, a love story in which the incident of the woman leaving her chariot to approach her sleeping lover is similar to the episode from Tasso's poem. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Poussin, sensitive to content, and learned not only in the fables of the poets but also—and this was of equal significance for his art—in the iconographic tradition of the visual arts, found in antique representations of the story of Endymion precisely the materials that he needed for his pictorial treatment of a new literary subject. Thus as often in his work, the imaginative use of ancient imagery for new pictorial purposes carries with it, in subtly evoking the ancient myth, a poetic richness of overtone; and the antique language of form, unobtrusively adapted to new expressive uses, maintains a palpable and eloquent continuity. And it is interesting to observe that although the antique components of the depiction of the myth of Endymion served Poussin for the episode of Rinaldo and Armida, when he came to represent the myth itself, as in the beautiful Detroit picture (Fig. 2), he abandoned, as if unwilling to plagiarize, the elements on the Endymion sarcophagi; and in his highly original representation of Selene's departure from Endymion who kneels at her feet as the horses of the sun bring up the dawn—a scene so far as I know never appearing in ancient art—he combines in a spirit of free invention other plastic elements from the art of the distant past.[226] Nothing perhaps could better

223. Now set into the outer wall of the Palazzo Rospigliosi. See C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, Berlin, 1890–1919, III, Part 1, p. 66; pl. XIII, fig. 47.

224. A fragment now exists in the Palazzo Farnese. See *ibid.*, p. 90; cf. pl. XIX, fig. 75.

225. In the wall of the cloister of San Paolo fuori-le-mura. See *ibid.*, p. 101; pl. XXIII, fig. 81. There is no reason to suppose that it was not there in Poussin's time.

226. Cf. for instance the figure of Selene with the figure of Artemis in a wall painting in Stabiae (Reinach, *Repertoire des peintures grecques et romaines*, Paris, 1922, p. 52, fig. 1). The figure drawing aside the curtain is a plain adaptation of the common Hellenistic type represented in the Victory of Brescia, the Capuan Aphrodite in Naples, etc. The sleeping figure and the sun god with his horses are obvious classical motives.

Fig. 3—Chantilly, Musée Condé: Poussin, Drawing after an Antique Sarcophagus, Selene and Endymion

Fig. 4—Paris, Louvre: Poussin, Fall of the Manna in the Wilderness

Fig. 5—Windsor Castle, Royal Library: Drawing after an Antique Sarcophagus, Selene and Endymion

Fig. 6—Rome, Cloister of S. Paolo f.-l.-m.: Drawing of an Antique Sarcophagus, Selene and Endymion (from Robert)

Fig. 7—Paris, Guyot de Villeneuve Collection: Vouet, The Abduction of Rinaldo

Fig. 8—Poussin, Abduction of Rinaldo (Engraved by Massé)

Fig. 9—Stockholm, National Museum: Pietro da Cortona (?), Abduction of Rinaldo

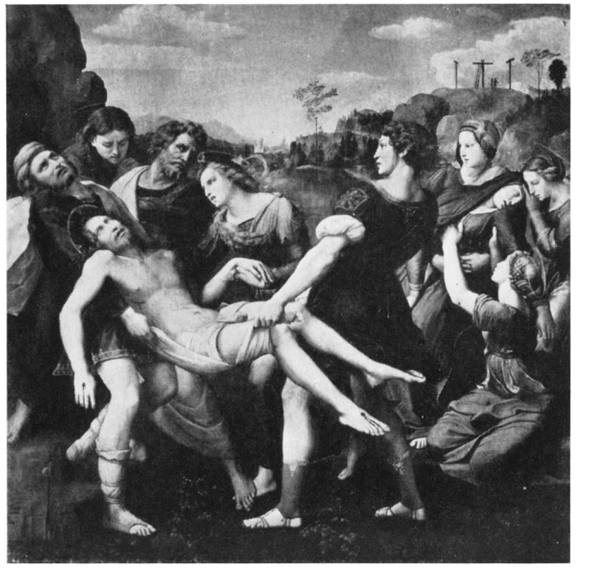

Fig. 10—Rome, Borghese Gallery: Raphael, Entombment

illustrate Poussin's profound and subtle originality than a comparison of the methods employed in composing these two paintings.

If we consider the succeeding episodes of the story of Rinaldo and Armida as interpreted by the painters, more and more material comes to hand to show that the traditional forms of sculpture and painting condition pictorial versions of the subject more than does any over-conscientious reading of the text, or other learned preoccupation. For the next scene (Fig. 7) the text is unusually laconic, merely stating that Armida had Rinaldo placed in her chariot,[227] so that here, as was not generally the case, it imposed no conditions on the painter, who had carte blanche to do as he pleased. The composition chosen by the French artist Simon Vouet for a painting that is one of a series of twelve devoted to the story of Rinaldo and Armida, was executed in 1630, a few years after his return to Paris from a long Italian sojourn.[228] In the manner in which the female figure at the left leans backward as she supports the sleeping Rinaldo, and in the relation of Rinaldo's head to the upthrust right shoulder with its drooping arm, it recalls the similarly disposed figures in Raphael's *Entombment* (Fig. 10); and it may have been equally suggested to Vouet by some Italian illustration of Tasso's subject like the animated version in Stockholm attributed to Pietro da Cortona (Fig. 9),[229] where Armida appears aboard her chariot which is equipped with an extra pair of horses. It will be noted, however, that supporting Rinaldo's legs in the picture by Vouet are two putti not present in the Da Cortona; and one may compare with the Vouet in this regard an engraving of a painting by Poussin (Fig. 8) which displays in the center the sleeping Rinaldo supported now by one female figure instead of two, and by a considerable group of putti.[230] And this interesting version of Poussin may be compared in turn with a fragment of an antique sarcophagus (Fig. 12) visible in Rome in the seventeenth century, representing a parody perhaps, with putti for actors, of the pathetic theme of the dying Meleager's last homecoming,[231] where one will observe a putto supporting the legs of the dying figure in a manner similar to that employed by the putti in the paintings of Poussin and Vouet. It may also be compared with the central part of a drawing of Michelangelo (Fig. 11) where a group of putti, several in attitudes not dissimilar to those in Poussin's picture, are carrying the carcass of a dead deer.[232] It is quite obvious then, that the composition employed by Vouet and Poussin for this episode from the *Gerusalemme liberata* is an entombment composition that has its origins in antiquity. It was available to these artists in several versions besides the parody noted above, as it had been in the sixteenth century to Raphael and to Michelangelo, who in turn may have given suggestions to the seventeenth-century painters.[233] As for Poussin's picture, it is further interesting to observe that the left-hand group of the river god and attendant nymphs was certainly suggested by the group at the right in Marcantonio's engraving after Raphael's drawing of the *Judgment of Paris* (Fig. 31).[234]

The following moment in the story is the transportation of Rinaldo through the air to

227. Canto XIV, stanza 68. The "lente ma tenacissime catene" of flowers with which she had bound him is generally visible in paintings of this subject.

228. For a description of these paintings, to which I hope to devote a separate article, see L. Demonts, "Les amours de Renaud et d'Armide," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire de l'art français*, VII, 1913, 58–78. I am indebted to M. de Villeneuve for his courteous permission to have the paintings photographed.

229. See Catalogue of 1928, no. 27.

230. According to Grautoff (*op. cit.*, II, p. 261) this engraving by Massé is of a lost picture. It corresponds, however, very exactly to a drawing in the Louvre. For a similar version in a private collection, see Friedlaender, *op. cit.*, p. 115; illustration p. 180.

231. It was set into the wall of the Villa Borghese built in 1615. See Robert, *op. cit.*, III, Part 2, p. 358; pl. XCVIII, fig. 307.

232. See K. Frey, *Die Handzeichnungen Michelangelos*, Berlin, 1911, III, pp. 89–91.

233. See Robert, *op. cit.*, III, Part 2, p. 343; pl. XCIV, fig. 283; *ibid.*, II, 64; pl. XXIV, fig. 57.

234. Professor Panofsky called my attention to this resemblance.

Armida's miraculous pleasure dome in the Fortunate Isles.[235] This occurs very rarely in painting and like the preceding scene was never prominent in the Italian illustrated editions. Now in the preceding scene, as we have observed, Armida and a female attendant convey Rinaldo to a chariot drawn by horses, and where the scene occurs in the illustrated editions it is horses that draw the chariot through the air.[236] But in Guercino's fresco in the Palazzo Costaguti at Rome (Fig. 13) one is surprised to find the chariot no longer drawn by horses but by dragons, which nowhere appear in the text of the *Gerusalemme liberata*. Their presence is, however, easily explained by the fact that the painter, casting about in his repertory of pictorial motives for one that would assist him in depicting this event in the story of Rinaldo and Armida, found the appropriate model in some antique representation of the final event in the Medea of Euripides, where Medea transports through the air the dead bodies of her children, whom she has slain to be avenged on Jason, in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. One may see this moment represented in a drawing of a lost fragment of an antique sarcophagus (Fig. 14).[237] It is equally if not more probable, however, that Guercino saw a woodcut of the event as described by Ovid, where Medea after setting fire to Jason's palace and slaying their children, who lie dismembered upon the ground, escapes through the air alone. Such an illustration of the scene (Fig. 15) appears in an abbreviated edition of the *Metamorphoses* containing many woodcuts that was first published at Lyons in 1557,[238] and in general established the type of illustration in other editions in many parts of Europe. Thus just as the witch Armida driving her chariot through the air had her antique forbear in Tasso's mind in the witch Medea driving her chariot of dragons, so Guercino found in some antique or modern illustration of the Medea story the appropriate pictorial material that he required.

The fifteenth canto tells of the voyage of the Christian warriors Carlo and Ubaldo to seek Rinaldo in the Fortunate Isles. Having arrived in the domain of Armida, they ascend the hill that is crowned by her palace, making their way with difficulty through various perils. And the last of these is the grave temptation to love and loiter prepared for them in the song of the nymphs who disport themselves in a pool, while a banquet sumptuously spread on a nearby table invites them to dine.[239] I have discovered no example of this scene among Italian painters, but the Italianate Vouet of necessity included it in his extensive illustration, already mentioned, of the story of Rinaldo and Armida (Fig. 19). The moment is that when the warriors state their emphatic refusal to be tempted by the blandishments of the nymphs, whom they treat as ungallantly and as firmly as Odysseus treated Circe on a similar occasion. Now the composition of Vouet's picture shows scant respect for the poetic text, which describes the bathing place of the nymphs as a lake formed by the sudden widening of a small river that ran through Armida's verdant meadows.[240] And had Vouet consulted the handsome edition of the *Gerusalemme liberata* published in 1617 with en-

235. Canto XIV, stanza 68.

236. In the Venice editions of 1611 and 1625 the main event in the illustration for Canto XIV is Godfrey's dream, but Armida appears driving Rinaldo in her chariot high in the air and in the distance.

237. See Robert, II, 205; pl. LXII, fig. 193. The dragons are not in Eúripides either, but were supplied by the scholiast.

238. The woodcuts are by Bernard Salomon. The illustrations in figs. 15 and 22 are from pp. 89 and 132 of a similar edition in Italian published at Lyons in 1559 (see A. Cartier, *Bibliographie des éditions des De Tournes*, Paris, 1937, I, 15; II, 450, 500). Mr. Philip Hofer called my attention to these editions and to the Ovid of 1619 (see note 241), and kindly allowed me to have illustrations made from his copies.

239. Stanzas 56–66. See especially 58:

"Quivi di cibi preziosa e cara
Apprestata è una mensa in su le rive;
E scherzando sen van per l'acqua chiara
Due donzellette garrule e lascive,
Ch'or si spruzzano il volto, or fanno a gara
Chi prima a un segno destinato arrive.
Si tuffano talora, e il capo e il dorso
Scoprono alfin dopo il celato corso."

240. Stanza 57:

"Così n'andâr sin dove il fiume vago
Si spande in maggior letto, e forma un lago."

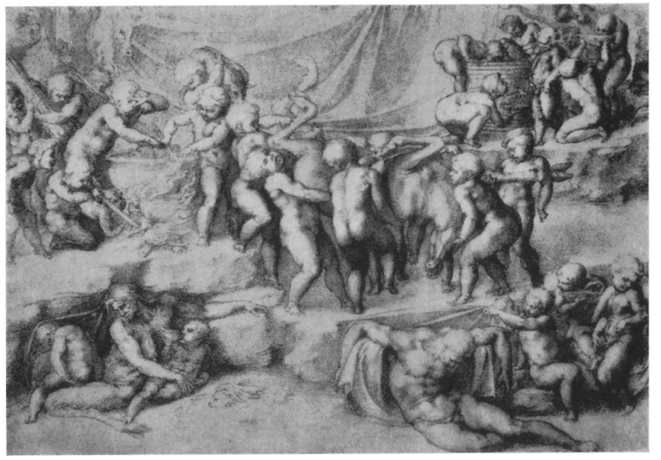

Fig. 11—Windsor Castle, Royal Library: Michelangelo, Children's Bacchanal (Drawing)

Fig. 12—Paris, Louvre: Drawing of an Antique Sarcophagus with Putti, Last Homecoming of Meleager (from Robert)

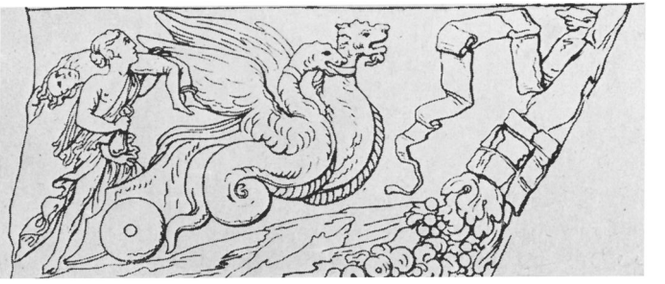

Fig. 14—Drawing of a Lost Fragment of an Antique Sarcophagus, Flight of Medea (from Robert)

Fig. 13—Rome, Palazzo Costaguti: Guercino, Rinaldo in Armida's Chariot

Fig. 15—Flight of Medea: Woodcut Illustration for Ovid's Metamorphoses, Lyons, 1559