



SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**The Influences of Fine Arts on Cultural Perception
and Human Behaviour in Different Periods
and Movements of Art Throughout History
and Within Varied Cultural Contexts**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Ph.D. thesis is aimed at investigating the interconnected correlations which may exist between various disciplines of Fine Arts, (within the broader context of different Art Periods and Art Movements in history), and the multifaceted impacts which they may have upon the formation of new cultural perceptions and human behaviours. More specifically pertaining to any significant modifications which could potentially be identified. Through means of therefore applying comprehensive research approaches extending across 3 sub-themes of investigation (divided into 3 chapters) which analyses a total of 9 different Art Movements throughout history, this research study therefore intends to reveal the complex interactions between the artistic expressions of different socio-cultural settings. Furthermore, this study will explore how various forms of Fine Arts have both transformed -and have been reformed by the 'collective consciousness' of distinguishable societies throughout history.

As a foundational point of departure, this investigation analyses the transformative nature of symbolic approaches to Fine Arts as *reflective representation of culture*, in context to three consequential ancient civilizations -and three time-periods, identified as the Classical Greek Period, the Han Dynasty of China and the Byzantine Era. The second point of investigation focuses on providing more insight regarding methods which have been utilized by various artists for the employment of Fine Arts as *catalysts of cultural change*, in context to the Renaissance, the Romanticism Movement, as well as the Cubism & the Avant-Garde Art Movements. The third research angle aims to recognize distinct examples through which Fine Arts have played a pivotal role in *promoting cultural identity*, more specifically in context to the Rococo and Fauvism Art Movements of Europe, along with the 'Ukiyo-e' Art Movement of the Japanese Edo-Period.

In order to more effectively examine the influences that these three Fine Arts angles of investigation have had upon human perception and behaviour, in-depth consideration of **psychological, behavioural, cognitive and sociological frameworks** will be incorporated to strengthen all research-based arguments made, with further includes **semiotics (reception theory)** and **cultural studies**. By therefore integrating these behavioural theories in unison with conventionally applied research approaches in Art history, this study aspires to unveil how artistic expressions and creations have produced a wide variety of cultural responses.

The following thesis conducted by the researcher, further acknowledges a broad spectrum of authors while comparing the research-based findings of a comprehensive number of peer reviewed research studies, across all six chapters of the research. By providing a detailed discussion of the reciprocal relationships which exist between Fine Arts, cultural perceptions, and human behaviour, this study aims to clarify the complex components which may affect these interconnected relations.

Therefore, the investigation not only aims to enhance scholarly discourse pertaining to Art History, but will also provide some unique insights related to contemporary cultural studies, psychology, and other interdisciplinary themes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Fine Arts serving as artist human expression, has played an incredibly important role throughout history in regards to inspiring, enriching and influencing cultural perceptions. Not only as it relates to shaping and strengthening ideas which impact collective cultural identity, but also as it relates to emphasizing and celebrating the shared values and belief-systems which are foundational to any cultural group or society.

Moreover as argued by Hagtvedt et al. (2008), artistic expressions through Fine Arts in context to 'visual interpretation and communication' have not only made significant alterations to the 'cultural perceptions' of individuals living within a particular culture, (as it relates to progress made in the areas of more successfully applying critical-thinking, philosophizing, formulating argumentative reasoning, reflecting, self-reflecting and becoming more intrinsically self-aware), but artistic expressions through Fine Arts have also impacted human decision-making and behaviour.

Therefore, in agreement with the perspectives provided by DeMarrais & Robb (2013), the modifications which had taken place in the minds of people through 'visual communication' and 'visual representations', had not only reshaped the thought-processes of individuals, but as a result thereof had also changed their decision-making processes which then led to a different set of outcome-based actions. Especially when considering the vast amount of information, ideas, beliefs and suggestions which had been proposed to various cultures, societies and civilizations across Fine Arts throughout history (DeMarrais & Robb, 2013).

In simple terms, the values and ideological ideas of individuals naturally impact the decisions that they make, as well as the behavioural manner with which they interact with others or carry themselves in the public sphere. Likewise, this basic understanding is also true on a collective cultural scale (Hagtvedt et al., 2008).

Hence, through means of conducting a comprehensive qualitative research study which aims to analyse and compare the historical influences and impacts which different Art Periods and Art Movements may have had upon the human experience, the final objective is therefore to make a substantial contribution towards gaining a deepened understanding regarding this particular topic of investigation.

I. Background & Context

I a.) Rationale

The significant influences and impacts which had been made upon human perception and behaviour through Fine Arts, has been an ongoing topic of perennial fascination among Fine Arts

scholars and historians, extending far beyond a mere appreciation of outward craftsmanship and aesthetic qualities. Instead, as emphasized by Mastandrea et al. (2019), this particular area of interest as it relates to research studies, seeks to understand and inquire more about the realms of cognition, emotional reception -and responses, as well as the perceptions, beliefs, personal convictions, values and attitudes which underpin behaviour Mastandrea et al. (2019).

Various forms of Fine Arts, craftsmanship and historical artefacts of an artistic nature, are not only considered to be ‘helpful mirrors of culture’ or a lens through which researches are able to gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted aspects of ancient societies -and civilizations, but can also be viewed as the ‘silent architects’ of cultural change (Ettehad et al., 2014).

An open-minded acknowledgement of the reciprocal correlations which may exist between Fine Arts and culture, therefore promotes the premise for further investigation into the avenues through which Fine Arts may have performed as ‘cultural signifiers’, ‘advocates for cultural change’, and ‘instruments’ for the transference of shared symbolisms, meanings and messages, (Gombrich, 1960; Panofsky, 1939).

Additionally, as supported by Chamberlain (2022), the examination and analysis of Fine Arts in context to human perception and behaviour, further enables researchers to consider the cognitive and psychological development of human societies over extended time-periods throughout history. For example, when considering and comparing the visual and communicative attributes of ancient cave paintings which were far more primitive and far less complex in contrast to the multiple layers of visual communication portrayed within ‘contemporary Fine Arts installations’, it is evidently clear that the degree to which cultural values, emotional expressions and symbolic messages are currently being ‘visually communicated’ during modern times, are vastly different (Chamberlain, 2022).

Therefore, as confirmed by Hodgson & Verpooten (2014), examining the historical courses -or trajectories which had taken place within Art Movements as well as the evolutionary changes which had occurred in regards to thematic developments, greatly assists researchers to shed adequate light upon the relevant influences that Fine Arts have had within diverse societal contexts. Furthermore, it’s essential to bear in mind that the artistic expressions from different societies, cultures and nations have evolved throughout history and will continue to be transformative across future generations. To the advantage of researchers, scholars and historians however, the multifaceted modifications and adaptations seen within the shifting nature of cultural narratives and perspectives, offers a wealth of knowledge and insight regarding the everchanging psyche of different generations, time-periods and eras (Hodgson & Verpooten, 2014).

The rationale for this investigative research study in accordance with comments made by Pelowski et al. (2016), therefore lies within the imperative necessity to methodically unpack these multi-

layered levels of influence, in order to accurately and effectively determine the manner in which Fine Arts disciplines and practices have reshaped cultural perceptions and human behaviours across distinguished Art Periods and diverse Art Movements (Pelowski et al., 2016).

I b.) Statement of the Problem

The research methodologies incorporated within the following study, are purposefully aimed towards 'bridging the gaps' of available information related to the topic of this thesis, in order to produce a more effective and comprehensive understanding of the interdisciplinary ways through which Fine Arts had historically contributed, (and continues to contribute), towards the reframing, expansion and advancement of individual -and collective perceptions, behaviours, cultural identities and the formation of societal norms (Lauwrence, 2007).

In agreement with the research-based perspectives of Lauwrence (2007), it is therefore of essential importance to identify the inherent complexities and interconnected correlations amidst the reciprocal interplay of Fine Arts and perception-based human behaviours, with both specificity and clarity. As a result, the research objectives and supporting research questions have been drafted in a conscientious manner, to ensure that all relevant information is considered from multiple angles and research-based perspectives.

I c.) Research Objectives

c.1 To examine the manner(s) within which Fine Arts had historically served as '**Reflections of Culture**' in diverse contexts, while potentially having made significant impacts upon human perception and behaviour.

c.2 To analyse the approaches and contexts within which Fine Arts had been effectively utilized as '**Catalysts of Cultural Change**', while simultaneously revising the potential impacts which may have been made upon human perception and behaviour.

c.3 To identify Art Periods or Art Movements throughout history which had most effectively represented and celebrated '**Cultural Identity**' and determining how artworks and artistic artefacts from those time-periods had influenced human perception and behaviour.

I d.) Significance of the Study

The following research study holds substantial significance as it pertains to varying research-angles, which connect to different 'academic areas of interest'. This understanding and perspective is further supported the by excellent key-points reiterated by Zaidel (2010).

Not only do the methodological approaches incorporated within this study raise questions which further expands upon already existing areas of historical Arts investigations, but the overarching investigation also ties into a number of psychological theories. Therefore, beyond comprehensively examining the reciprocal interactions which may have existed between former Arts Movements or Art Periods in history, cultural perception and the social dynamics of human behaviour, this research study also aspires to identify any potential influences which Fine Arts may have had upon the cognitive -and emotional development of previous cultures, societies and civilizations (Coleman, 2005).

Consequently, as emphasized by Coleman (2005), the cross-cultural nature of this research-study further contributes towards the broader academic discourse being had among scholars as it relates to ‘cultural studies’, while providing further supplementary insights regarding the ‘artistic influences and impacts’ made across sociocultural contexts.

I e.) Structure of the Thesis

The ensuing chapters of this PhD thesis will be presented in a clearly outlined and structured manner, which encompasses a meticulously detailed review of all potentially relevant literature to ensure that strong theoretical foundations are established going forward.

As mentioned within the Abstract of this thesis, a total number of 18 Art Movements will be analysed across 6 chapters -and subdivisions of the investigation, to ensure that the theme of this research study is examined from a broad spectrum of viewpoints. Furthermore, the structure of this thesis aims to include the perspective of a wide variety of academic scholars and Art historians.

The subsequent chapters which will follow, do not only delve into an Art Historical Analysis of Fine Art Movements and Art Periods across different time-periods in history, but also explores cross-cultural investigations and psychological inquiries which includes semiotic analyses. The collective combination of diverse angles of investigation -and different strands of inquiry, will therefore result in a culmination of balanced perspectives and corroborating revelations, which should provide a more in-depth understanding regarding the topic of investigation.

I f). Scope and Limitations

Although the following thesis aspires to be of a detailed and comprehensive nature, the vastness of all 3 subdivisions of investigation, (encompassing 9 Art Movements across various time-periods in history and potentially drawing correlations with multiple psychological theories pertaining to the influences upon human perception and behaviour), necessitates certain limitations.

Although the primary focus of this research study concentrates upon the interconnectedness of Fine Arts movements and understanding significant historical artworks in context to the societal values

within which they had been created, one key-limitation of the following research study includes the difficult task of accurately interpreting artistic expressions within their historical context, due to the potential bias of Art historians and scholars (Rocavert, 2016).

Despite therefore comparing, reviewing and analysing information of a variety of different scholarly articles, journals and former research-findings, the qualitative approaches of this research study strongly depend upon the corroborating perspectives of multiple scholars, which may include some degree of human error (Rocavert, 2016).

I g.) Research Questions

g.1) Question 1: How Has Fine Arts Served as '***Reflections of Culture***' Within Historical Contexts That Pertain to Human Perception and Behaviour?

g.2) Question 2: In Which Ways Have Fine Arts Been Effectively Utilized as '***Catalysts of Cultural Change***' in Context to the Impacts That Were Made Upon Human Perception and Behaviour?

g.3) Question 3: During Which Art Periods or Art Movements Throughout History Had '***Cultural Identity***' Been Best Represented and Celebrated as it Related to Influences Upon Human Perception and Behaviour?

II. Relevant Methodologies

II a). First Research Methodology – An Art Historical Analysis

As confirmed by Brand (1988), an 'Art Historical Analysis' as the first research-approach of this study, will be applied to examine artworks from various disciplines, while attempting to methodically analyse the aesthetic characteristics, visual attributes and additional thematic symbolisms, within a variety of different cultural -and historical contexts.

This particular research angle will provide a clearer contextualized understanding of the evolutionary developments related to artistic expressions throughout extended time-periods (Churchill, 2021).

II b). Second Research Methodology - Sociological Method

The 'Sociological Method' as the second research-approach of this study, will attempt to explore -and identify the relevant cultural traits, cultural interactions and societal norms, which had influenced Art Movements and Art Periods throughout history (Alexander, 1988).

Therefore, as substantiated by Carls (n.d.) and Little (2014), qualitative information pertaining to the belief-systems, values and attitudes which had existed among cultural groups -and ancient

societies, will be collected in order to better examine and understand the societal impacts upon artistic production -and vice versa.

II c). Third Research Methodology - Cross-Cultural Investigations

As underscored by Aneas & Sandin (2009), 'Cross-Cultural Investigations' as the third research-approach of this study, intends to compare 'artistic receptions' across multiple civilizations with 'cultural-interpretations'. This particular research methodology will provide greater in-depth insights into any potential patterns which may exist in regards to the influences or impacts that Fine Arts may have had upon either of these factors throughout history.

In addition, case studies from diverse cultural -and societal contexts will be analysed through quantitative research approaches (Romani et al., 2018).

II d). Fourth Research Methodology - Iconographical Method

In agreement with the views of Munsterberg (2009), the 'Iconographical Method' as the fourth research-approach of this study, (closely aligned with an Art Historical Analysis), will be implemented with the purpose of deciphering diverse symbolic meanings seen within artworks from different eras and time-periods.

Its noteworthy to mention however, that this particular research method also leans upon components of a formal Art analysis which typically provides commentary regarding the relevant Design Principles and Art Elements, while describing the visual attributes of artworks (Glass, 2020).

II e). Fifth Research Methodology – Psychological, Behavioural & Cognitive Inquiry

'Psychological, Behavioural and Cognitive Inquiry' as the fifth research-approach of this study, will aim to examine the relevancy of psychological characteristics and theories which best coincides with -and supports the reciprocal interplay between various Fine Arts themes and forms of 'visual communication', in relation to the potential impacts which had been made upon human perception and behaviour (Schwartz, 2012).

This thesis will permit considerable thought and focus upon 'Cognitive – and Behavioural Theories', which integrates the 'Mere Exposure Effect' (Zajonc, 1968; Obermiller, 1985; Nickerson, 2022; Heath, 1990), 'Schema Theory' (Bartlett, 1932; Axelrod, 1973; Brewer, 2000; Wittrock, 2000; Garro, 2000; Steffensen, 1979; Wertsch, 2008), 'Social Learning Theory' (Bandura, 1977; Williams, 1983; Rushton, 1982; Ebel, 1977; Wren, 1982), 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' (Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1997; Wong, 2009; Auster, 1965; Davis, 1967; Stone, 2009; Gerard, 1992), and 'Operant Conditioning' (Skinner, 1953; Culatta & Kearsley, 2018; Praveen, 2017; Scharff, 1982).

In alignment with the perspectives of Muthukrishna et al. (2020), the cognitive and emotional responses that different cultures had demonstrated towards Fine Arts throughout history, as well as documented accounts thereof, will be further analysed within this study. At the same time, relevant ‘cognitive psychological theories’ will also be taken into consideration, including any potential ‘emotional response theories’ which correlates with the research content.

II f). Sixth Research Methodology - Semiotic (Reception Analysis)

Eco (1976) and Jauss (1982) explains that ‘Semiotic and Reception Analysis’, (as the sixth research-approach of this study), will more specifically be incorporated within this investigation for the purpose of exploring the manner in which symbolic qualities observed within artworks from different cultural time-periods, had been interpreted by various societies throughout history.

Therefore, the theory of semiotics aims to examine any potential ‘hidden -and invisible motivations’, or potentially authoritative systems of influence, which may have been subconsciously hidden beneath the surface of artistic expressions (Heinz, 2018).

In other words, in agreement with Heinz (2018) and Kosh (2021), this research approach questions whether any religious, political or other forms of biases may have influenced the manner in which the artists have depicted certain figures, characters or narratives within their artworks.

Therefore, the collective interdisciplinary approaches of the combined research strategies which will be integrated into both the research structure and design of this investigation, are aimed towards providing a balanced -yet in-depth perspective regarding the historical influences which Fine Arts may have had upon human perception and behaviours. In addition, the broad and all-encompassing research methodologies within this study are further aimed at making a substantial contribution towards other scholarly investigations, which relate to the influences and impacts that may have had Fine Arts throughout various historical time-periods.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The Literature Review of this thesis had served as a critical foundation in relation to having investigated the multifaceted interconnectivity between the creation – and expression of Fine Arts, cultural – or societal perceptions, and related human behaviours throughout history. Through the comparative analysis pertaining to the nine specific Art Movements and their respective time-periods which had been thoroughly discussed – and had included the ‘Classical Greek Period’, the ‘Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty’, as well as the ‘Byzantine Era’ – this research study had primarily focused upon the uncovering and evaluation of the various methods and approaches through which Fine Arts had either ‘directly – and intentionally’, or ‘indirectly – and unintentionally’, fulfilled the purpose of serving as ‘reflective mirrors’ of the applicable philosophical, ideological, moral and religious belief-systems which had prevailed throughout different time-periods and historical contexts (Carter, 2023; Drewer, 1996; Wu, 2021). From the perspective of this particular research-angle, this investigative study had therefore revealed the multiuse avenues through which the visual portrayals and representations observed within Fine Arts had symbolically supported the philosophical, ideological, social, cultural and religious values, (including the extended belief-systems and correlating practices thereof), had collectively contributed towards the development of ‘societal consciousness’ across different historical cultural-groups and broader civilizations (Chamberlain, 2022; Garro, 2000; Wittrock, 2000).

This thesis had furthermore assessed the methods and approaches through which Fine Arts had historically served as remarkable ‘catalysts’ which persistently advocated for ‘social shifts’ and related ‘cultural change’. Through the prism of this context, psychological theories, semiotic theories and sociological theories had been incorporated to provide substantiating evidence which supports the perspective that the Renaissance Art Movement, the Romantic Art Movement and the Cubism Art Movement had utilized different approaches to ‘visual communication’ which had not merely restructured ‘societal values’, but distinctive behavioural patterns as well (Bandura, 1976; Colenbrander, 2005; Festinger, 1962).

The third research-angle had highlighted specific instances during which Fine Arts had not merely celebrated but supported and substantiated ‘cultural identity’ through highly renowned historical artworks from the Rococo Art Movement, the Fauvism Art Movement and Ukiyo-e Art Movement from Japan’s Edo time-period. Consequently, these profound artworks had not merely reinforced ‘collectively cultural memory’, but ‘emotional engagement’ and ‘symbolic understanding’ as well (Bylsma, 2022; Jiachuan, 2019; Trapasso, 2013).

In agreement with the combined perspectives of Bandura (1976), Bylsma (2022), Carter (2023), Chamberlain (2022), Colenbrander (2005), Drewer (1996), Festinger (1962), Garro (2000), Jiachuan (2019), Trapasso (2013), Wittrock (2000), Wu (2021) – and a multitude of other scholars, Art historians and authors referenced within this research-study, a strong and compelling ‘historical framework’, as well as a thorough ‘theoretical framework’ had been established, for the purpose of more insightfully understanding the transformational impacts and influences of Fine Arts throughout diverse cultural – and societal contexts.

2.2.1 Key Ways in Which Fine Arts from the Classical Greek Period Had Indirectly Served as a Reflective Mirror of Culture During This Era

The Classical Greek Period (c. 5th–4th century BC) had provided significance to Fine Arts as it had reflected culture deeply by upholding the social, political, and philosophical beliefs of that time period. The creative accomplishments of that era had been inextricably bound to the ideals of democracy, sports, religious piety, and philosophical reflection that had characterized Hellenistic life (Carter, 2023; Weadmin, 2022). The sculptures, architecture, and aesthetic innovations had celebrated human physicality and intellect, but they had also enforced societal hierarchies and collective ideologies.

As an example, one of the most prominent expressions in which Classical Greek Fine Arts had reflected culture had been through the idealized representation of the human body, which could be viewed in sculptures like the Doryphoros by Polykleitos. This statue had represented the idealized version of the Classical Greek conception of the male citizen; a male citizen who had embodied a Greek ideal of perfection, both physically and conceptually, that had spanned the period (Cafá, 2014; Koortbojian, 2002). Not only had the contrapposto stance manifested in the Doryphoros granted balance and proportion, but it had also reflected the philosophical ideals of harmony and order that had previously been entrenched in Greek thought (Meyer, 2021). Moreover, the Discobolus by Myron had also demonstrated the Greek preoccupation with physical prowess and competition, serving to underline the cultural importance of the Olympic Games and physical training in Greek life (De Bruyn, 2020; Valentine, 2022). These sculptures had been visual embodiments of the societal expectation for men to aspire to realms of physical and intellectual superiority.

The Parthenon and its frieze had been a monumental embodiment of Classical Greek religious and civic identity. The idealized Panathenaic Procession on the Parthenon Frieze had represented the essence of Athenian cultural life, with aspects such as unity, piety, and civic duty, to name just a few (Osborne, 1987; Root, 1985). The relief panels had shown gods but also Athenian citizens, representative of the integrated nature between mortals and gods in the Classical Greek worldview (Elderkin, 1936).

The religiosity present in Greek Art had also been somewhat evident in the monumentally powerful Nike of Samothrace, which had encapsulated the victorious spirit of Greek military endeavors but also had signified divine protagonism in conflict (Coskun, 2015; Pruski, 2019). These icons of high Art and upper culture had underwritten the notion that human and corporeal excellence, whether in governance, sport, or combat, had been bound up in divine will and cultural hegemony.

2.2.2 The Impact of Classical Greek Fine Arts on Western Fine Arts

Moreover, Classical Greek Fine Arts had significantly influenced the development of Western and European cultures. Building techniques refined by Classical Greece, including the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, had long since impacted European building design—visible in Renaissance and Neoclassical architecture (Neils, 1999). The principles that had so often been elucidated in Greek Art had also echoed in later European artistic endeavors, where harmony, proportion, and the humanistic moral had similarly been explored throughout subsequent centuries (Schmalbeck, 2015). Greek sculptures had been widely copied throughout Europe by Roman artists (Koortbojian, 2002). Even in more modern history, the aesthetics and ideals of Classical Greek Art had remained influences on artistic and cultural developments, namely realism and classical revivalism (Schneider, 2021).

Thus, Fine Arts from the Classical Greek Period had been an important mirror to the culture that had embodied the values and questions of the mind and spirituality of the time. At the same time, these Arts had established the basis of Western and European Arts, ensuring that Classical Greece had survived into the future far beyond its own time period (Carter, 2023; Root, 1985).

2.2.3 Multiple Theories Based in Psychology That Provide Further Substantiative Evidence That the Classical Greek Period Had Indirectly Served as a Reflective Mirror of Culture

Psychologically and cognitively, we can explain this phenomenon by the so-called 'Mere Exposure Effect' (Zajonc, 1968), which had suggested that, with repeated exposure to particular artistic styles, familiarity and cultural acceptability increased. The reiteration of Classical Greek forms, for example, the contrapposto position of figures in sculptures, had enforced aesthetic and philosophical ideals in Greek culture (Nickerson, 2022; Obermiller, 1985). This had set a collective cultural visual discussion that had been woven into Greek identity over generations (Heath, 1990).

Bartlett (1932), in relation to Schema Cognitive Theory, had maintained that the mental scaffolding that had already been in place had determined comprehension and memory. In vigor, the artistic representations of Classical Greece, for example, that of the Discobolus of Myron, had thus

encoded the societal schemas of physical excellence as well as intellectual discipline (Garro, 2000; Wittrock, 2000). These works had played the role of cognitive templates that had impacted subsequent artistic and athletic norms, reinforcing the ideals of Classical Greek society (Steffensen, 1979; Wertsch, 2008).

Semiotically speaking, Classical Greek Fine Arts had been a signifier conveying symbolic meanings that had echoed deeper cultural meta-narratives. The Parthenon Frieze, in fact, had visually represented the Panathenaic Procession, emphasizing themes of unity, civic duty, and divine approbation (Osborne, 1987; Root, 1985). These symbols had reinforced the Greek view of the world, equating human accomplishments with divine favor (Coskun, 2015; Elderkin, 1936).

From a sociological standpoint, Fine Arts from the Classical Greek Period had essentially served as instruments of culture preservation and transmission. Artworks had embodied collective societal beliefs, as noted by Chamberlain (2022), and had impacted future generations. In Greek Art, the visualization of gods, heroes, and citizens had crafted a common identity that had maintained continuity in warding off community dissolution (Bruder & Ucok, 2000; Cheung et al., 2019). In this light, Fine Arts had not only mirrored Greek culture but had also played a role in its survival and proliferation.

The Mere Exposure Effect (Zajonc, 1968) had meant that repeated exposure had turned Greek artistic motifs into culturally relevant signs. Similarly, Bartlett's (1932) Schema Theory had demonstrated the cognitive template that Greek Art had provided to all later traditions of Art (Garro, 2000; Wertsch, 2008). These attitudes had further boosted the notion of Classical Greek Fine Arts playing a key role in forming, delivering, and maintaining cultural identity through the ages (Bruder & Ucok, 2000; Cheung et al., 2019). Additionally, Greek artistic tenets had also inspired the intellectual foundation of later European societies, which meant that Classical Greece had a substantial influence on modern Art and cultural development (Schneider, 2021).

Thus, Fine Arts from the Classical Greek Period had acted as a key mirror of culture by embodying the social values, philosophical questions, and religious beliefs that had characterized the age. At the same time, these artistic expressions had paved the way for Western and European artistic traditions, ensuring that the legacy of Classical Greece had outlived its historical time frame (Carter, 2023; Root, 1985).

2.3.1 Fine Arts of the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) as a Reflection of Ancient Chinese Culture

Indeed, the Fine Arts of the Han Dynasty had been a very expressive reflection of Ancient China's cultural identity, values, and concept of the world. In visual media such as calligraphy, painting, sculpture, tomb murals, ceramics, and bronze works, Han artists had articulated important ideologies and social priorities — in particular Confucian values, respect for authority, intellectual cultivation, and a yearning for immortality. The artworks had not only enlivened aesthetic pursuits; they had also been imbued with symbolic stories of daily life and the metaphysical aspirations of their makers.

Burial arts, by far one of the most important expressions of Fine Arts that had reflected Han culture, in its different aspects had encapsulated both the spiritual reflection and material concerns of society in regard to its development. Noting that many Han period tombs had housed extravagant murals, figurines, and jade objects, Wu (2021) and Waring (2021) had explained how the living had wanted to preserve ephemeral status and honour. These tombs had often been covered with earthen mounds that had protected their contents for centuries. Cultural expression had been so ingrained in these burial practices, through which painted or sculpted figures—from royal families to servants—had expressed the Han belief in the continuity between earthly life and the afterlife (Wu, 2021; Waring, 2021).

So too had the invention of paper by Cai Lun revolutionised cultural production and dissemination in this period. As Mark (2016) and Wang (1964) had observed, this innovation had accelerated literary expansion, governmental communication, and the more general dissemination of Confucian ideology. Paper had allowed calligraphy and painting to flourish, and through these media, the Han people had displayed philosophical depth, a reverence for tradition, and a devotion to literacy. Xu Shen had developed early dictionaries, which had continued to establish the cultural priority bestowed on language and history (Scobell, 2002). The precision and virtuosity of these written forms had served both administrative and literary purposes, yet they had also developed into sophisticated forms of Art, signifying elite culture and moral cultivation—especially for aristocratic women, who had been instructed in calligraphy as a status symbol (Feng, 2013).

The resurgence of Confucianism during the Han Dynasty had fundamentally oriented the thematic content in visual culture. In a language of forms drawn from nature, and of imagery that had described the normative interactions of upright social behavior—between rulers and subjects, parents and children, and masters and servants—Han artists had buttressed Confucian ethics. For example, tomb paintings, as cited by Jiachuan (2019) and Wallace (2011), had exhibited domestic banquets or interactions that mirrored the feudal ethics. These visual narratives had served as more than mere decoration; they had conveyed, visually, deep-seated Han values of filial piety, loyalty, and social order.

The Funeral Banner of Lady Dai had shown how spiritual beliefs and cultural ideals had been expressed in silk paintings. The banner had mingled portraiture, mythological symbolism, and cosmic metaphors to illustrate the soul's journey to the afterlife. As Hung (1992), Liu-Perkins (2014), and McIntire (n.d.) had shown, the banner had illustrated not only Lady Dai's elevated status but also societal obsessions with immortality, spiritual harmony, and cosmological order. The graceful composition, heavenly motifs, and use of perspective had expressed the aspiration for transcendence while positioning the aristocracy at the center of Han cosmological thought.

Furthermore, portraiture had been an outspoken mirror of cultural values. Fenollosa (2007) and Ebrey (2013) had uncovered how figure paintings on everyday objects — baskets, coffins, wooden panels — had immortalized noble figures, scholars, and even family relations. These works had been focused on personal dignity and social status, confirming that honouring identity, generation, and social contribution had been held in high esteem during the Han Dynasty.

Landscape and narrative painting, still developing in the Han period, had likewise articulated cultural priorities. As either Dillon (1998) or Szczepanski (2019) had noted, early Han landscape painting had foregrounded royal processions or moral allegories rather than nature for nature's sake. Yet the experimental use of brushstrokes and perspective had begun what would turn out to be a visual tradition that eventually flowered into one of China's most important forms of Art. These compositions had been intended to raise the viewer's consciousness about their place in the world, the universe, and time.

Relief sculpture and ceramic models—like those that had appeared in sarcophagi and tombs—had been imbued with socio-economic status, religious faith, and literacy/intellectual aspiration. Yan et al. (2012) had shown how paintings featuring the ancient game of 'liubo' had represented the Han Dynasty's aspiration of valuing education, cognitive superiority, and cosmological harmony. Similarly, Jiaran et al. (2021) had treated ceramic estate models as expressions of social differentiation, autonomy, and agrarianism—foundational values of the Han cosmological order. These artifacts had served not only to venerate the deceased, but had also enabled a microcosm of Han society that had materialized cultural wealth and philosophical abstraction through visual culture.

In sculpture, especially bronze sculptures like the kneeling servant lamp found in Princess Dou Wan's tomb, artisans had evinced technical brilliance as well as meaningful cultural values (Bulling, 1972; Gujian, 2016). The lamp, with its mobile chimney and soot-collecting mechanism, had represented not only technological prowess but also the value of servile labor, light (both literal and figurative), and high-quality craft. The servant figure had depicted not just a conceptual being but an

entire social hierarchy, demonstrating how elements of Fine Arts had fused utility with sociological ideology.

Also, calligraphy, according to Clunas (2017) and Watson (2000), had become an Art of self-expression that had mirrored one's intellect, discipline, and spiritual alignment. This brushwork had aimed to express inner harmony and personal cultivation—values at the center of Confucian thought. It had also established the aesthetic underpinnings of Chinese painting, associating textual expression with visual composition in a way that had been peculiar to Chinese culture.

In short, the Fine Arts of the Han Dynasty had served as potent vehicles through which cultural values, philosophies, social stratifications, and spiritual beliefs had been articulated visually. Whether as burial murals, sculptural artefacts, literary inscriptions, or silk banners, Han visual culture had continuously represented a society interested in the principles of harmony, order, memory, honour, and intellectual progress. The Fine Arts of the Han Dynasty had been trained not only as an aesthetic achievement but also as a complex cultural document that had revealed the visual identity of ancient China. They had stood in a unique position due to their integration of artistic expression with Confucian ethics, cosmological understanding, and elite education—thus offering a unified vision of the elevated ideals of the Han people.

2.3.2 Theoretical Foundations Supporting the Role of Han Dynasty Fine Arts as a Reflection of Culture

Chinese artists, particularly in the Fine Arts of the Chinese Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), had exemplified an era where artistic expression had been a reflection of the cultural, ideological, and societal state of values of both the era and the people. This understanding had been supported by theories of behaviour, cognition, semiotics, psychology, and sociology explored by many, which had provided a scaffold of theory that had explained how Han Dynasty Fine Arts had both reflected, shaped, and preserved culture.

From the perspective of a behavioural and psychological stance, Zajonc's (1968) Mere Exposure Effect had offered probably the most persuasive evidence for explaining the cultural relevance of Han artistic motifs. Zajonc had shown that repeated exposure to a stimulus—whether symbolic, artistic, or social—had increased the odds of emotional attachment and positive reception. Cultural staples like jade burial suits, ceremonial sculptures, and ancestral murals had frequently repeated themselves across tombs and ritual spaces within the orbit of Han Fine Arts. Such repetitions had contributed to a sense of familiarity and cultural resonance with Confucian ideals like filial piety, social harmony, and ancestor worship (Obermiller, 1985; Zajonc, 1968). This had meant that Han Dynasty Art

had served not just as visual decoration, but also as a mechanism for reinforcing social values through behaviour.

Building upon Zajonc's premise, Obermiller (1985) had also proposed that emotional responses to Fine Arts may have developed without cognitive, rational reasoning. This perspective had undergirded the idea that Han visual culture had unconsciously conditioned viewers toward loyalty, moral obedience, and reverence for hierarchical organization via repeated depictions of harmony, agrarian surplus, and imperial entelechy. Gradually transcending individually perceived meanings or individual audiences' reflections, these visual cues had become shorthand representations of local group identity and legitimacy, acculturated in ritual bronzes, lacquerware, and funerary banners (Heath, 1990; Obermiller, 1985).

From the cognitive theoretic perspective, Frederic Bartlett's Schema Theory had enriched this insight well before. Bartlett had suggested that our interpretation and recollection of events had drawn upon existing mental frameworks called "schemas," which had filtered incoming information based on knowledge gleaned from culture (Axelrod, 1973). When applied to Han Dynasty Fine Arts, this theory had demonstrated how the visual narratives portrayed in tomb Art—for instance, banquets or ascensions to heaven—had been reflections of decorated schemas of society involving concepts like the afterlife, cosmology, and moral customs. Brewer (2000) had cautioned that such schemata had not been static and had developed in dynamic relation with collective memory. Han artworks had thus performed the function of cognitive anchors — instruments that had crystallized conceptual constellations around questions of life, death, power, and virtue.

Artworks, Wittrock (2000) and Garro (2000) had argued, had acted as cultural vaults, transmitting encoded knowledge across generations. Through visual formats applicable for easy memorization and retention via schema-driven learning, the burial Art of the Han Dynasty had preserved Confucian doctrines, relationships of filial piety, and agricultural symbolism—such as figurative sculptures of livestock and estate miniatures that had not only signified wealth, but had also served as visual signifiers of self-sufficient circulation, resonating with agrarian values woven into the fabric of Han philosophy (Garro, 2000; Steffensen, 1979).

The semiotic dimension had only served to shed added light on the cultural power of Han Fine Arts as mirrors of civilization. Readers of semiotic theory had emphasized how the cultural meanings laden within symbols and signs—be they in language, image, or material form—had come to be experienced. And as could be seen from Han artworks, jade had represented spiritual purity, and dragons and phoenixes had represented cosmic harmony and imperial power. These repeated motifs had acted

as sign systems encoding shared ideologies of balance, immortality, and a “great harmony” between heaven and earth. Both Chappell (1973) and Schmalbeck (2015) had demonstrated how visual semiotics had allowed for the socio-political logics of the Han to be embedded into its artistic form, where Han Art had become both an aesthetic object and an ideological vehicle.

On the psychological side, Bolwerk et al. (2014) had shown that engagement with Fine Arts had produced emotional and reflective responses—a phenomenon that had facilitated the internalization of cultural messages. In Han tombs, beautifully painted banners and carved attendants had animated emotional ties to the deceased and had reinforced convictions in an afterlife and ongoing family glory. Not only had they served as personal organizational status symbols, these artifacts had also nuanced the expression of long-held cultural ideals of duty, transcendence, and the eternity of the soul (Bolwerk et al., 2014; Chatterjee, 1970).

Within sociological theory, it had been suggested that Fine Arts had served as mirrors of collective consciousness by relevant authors such as Bardon (2024) and Baumberger (2013). Artworks from the Han Dynasty had emphasized the importance of the class structure, social harmony, gender roles, and political legitimacy. For instance, the ceremonial lamps, terra-cotta musicians, and scholar figurines that had been interred in the dominant elite tombs had embodied the importance of Confucian hierarchy and intellectual cultivation, while promoting the suppression of social originality and compliance with the ideal of scholarly virtue (Bardon, 2024; Baumberger, 2013).

Bruder and Ucok (2000) had noted Fine Arts as crowded with interaction; instead of merely viewing visual meaning, viewers had habitually constructed meaning from visual content based on their shared cultural backgrounds. This finding had helped confirm that Han Fine Arts had acted as instruments of socialization, establishing a collective understanding of what it had meant to be moral, noble, and Chinese. Chamberlain (2022) had bolstered this perspective by demonstrating that interpretation had already been filtered through life experience and cultural memory, which had been the reason why some Han symbols—for example, yin-yang or celestial beings—had retained their force as adaptable cultural icons across centuries.

Cheung et al. (2019) and Christensen et al. (2023) had demonstrated how cultural conditioning had manifested itself in emotional responses to visual stimuli. The Han Dynasty had been troubled, and the artworks that had involved heavenly ascent or harmonious processions had invoked emotional calm, as they had symbolized Confucian and Daoist ideas of harmony, order, and transcendence. These had not been involuntary reactions, but had been fundamental to cultural learning, religious conceptions, and actual social values.

At last, some studies by Frascaroli (2022), Gago and de Almeida (2013), and Herwig et al. (2012) had offered further confirmation that Fine Arts had uncovered and formed cultural psychology. The focus on jade’s incorruptibility, ceremonial precision, and naturalistic depictions of daily life in Han Art had mirrored a cultural psychology that had valued virtue, permanence, and orderly living. Such artistic forms had thus served a dual purpose as aesthetic commodities and psychological artifacts—seeding belief systems in visual form and rooting identity within the cultural collective mind.

Ultimately, the application of behavioural, cognitive, semiotic, psychological, and sociological theories in conjunction with one another had substantiated the claim that Han Dynasty Fine Arts had profoundly reflected Chinese cultural identity at the time. Transmitted through schema, symbolic representation, emotional engagement, or social vector, these artworks had stabilized and made permanent the cultural values that would ensure their renewal for the generations to come. By this layered theoretical lens, the visible culture of the Han Dynasty had crystallized not just as artistry, but as a systematic, purposeful, and psychically impinging reflection of Chinese civilization.

2.4.1 Fine Arts as a Reflection of Culture During the Byzantine Era (330–1453 AD)

The Byzantine Era Fine Arts had strongly represented the values, hierarchies, and religious beliefs that had come to be dominant within the Eastern Roman Empire. Byzantine Art, inscribed within Orthodox Christianity and Roman imperial traditions, had not only functioned as decorative objects but had also served as media of cultural transmission and tools for shaping public consciousness in society (Drewer, 1996; Weitzmann, 1947). In parallel with Christianity’s gradual emergence from earlier Greco-Roman iterations of mythological systems, artistic representations had evolved away from purely sculptural depictions of mythological deities, toward the portrayal of virtues and biblical narratives—demonstrating the society’s transition from polytheism to monotheistic Orthodoxy (Frothingham, 1895).

A similar approach had been taken with the Fine Arts, which had combined Greco-Roman realism with Eastern symbolism and abstraction (Kazdan & Epstein, 1990; McCormick, 1987). That stylistic synthesis had reflected the empire’s own multi-ethnic makeup and its desire to maintain cultural oneness under a single religious-political ideology. After all, religious Art had become formalised as a visual mediator of Christianity not only for the sake of moral instruction of the laity but also to establish social hierarchies—including the sanctity of the family unit, glorification of celibacy, and the exalted status of religious and imperial dignitaries (Kazdan & Epstein, 1990; Nicol, 1967).

Political power had certainly been immortalized in the spiritual acts of the Fine Arts, as found in works such as *Justinian’s Procession* in the Basilica of San Vitale (Bassett, 2008; Rupley, 2009). For example, Justinian had been depicted clad in imperial purple and encircled with a golden halo—despite

never having been canonized—thereby underscoring how Art had served to create a divinely ordained identity (Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold, 1997; Angelova, 2015). These images had echoed the cultural preference for moral exemplars and had associated rulers with holy deference, inviting public mimicry.

The societal roles of women had also been depicted in artworks, as in *The Procession of Empress Theodora*. The Empress had appeared to present a gem-studded chalice, in the company of lavishly robed court ladies, and had become representative of nobility, female agency, and the sacredness of the feminine imperial domestic (Michael Shin, 2020; Wainwright, 2018). That attention to detail in these portrayals had reflected the cultural honor of motherhood, virtue, and divine intercession that had permeated both public imagery and societal structure (Ensslin, 1967).

Therefore, Byzantine Fine Arts had mobilized not only aesthetic imagery but also ideological tools that had represented and shaped values, reinforced cultural priorities, and transmitted the empire’s socio-political-religious worldview (Hunger, 1982; Moorhead, 1986).

2.4.2 Religious and Iconographic Significance of Byzantine Fine Arts

The spiritual bridge role of Byzantine Art between the earthly and divine realms had played a critical part in its religious and iconographic meaning. The loveliness of these works had downplayed their purpose as mere aesthetic decoration, emphasizing instead their mediatory role between the divine and humankind. Artists had intentionally borrowed religious paradigms and had made Art a tool of mediation for worshippers, as the works had functioned as much to educate as to grant access to heavenly mysteries (Drewer, 1996; Weitzmann, 1947). Icons and mosaics had functioned as vehicles of divine presence, meant to pull beholders into meditative prayer and ethical reflection.

This purpose had been epitomized by *Virgin (Theotokos) and Child Between Saints Theodore and George*, the renowned encaustic painting that had adorned the front of its original tabernacle. Crafted with hot wax techniques, it had guided the viewer’s gaze upward through the movement of the composition—from the saints to the Virgin and finally to the celestial kingdom above (Kalavrezou, 1990). This directional layout had not merely provided theological insight but had also articulated the sacred hierarchy maintained by Orthodox belief. Per Cameron (1978), these artworks had embodied both devotion and transcendence: the faithful had been able to interact with divine figures as actual presences—not merely generalized abstractions.

Byzantine Art had also functioned pedagogically, standardizing iconographic motifs to ensure that a consistent theology had been adopted in regions throughout the empire. Such repetition of stylized

religious imagery had ensured that Orthodox beliefs had been visually encoded and easily recognizable across a widely diverse cultural setting (Weitzmann, 1947). Even during the iconoclastic controversy under Emperor Leo III, the debate itself had shown how deeply images had taken root in Byzantine religious consciousness (Brown, 1973). Iconoclasm, though aimed at repressing both the production of and devotion to icons, had ironically revealed the theological gravity of those very images—whose destruction had been rooted in fears of idolatry and incorrect representations of God (Shedlock, 1968).

The Middle Byzantine Period had immediately followed the resolution of iconoclasm under Empress Theodora, who had restored the production of religious Art (Shedlock, 1968). Religious craftsmanship and architectural ingenuity had flourished (Ibid). Mosaic Art had returned to its function of reinforcing moral and spiritual ideals, as seen in the decoration of the Basilica of San Vitale, where Theodora and Justinian had both been enshrined as embodiments of divine and earthly authority (Liu, 2022; Rupley, 2009).

Ultimately, the religious and iconographic significance of Byzantine Art had manifested the invisible, transmitted theological discourse, and articulated the moral and spiritual aspirations of a pious society. Not only had Art reflected the Byzantine worldview, but it had also helped to shape it—serving as a spiritual guide, a political tool, and a cultural mirror (Drewer, 1996; Moorhead, 1986).

2.4.3 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported Byzantine Fine Arts as a Reflection of Culture

That Byzantine society had preserved values, hierarchies, belief systems, and social structures had indeed lived on not only through the transmutations of its artistic processes but through the actions of long-past lives themselves, wherein the Fine Arts of the Byzantine Period (330–1453 AD) had operated as cultural mirrors reflecting systemic and ethical values. These approaches—particularly semiotic, psychological, and sociological perspectives—had provided a strong analytical framework within which the reflective qualities of Byzantine Art might have been better apprehended.

Frederic Bartlett's Schema Cognitive Theory (Axelrod, 1973) had shown that people's perceptions of, and responses to, artworks had been determined by pre-constructed mental representations or “schemas.” Byzantine images—including *The Virgin (Theotokos)* and *Child Between Saints Theodore and George*—had conformed to the culturally embedded visual schemas that had existed in the minds of Christian viewers, encoding religion, social roles, and a symbolic system that had been immediately recognizable to its audience (Allen, 2015; Cameron, 1978). These icons had not only represented divine presence but had also reinforced social and gender roles, thereby acting as visual reinforcements of culturally constructed knowledge (Garro, 2000; Wittrock, 2000).

Steffensen (1979) had further confirmed that viewers had used their cultural background to interpret texts or images. In this respect, Byzantine iconography had drawn on the repetition of symbolic motifs—halos, gold backgrounds, stylized figures—which had expressed not only religious truths, but had also been embedded in collective memory and identity (Moorhead, 1986; Weitzmann, 1947). In such a way, Fine Arts had worked as schema-driven cultural vaults that had codified societal knowledge and spiritual longings across generations (Brewer, 2000; Wertsch, 2008).

Yet the Mere Exposure Effect, suggested by Robert Zajonc (1968), had already explained the phenomenon whereby increased visual exposure had resulted in greater familiarity and emotional acceptance over time. Visually resonant with *The Procession of Empress Theodora*, this theory had been directly demonstrated in mosaics where recurring elements of visual history—such as divine halos, rich garments, and ritual gestures—had normalized hierarchical structures and divine authority among the Byzantine populace (Shin, 2020; Wainwright, 2018). As Zajonc (1968) had suggested, the more these gods and emperors had been displayed in visual Art, the more they had been culturally absorbed and emotionally accepted by the masses.

Obermiller (1985) had previously explained that multiple visual exposures could evoke positive affect even without conscious deliberation. This had established that mosaics such as Justinian’s Procession in the Basilica of San Vitale had not simply gone through a passive process, but had visually and sacredly reinforced imperial leadership through the viewer’s emotional engagement with well-known symbolism (Angelova, 2015; Bassett, 2008; Rupley, 2009). These artistic refrains had moulded reverence for leadership, sanctity, and gendered divisions of labour—hence fortifying religious veneration and imperial allegiance.

Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1976) had emphasized that one’s behaviour might have been learned through observational modeling. By painting idealised actions, virtues, and religious conduct, Byzantine Art had served as a kind of behavioural template for society. Such representations of emperors and saints in aristocratic raiment, performing specific sacramental actions, had acted as behavioural models which society had mirrored (Angelova, 2015; Bassett, 2008).

For instance, Justinian’s image as a religious and civic benefactor—wearing imperial purple and offering a golden basin—had modeled piety in religious affairs and civic duty, reinforcing standards of behaviour associated with leadership in both religious and state matters (Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold, 1997). As Bandura (1977) had described, these visual reinforcements had inculcated values such as obedience, discipline, and moral integrity—behaviours which had been at the heart of Byzantine living and worship.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital had shown how Art had communicated and maintained values and structures of power in society. In fact, mosaics and icons within the Byzantine Empire had not only been religious embellishments—they had been engines of social stratification. The lavish attire of Empress Theodora and her retinue had expressed upper-class femininity and virtue, which had sustained elite status and reiterated the pictorial codification of rank (Shin, 2020; Wainwright, 2018).

Baumberger (2013) had argued that embedded in artworks were ideological narratives that had communicated society's dominant belief systems. The representation of holy figures in religious artworks had corresponded to the Byzantine societal structure, in which divine figures had been placed above saints, emperors, clergy, and the laity, thereby serving as visual legitimization of legal power (Brown, 1973; Shedlock, 1968). This visual hierarchy had re-stated the communal values of law, purity, celibacy, family cohesion, and imperial leadership (Kazdan & Epstein, 1990; Nicol, 1967).

As demonstrated by Bolwerk et al. (2014), Fine Arts had been emotional and psychological catalysts for activating cultural identity. Not only had the Virgin and Child encaustic painting produced awe, but it had also led viewers toward a deeper internal moral reflection and spiritual connection (Drewer, 1996; Kalavrezou, 1990). These works had not been designed simply to represent, but also to influence—to move the spirit toward reverence, fidelity, and submission, and thus to foster cultural cohesion through emotional processes (Chatterjee, 1970; Gunaratne et al., 2019).

Herwig et al. (2012) had concluded that viewing artworks had stimulated self-reflective areas of the brain, which had allowed Byzantine people to place their individual selves within the greater theological framework that had defined their society. Thus, the religious works of Art had served to provide spiritual orientation while also confirming the moral and social ethos of the empire.

Through a synthesis of Behavioural, Cognitive, Semiotic, Psychological, and Sociological theory, it had become clear that Fine Arts from the Byzantine Era had played a much more abiding role than that of passive representation—they had been active players in reflecting and reinforcing culture. They had rendered behaviour through modelling (Bandura, 1976), summoned emotional familiarity (Zajonc, 1968), encoded collective memory (Bartlett, cited in Axelrod, 1973), and had either supported or subtly questioned hierarchical structures and belief systems (Bourdieu, 1984; Weitzmann, 1947). Collectively, these theories had supported the conclusion that Byzantine Fine Arts had served the dual purposes of both mirroring and orchestrating cultural ideologies—effectively shaping and preserving the values and worldviews of their era.

2.5.1 How Fine Arts from the Renaissance (c. 1300–1600/1650) Had Served as Catalysts of Cultural Change

Fine Arts in the Renaissance had been a highly effective vehicle for ideological change, as their embodiment, representation, and advocacy of new ideas had altered the ways in which humanity, knowledge, and creation had been perceived. Central to this cultural revolution had been the synergistic interplay between intellectual awakening and visual expression, which had served as the engine for both social reform and educational advancement throughout Europe (Monfasani, 2015; Randolph, 2007).

It had been in Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci that Art had been exploited to uncover the layers of human form and internal emotional experience, establishing alternative standards for scientific research and personal reflection. Having been produced following the dissection of over thirty corpses, Leonardo's anatomical sketches had not only expanded public knowledge of the human body but had also brought prior medieval restrictions on scientific exploration into question (Jones, 2012; Perloff, 2013). As Bernardini (2006) had written, these studies of the visual had contributed to a cultural shift that had elevated the work of the artist from artisan to intellectual—a strand of a broader cultural appreciation for empirical observation and innovation.

Similarly, the work of Michelangelo had advanced this cultural shift, rendering divine subjects as fully embodied mortals with no precedent in emotional intensity and anatomical accuracy. His ceiling frescoes of the Sistine Chapel and The Last Judgement had tapped into the collective psyche, bringing biblical stories into lived human experience—palpable and concrete (Bardon, 2023; Eknayan, 2000). These contributions had transformed the heroic vocation of Fine Arts, aligning celestial idealism with terrestrial realism, and had inspired a cultural introspection on artistic destiny.

The Renaissance had also witnessed the monumental rise of “sentimental objects,” which the elite had mastered to define social status and personal legacy. Rare things had always been valued—jeweled goblets and ostrich eggs, for example—that had represented cultural refinement and generational pride (Starn, 1998). These seemingly materialistic objects had in fact been social markers of identity, and thus Fine Arts had instigated changes to social values concerning possession, legacy, and individual representation.

Public artworks had also served as ideological tools that had spoken to human potential and intellectual aspiration. Raphael's School of Athens had served as a visual manifesto for Renaissance philosophy, portraying Plato and Aristotle—among other philosophers—in dynamic dialogue and visually celebrating the harmony of classical wisdom and contemporary inquiry (Bell, 1995; Normandin, 1995). It had transformed the intellectual climate by depicting philosophers as cultural heroes and had represented the civic pride that had emerged during the High Renaissance (Brilliant, 1984; Most, 1996).

These had not been merely decorative masterpieces—they had actively shaped thought, inspired societal debate, and modelled ideals of human excellence. Thus, during the Renaissance, Fine Arts had been transformed into agencies of cultural leadership—leading reforms in education, science, religion, politics, and philosophy (De Jésus et al., 2001; Wallace, 2010).

2.5.2 Humanism and the Intellectual Movements Pertaining to Renaissance Fine Arts

Fine Arts in the Renaissance had not merely been aesthetic exercises, but rather the visual wing of the wider Humanist movement, which had brought man to the core of intellectual, artistic, and moral inquiry. Greco-Roman ideals had been revived through literature, architecture, and painting, and classical values had been invigorated while emphasizing individual dignity and creative potential (Frary, 2018; Kristeller, 1962).

This change had been propelled by a new pedagogical interest in the “*studia humanitatis*”—a curriculum concerned with history, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy—and thus had been aimed at producing virtuous citizens and well-rounded persons (Gray, 1963). Fine Arts had represented these ideals by visually reinvesting in and epitomizing the human body in its natural, but often ideal, form—thus mirroring humanity’s divine ability for reason, beauty, and innovation (Cooper, 1999; Rossi, 2007).

Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci had embodied this vision. By employing “*sfumato*”, layering expressions, and deploying compositional genius, he had created an image that had risen above portraiture to place the subject in a near-divine, intellectual sphere (Clémence, 2023; Greenstein, 2004). Her visage had been read as ageless and pensive, reflective of the Renaissance notion that inner contemplation and selfhood had been fit subjects for artistic investigation and cultural reverence (Arbiter, 1917; Barolsky, 1994).

In addition, works such as Raphael’s *School of Athens* had directly reflected the intellectual movement of the moment, when the values of dialogue, reason, and critical thought had flourished beyond the school and the academy. As Bell (1995) and Most (1996) had noted, the fresco’s composition of philosophers in engaged debate had not merely celebrated classical learning but had also coincided with the civic humanist ideal that knowledge had been a means to the common good.

This age of Fine Arts had also clearly illustrated a division from medieval religious restrictions. Ford (2006) had explained that this had been made possible by the way institutions such as the Collège de France had deliberately stripped theology of its authority over academic study, thereby liberating both artists and thinkers to pursue knowledge without fear of Church influence. This freedom had

enabled Humanism to develop—fostering freedom of expression, scepticism, and inquiry in all disciplines (Murphy, 2008; Shapiro, 1967).

All in all, Fine Arts from the Renaissance had not only reflected but had also consolidated the intellectual changes of the epoch. These works, by imbuing their illustrations of Humanist principles—secular knowledge, reasoned thought, and individual virtue—with such significance, had played a pivotal role in redefining what society had come to cherish in profound ways that had encouraged future generations to pursue both private fulfilment and public culture (Kristeller, 1962; Testa & Salamone, 2005).

2.5.3 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported Renaissance Fine Arts as Catalysts for Cultural Change

Renaissance Fine Arts had been functioning as an effective medium of cultural change in society, as such works had reflected the existing, the emerging, and even opposed the popular intellectual and ethical values of the epoch. As discussed throughout this chapter, the behavioural, cognitive, semiotic, psychological, and sociological theories had together contributed to a broader understanding of the mechanisms through which this change had taken place.

The Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura had reiterated the proposition that Fine Arts had acted as significant models of social change during the Renaissance period. Bandura (1976) had demonstrated that patterns of behaviour had been influenced by observational learning, imitation, and internalized reinforcement—thereby explaining how Renaissance audiences had learned to conform to bold new cultural ideals through visual exposure to artworks. Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), for example, had embodied particular values of marital fidelity, social order, and Christian morality, and had therefore modelled idealized behaviours for contemporaneous viewers (Bandura, 1976; Seidel, 1989).

This visual structure of agreed behaviours had aligned with Williams' (1983) broadening of Bandura's theory, which had emphasized that reinforcement mechanisms had been operating within wider structures of symbolic meaning and environmental agency. As such, artworks had been approached repeatedly by individuals and communities and had served as vessels communicating expectations for (presumably normative) behaviours—ones in which ideals of dignity, civic responsibility, and individual virtue associated with the Renaissance had become internalized (Rushton, 1982; Williams, 1983).

A significant part of the further cognitive impact had been drawn from Leon Festinger’s Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which had explained how an internal sense of discomfort, evoked by discordant values, had led people to adjust their beliefs and change their behaviours accordingly. Renaissance Art, for instance, had regularly placed classical pagan themes beside Christian morals—thus violating existing theological confines and forcing observers to harmonize Humanist inquiry with religious doctrine (Aronson, 1997; Festinger, 1962). The nude representations of human heroic forms in Michelangelo’s *David* or *Creation of Adam*, for example, had induced admiration of human beauty while also provoking theological meditation—and had thus triggered both internal and cultural transformation (Auster, 1965; Wong, 2009).

A semiotic framework had further bolstered this argument, reaffirming that Renaissance Fine Arts had reconstructed cultural paradigms through elaborate systems of signs and symbols. As the analysis of the *Arnolfini Portrait* had shown, symbolic icons such as the dog (fidelity), mirror (divine presence), and single candle (spiritual union) had conveyed layered moral meanings that had educated viewers visually (Colenbrander, 2005). This conscious manipulation of symbolic language had not merely mirrored culture—it had shaped and delivered its systems of morals and ethics.

These semiotic systems had aligned closely with Bandura’s later claim that symbolic modelling had been instrumental to both observational learning and cultural adaptation (Bandura, 1986). In paintings such as Raphael’s *School of Athens*, allegory and iconography had been used deliberately to communicate Renaissance ideals of reason, inquiry, and civic virtue—effectively transforming Art into a visual language of philosophical persuasion and transformation (Bell, 1995; Most, 1996).

The Fine Arts had engaged audiences emotionally and aesthetically, a fact that had been theorized within psychology (particularly since Hegel’s aesthetic theory) as stirring in audiences a form of introspection, moral questioning, and personality development. In fact, artistic production had acted upon the mind by provoking cognitive-affective schemas that had mirrored personal and societal values—as first claimed by Bullout and Reber (2013)—thus connecting Fine Arts to emotional and psychological development. With Renaissance artworks, audiences had not merely spectated but had participated in philosophical, ethical, and social contemplation (Maxwell, 2004; Pelowski et al., 2016).

Not only had *The Arnolfini Portrait* modelled desirable behaviours, but it had also gone further by suggesting the idea of personal agency and control within the cultural context of marriage and commerce—as evidenced by Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Howell, 2020). These images had helped viewers to identify with and learn from them—thereby serving as both mirror and mentor for achieving the ideals defined by Renaissance Fine Arts.

A few years earlier, Pierre Bourdieu (1968; 1984) had provided a crucial insight from a sociological perspective by drawing a relationship between Fine Arts and the production and transmission of cultural capital. During the Renaissance, artworks had been commissioned and consumed by the elite as statements of identity, wealth, and intellectual affiliation. As a result, the proliferation of those works in both public and private places had already democratized access to the rising humanist patterns that had permeated different social strata and institutions (Belfiore, 2006; Bourdieu, 1968).

Arising from sociological counterarguments, further bolstered by Bullot and Reber (2013), it had been observed that Fine Arts had acted as communal mirrors—means for collective societies to reflect on the changing worldviews around them. The work of Raphael's frescoes and Leonardo's anatomical sketches had not only added to scientific knowledge but had also engendered a reconstruction of the human being as a rational, intellectual, and creative agent: values that had transformed cultural identities throughout Europe (Cooper, 1999; Kristeller, 1962).

In addition, existing theories developed by Ewen (1999–2000) and Joffe (2008) had confirmed Fine Arts' role through designed emotive interactions, which might have stimulated public debate in addressing empathy, critical thinking, and ethics. These affective responses had influenced not only individuals but entire societies, drawing them into dramatic new worldviews. When a sufficient number of people had begun to question their lives, they had necessarily cultivated the grounds for collective reflection, debate, and social change.

In conclusion, the Renaissance had given rise not just to an artistic lexicon but had initiated a fundamental cultural and moral re-alignment, the presence of which Behavioural, Cognitive, Semiotic, Psychological, and Sociological theory had confirmed. Every theoretical lens had verified that Fine Arts from that period had been much more than reflective of their time—they had shaped beliefs, formed identities, and consolidated novel cultural paradigms through visual, emotional, and intellectual engagement (Bandura, 1976; Bourdieu, 1968; Bullot & Reber, 2013; Festinger, 1962).

By elucidating that learning could be a product of witnessing, that belief modification often stemmed from internal struggle, and that values could be inscribed through symbols and aesthetic qualities, such theories had collectively established that Renaissance Fine Arts, in particular, had functioned as membranous verities of continual cultural transformation.

2.6.1 Fine Arts of the Romanticism Movement (1770–1870) as Catalysts of Cultural Change

Thus, the Fine Arts of the Romanticism Movement, which had lasted from 1770 to 1870, had become one of the strongest agents of cultural change in European and Western societies. Klancher (1989) had previously stated that Romanticism had arisen not only as an intellectual movement, but also as a powerful poetic and ideological reaction against Enlightenment rationalism and the mechanisation processes of the Industrial Revolution. Artists had sought to re-establish society's ties to the spiritual, the emotional, and the natural—things that industrialisation had attempted to suppress. This emotional reawakening had been crucial in remaking public consciousness.

Romantic artists had spurned the frigid, aseptic rationalism of Enlightenment ideals for emotionally fecund and psychologically expressive artworks (Artz, 1962). By depicting extreme emotional experiences and spiritual themes, Romantic artists had consciously redirected aesthetic standards and social expectations away from classical notions of balance, proportion, and rationality, toward feelings, intuition, and subjective truths (Burns-Dans, 2018). This ideological turn had ultimately redefined how culture had interpreted truth, emotion, and individuality—an impact that had not only transformed Fine Arts but had also permeated music, literature, historiography, and education (Klancher, 1989).

By their challenge to existing institutional values, Romantic painters such as Eugène Delacroix, William Blake, Théodore Géricault, and John Constable had already subverted established social hierarchies (Rubin, 1993). For example, Géricault's striking subject matter had celebrated personal freedom and human suffering rather than rational virtue, thereby holistically attacking the Enlightenment's intellectual hold on Europe (Caruso & Caruso, 2015). These artists had embraced individualism and subjectivity as central themes and had granted the viewer permission to feel, imagine, and reflect—an act that had, in itself, changed the social function of Art and had helped to spur democratic ideals throughout Europe.

Romanticism, as Kaufman (1925) had pointed out, had provided a means of cultural flight and insurrection, bringing to light the errant and boundless aspects of human sensibility. It had been chaotic precisely because it had eluded categorisation, but that had been its strongest asset as an engine of cultural change. Romanticism, rather than adhering to strict artistic classifications, had synthesised oppositions and had denied the established hierarchies between different forms or genres within the Fine Arts (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

Moreover, paintings such as Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) had functioned as visual manifestos that had done more than express revolutionary spirit and collective action in France; they had enshrined them. Splicing allegorical symbolism with contemporary political commentary, the

painting had provoked a visceral reaction, with critics noting its use of artistic persuasion to arouse national pride and revolutionary sentiment (Carroll, 2017; Gao, 2017). The central female figure, the embodiment of Liberty, had come to symbolise social uplift—human freedom, revolutionary resistance, and the triumph of democracy. This practice had allowed the painting to actively participate in shaping political consciousness and had reinforced resistance to tyranny as a cultural value (Mora, 2000; Olmsted, 2009).

In Spain, too, Goya's *The Third of May 1808* had, in its time, been a shocking cultural intervention—revealing the brutalities of war not as noble endeavours but as horrific undermining of humanity. This painting had subverted governmental expectations of glorifying military victory by emotionally exposing the suffering of the innocent (Arn, 2019; Trancart, 2022). Through its dramatic lighting and realistic images of the doomed, Goya had turned public sentiment against the occupying forces and had opened sympathy for the oppressed Spanish people—thus inspiring cultural awareness and moral indignation (Leader, 2014; Licht, 1979).

Romanticism had also spurred the use of landscapes as forms of philosophical and spiritual meditation. Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818) had epitomised that shift—a pictorial expression of emotional and psychological isolation experienced by the individual in the immensity and inscrutability of nature. By depicting the figure from behind and having him gaze out at a misty mountaintop, Friedrich had nudged viewers to consider a transcendental relationship between man and the sublime (Du Plessis, 2022; Hencz, 2024). The artwork had instigated a cultural revaluation of nature as not simply a backdrop but rather as an emotionally charged, divine entity—a radical reimagining that had fostered environmental awareness and spiritual introspection in society (Gaete, 2020; Kaminski, 2016).

2.6.2 The Expression of Emotion and Nationalism Through Romantic Fine Arts

Both emotion and nationalism had functioned as leading thematic currents across the language of visual, poetic, and musical expressions of the Romantic Movement. Romantic artists had truly believed that emotion—not logic—had been the truest route to better understanding and articulating the human condition. Thus, they had used colours, lights, and brushstrokes to evoke emotions such as internal conflict, wonder, misery, and optimism (Artz, 1962; Esaak, 2019).

This emotional expressiveness had not only transformed aesthetic sensibilities but had actively conditioned social behaviour. The Romantic Movement had affirmed the worthiness and transformational power of personal feelings, and in doing so, had bolstered the idea that great Art should move the soul and incite contemplation rather than merely serve didactic or decorative purposes (Burns-

Dans, 2018; Rubin, 1993). Paintings like Goya's *The Third of May* and Friedrich's *Wanderer* had shown how visual Art could funnel rich emotionality to comment on war, investigate spiritual identity, or ponder existential solitude—all of which had become themes that ultimately defined modern ideas of psychological complexity.

Alongside emotional depth, Romantic Fine Arts had played a pioneering role in nurturing nationalist sentiments. As Moskvichova et al. (2019) had observed, the rise of Folk Romanticism in Germany had mirrored political oppression under French rule. By reviving folk traditions, music, and storytelling, Romanticism had helped spark a cultural movement that had enabled the German people to rediscover and assert a unified national identity. The *Magic Horn of Boy* (1806–1808), released by the Heidelberg School of Artists, had resonated deeply with the emotional and moral sensibilities of the German people and had been named the “soul of Germany” (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

Likewise, Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* had demonstrated how Romantic picturing could invoke national identity. The painting had crossed class boundaries in its portrayal of individuals from all segments of society—toiling men and women, intellectuals, students, and youths—marching together under a national flag. This symbolic unification had elevated the notions of freedom and nationalism to an almost sacred level that had prompted political action and social change (Carroll, 2017; Marrinan, 1980).

Romanticism's emotional power had similarly manifested as cultural values that had embraced rebellion, freedom of expression, and the defiance of authoritarian rule. As Crawford (2024) had noted, Romanticists had tended to romanticize society's “rebellious outsiders,” not only amplifying sympathy for the underprivileged but also undermining established social conventions. Romantic Fine Arts had sowed the seeds of modern liberal democracy, character studies in literature and film, and personal sovereignty in cultural discourse—all in salute to the individuality of expression (Crawford, 2024).

Finally, the Romanticism Movement had resisted elitism and artistic classification, valuing synthesis and expressive license (Moskvichova et al., 2019). This process had enabled artists to engage with contentious themes and create works that had helped not only to critique prevailing ideologies but also to establish new social and cultural values rooted in emotion, nationalism, soul-searching, and freedom. Thus, Romantic Fine Arts had stood at the forefront of driving future cultural movements based on human rights, self-expression, and democratic ideals.

2.6.3 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported the Romanticism Art Movement as a Catalyst for Cultural Change

Paintings from the Romantic Art Movement had portrayed imagery which had led to distinguishable shifts in regards to both cultural interpretations and perceptions – which had indirectly aligned closely with Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory', although this theory had been developed and formulated many years later. Examples of such powerful symbolic visual representations had been depicted by Fine Artists from the Romantic Era like Eugène Delacroix (who painted the notorious *Liberty Leading the People* in 1830), that had in return influenced public debates and discourse regarding relevant moral – and cultural values in an autonomous manner. Not only through means of mere observational learning, but through the active reinforcement thereof, as well as through 'symbolic modelling' (Bandura, 1976; Bandura, 1986). More specifically, moral codes pertaining to 'individuality', the attainment of 'emotional depth' and 'forward-thinking progressive ideals' had all been overtly glorified by Romanticism. Furthermore, these specific characteristics which had been heralded by the Romanticism Art Movement, had been argued by Bandura (1976) as having been reinforced through the repeated exposure thereof, as well as through the repeated imitation and eventual adoption thereof. In other words, exposure, imitation and the adoption of these values had indirectly advocated for 'social change' through the learning of certain behaviours (Bandura, 1976).

Likewise, the 'Operant Conditioning Theory' by Skinner had elaborated upon the manner in which the 'emotional weight' and engaging impact of Romantic paintings had persuaded the interpretational perceptions of viewer behaviours, through the application of positive and negative reinforcements. *Liberty Leading the People*, for example, had utilized the 'triumphant scenery' exuberating a strong sense of 'liberty', as a form of a 'visual reward'. Similarly, the brutal portrayal of fallen bodies had, to an extent, served as a 'symbol of punishment' for inaction from the audience. This artistic tactic of provocation and persuasiveness had either intentionally – or unintentionally – fostered behavioural change which had favoured revolutionary societal changes (Malone, 1975; Praveen, 2017; Shaff, 1982). In agreement with Malone (1975), Praveen (2017), and Shaff (1982), the Romantic Movement Art had, therefore, within context to Skinner's theory, functioned as a type of 'cultural operant' – which had consequently drawn spectators towards alternative social models related to a variety of different ethical – and moral frameworks. Especially through means of intentional and strategic reinforcement, as well as involvement on multiple levels of participation.

From a different perspective, the 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' by Festinger had revealed the unique ways through which Romantic Artworks had specifically caused 'psychological discomfort' amongst viewers who had been exposed to 'contradictory ideological, spiritual – or emotional-narratives'. An accurate example of 'emotional discomfort' which had been felt amongst audiences, included reactions towards 'Enlightenment rationality'. As a result, this typical experience pertaining to feeling inner turmoil or a sense of 'internal dissonance', had led audiences to both wrestle with – and to

resolve their personal inner conflicts, through aligning their core beliefs with their felt emotions. In doing so, this occurrence and process among viewers had gradually assisted in the shifting of 'cultural consensus' towards increasingly more intrinsically orientated and 'individualistic values' (Aronson, 1997; Festinger, 1962; Wong, 2009). In accordance with the perspective presented by Aronson (1997), Festinger (1962), and Wong (2009), themes related to 'personal suffering', 'nature' and 'nationalist passion' had therefore become new and practical avenues through which 'motivation' in connection with the reformation of belief systems and eventual cultural changes had transpired.

Fine Arts from the Romanticism Era, especially through the lens of symbolic interpretation and 'semiotics', had, through means of the reinforcement of repeated storylines, preferred narratives, repeated heroic confrontations, turmoil, battles and overwhelming grand landscapes – become broader cultural signs which had conveyed challengingly detailed information related to freedom, existential cultural struggles, or the 'the divine'. As Colenbrander (2005) had noted, these symbols had already encompassed new ideological stances or positions, which had further provided blueprints embedded in semiotic constructs for newly emerging cultural values.

Additionally, viewers had responded and reacted towards the underlying insinuations of these symbolically suggestive visual portrayals through means of reflections, while those reflections had resulted in 'internalised change' which had quite frequently surpassed the intended purpose of the original artwork itself. Therefore, paintings from the Romantic Art Movement, as well as 'Romantic aesthetics', had supported the development of 'cultural identity' and 'emotional authenticity'. This had in return caused the creation of iconographic imagery which had been filled to the brim with emotionalism, (such as Delacroix's allegorical Liberty), which had collectively served as 'ideological signifiers' of not only 'social aspiration' – but determined societal resistance. This artistic trend, most evidently seen within Romanticism, had substantiated the interpretational viewpoint that symbolisms within Fine Arts had intentionally aimed towards both the communication and transmission of ever-changing cultural ideals (Colenbrander, 2005).

As commented upon by Joffe (2008), the Romanticism Art Movement had revelled – and had been most impactful within context to the effective evocation of strong emotional and psychological reactions. This had been most evident and most clearly visible within the passionate brushwork, the dramatic – and even melodramatic – scenery, the somewhat unsettling subject themes in certain instances, as well as the strategically planned compositional layouts. Joffe (2008) had furthermore presented the argument that visual imagery from the Romantic Era had created empathetic engagement amongst viewers – which had awoken the souls of many Europeans during this time period to the harsh realities of various 'societal injustices', the human vulnerability of mortality – as well as the 'fragility

of the human condition'. These psychological responses had given rise to public discourse which had collectively sought deepened 'meaning' – and potentially 'action' as well – in the face of incredibly costly personal losses.

Jin and Ye (2022) had previously supported this perspective, while simultaneously having highlighted that 'emotional stimuli' and other instruments of provocation found within Fine Arts had not only developed 'self-efficacy' and 'psychological well-being' amongst the members of a society, but had further prepared – and enabled individuals to re-frame or re-construct their social environments. Romantic paintings had also activated intrinsic motivation for change – which had challenged audience members and viewers to interrogate the authoritative structures and societal norms during which they had lived and had been faced with in their daily lives. Therefore, both 'social reformations', taking 'personal stances' and becoming more engaged in 'individual agency' had been encouraged throughout the Romantic Art Movement.

In comparison to theoretical frameworks which had been developed many years later, Festinger's model had strongly contended for the fact that the 'dissonance' which had been caused by Romanticism's dismissal of 'classical rationalism' had gradually led towards the extended 'cognitive accommodation' of newly acquired and insightful information – which had in return substantiated the Romantic Art Movement's distinctive role as somewhat of a 'harbinger' of societal re-alignment through means of philosophical, religious, moral and ideological shifts (Aronson, 1997; Festinger, 1962).

From a sociological perspective, Romantic Fine Arts had both influenced and been influenced by cultural capital, as Bourdieu (1968, 1984) had claimed. Artworks had not only revealed the distinct 'elite tastes' of high society, but had further reconfigured and indirectly promoted them amongst audiences. This perpetuation and promotion of certain 'high societal tastes' had also challenged the previously existing conventions related to that which had been defined as 'beauty' and 'authoritative-standards'. Romanticism, as a very distinct 'ideologically-driven cultural-movement', had drawn the collective societal attention further away from values and ideals which had revolved around the 'Enlightenment'. More specifically, ideals which had previously focused disproportionately more on rationalism and logical-order, had gradually embraced concepts pertaining to 'subjective emotion', 'individual liberties' – or 'freedoms' and 'national identity'. In return, these newly adopted intrinsic values and ideals had greatly contributed towards the reversal of the 'social stratification' of more surface-level concepts which had formerly been regarded as important in European society.

Furthermore, the Romantic Movement had revised, altered and in a sense 're-designed' the "Art code," as Bourdieu (1984) had explained, through means of having removed the divisions which had

existed between the popular sentiments of the general public during this time-period, and the upper-classes of high society. Additionally, paintings from the Romantic Era had facilitated and encouraged an increasingly more 'democratic – and fair society', within which the most vulnerable, the voiceless and those who had undergone various private experiences in the 'public square', could be truly heard and provided with both validation and protection. Therefore, the emotionally-charged – and symbolic nature of the Romantic Art Movement had fulfilled a pivotal role in regards to the restructuring of societal values, standards and practices – as well as the Fine Arts industry of this particular era (Bourdieu, 1984).

In support of the perspective presented by Bourdieu (1984), Bulot and Reber (2013) had added to this understanding by mentioning that Romantic Artworks had inspired more intentional reflection among the broader public, especially during times of unrest, social turmoil or crises that had affected entire communities. The ever-changing development and progress of Fine Arts had therefore no longer served as mere aesthetic-decoration of religious connectivity, but had evolved into a powerful avenue for 'moral-engagement' – which had further granted a 'public voice' to the troubled concerns of multiple social anxieties which had been experienced at the time. This new avenue of 'moral engagement' through the expression of Romanticism, had also reaffirmed newly shared communal perspectives, values and ideals. Moreover, in the midst of the 'industrial transformation' which had taken place during this time-period in history, these newly adopted 'moral engagements' had further solidified a stronger sense of 'social uniformity', sense of 'togetherness' and 'solidarity' – which had further reinforced the role of the Romantic Art Movement as a more expansive 'socio-cultural' advocate (Bulot & Reber, 2013).

In correlation with the views presented by Bandura (1977), the credible argument could therefore be made that Romanticism had been an example of both an artistic – and cultural movement which had uniquely encouraged, enabled and empowered not only the development of 'individual-identity', but 'collective-identity' as well. Within the context of therefore understanding its role in regards to cultivating 'collective-identity', the Romantic Art Movement had offered visual imagery which had not only been reflective in nature, but inspiring and aspiring. Furthermore, in accordance with the theory of Bandura (1977), when idealized virtues, mannerism or extended behaviours in Fine Arts (sculpture, painting, mosaics, frescoes, etc.) had been observed in reference to 'heroism', 'rebellion', or 'martyrdom', for example — cultural groups and their respective societies had seemed to internalize and adopt these suggested values as part of their own identity. Especially as it had pertained to the application of the principle known as 'self-efficacy' (Bandura, 1977).

Paintings from the Romantic Art Movement had in particular typically illustrated highly dramatic or emotional scenery within which human initiatives, interventions, moral courage and creative solutions had prevailed over indifferences, injustices or tyranny. Similar to the symbolic portrayal seen in ‘Liberty Leading the People’, French – and other European audiences had already received the message that both cultural change and political alterations in resistance to the ‘status-quo’ had been — and could be — achieved through taking proactive steps and direct action which had eventually resulted in social changes (Carroll, 2017; Gao, 2017; Kazepides, 1976).

The widespread scholarly perspective pertaining to the ‘collective European identity’ which had been inspired through the Romantic Art Movement, had been supported by Bullot and Reber (2013), Cole (2021), and Turner (2007), who had indirectly reaffirmed the understanding that Romanticism had fulfilled an essential role in regards to the reshaping of the quality of visual attributes and aesthetic standards as it had pertained to Fine Arts during this time-period in history. Lindström et al. (2021) and Talley (2023) had more specifically presented credible arguments and had convincingly demonstrated the manner in which a variety of Artworks had been embroiled in different social struggles, while others had served as visual symbols of ‘protest’, ‘solidarity’, or as instruments of healing.

The Romantic Era’s exceptionally characteristic demand for ‘emotional honesty’ and ‘openness’, as well as ‘imaginative freedom’, had (re)opened new psychological considerations, investigations and perspectives for ‘meaning-making’, while its overt opposition to restrictive and rigid authoritarian structures had attempted to serve as a form of more subtle resistance towards ‘political powers’ through the carefully considered imagery (Ewen, 1999–2000; Talley, 2023). Therefore, the research of Ewen (1999–2000) and Talley (2023) had clarified and substantiated the investigative understanding that Romantic Fine Arts had truly formed a deeply intertwined point of connectivity between personal expressions and social transformation.

2.7.1 The Cubism Art Movement as an Advocate for Cultural Change (1907–1914)

As noted by Cooper (1970) and Golding (1988), the Cubism Art Movement had marked a decisive ‘breaking-away’—both visually and conceptually—with the previously existing forms of artistic representations, portrayals and symbolic depiction, which had led to a drastic cultural re-assessment and evaluation of the potential ‘culturally appropriate’ ways in which ‘reality’, as it had been understood during this time-period, had to be best perceived, interpreted, and communicated to the public. Between 1908 and 1914, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque had produced unique Cubism Artworks which had not only been collaborative or mimetic in style, but had formed the foundational basis of the Cubism Art Movement’s analytical structure. These newly designed interpretational and

stylistic approaches to subject themes had extended beyond the boundaries of pictorial spaces – as well as beyond ‘spatial cognition’, through means of having illustrated fragmented objects from multiple and alternating viewpoints. This artistic approach had, in return, produced far deeper levels of ‘viewer engagement’ with Visual Arts during this time-period (Cooper, 1970; Golding, 1988). Artworks which had been more specifically classified as having formed part of ‘Early Cubism’ had ushered in a new kind of visual literacy, where audiences had been encouraged to reassemble meaning from subdivided forms—which had presented an entirely new and different kind of relationship with artistic source material. In other words, the Cubism Art Movement had therefore challenged audiences perceptually, interpretationally and cognitively (Cooper, 1970; Fry, 1966).

As mentioned by Golding (1998) and Levine (2001), the Cubism Art Movement, which had been insistent on viewing subject themes through the prism of ‘geometrical planes’, overlapping perspectives, and abstracted compositional viewpoints, had become somewhat of a ‘metaphoric visual symbol’ for the complex and highly detailed difficulties faced by European society which had been changing at a rapid pace. As argued by these authors, those specific artistic characteristics and visual attributes related to Cubism Art style had reflected the particular ‘disintegration of identity’, as well as the disintegration of perceptions – and related experiences – which had gone hand-in-hand with industrialisation, urbanisation, and technological innovation that had followed (Golding, 1998; Levine, 2001). Therefore, in agreement with the views of Golding (1998) and Levine (2001), Cubism had not merely mirrored the fact that society had undergone changes on multiple levels, but had simultaneously encouraged critical engagement which had further ignited ‘intellectual responses’ to these societal alterations which had occurred. The Cubism Art Movement had therefore fulfilled the function of promoting cultural transformation.

Onibere (2024) and Rubin (1989) had alluded to the fact that ‘Synthetic Cubism’ had been a pivotal forerunner of a new cultural acceptance of mass production, mass advertisement, consumerism, and mechanical reproductions. In other words, through the incorporation of newspaper cuttings, product labels or discarded objects into combined collaged compositions, artists like Picasso and Braque had blurred the boundary lines amidst that which had been considered as ‘high Art’ – and that which had been considered as either ‘everyday craftsmanship’ or ‘ordinary expressions of commoners’ (Onibere, 2024; Rubin, 1989).

In unison with the observations made regarding the Cubism Art Movement thus far, these hybrid Cubism Artworks had both recognised and reinforced the increasingly expanding presence of ‘visual advertising’, as well as Europe’s ‘popularized culture’. In addition, these Cubism Artworks had also encouraged the ‘critiquing’ and ‘reinterpretation’ of the particular influences. The Cubism Art

Movement had therefore not merely served as societal reflection, but had also contributed towards the continuous transformation of 'cultural interpretation of media', including an improved understanding of materialism and visual communication (Conde-Pumpido, 2020; Hoder-Marsky, 2002).

As commented upon by Einstein and Haxthausen (2004), the Cubism Art Movement had been in the centre of scientific arguments and philosophical debates. More specifically, as it had related to scientific views or 'perception', concepts like 'time', 'space' and 'motion' had been frequently discussed and re-evaluated. While having drawn upon the influences of Bergson's theories which had pertained to a deepened 'consciousness' and time – including the investigation of the 'subconscious mind' by Sigmund Freud – Cubism Artworks had, in correlation with these theories, attempted to experiment with the thought-provoking possibilities of 'visual abstraction'. The 'nonlinear-temporality' and related 'psychological depths' of these 'visual abstractions' had interested the Cubism Artists in particular (Harrison, 1998). In addition, Cubism Art's innovative style and nature had extended the movement's function related to influencing the culture, beyond mere reflective portrayals – and towards a cultural investigation of more insightfully understanding conceptualism and symbolism. From this interpretational perspective, Cubism had not only merely attempted to alter 'visual reality' as it had previously been known and understood—but it had ultimately transformed the metaphysic-structures of Fine Arts standards and normative practices during this time-period in history (Einstein & Haxthausen, 2004).

The international humanistic awareness fostered by Cubism had also been represented in Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), which, though later, had embodied the ideological tenets and formal concerns set in motion by the early Cubism Fine Artists. The notorious painting known as *Guernica* had confronted political oppression, war crimes, and authoritarian violence through means of having applied Cubist abstraction in order to generalise human suffering, while simultaneously provoking visceral emotional responses (Hofmann, 1983; Kopper, 2014). This uniquely powerful Cubism painting had also swayed global sentiment through its international exhibitions and symbolic force. It had further affirmed Fine Art's power to inspire and instigate moral resolve, as well as defining 'collective memory' (Rhodes, 2013; Xifra & Heath, 2018).

2.7.2 Cubism's Departure from Tradition, Confrontation and Challenge to Conventional Art Forms

Cubism had departed rather distinctly from the highly esteemed 'classical traditions' which had formerly governed European – and Western Fine Arts since the Renaissance time-period. The Cubism Art Movement's refusal to incorporate single-point perspective, illusionistic depth, and mimetic fidelity

– had marked a radical separation from prior centuries of visual interpretation, realism and life-like portrayals. This rupture had been demonstrated most clearly by Picasso’s *Les Femmes d’Alger (O.J.)* (1907), which had strategically placed both angular shapes, semi-abstract forms and African motifs into a jarring, disjunctive compositional layout—which had not only transgressed academic expectations, but had rebelled against it (Daix, 1993). In doing so therefore, Cubism had subverted the authority of traditional visual qualities, characteristics, and attributes – and had further guided the ‘artistic community’ during this historical time-period to rethink and re-evaluate the foundations of depiction, portrayal and representation.

Painters from the Cubism Art Movement had incorporated ‘analytical techniques’ which had primarily focused upon calculated ‘intellectualism’ rather than the emotional reactions and responses. These ‘analytical techniques’ had broken – or fragmented – objects into geometrical-coloured-planes which had consequently been reconfigured in visually irreconcilable ways, removed from both rationalism and logical reasoning. This had stood in stark contrast to either the illusionistic harmony which had been witnessed throughout the Renaissance Art Movement or the expressive dynamism observed within paintings from the Romanticism Era (Cooper, 1970; Richardson, 1996). Even the more rational, sombre and more serious monochromatic colour schemes from the ‘Analytical’ style of Cubism had indicated a cultural movement towards intellectual engagement: – such as having prioritized form, an outlining of structures, and ‘conceptualized analysis’ having been preferred over the decorative, the enjoyment of expression (Richardson, 1996).

Synthetic Cubism, by contrast, had introduced playful subversion and anti-elitism by incorporating mass-produced ephemera into high Art contexts. This approach had deconstructed the traditional “aura” of Fine Art objects and had undermined the hierarchies between artist and artisan, and between original and copy (Kahnweiler, 1949; Rubin, 1989). The inclusion of printed materials had brought language into the realm of visual composition, disturbing the independence of the image and inviting viewers to contemplate the semiotic interplay between word and picture—an innovation later embraced by the Dadaists and Surrealists (Alliez, 2020; Conde-Pumpido, 2020).

The conceptual basis of Cubism had also further aligned with what Fry (1988) had called the “Kantian critique”—a philosophical examination, investigation and assessment of human perception and the processes relating to constructing new knowledge. Cubism Artworks had in particular made such philosophical concerns tangibly visible to audiences by having continually questioned the internal mechanisms of ‘visual understanding’. The “Kantian critique” had suggested that ‘reality’ as it is known to humanity, had not been determined and ‘made sense of’ in a passive manner – but had instead been proactively formulated by continuous debate, reasoning and critical thinking of the human mind. As a

result-hereof, Cubism Fine Arts had therefore signified both an artistic and philosophical departure from rationalism and classical empiricism which had been highly valued throughout the Enlightenment (Cheetham, 2001; Crowther, 1987).

Lastly, the Cubism Art Movement's restructuring and reassembling of 'space and time' had not merely challenged the harmonious continuity which had been characteristic of 'classical compositions', but through the combination and accumulation of multiple perspectives throughout a singular visual plane-field, Fine Artists engaged in Cubism techniques had both denied and validated more traditionally recognized spatial perceptions and logic. Cottington (2021) had referred to this contradicting artistic denial and validation as a "visual dialectic" which had occurred between classical and comparatively more modernized masterpieces. The Cubism Art Movement had therefore introduced Modern Art into a new period of 'self-reflexivity', as well as 'conceptual experimentation'. These new interpretational and practical approaches to portraying Visual Arts had essentially 'set the stage' and 'opened the doorway' for increased Avant-Garde developments which had led to Fine Arts movements such as Surrealism, Constructivism, and Abstract Expressionism (Judovitz, 1995; Judah, 2007).

2.7.3. Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported Cubism Fine Arts as Catalysts for Cultural Change

Artworks associated with the Cubism Art Movement had without a doubt represented the principles which had many years later been suggested by Albert Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory', that had in particular commented upon the powerful, transformative and highly influential nature of 'observational learning', 'self-reinforcement', and 'social imitation – or modelling' (Bandura, 1976). The mesmerizing and extraordinarily abstract, multi-angled compositional layouts and illustrative portrayals of visionary Cubism Fine Artists like Picasso and Braque had been unfamiliar visual representations for viewers at that point in history. Therefore, these unconventional portrayals had not merely challenged interpretational perception but had simultaneously offered a new lens through which the world could be glanced at and understood. These gradual visual alterations pertaining to a 'reality filled with discontinuities' and certain 'inconsistencies' (especially in relation to the fragmented and somewhat collapsed interpretive structures), had indirectly trained the 'perceptual eyes' of audiences to filter their new visual experiences through Cubism's new interpretational prism. Therefore, European and Western viewers had learned, as Bandura (1976) had many years later described, methods by which to internalise the 'conceptual paradigms' through which the world had become understood. Through the Cubism Art Movement's modelling of 'new conceptual paradigms', it had uniquely led to the development of a new visual literacy within society, which had not merely challenged – but likewise deepened – 'critical thinking' and presented an alternative 'worldview'. These suggested perceptual

alterations had indirectly confirmed the understanding that Cubism had been utilized as a tool of profound behavioural and cultural change (Ebel, 1977; Williams, 1983).

In further support of the perspective presented by Ebel (1977) and Williams (1983), Rushton (1982) had highlighted that morally-driven cognition had been constructed over time by external forces and influences, as well as through 'observational modelling' – instead of through the pressures related to instinctive human impulses. The Cubism Art Movement had therefore introduced new visual alternatives through the prism of 'form', including new cultural perspectives, which had in combination, served as a deconstruction of formerly established moral – and aesthetic standards. More specifically through means of the clear departure from historical, religious, traditional as 'realistic' subject themes. There had therefore been a strong correlation between the visual renunciation of the 'illusionary-space' and the ultimate artistic rejection of authoritarian ideologies, as well as certain visual expectations which had been 'institutionalised'. The Cubism Art Movement had therefore refracted and reassembled symbolic portrayals of the world as it had been understood at the time, into its discordant and inharmonious new geometric shapes, which had become a somewhat 'cultural agent' of moral and perceptual alteration. In other words, therefore having offered increasingly ethical perspectives based on interpretation, critical subjectivity, perception, and plurality. These distinctly different and alternate visual characteristics had fostered far greater introspection and a form of 'moral questioning' among audiences, but had been consistent with Bandura's assertion many years later, that familiar 'visual cues' had been able to impact the intrinsic value-systems of societies (Bandura, 1976; Rushton, 1982).

Furthermore, 'The Cognitive Dissonance Theory' which had been debated and formulated by Leon Festinger (1962) decades after the development of the Cubism Art Movement, had surprisingly provided a complementary psychological framework for more accurately grasping and understanding the 'psychological discomfort' which had been caused by Cubism paintings or mixed-media among viewers. As a result, this 'psychological discomfort' had served as a motivating factor for European and Western audiences to find ways to apply a form of reorientation to their already-existing perceptual understandings. When citizens from the general Western or European audiences had come into contact with paintings or mixed-media artworks from the Cubism Art Movement, especially artworks such as *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J. version O), they had been forced to wrestle with the stark, contradicting – and even somewhat opposing traditional Fine Arts expectations, versus the newly established 'illusionary visual reality'. This visually discomforting discordance had ultimately produced a form of 'cognitive dissonance', which could only have been resolved through 'ideological adaptations', as had many years later been proposed by Festinger (1962).

The profound importance of this process, as described by Festinger (1962), had first been expanded upon in great detail by Auster (1965), who had provided a credible demonstration of the suggested viewpoint that seemingly conflicting information, (when organised in an attention-grabbing manner and presented through persuasive visual forms of portrayal), had shown the capacity to overturn even firmly held former belief systems. The radical components of 'abstractionism' which had been present within different aspects of the Cubism Art Movement, in combination with this stylistic movement's refusal to apply single-point perspective – as well as its continued embrace of 'fragmented temporality' – had produced a 'dissonance' amongst viewers. In fact, European and Western spectators had indirectly been requested to re-adjust and alter prior perceptions of not only Art, but their perceptual understanding of beauty, temporality, space and 'reality itself' (Aronson, 1997; Wong, 2009).

Furthermore, the 'Operant Conditioning Theory' presented by B.F. Skinner had drafted its own 'behavioural framework' for the interpretation and analysis of the manner in which Cubism painting or mixed-media artworks had impacted and shaped the reactionary responses of audiences. The Cubism Art Movement's stylistic introduction to the incorporation of artistic components such as 'collage', 'assemblage', 'abstracted shapes', and 'intellectualised themes' within its newly redefined 'reality', had served as visual reinforcement. Therefore, this artistic approach had rewarded those who had embraced this specific suggested form of 'creative innovation' and had simultaneously, yet perhaps unintentionally, marginalised resistance of a more traditionalist nature (Praveen, 2017).

For instance, the Cubism Art Movement had received affirmation, positive reinforcement and support within the context of more intellectual and elite circles during the early 1900s, while the movement had also received encouragement and validation through institutionalised Cubism Art Exhibitions. In addition, the increased 'recognition', 'accolades' – and 'prestige' which had continually been awarded to the Cubism Art Movement's pioneering artists, had also served as a powerful instrument of encouragement (Malone, 1975; Scharff, 1982). Since the Western and European 'middle-classes' had associated the artworks from the Cubism Art Movement to a sphere of 'cultural elevation' and 'elitism', as well as 'modern identity' and the attainment of more 'progressive mindsets', broader societies during this time-period had accordingly attempted to adjust their aesthetic visual, perceptual and behavioural preferences. Therefore, the Cubism Art Movement had not merely represented artistic – and cultural innovation, but had served a remarkable role in the conditioning thereof into the intersectional fabric of both Western – and European societies during this time-period (Kazepides, 1976).

From the perspective of Colenbrander (2005) and within the context of understanding 'semiotic symbolism', the Cubism Art Movement had therefore 'overturned' the traditionally accepted 'symbolic

codes' of Western and European Fine Arts which had been highly revered, esteemed and respected. Whereas Renaissance Fine Arts had interwoven deep 'spiritual truths' and 'representational symbolisms' through means of the application of 'idealised realism', Romanticism had in contrast preferred the incorporation of symbolised portrayals containing intensely felt emotions within 'dynamic compositions', while the Cubism Art Movement had, in stark contrast to both of these Art movements, attempted to not only reduce form, but linearity as well. Furthermore, Cubism had also attempted to apply 'visual obscurity' with the purpose of signifying the 'multiplicity of reality – or truth', including the fragmented components of modern identity. As a result, the formerly more familiar 'visual signs' had no longer been the same, as argued by Colenbrander (2005), and thus a form of 're-education in decoding' had been necessary for audiences to be increasingly receptive. Therefore, viewers had to 'make sense' of what they had visually witnessed by having 'pieced together' interpretations from 'abstract shapes', typography, and other superimposed perspectives. This semiotic revolution, as noted by Colenbrander (2005), had in return created its own 'new visual language'. A new artistic 'visual language' which had essentially prioritized 'critical thought processes' over perceptions, the significance of 'form' above the artistic credence of 'illusion', and most definitely 'intellectual understanding – and engagement', over mere 'passive artistic appreciation'.

From a psychological viewpoint, the Cubism Art Movement had therefore required a deepened level of willing human participation from the stance of the 'viewer'. More specifically in terms of the 'cognitive', 'emotional', and 'perceptual reconstruction' which had been required by audiences during this time-period. Fine Arts as a more general concept, when applied correctly, had overall historically sought to evoke empathy from viewers and had attempted to cause people to become more reflective (Joffe, 2008). In contrast to these more traditional purposes of Fine Arts, the Cubism Art Movement's unique style, which had encompassed both 'abstraction' as well as 'intellectualism', had not sought to provoke or encourage the development of 'timeless emotional responses', but had rather aimed at engaging audiences on a 'cognitive level' while having challenged their perspectives in regards to 'decoding', 'dissecting' and 'constructing' their own personal meaning. Such rigorous engagement as had been required by viewers had in return instilled 'self-efficacy', as well as the independence of critical reasoning and thoughts (Joffe, 2008).

Jin and Ye (2022) had indeed discovered that increasing exposure to Fine Arts had improved and enhanced not only the self-perception and level of creativity demonstrated by students, but the overall development of their alternative moral perspectives as well. In agreement with the views of Jin and Ye (2022), the credible argument can therefore be made that the Cubism Art Movement had functioned not only merely as a form of 'visual revolution', but as a 'cognitive recalibration' in and of itself, which had encouraged and enabled social groups to reconceive culture, time, identity, and

morality. Moreover, to 'recalibrate' depth, space and perspective itself, through means of the application of a 'multi-angled interpretive framework' (Jin & Ye, 2022).

Scholars such as Dissanayake (1980), Ewen (1999–2000), and Silva (2021) had all concurred that Fine Arts had not merely served as mirror-like reflections of different cultural settings, but as provocateurs of various ideological and philosophical perspectives, as well as avenues through which human agency had been exercised. Therefore, Fine Arts had not only captured portrayals of events within a historical sense, but had in return led to the development of 'ideological reformation' while having served as a mechanism for human intervention. Cubism had therefore rejected the formerly determined understandings, interpretations and viewpoints related to realistic depth, space and perspective, as well as 'coherent subjectivity'. Within this context, the Cubism Art Movement had therefore, as an act of 'subtle rebellion', undermined the previously exerted authoritarian structure of the Enlightenment's rationalism and Renaissance order. This subtle rejection and rebellion had consequently altered European cultures and societies' sense of 'visual metaphysics'. In therefore doing so, the Cubism Art Movement had not simply reshaped the formerly recognized 'artistic conventions', but had also promoted the systematic dismantling of traditional concepts of truth or reality as it had been known itself. This had therefore echoed the 'post-structural' and 'semiotic conceptions' of Art as continual debate, communication and public discourse (Dissanayake, 1980; Ewen, 1999–2000; Silva, 2021).

Therefore, in agreement with Bandura (1976), Ebel (1977), Williams (1983), Rushton (1982), Festinger (1962), Auster (1965), Aronson (1997), Wong (2009), Praveen (2017), Malone (1975), Scharff (1982), Kazepides (1976), Colenbrander (2005), Joffe (2008), Jin and Ye (2022), Jin & Ye (2022), Dissanayake (1980), Ewen (1999–2000) and Silva (2021), Fine Arts from the Cubism Art Movement (1907–1914) had broadly served as a form of visual inspiration and stimulus to encourage cultural changes and transitions, which had been underpinned by a combination of varying yet collectively substantiating psychological and sociological theories. Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory' had, for example, indirectly years later illustrated practical ways in which the Cubism Art Movement had modelled and reinforced new cultural behaviours through the expression of new visual realities.

Additionally, the 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' presented by Festinger many years after the development of the Cubism Art Movement had explained how Western – and European audiences during this time-period in history had been challenged to re-examine and reframe their core belief systems. Yet, the 'Operant Conditioning Theory' formulated by B.F. Skinner had provided far more insightful clarity regarding the mechanisms and applied methods of 'behavioural reinforcement'. Furthermore, the thoroughly discussed 'semiotic' and 'sociological contexts – and frameworks' by Bourdieu and

Colenbrander had provided additional substantiative evidence to suggest that the Cubism Art Movement had undeniably altered the familiar underlying symbolic-associated codes, as well as the related influential structure of Fine Arts as ‘visual culture’ (Aronson, 1997; Auster, 1965; Bandura, 1976; Colenbrander, 2005; Dissanayake, 1980; Ebel, 1977; Ewen, 1999–2000; Festinger, 1962; Jin & Ye, 2022; Joffe, 2008; Kazepides, 1976; Malone, 1975; Praveen, 2017; Rushton, 1982; Scharff, 1982; Silva, 2021; Williams, 1983; Wong, 2009).

2.8.1 Rococo Fine Arts as a Representation, Affirmation and Substantiation of Cultural Identity

The Fine Arts, coming from the Rococo Art Movement (1740–1770), had been powerful projections of cultural identity and had embodied the aesthetic, philosophical, and social values that had become wired into the fabric of 18th-century French aristocratic life. Rococo Art had sprung out of the lavish, absolutist Baroque period in the wake of the extravagance of Louis XIV’s Versailles, and instead, had embraced themes of leisure, elegance, intimacy, and sensuality that had reflected the changing values of elite society (Trapasso, 2013).

As Trapasso (2013) had noted, the Rococo style—with its pastel colours, sinuous lines, and playful, emotionally charged representations—had signalled a shift in the culture towards more lightweight, individualistic, and pleasurable pursuits. The earlier work of Jean-Antoine Watteau, who had established the “fêtes galantes” genre—focused on courtship and pastoral delights—had set the stage for this cultural shift. These artistic depictions had conveyed an idealised type of the French high society—a definitive field in which Art had become the reflection through which parts of their leisurely and romantic self-image had been projected and looked upon with admiration (Milam, 2000; Trapasso, 2013).

The Rococo Art Movement had also brooded over France’s post-Baroque social transformation, wherein private pleasures and personal freedoms had started to shape cultural identity instead of state-based or religious ideologies (Bylsma, 2022). Boucher’s *The Swing* had epitomised this tendency, visually depicting both the decadence and the symbolic eroticism that had supported aristocratic extravagance. Paintings like this had not only illustrated individual fantasies—they had reinforced a collective cultural lexicon of flirtation, sensuality, and escape over some centuries, visually corroborating aristocratic values (Bylsma, 2022; Goodman, 1995).

That visual culture of pleasure had also been underpinned by intellectual currents of the time. Emerging alongside Enlightenment ideologies, the Rococo Movement had embodied a paradox in which pleasure and personal liberty had been both critiqued and philosophically validated (Elfrink, 2016;

Gilbert, 2014; Poe, 1988). Though philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau had denounced the moral depravity of Rococo Art, they had also promoted the same principles of individuality and expressiveness that Rococo artists had embodied in visual form (Gilbert, 2014; Poe, 1988).

As the Rococo style had spread from France to different areas of Europe, it had also preserved reflective—localized—cultural identity. Rococo Art had not been without its spiritual dimension. Even in Germany, its application in Augsburg religious decoration had stood as a defiant expression of an alternative cultural lens against the rationalist dogma of the Enlightenment (Collinson, 1994). In Britain, the increasingly middle-class orientation of Rococo Art had made it all the more relevant to a consumerist ethos, in which its ornamental characteristics had been customised to embody new material and social realities (Crown, 1990).

And, through its unprecedented practical application of taste and refinement in the decoration of both fine residences and ambitious public spaces, Rococo Fine Arts had not just reflected the values of its time—it had codified a collective identity based on sensuality, liberalism, and taste that had both influenced and reflected the cycle of cultural formation in France and Europe during this period.

2.8.2 Rococo Art as Aristocracy and Social Identity in Expression

In addition to articulating cultural identity, Rococo Fine Arts had articulated aristocratic identity and social hierarchy. The aesthetic codes of the Rococo style had existed as a visual language of noble refinement, wealth, and class exclusivity. As noted by Brighidin (2014), the commission and exhibition of Rococo works—from grand paintings to interior designs—had served as markers of standing, representing social status and cultural primacy among the French upper class.

Figures like Madame de Pompadour had embodied this dynamic. Her support for François Boucher, as Prosner (1990) and Riggs (2001) had noted, had not simply promoted his career; it had explicitly translated Rococo aesthetics into an emblem of French femininity, refinement, and intellectual clout. Yet the strategic performances—the beautiful, politically active woman, for example, or the architect of cultural taste—portrayed in her portraits had enabled self-fashioning, productive of both beauty and political agency (Barker, 2009; Lajer-Burcharth, 2009).

Portraits of nobles such as Marie Antoinette had also acted as extensions of statecraft and diplomacy. As the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2022) and Brosnan (2016) had documented, Vigée Le Brun's court portraits had not only captured the queen's likeness, but she had also used them as tools of soft power—strategically circulated to solidify royal presence, promote alliances, and project French monarchical grandeur on an international scale.

Additionally, Rococo Art had underscored gendered depictions that had mirrored aristocratic social positions. As Sotiriou (2018) had pointed out, women had frequently figured in Rococo paintings as embodiments of grace, beauty, and emotional refinement—representations of cultural understandings of femininity that had served to solidify the gendered hierarchy of the aristocratic world. These images had not simply been decorative but had served as codified images of role and behaviour.

Cultural salons (Barker, 2009; Linden, 2021; Plumb-Dhindsa, 1998) had played a key role in determining the stylistic trajectory of Rococo. In salons run by aristocratic women (and not limited to them), they had allowed for spaces of intellectual exchange, artistic patronage, and social networking—thus cementing Rococo Fine Arts as an aesthetic form steeped in both the identity and the power of elite women. These social spaces had enabled the unification of Rococo themes with sensibility, romanticism, and wit, thereby consolidating aristocratic identity through not just wealth but cultured womanliness.

Even Rococo's stylistics—the S-curves, asymmetrical terminations, and ornamental motifs—had visually embodied the liberality, elegance, and measured pace of celebrity life (Halsband, 1985; Mann, 1997). Compared to the stiff magnificence of the Baroque or the austere symmetry of Neoclassicism, these design elements had stood in contrast and had established Rococo as a consummate representation of aristocratic escapism and class difference.

However, as Bylsma (2022) and Elfrink (2016) had pointed out, this had not been an unchallenged aesthetic. The same visual language that had once epitomised aristocratic luxury had come to seem decadent, elitist, and corrupt—an area in which popular displeasure had become an incubator for Enlightenment ideas and revolutionary agitation. In this sense, Rococo Fine Arts had acted both as a visual affirmation of aristocracy and as a cultural flashpoint that had, in the end, inspired social change.

2.8.3 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported Rococo Fine Arts as a Representation and Substantiation of Cultural Identity

Eighteenth-century French and European noble society had received an important visual style of its cultural identity through Fine Arts from the Rococo Art Movement (1740–1770). Rococo artworks had not simply illustrated decorative tastes; they had actively mapped the elite's behavioural, psychological, and cognitive structures—embodying an ethos of leisure, refinement, sensuality, and social distinction (Bylsma, 2022; Trapasso, 2013). Behavioural, cognitive, semiotic, psychological, and sociological theories had greatly reinforced this understanding.

Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development had provided the foundation for understanding how Rococo Art had served not only as a reflection but also as an instrument of cognitive construction

and cultural development. This pulsation toward lightness, evidence of command, tonal contrast, and rhythmic imaginings in Art had, as scholars such as Cerovac and Keane (2024), Lefa (2014), and Scott (2023) had maintained, resonated with cognitive advancement and cultural formation. Rococo’s visual affirmation of personal pleasure, emotional sensibility, and aesthetic refinement had aligned with Piaget’s formal operational stage, in which abstract reasoning and introspective understanding had fully developed.

In fact, the Rococo painting *A Boy Blowing Bubbles*, by Jean Siméon Chardin (1733–34), had already indirectly illustrated this process. The painting’s image of intense focus on a transient object had come to represent cognitive growth, abstract thought, and metacognitive curiosity in the works of Herbert (2001), Ly (2018), and Frey (2021). The way in which the boy had interacted with the bubble had mirrored the process of cultural identity formation itself—self-reflection, temporality, and perceptual exploration—which had been in line with Piaget’s tentative argument that Art had simply been indicative of blurry cognitive schemas that had developed over time (Piaget, 1950).

Fine Arts had developed through—and contributed to—the sculpting of cultural identity in and through social learning, collective practices, and symbolic tools. Cognition had been mediated through language, tools, and culture (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012). Rich with symbolic gestures of aristocratic leisure, wit, and domestic intimacy, Rococo artworks had served as cultural artifacts that had mediated meaning and represented shared norms (Burton, 2024; Saisselin, 1960; Trapasso, 2013).

Shabani et al. (2010) mentioned that ‘The-Zone-of-Proximal-Development’, had shown how Rococo Art had scaffolded the transference of cultural expectations over generations, particularly in elite French salons where taste, intellect, and refinement had been cultivated. Rococo trends had created cultural intermediates within serving patrons, as in the case of Madame de Pompadour, harnessing the potential of artistic patronage to negotiate notions of femininity, political influence, and Enlightenment engagement (Brighidin, 2014; Bylsma, 2022).

In addition, a collaborative production of Rococo interiors, paintings, and porcelain—which had included designers, decorators, and artisans—had already cemented Vygotsky’s claim that cultural development had come out of interpersonal activity and social interaction (Rahmatirad, 2020; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022).

The Triadic Model of Semiotics (icon–index–symbol) of Charles Sanders Peirce had shown a transmission of meaning beyond surface aesthetics by Rococo Fine Arts. Rococo artworks had employed icons (mimetic representations of courting, relaxing, and flirting), indexes (hints referring to status or sensuality), and symbols (material things that had signified class status or gender roles) to express

cultural values (Camargo & Gudwin, 2022; Kilstrup, 2015). Birds, porcelain, and fans might have represented romantic devotion and feminine seduction better in Rococo landscapes, Goodman (1995) had noted.

West (1977) and Svanter (2014) had stressed that the meaning of signs had emerged through repetition and cultural habituation. Rococo's ornamental motifs, interpreted by elite audiences as emblems of sophistication and emotional pleasure, had become interpretants, such as "S-curves," seashells, or "rocaille" patterns (Halsband, 1985; Mann, 1997). Peirce's semiotics had shown how the purveyance of cultural identity had been encoded into stylistic features and had been interpreted differently according to the audience's social class and familiarity with the norms of high-born lexical aristocracy.

In fact, even Bandura's Social Learning Theory had given a behavioural grounding to how Rococo Art had shaped aristocratic behaviour. Watteau, Boucher, and Fragonard had painted carefree courtship, erotic innuendo, and sensuous indulgence—role models for the elite. Bandura (1977) had theorised that audiences had learned by observation and vicarious reinforcement; Rococo works had therefore demonstrated social scripts for courtship, leisure, and feminine allure, which the upper classes had in turn emulated in their behaviour, fashion, and architecture (Burton, 2024; Junod, 2005; Trapasso, 2013).

For example, François Boucher's nudes had encoded permissive social mores, mirroring the transition from religious to secular behavioural paradigms (Williams, 2015). In this process of adopting who one had seen in the Art, aristocratic identities had been reconsolidated within their class-based roles (Brighidin, 2014; Milam, 2000).

Psychological explanations, especially those dealing with aesthetic emotion and perception, had substantiated the idea that Rococo pieces had consolidated identity through emotional engagement and desire. These soft pastel palettes, curving lines, and domestic scenes had not only been visual delights but had also activated cognitive-affective engagement. Saisselin (1960) had proposed that Rococo Fine Arts had represented a dream-like quest for airy happiness, while Halsband (1985) and Mann (1997) had emphasized the emotional equilibrium and decorative rhythm that had made Rococo uniquely expressive of elite sensibilities.

As Heffernen (2008) and Mariano (2023) had observed, portrayals of transience — like bubbles or flowers or birds — had been philosophical and existential, re-establishing identity as not just performative (in the social world) but metaphysical — enmeshed with time, pleasure, and mortality's ephemerality. The psychological justifications had enabled Rococo Art to respond to the psyches of its

audiences, thereby reinforcing the self and status of those who had engaged aesthetically, thus confirming their sense of themselves.

Through an extensive application of behavioural, cognitive, semiotic, psychological, and sociological theories, it had been evident that Rococo Fine Arts had not merely reflected but had constructed, transmitted, and reinforced cultural identity. For Rococo Art had served simultaneously as cognitive mirror, semiotic code, social script, and emotional conduit, encapsulating and preserving the very spirit of enlightened 18th-century aristocratic existence.

The amalgamation of Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Vygotsky's sociocultural scaffolding, Peirce's semiotics, Bandura's modelling, and affective psychological theory had rendered Rococo Fine Arts an essential impetus for the development of cultural self-understanding—a legacy far more meaningful than ornament.

2.9.1 Ukiyo-e Printmaking (1615–1868) as a Representation and Substantiating Expression of Japanese Cultural Identity

Fine Arts from the Ukiyo-e Art Movement, which had developed during Japan's Edo Period (1615–1868), had played a dual role as a multidimensional representation of Japanese cultural identity, articulating not only, but also creating the collective values, customs, aesthetic ideals, and socio-cultural nuances of this transitional period in Japanese history. As Newcombe (2011) and Bickford (1982) had stressed, the creation of Ukiyo-e printmaking had evolved from indigenous techniques—first inspired by Chinese woodblock methods—and had matured into a uniquely Japanese Art form that had come to signify the nation's developing identity.

The Ukiyo-e prints had not only been a visual documentation of the social dynamics, leisure practices, and aesthetics of Edo-period Japan, but had also represented a collaborative and deep-rooted cultural expression. As Newcombe (2011) had elucidated, the shift in the (artistic) production from monochrome prints to the bright nishiki-e (multi-block printing) had spoken of an increasing sophistication in visual narrative and technical perfection—something that had been underpinned by developments in washi and kozo papers that had ensured the permanence and longevity of these prints (Fiske, 2006). These materials had also functioned as material carriers of culture across time.

From the semiotic level, the prints had worked as multifocal visual ciphers, imprinting culturally pertinent ideograms—cherry blossoms, maple leaves, waves, birds, fans, umbrellas, and Kabuki actors, among others—that all had enshrined the Japanese worldview on impermanence and transience (Hickman, 1978). These signs of visual culture had served as a “language” that had spoken of *mono no*

aware (the pathos of things), beauty, and transitory pleasures, all of which had been essential to the Edo identity.

Ukiyo-e prints had, in fact, paralleled Piaget's schema acquisition, and thereafter, the cognitive development of Japanese identity through Ukiyo-e. Japanese citizens had absorbed these prints through years of looking at them, assimilating mental schemata that had helped shape their perceptions of everything from nature to fashion to class to seasonality. Suzuki Harunobu's poetic evocations and Hiroshige's landmark series of prints like *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō* had provided a sophisticated visual narrative that had recorded and formed collective cultural memory (Bell, 2016; Stokes, 2022).

From a semiotic standpoint, the prints had coded complex visual symbols that had been rich with culturally resonant meaning—cherry blossoms or maple leaves, waves or birds or fans or umbrellas, or Kabuki actors—that had embodied concisely the Japanese worldview of impermanence and transience (Hickman, 1978). Such visual signs had been able to provide a kind of cultural “language,” signifying the ideals of *mono no aware* (the pathos of things), beauty, and transitory pleasures at the heart of the Edo identity.

Furthermore, the cognitive evolution of Japanese identity via Ukiyo-e had aligned with Piaget's theory of the schema. In addition to Japanese citizens' past visual comradery with these prints, they had mentally constructed hierarchically coded categories of both their wilderness as well as their urban landscapes, which had retained the teachings learnt from this wondrousness—their fashion, their class, their seasonal rhythms. The poetic scenes of Suzuki Harunobu and the landscape series by Hiroshige, such as *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*, had provided a highbrow visual narrative that had both recorded and helped mould collective cultural memory (Bell, 2016; Stokes, 2022).

Not only had sensual or leisure themes been present, but this cultural identity had extended to religious and philosophical contexts. Snow (2012), for instance, had shown how *ema* (votive prints) had fused Shinto devotion with Ukiyo-e aesthetics, emblemizing the sacred-secular synthesis that had shaped Japanese spirituality as well as visual culture. In a similar fashion, Lin (2024) had charted the Buddhist roots of the term “Ukiyo-e,” moving from a distinct focus on the moral value of “self-sacrifice” towards a rather embrace of “sensory indulgence,” indicating a turn in cultural ideology and artistic pushes.

“Ukiyo-e” prints had also acted as vessels for validation and support of both nationalistic and intercultural conversation. Thompson (2002) had examined the practice of “*mitate*”—a literary and artistic device involving parody and allusion—as an approach to reinterpreting Chinese influences and

in the service of articulating Japanese identity. This development had also coincided with the rise of “kokugaku” (national learning), in which Japanese scholars and artists had taken back traditional cultural values from foreign domination.

The psychological power of Ukiyo-e, being quasi-3D and evocative, had thus had deep-most insertion within Arts and culture as a collector visual invocation and 3D beautiful design activation and extended cultural pride within cultural aesthetic rhetoric. As evidenced in Hiroshige's Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857), the use of bokashi (tonal gradients) and visual rhythm had created emotional depth, embodying the human experience in the presence of nature's forces (Fernández, n.d.; Newcombe, 2011). Ota (2023) had represented the return of a national hero bestowed with the great responsibility of serving and protecting nature from any person(s) who dared oppose the common good. This print, as well as The Great Wave off Kanagawa (Hokusai), had captured the Japanese imaginary: their resilience, humility, and transient nature, which had determined their identity (Chittenden, 2024; Moris, 2016).

Not only had these deeply cultural visual clues reinforced internal cohesion, but they had also been at the forefront of international acclaim and admiration, as evidenced through potentially inspiring the Japonisme Movement and Impressionists in Europe (Coats, 2016; Guth, 2011; Sotheby's Auctioneers, 2023). Through this transnational impact, Ukiyo-e had become itself a sign system of Japanese cultural sophistication, spanning the axis of traditional self-reflection and outward artistic representation.

Finally, as Kern (2011) and Koyama-Richard (2013) had argued, Ukiyo-e's inclusion in education, fashion, advertising, and social commentary had secured it as an all-encompassing cultural mechanism—not simply aesthetic ornamentation. These prints had shaped common understandings of identity across class, gender, and generational divisions, becoming foundational to Japanese national consciousness.

2.9.2 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported the Ukiyo-e Art Movement (1615–1868) as a Representation and Substantiation of Cultural Identity

The Ukiyo-e Art Movement, that had evolved in association with Japan's Edo period (1615–1868), had deeply functioned as a visual code and a culturally encoded system of Japanese cultural identity. Drawing upon a deep heritage of woodblock printing traditions, the movement had reflected, negotiated, and produced the collective mindset, aesthetic sensibilities, and socio-political ideology of Japanese society, especially that of the new merchant class and the urban population (Bickford, 1982; Newcombe, 2011).

More so, Piaget's theory, through the lenses of Cerovac and Keane (2024), had confirmed that artistic expression such as Ukiyo-e had mirrored and shaped an epoch of cognitive development, particularly as it had neared the progression toward symbolic and abstract reasoning. Artists like Suzuki Harunobu had expertly combined poetic allegory and symbolic evidence—whether flowering cherry blossoms or the changing leaves of autumn—with an aesthetic sensibility that customers had read as culturally-specific cognitive schemas that had been embedded in thematic concerns of transience, beauty, and identity (Bell, 2016; Lefa, 2014). Indeed, Saravanan and Murphy (2023) had echoed this sentiment by asserting that movements such as Ukiyo-e had demonstrated a cultural reflection of cognitive progress via increasingly complex and thematically nuanced visuals.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory had offered additional evidence. As Jeong et al. (2022) and Mahn and John-Steiner (2012) had stated, cognition had occurred through social and cultural interaction, whereby Ukiyo-e printmaking had functioned as a cultural scaffold—disseminating aesthetic norms, societal roles, and behavioural expectations across class and generation. For example, Toshusai Sharaku's portrait Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) had been described as having not just depicted a Kabuki actor, but having encapsulated the stylized emotional language and social archetypes of Edo-period theatre, and thus having provided a visual and cognitive mediator for cultural knowledge (Shabani et al., 2010; Wilson & Klobardanz, 2018).

Indeed, the very collaborative nature of Ukiyo-e production had echoed Vygotskian scaffolding itself. The pandemic had made it clear that the synergy between designers, carvers, printers, and publishers had been the embodiment of collective cognition in which knowledge had been socially constructed and artistically disseminated (Newcombe, 2011; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022). It had, over time, intensified national unity and common mythmaking by embedding symbolic meaning into visual form.

Looking at it through a 'semiotic-lens', Peirce's Triadic Model (icon, index, symbol) had revealed how Ukiyo-e artworks had functioned as symbolic anchors of identity. For instance, Hokusai's The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833) had worked as a 'representamen' — a sign — that had indicated the force of nature and its 'interpretant' had soaked up meanings of impermanence and humility, as well as the Japanese ethos of mono no aware (Cartwright & Nakamura, 2009; Kilstrup, 2015; Moris, 2016). As Brunning and Foster had stated, the Fine Arts had become semiotic systems encoding meaning culturally over time through every new layer of sign, ultimately creating identity not only by mirroring life, but by giving it a proportion of cultural weight.

On the psychological level, Ukiyo-e had imbued emotional and symbolic values that had tapped into existing layers of cultural values. Hickman (1978) had shown how motifs—lanterns, fans, waves, cherry blossoms—had metaphorically expressed the ephemeral, sensory-perverse way of lives of the Ukiyo (“floating world”), which had felt deeply relevant to the Japanese public’s affective investment in temporality and aestheticism. Heffernen (2008) and Mariano (2023) had similarly sought to incite a metaphysical awakening through ephemeral artistic experience—specifically, those mediated in the grand wave or delicate geisha paintings—while correlating these insights with psychological theories of aesthetic reflection and identity internalization.

Interestingly, Bandura’s Social Learning Theory—oriented on human behaviour—had previously been used to explain how Ukiyo-e prints had also acted as cultural behaviour models for Japanese cultural conduct and identity needs. Weaving these types of iconographies together, the constant visual depiction of Kabuki actors, geishas and daily life in the city had shaped aspirational conduct and aesthetic ideals for Edo society (Bickford, 1982; Hall, 2018). These works had not simply reflected the values of indulgence, leisure and refinement, but had also promoted them for emulation and normalization in urban life.

Sociologically, Ukiyo-e had changed the definition of Japanese class and accessibility to culture. This Art form, once denigrated as “popular,” had in fact been eaten and stockpiled by everybody from commoners to daimyō, revealing a brokering of patronage between elite patrons and merchant-class aspirations (Goree, 2020; Kern, 2011). As Koyama-Richard (2013) had argued, these prints had acted as manifesto and commercial project, providing both education and advertisement, circulating cultural ideas in public consumption and public space.

The production and thematic depth of Ukiyo-e—not to mention the extensive coverage of iconic locations and pivotal moments, like Hiroshige’s *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*—had added permanent records of national landmarks, seasonal changes, and social activities, as well as formalizing a shared visual memory of Japan’s socio-cultural landscape through the Edo period (Goree, 2020; Kern, 2011; Stokes, 2022). This image had become, by repetition, reprint and reinterpretation across generations, a staple of Japanese identity.

The combination of cognitive, semiotic, psychological, sociological, and behavioural theories had confirmed that Ukiyo-e Fine Arts had not only reflected Japanese cultural identity, but had played a critical role in constructing, transmitting, and transforming it. Through motifs, collaborative production, theatrical depictions and symbolic storytelling, Ukiyo-e had etched cultural consciousness into the daily lives of Edo-period denizens (Hickman, 1978; Jeong et al., 2022; Mariano, 2023). This movement, in

other words, had been a multi-dimensional mirror—an image of the values, aesthetic ideals, moral challenges and philosophical tenets of contemporary society. Seeking a historical as well as theoretical model of how Fine Arts had validated and affirmed cultural identity, Ukiyo-e had embodied Japan's emerging sense of self through its highly layered theoretical underpinnings, thus transcending mere Art.

The quantity and thematic richness of Ukiyo-e connected with this interest—for example, in Hiroshige's *The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō*—had also created a visual record of national architectures, climatic changes, and socio-cultural practices, resulting in a visual archive of Japan's socio-cultural landscape during the Edo period (Stokes, 2022). This iconic memory had been enshrined in Japanese identity — reasserted through repeated, republication and reimagining across generations.

In agreement with Stokes (2022), cognitive, semiotic, psychological, sociological and behavioural theories had integrated to show that Ukiyo-e Fine Arts had not merely reflected Japanese cultural identity—the media had constructed, conveyed and reshaped this cultural identity. By means of motifs, collaborative production, theatrical representation, and narrative symbolism, Ukiyo-e had etched its cultural consciousness into the fabric of everyday life in the Edo period (Bell, 2016; Brunning & Foster, 2020; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022). This movement had acted like a multi-faceted mirror—reflecting value systems, aesthetic ideals, moral tension and philosophical ideals present in society. With its sophisticated encodings of transcultural influences, Ukiyo-e had not just been historical but also a theoretical exponent of how Fine Arts had anchored the continuing opposition and mediation of cultural identity through its highly layered theorizations.

2.10.1 Fauvism Fine Arts as a Representation and Substantiating Expression of French Cultural Identity

It had also been a mirror of the larger socio-political changes roiling France. This had been the time of Paris post-industrial modernization (as noted by Deyasie, 2015; Spivey, 2021) and increased post-independence awareness of imperialism and colonial tensions that had paved the way for the revolt against norms and the exaltation of non-Western aesthetics. Artists of Fauvism, who had been influenced by various African, Oceanic and Asian artforms, had already included elements of “primitivism” into their works in an attempt to throw off elite European cultural values and construct an alternate identity—one based on raw emotion, spirituality, and primal beauty (Cohen, 2017; Coppel, 1999; Dorra, 1976).

Moreover, while Fauvism had drawn on earlier influences including Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Neo-Impressionism, it had eventually adapted their techniques to become more emotionally saturated, socially inclusive and culturally meaningful. This had signified a notable change in how the French people had started to see themselves, not as custodians of classical ideals but as bold

bearers of modernist innovation and psychological, at times auto-destructive, exploration (Carlson, 1967; Love, 1960; Martin, 1983).

Further popularizing this breadth and depth of Fauvism's cultural relevance had been paintings such as Georges Rouault's *Jeu de Massacre* (1905). Rouault's grotesque and emotive imagery had tempered the bourgeoisie and showcased the sordid aspects of French character, broadening the movement's remit to every class of French society—from the joyous to the tragic (Boespflug, 2022; Charensol, 1965; Lehmann & Suarès, 1971). Likewise, the provincial and rural roots of France had been celebrated in Maurice de Vlaminck's *The River Seine at Chatou* (1906), a sentimental and nationalistic rendering of local heritage and pride (Benjamin, 1993; Christie, 2002; Fogagnoli, 2022).

In agreement with Cohen (2017), Coppel (1999), Dorra (1976), Fauvism had not only mirrored cultural identity; it had forged it—translating the changing values of the French into a vivid visual tongue that had captured the tensions between tradition and modernity, between the aspirational and the quotidian, between the city and the countryside, between the public and the private.

2.10.2 Theoretical Frameworks Which Had Supported the Fauvism Art Movement as a Representation and Substantiation of Cultural Identity

The Fauvism Art Movement (1905–1908) had been a brilliant articulation of the French cultural identity, not merely through its intense visual language, but also through its resonance with new psychological and sociopolitical values. Behavioural, Cognitive, Semiotic, Psychological and Sociological theories had provided a multi-theoretical foundation that had validated how Fauvism had configured cultural identity, which had supported this understanding and had further clarified this argument.

The Cognitive Theory propounded by Jean Piaget and fostered by Cerovac and Keane (2024) had previously demonstrated how fettered artistic movements such as Fauvism had aligned with progressions through stages of cognitive maturation, whereby human beings had moved from rigid formal traditions toward higher-order symbolic and aesthetic interpretation. The Fauvism Movement — associating flattened forms with intense colours — had reflected the readiness of the French psychological space to be exposed to syllogistic abstraction and emotionally resonant expression, thus correlating to Piaget's formal operational stage of cognitive development, where abstract and metacognitive reasoning had matured (Saravanan & Murphy, 2023).

Lefa (2014) and Scott (2023) had made more drastic criticism that the sharp divergence from traditional representation, which had been illustrated by Matisse's *Portrait of Madame Matisse* (1905)

and Derain's *Boats in the Port of Collioure* (1905), had been a reflection of cognitive advancement in terms of cultural representation. And these works had not just recorded visual likeness—they had taken the mystic truth of the human spirit that French culture had started to embrace as more legitimate representations of their ideals (Bindé, 2017; Bois & Sims, 1994).

Through a Sociocultural Theory of learning perspective, Vygotsky's ideas had demonstrated how cultural identity had been constructed through collective sense-making, facilitated by the usage of artistic instruments, concepts, and symbolic practices (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012; Shabani et al., 2010). Fauvism had developed around a time of highly intense social transformation in France, a society that had been rapidly modernizing and re-negotiating its colonial ties (Deyasie, 2015; Spivey, 2021). The visual lexicon of Matisse and Derain had been an act of defiance, in terms of their colonial superiority—when they had adopted “primitivism” and non-Western aesthetics, they had been engaging their own form of colonialism, only now Fine Art had emerged as a cultural artifact of resistance and of a reformed French identity. These artworks had acted as socially constructed tools of meaning, resonating with Vygotsky's perspective that knowledge, particularly aesthetic knowledge, had been rooted in collective cultural experiences (Rahmatirad, 2020; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022).

In terms of Learning, Fauvism had been in sync with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, for audiences had slowly assimilated the emotional fortitude and expressive freedom of its painters. Despite initial ridicule, the movement's popularity had shown observational learning, whereby viewers had refocused their visual expectations and had started to appreciate emotional expressivity to the detriment of academic realism (Esaak, 2019). Exactly as Bandura (1977) had theorized, repeated exposure to the emotionally provocative works of people like Vlaminck or Matisse had desensitized their already defiant visual modes, allowing them to become cultural templates for artistic freedom and subjectivity (Clark, 1979; Meyer, 2021).

Focused on the Semiotic Theory, Peirce's Triadic Model—representamen, object, and interpretant—had elucidated the ways in which Fauvist artworks had produced semiotic bridges between emotion, symbol, and identity. As argued in the literature by writers such as Camargo and Gudwin (2022) and Kilstrup (2015), the non-naturalistic colour schemes visible in works such as *Green Stripe* (1905) had been operating as representamens, representing inner emotional states, not outer appearance. Their “objects” had moved from mimetic accuracy to culturally relevant expression, and the interpretants had been created through emotional resonance audiences had experienced regarding this raw, unfiltered expressivity. As such, Fauvism had aided a semiotic collective reimagining of the logo “French”—not in the scholarly order of realism, but in the contracted emotional modernistic banner of the early 1900s (Svanter, 2014; West, 1977).

Psychologically, Fauvism had penetrated to the emotional cognition and affective engagement of its beholders. As Birren (1976) had pointed out, Matisse's jubilant application of colour had resulted in positive emotional states, while Rouault's *Jeu de Massacre* (1905) had produced feelings of psychological discomfort and social critique, as if Fauvism had included the whole range of emotional identity. Mariano (2023) and Heffernen (2008) had suggested that such emotive visual expression had served as a type of metaphysical awakening that had caused an introspective retrospection which had redefined the consciousness of the French with regard to foreign impression. These psychological responses had reinforced the idea that Fauvist artworks had not only represented identity—they had emotionally constructed and confirmed it.

Sociologically, Fauvism had reacted to the divided French society, and its challenge to elitist aesthetics had made space for more personal and democratic expressions of national character. As Clark (1979), Meyer (2021), and Osborne (2005) had similarly seen, Fauvism had delivered the first blow to a centuries-old connection between Fine Arts and aristocracy, providing a visual battle cry that had resonated with general trends in cultural decolonization, social liberalism, and artistic experimentation. These changes had resonated within the expanding social capacity for individualism, leisure, and emotional honesty (Crouzet, 2003; Furlough, 1993).

In agreement with Bandura (1977), Bindé (2017), Birren (1976), Bois & Sims (1994), Camargo & Gudwin (2022), Cerovac & Keane (2024), Clark (1979), Crouzet (2003), Deyasie (2015), Esaak (2019), Furlough (1993), Heffernen (2008), Kilstrup (2015), Lefa (2014), Mahn & John-Steiner (2012), Mariano (2023), Meyer (2021), Osborne (2005), Rahmatirad (2020), Sarmiento-Campos et al. (2022), Saravanan & Murphy (2023), Scott (2023), Shabani et al. (2010), Spivey (2021), Svanter (2014) and West (1977), the Fauvism Art Movement (1905–1908) had not merely been representative but had helped build and crystallize French cultural identity during a time of upheaval and change. Fauvism had therefore turned its back on the rigid hierarchy of academic tradition and had fully embraced increasingly more vivid emotional subjectivity, non-Western inspiration, and anti-imperial introspection—making it a theoretical case study in how Fine Arts had acted as a tenacious catalyst in reaffirmation and reconstruction of cultural identity.

2.11 Conclusion

The Literature Review and broader research-investigation of this thesis, had provided credible evidence to suggest that different forms, styles, disciplines and cultural movements within Fine Arts – across diverse historical time-periods – had not merely reflected certain cultural or social values, but had also fulfilled an intentional and active role of having altered and shaped 'human perception',

'cultural identity' and 'human behaviour', more specifically through means of symbolic, psychological and cognitive forms of human engagement. Whether therefore through having reinforced and reaffirmed the 'collective ideals' found within Classical Greek sculptures as commented upon by Koortbojian (2002), whether through having embodied the 'Confucian Order' in funerary depictions within the Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty as noted by Wu (2021), or whether through having modelled Christian morals, values and beliefs within Byzantine iconography as referred to by Cameron (1978), Fine Arts had undoubtedly served as both advocating catalysts of social changes, as well as archives of historical and cultural knowledge (Cameron, 1978; Koortbojian, 2002; Wu, 2021).

Furthermore, Fine Arts which had specifically been created and produced during both the Renaissance – and Cubism Art Movements, had visually illustrated an increasingly more recognizable shift towards the liberation of cognitive, interpretational – and perceptual patterns of reasoning and thinking, including the ability to provide social critique and the applicability of relevant behavioural adaptations. These altering influences demonstrated by both the Renaissance and Cubism Art Movements had in return confirmed their uniquely powerful roles which had been historically been fulfilled as catalysts and advocating-forces of 'cultural change' throughout different time-periods (Aronson, 1997; Bandura, 1976; Richardson, 1996). Moreover, the Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e Art Movements had additionally offered investigative scholars, Art historians and authors with visual substantiations of remarkably characteristic 'cultural identities', which had been founded upon recognizable aesthetic-attributes, visually distinctive symbolisms, as well as a plethora of 'emotional resonance' – which had further been aligned in a correlating manner with the 'sociological circumstances – and settings', as well as the respective moral values and practices of the different periods in history (Cortiaus, 2024; Jiachuan, 2019; Trapasso, 2013).

In agreement with the combined perspectives of Aronson (1997), Bandura (1976), Cameron (1978), Cortiaus (2024), Jiachuan (2019), Koortbojian (2002), Richardson (1996), Trapasso (2013), Wu (2021) – and a multitude of other scholars, Art historians and authors referenced within this research-study, the Literature Review had in particular provided substantiative groundwork which validated the central key-focus of this research investigation's hypothesis, which is that Fine Arts had historically not merely reflected – but foundationally altered and changed 'cultural – and societal identities', including human interpretations, perceptions and behaviours throughout history.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The following research study provides an extensive overview of a variety of different academic perspectives and research methods which includes the application of an Art Historical Analysis, the implementation of a Sociological Research Method, an Iconographical Research Method, Cross-Cultural Investigation, as well as incorporating a Psychological Inquiry which closely relates to Semiotic & Reception Analysis. These combined interdisciplinary components which form part of the applied methodology in qualitative research, have been thoroughly considered to ensure that a meticulous investigation will be conducted, that aims to provide an enhanced understanding of the correlations which may exist between Fine Arts, cultural perception and human behaviour.

First Qualitative Methodological Approach: Art Historical Analysis

The application of an Art Historical Analysis will start off by thoroughly examining a variety of artworks from different Fine Arts disciplines, (such as sculpture, relief, mosaic, painting, drawing, ceramics, pottery, calligraphy, metal casting, printmaking etc.), which are not merely representational of distinct Art Movements, but also emblematic of significant periods in Art History. In support of the perspective of Brand (1988), further drawing upon well-established historical research methodologies which have been most effectively implemented in regards to qualitative research, a methodical analysis of the aesthetic attributes, overarching visual characteristics and underlying thematic symbolisms which are most relevant to particular Art Movements or time-periods, will be conducted.

This qualitative approach to investigative research enables the researcher to provide a more in-depth and contextualized understanding. More specifically pertaining to ways in which 'artistic expressions' have evolved over the ages and has responded differently in context to varying socio-cultural contexts (Brand 1998).

Churchill (2021) makes the valid point by stating that Art historians are limited in regards to the amount of information they're able to accurately analyse, by referring to mere surface-level observations. To therefore gain a clearer contextual understanding regarding the purpose(s) as to 'why' uniquely influential artworks have been created in the first place, or which symbolic messages may be connected to them – the incorporation of supporting evidence and additional resources are most often required. As a result, that which is being visually observed is thus compared against substantive background information that's been formerly revealed by historical scholars and archaeologists, in context to the broader historical time-line. For example, considering the circumstantial influences and conditions related to 'artistic production' through means of reviewing archival records, speeches, diaries, letters, and many other credible sources, are essential (Churchill, 2021).

Second Qualitative Methodological Approach: Sociological Method

As elaborated upon by Alexander (1988), the implementation of the Sociological Method is aimed at examining relevant key-information through the lens of an Arts-related historical era. While applying this research-method, historical events or circumstances and other social influences would need to be considered from multiple perspectives, in regards to 'how' these cumulative conditions may have impacted and shaped particular artistic movements and their most prominent artworks (Alexander, 1988)

Little (2014) states that every component of human behaviour which includes all contributing influences, could be regarded as a potential source of investigation. The Sociological Methodology therefore seeks to questions the societal norms, interactions and cultural traits that different communities, societies or civilizations have created for themselves to live in.

Carls (n.d.), contributes to this understanding by alluding to the fact that a society is not simply a group of people who live in close geographical proximity to one another, but rather an 'ensemble' of shared values, belief-systems, worldviews and a collection of diverse individual ideas. However, Carls (n.d.) implies that when the individuals living together within a society start to interact with -and support one another while ultimately working towards collective goals, it results in the amalgamation of 'collective-consciences'.

In regards to the effective implementation of Sociological Methodology within context to an Art historical context, Kar (n.d.) however notes that recognizing the key-challenges related to qualitative information as it pertains to identifying the skills, values, beliefs, and beneficial underlying attitudes found among different cultural groups, is not only essential for understanding the magnitude of these identifiable distinctions – but to further make accurate determinations in context to the research being conducted (Kar, n.d.).

In addition, Thompson (2023) mentions that the gathering processes of secondary information from qualitative resources are fairly numerous, since many governmental institutions and research organizations have archived key historical documents. These secondary qualitative resources may include government reports, audio-visual content, newspaper report and the personal documents of important historical figures who may have made important societal contributions.

Third Qualitative Methodological Approach: Cross-Cultural Investigations:

Somewhat similar to the Sociological Method, Romani (2018) mentions that the Cross-Cultural Investigative research method in context to qualitative research, involves a detailed inquiry into the cultural interpretations and 'artistic receptions' which had occurred within different cultural settings. For example, this research probe will compare and analyse case studies from varying cultural contexts such as Classical Greece, Ancient China, the Byzantine Era, Europe, the Edo-Period from Japan, 20th century American Art Movements, including Contemporary (modern-day) Art movements and artworks

which have been created by a diverse selection of artists. Therefore, through qualitative approaches to research, this investigation seeks to detect and uncover specific patterns of artistic reception across diverse societies and civilizations. (Romani et al., 2018).

Aneas & Sandin (2009) mentions that the definitive attributes of qualitative research naturally move Art historical researchers into the methodological sphere in which both intercultural -and cross-cultural communication can be analysed and further developed. Within this qualitative cross-cultural research process, a number of key aspects are often revealed which can then be compared and considered in a more in-depth manner. The further weighted attention that historically-focused qualitative research generally devotes to providing 'extensive cultural context' to research-based information, reminds one of the fact that varying human experiences occur in circumscribed social settings and those significant historical events therefore cannot be adequately understood when being removed from those social environments. For this reason, qualitative cross-cultural examination (within an Art historical context), gives distinct attention to the original social settings of particular culture, while aiming to remain as faithful and true to those original settings as possible (Aneas & Sandin, 2009)

Fourth Qualitative Methodological Approach: Iconographical Method:

In support of the Art Historical Analysis research method, the Iconographical Analysis is directed at further deciphering, better comprehending and clarifying the intended meanings behind symbolic characteristics observed within artworks. Gocsik (2004) advises to structure corresponding considerations and arguments in a chronological manner, when either describing or debating a specific Art Movement or the progress made by a particular artist, over time. Furthermore, Gocsik (2004) proposes to structure research-based arguments in a spatial manner when discussing or analysing the visual attributes of an artwork, while structuring substantiative perspectives relationally when examining an artwork in the broader context of a distinguishable Art Movement. As also noted by many Art historians and scholars, supporting images are required within the application of the Iconographical research approach, for the sake of verifying and validating all of the interpretative analyses made by the researcher.

Munsterberg (2009) supports the perspective that the successful corroborative connections which may exist between particular cultures and symbolic artworks being examined, need to be accurately investigated in relation to the original historical contexts within which they were created. Therefore the 'manner' in which those Art historical contexts are being described by researchers truly matters, as thorough representation can prevent slanted half-truths from being promoted as potentially false symbolical interpretations.

Furthermore, it's suggested by Munsterberg (2009) that analyses made through means of applying the Iconographical Research Method are richest in nature, when researchers are able to create a network of very specific research-based facts.

Glass (2020) further argues that the Iconographical Research Method (as well as the Art Historical Analysis Research Method) often includes the application of a 'formal Art analysis' as it relates to key-representational-artworks and historical artefacts. The first part of a 'formal Art analysis', involves describing and analysing the 'visual features' of historically significant artworks and their influences upon audiences within contextual cultural settings, while the second part of a 'formal Art analysis' attempts to further examine the visual -and symbolic properties in a more methodical manner. Therefore, the latter approach of a 'formal Art analyses are primarily reliant upon an established list of Art Elements, Design Principles and other symbolic considerations pertaining to different societal settings (Glass, 2020).

Fifth Qualitative Methodological Approach: Psychological, Cognitive and Behavioural Inquiry:

This study will also incorporate the Psychological Inquiry method, to more effectively measure any relevant psychological dimensions which may pertain to the relational interplay connecting Fine Arts and human perception. These psychological frameworks in accordance with the views of Schwartz (2012), will also refer to both 'cognitive psychological trademarks' and 'emotional response theories,' while attempting to compare the level of positive -or negative 'artistic receptions' observed among various cultures throughout history. However, substantive scholarly research journals, articles and other archived sources would need to be carefully reviewed, in order to produce meaningful and viable arguments (Schwartz, 2012).

This thesis will further permit considerable thought and focus upon 'Cognitive – and Behavioural Theories', which integrates the 'Mere Exposure Effect' (Zajonc, 1968; Obermiller, 1985; Nickerson, 2022; Heath, 1990), 'Schema Theory' (Bartlett, 1932; Axelrod, 1973; Brewer, 2000; Wittrock, 2000; Garro, 2000; Steffensen, 1979; Wertsch, 2008), 'Social Learning Theory' (Bandura, 1977; Williams, 1983; Rushton, 1982; Ebel, 1977; Wren, 1982), 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' (Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1997; Wong, 2009; Auster, 1965; Davis, 1967; Stone, 2009; Gerard, 1992), and 'Operant Conditioning' (Skinner, 1953; Culatta & Kearsley, 2018; Praveen, 2017; Scharff, 1982).

Additionally, Muthukrishna et al. (2020) emphasises that 'individual-collectivism' and 'relational mobility' are two of the most prominently referenced 'cross-cultural psychological approaches' of the Psychological Research Method, despite being distinguishably different. For example, collective cultures living together in unison within certain societies are more family orientated

and mostly concerned with the internal welfare of their own communities. As a result, such a society can be defined as being 'highly collectivist', due to the nature of their collective values. Alternatively, sub-cultures living alongside one another in other societies can be ascribed as being more 'individualist', since the pursuit of fulfilling one's personal ideals, goals and purposes are more commonly shared among citizens.

Additionally, the celebration of one's own accomplishments are also highly valued within 'individualist societies', which is more closely associated with 'relational mobility', pointing to the level of ease with which individuals can either choose to build -or dismantle relationships. Previous research-based studies have frequently attributed Western nations with being more 'individualist' in nature which best correlates with 'relational mobility', while Asian countries have been most commonly characterized by 'collectivism' – referring to having 'low relational mobility'. Most importantly however, it's crucial to keep in mind that societies from various nations aren't homogenous, but ultimately represent the dispersion of diverse cultural key-features which are organized within the confinements of ingrained and intercepting ethnic groups (Muthukrishna et al., 2020).

Sixth Qualitative Methodological Approach: Semiotic (Reception Analysis):

Eco (1976) and Jauss (1982) confirms that a qualitative analysis of symbolic significance and 'the interpretational processes' related to Fine Arts, can only be successfully built upon the foundational principles of 'reception theory' and 'semiotics'. Semiotics not only refers to the study of sign-interpretation and sign-using patterns -or behaviours, but successfully reviewing historical information through the lens of semiotics would require a thorough consideration of the manner in which embedded symbols and signs within artworks, have been decoded by various cultures and societies throughout history.

Heinz (2018) contributes to the overall understanding of the 'Semiotic and Reception Analysis Research Method', by stating that semiotics is focused upon examining the nature of both verbal -and nonverbal interactions, while endeavouring to explicate the foundational attributes of communication.

In agreement with Heinz (2018), Kosh (2021) further elaborates by mentioning that semiotics is aimed at primarily studying any potential 'invisible motivations' or 'structural power-systems' which may exist behind the subtle signs employed within social interactions -or encounters. Therefore, unique strategies applied by various societies or cultural groups as it pertains to emblematic styles of cultural writing, becomes an invaluable component to consider when attempting to accurately analyse interpersonal exchanges, as well as selected communication tactics used by philosophical, religious, educational or governmental institutions.

Kosh (2021) also underscores the important fact that any degree of communication is ultimately enhanced by the 'level of access' that a particular society or civilization has to high quality educational resources, the level of access they have to technological advancements and the average measure of literacy that's been achieved among their general population. Another incredibly noteworthy point made by Kosh (2021) reveals that the degree of effective communication which had historically existed within ancient civilizations of older societies merely a few hundred years ago, directly impacted the pace and extent to which societal changes had occurred. In other words, advanced levels of education and communication had produced faster societal advancements and transformations.

Therefore, better understanding communication patterns and strategies which seem to endure within specified social -and cultural settings, immensely assist researchers to correctly determine the ideological views of different communicators (Kosh, 2021).

Heinz (2018) notes that 'reception theory', (although somewhat similar to semiotics), more specifically focuses upon adequately grasping the exact function that the reader, the viewer or the listener plays in context to non-verbal communication. Moreover, the 'reader-response' research methods which are typically applied within reception theory, seem to share a number of similarities to the foundational principles that are used within 'poststructuralism'.

In agreement with the various perspectives presented by Eco (1976), Jauss (1982), Kosh (2021) and Heinz (2018), gaining an understanding of the interpretational skills, levels of introspection and levels of comprehension which either exists -or had existed among particular civilizations, societies, ethnic groups, cultures or sub-cultures, would most certainly be invaluable information to consider when analysing the 'symbolic visual attributes' and 'hidden messages' observed within historical artworks and artefacts – which specifically connects to a particular Art Movement or Art Period in history.

CHAPTER 4: FINE ARTS AS REFLECTIONS OF CULTURE THROUGH ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Fine Arts serve as mirrors to society, reflecting the beliefs, values, and aspirations of a given culture. This is particularly evident in the portrayal of deities and mythology in Ancient Art (Zahi Hawass, 2009).

4.1.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Classical Greek Period (206 BC – 220 AD)

4.1.1.1 Origins of Classical Greece

Sakoulas (n.d.) notes that Sparta and Athens had primarily ruled the Ancient Greek Hellenistic regions from 480 to 323 BC, through means of their military dominance and cultural accomplishments. Scholars have documented an initial era of 'peace' which had existed during the Early Classical Period between Sparta and Athens until the first half of the 5th century B.C. The main source of these cultural and political disagreements can be ascribed to the fact that Athens had increasingly become more democratic in regards to the style of governance which its leaders had adopted, its new commercial trade regulations that had simultaneously become less restrictive, including the more open-minded cultural ideologies and practices that had been embraced by Athenian society. In stark contrast, Sparta had been presided over by two kings who had utilized strong military force to control Spartan society to the extent that any potential revolts by helots would certainly have failed, as well as any attempts to be invaded externally. At the same time, these Spartan kings had occupied the southern part of the Peloponnesus, which had caused Sparta to be an incredibly restrictive, controlled, and closed society. Needless to mention that this excessively controlled environment had impacted the 'cultural lenses' and 'prisms of thought' through which Spartans had viewed the world during that time period (Sakoulas, n.d.).

When Athens had finally been led by Perikles, a sudden expansion of successful trade had led to a significant increase in wealth referred to as the 'Golden Age.' These rapid and cumulative developments, which had later resulted in a more stable and mature environment, were later referred to as the 'Classical Era' or 'Classical Greece.' It is also worth mentioning that during this time period, large-scale architectural construction projects had been undertaken, such as the Acropolis, which had become a significant landmark (Carter, 2023).

Some features and characteristics of 'Classical Greece' include the following attributes: an expansion and acceleration in the level of craftsmanship and quality of aesthetic beauty seen within Fine Arts; evolutionary growth in Philosophical thinking; and a diversification within Literature as it had pertained to both complexity and depth. As a result, the 'Classical Era' had not only produced original philosophical ideas, theories, and propositions put forth by Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato (to name only

three notorious philosophers of the Classical Era), but these advanced philosophical approaches and literary texts had served as a foundational springboard upon which western leaders had further developed their ideas for the following two millennia (Carter, 2023).

As somewhat of a contradiction, but yet providing some balanced insight and perspective, Robinson (2015) points out that Greek literature had rather openly revealed that poverty had always been present in Ancient Greek society. Within a variety of Ancient Greek literary texts, the importance of having a 'sound moral character' and 'being self-sufficient' had arguably been far more celebrated and highly regarded compared to elevating monetary affluence. Robinson (2015) also makes the credible argument that hardly any Classical Greek literature had focused upon praising the importance of innovation or technological advancements. On the contrary, however, deep respect had been revealed within these ancient texts for upholding traditions, as well as the preservation of objects that had represented either the 'eternally divine,' the 'aesthetically beautiful,' the 'powerful,' or 'wisdom' that pertains to engaging with or presiding over people (Robinson, 2015).

Furthermore, Robinson (2015) also notes that this citizen-centered culture, which had focused upon both the attainment of good moral character and the development of political institutions, had enabled Greeks during the Classical Period to establish fair rules related to the bilateral low-trading expenses of monetary investment, equal market-related competition, and specialized economic trade. At the same time, the sharing of innovative advancements had been highly encouraged during this time period.

4.1.1.2 Contributions Made to Philosophy, Science & Math During Classical Greece

In regards to higher-order thinking and philosophical advancements that had been achieved during the Classical Greek Period, Weadmin (2022) states that great emphasis had been placed upon thought-provoking approaches to inquiry, including the 'role that reason had played' as it had related to clear and rational logic. Therefore, scientific observations of the rational world had been held in high regard (Weadmin, 2022).

Unsurprisingly, as stated by Cuomo (2019), outstanding progress had been made in the areas of mathematics, more specifically related to the areas of geometry, the development of new scientific theories, experimentation, and new scientific discoveries. For example, in order to explain and rationalize the movements of the sun and planets that had been observed by Ancient Astronomers, including the heliocentric system and the axis of the earth, Greeks from the Classical Period had attempted to design the earliest astronomical models (Cuomo, 2019).

Another iconic individual from the Classical Greek Period named Hippocrates had gained unprecedented popularity for his outstanding investigations that had been conducted in order to better

understand the causes of various diseases, while he had continually worked towards developing new medicines. His dedication as a physician and doctor during the Classical Greek Era, as well as the medical school which he had established, had ultimately led to the name that had been bestowed upon him as the “Father of modern medicine.” Hippocrates’s notorious ‘Hippocratic Oath,’ however, is still relevant during modern science (Weadmin, 2020).

In regards to the important role that philosophy had played during the Classical Greek Period, Carter (2023) further notes that the conversations and debates that had been documented by Plato, (who had converted the philosophical questions of Socrates into written texts), had not only epitomized but truly captured the essence of ancient Greek ‘cultural and ideological thinking.’ As an extended elaboration thereof, Aristotle, who had been known to be Plato’s student during this particular time period, had continued further philosophical and research-based writing which had predominantly focused upon themes related to human biology and theatrical expression (Carter, 2023).

4.1.1.3 The Role of Religion in Classical Greek Culture & Society

I find the investigative research-based perspectives of Paul (1984) very intriguing, who conveys the understanding that the Classical Greek ‘city-state’ had been deeply intertwined with religious conformity during this time period. The ruling ‘city-state’ had not only provided its native populace with protective rights but had also granted them platforms to demonstrate sought-after qualities. These platforms had not only been intended to ‘set them apart’ from each other but had also classified them as being ‘separate to’—and ‘above’—the animal species. Paul (1984) also quotes Democritus, who had advised his fellow countrymen during the ancient Classical Greek Period that pursuing a particular craft, skill, or specified area of study would ensure humanity had excelled and achieved extraordinary heights (Paul, 1984).

Sailors (2007) provides extended clarification by pointing out that Homer, (the most famous Greek poet and one of the most highly esteemed literary authors in Ancient Greek history), had proposed the idea centuries prior to other philosophers, (such as Democritus, the Pre-Socratic Philosopher named Euripides—and ancient Greek Tragedian Playwright), that perhaps humanity had shared in the complexities and attributes of the gods while striving towards achieving immortality. Therefore, Plato had ascribed the formidable attribute of being known as the ‘educational instructor of the Hellas’ to Homer, while Plato himself had been referred to as the ‘embodiment of the spirit of Homer’ by many prominent figures of his time. Especially in regard to the role that his literary texts had played in bringing forth political reformation and freedom within Classical Greek society—not merely in context to ideological changes alone, but in many practical ways as well (Sailors, 2007).

Therefore, to better grasp the freedom which had been strived towards by the ancient Greeks of the Classical Period, Paul (1984) alleges that it is essential to understand that Classical Greek society had believed that achieving an ultimate state of 'eternity within one's human form' was an attainable goal. Due to the 'literal nature' of this core belief, which had been broadly upheld by Classical Greek society, it therefore had served as the key motivating factor and driving force behind their relentless pursuit of becoming brilliant at whatever they had set their minds to. Multiple scholars have also noted that reaching towards becoming 'shining lamps' had also been of utmost importance within the cultural norms of Classical Greece. For this exact reason, it is further argued by Paul (1984) that Classical Greek society had mostly rejected the philosophies of Odysseus, who had originally proposed ideas related to the 'flawed nature of Greek manhood,' and instead had openly embraced the 'Achilles of Homer's Iliad' (the most powerful warrior), as well as the 'Heracles of Hesiod's Theogony,' which extolled a number of well-known Mythological Greek Heroes (Paul, 1984).

Den Boer (1973) points to another religious movement, which had heralded the practice of 'Orphism.' This Classical Greek term had upheld the viewpoint that belonging to a group of theological ideologues and philosophical thinkers who had encapsulated religious beliefs in various forms of literature somehow had provided followers with 'religious superiority.' This particular example of an 'authoritarian religious movement' had claimed Orpheus to be their main religious representative while being recognized as a prophetic singer and musician. Orpheus, who had initially been serving as the disciple of Apollo, had later embraced the Dionysus Cult and then had attempted to present an interconnected philosophical perspective which joined both Dionysus and Apollo together into a new ideology. What is most unusual and unique, however, is that Orpheus had been considered to be of a lower social class within Classical Greek society. Therefore, it had been highly rare for the Orphic Theologians to classify and describe Orpheus in this glorified manner (Den Boer, 1973).

However, as emphasized by Den Boer (1973), the attempt by Orpheus to join Dionysus and Apollo into a new ideology and religion had never seemed to successfully spread its roots during the Classical Greece time period, as no historical texts had revealed any further documentation of this proposed idea. Furthermore, many scholars have commented upon the multitude of contradictions which had been found within the ancient religious texts from the Classical Greek Era.

An interesting aspect of the religious practices which had characterized the Classical Greek Period and had been commented on by many academic authors is the fact that it had been broadly viewed as being inappropriate to voice one's own religious perspectives in the midst of educated company. Sailors (2007) presents the argument within her research that although individuals who had lived within Classical Greek society had not necessarily lacked a deep understanding of the widely respected Greek religious beliefs, it had been explicitly understood within the cultural context of their time that

submissive silence had not only been expected but had also been interpreted as a form of active respect (Sailors, 2007).

Yet, Den Boer (1973) proceeds to shed light on this matter by stating that older myths which had previously existed regarding the 'legendary notions of the gods' had been viewed as both offensive and distasteful to Greeks from the Classical Period who had considered themselves to be 'enlightened.' Equivalently, it is worth mentioning that the philosopher Plato had rejected 'ill-mannered advice and wisdom,' while Aeschylus (a great Classical Athenian Dramatist) had also rejected the concept of implementing vicarious punishment within an advancing societal context (Den Boer, 1973).

Although certain aspects of Greek religious beliefs and cultural values had therefore been rejected by the noble class of Classical Greek society, Gardner (1980) confirms that it had been broadly accepted by the majority of Greek citizens that the 'gods of Olympus' had supremely reigned over all of humanity, regardless of an individual's class or stature. These gods had included the revered names of Aphrodite, Hestia, Athena, Poseidon, Apollo, Zeus, Hera, Artemis, Hermes, Ares, Dionysus, and Ares (Gardner, 1980).

Gardner (1980) makes further mention of the fact that although no distinctions had been made between the 'gods for the wealthy' versus 'gods of the less fortunate,' the only historically documented differentiation which had been made recognized that both seamen and farming communities had worshiped additional gods which had been more relevant to the imagination of their own experiences. However, there is unfortunately very little substantiative information available to elaborate upon this particular aspect of religious beliefs, which had been documented throughout the Classical Greek Period (Gardner, 1980).

An alternative approach to having practiced religious beliefs on a personal scale and individual level, points to the role which fathers had played in carrying their children during the 'Amphidromia Ceremony' to introduce them to the rest of their extended family members. In connection to this special ceremony, Den Boer (1973) highlights that Euripides once wrote a play titled *Alcestis*, within which a prayer to an unknown goddess had been cited on behalf of a father who had requested that his children be granted noble and loving spouses after his future death. Therefore, although Classical Greek religious beliefs and practices had been closely tied to the prescribed constraints of the 'city-state,' 'individuals' had been granted the freedom of praying certain personalized prayers, despite many restrictions which had been imposed upon their 'personal agency' and 'independence of thought' (Den Boer, 1973).

4.1.1.4 The Role of Politics and Diplomacy During Classical Greece

As already mentioned under the sub-heading titled 'Origins of Classical Greece,' the two city-states of Classical Greece had been ruled by leaders who signified and represented opposing political

views. Woida (2023) further substantiates the understanding that Athens had been the birthplace of democratic power, where the majority of the population had first practiced their equal civil rights to cast a vote. Although democracy had been highly flawed during this time period, the attempts which had been made by Athenians to establish greater fairness within their society, stood in vehement opposition to the military oligarchy of Sparta, which had been ruled by a small number of Spartan warriors (Woida, 2023).

Brand (n.d.) notes that despite the fact that Spartans had ruled the political landscape through military dominance, they had also been characterized by their highly-esteemed level of discipline, their fervency and passion for the attainment of physical fitness, as well as the robust focus which they had placed upon the education of their citizens. As a result of their highly disciplined culture, the Spartans had yielded some of the most highly skilled and competitive warriors among ancient civilizations (Brand, n.d.).

Besides these stark and conflicting differences which had existed between Athens and Sparta during the Classical Greek Period, Curran (1989) makes the excellent observation regarding Philip the Second of Macedon by noting that he had succeeded in unifying the two city-states within this exact time period. Additionally, Alexander the Great was coincidentally also the son of Philip the Second, who had later continued to conquer India, Persia, and considerable areas within Greece (Curran, 1989).

Mosley (1972) provides further insight by stating that the successful execution of diplomatic communication and compromises between male rulers from different states had been incredibly difficult to achieve during the Classical Greek Period. Although certain arrangements and agreements had occasionally been reached between various officials and rulers, maintaining confidentiality and secrecy (that were different from the formation of official treaties) hadn't been easy to implement or attain either (Mosley, 1972).

One of the key reasons for this particular challenge which had been faced during ancient times could be ascribed to the sheer incompetence and ignorance which had existed among Ancient Greek leaders (Curran, 1989).

For example, Hamilton (1970) states that during the ancient times of Classical Greece, officials or statesmen had been elected on an annual basis, which ultimately had prohibited them from initiating or implementing original policies of their own. If this had been the case, however, they would have had fair opportunities to distinguish themselves from the weak leadership skills of others. Another disadvantage which these men had faced had been the fact that they were continually exposed to public criticism, arguments which frequently had taken place in the public square, including having been

exposed to every new whimsical, ideological trend which had arisen among the citizens of their state (Hamilton, 1970).

In direct contrast as commented upon by Esu (2017) however, 21st-century governments place exceptional value upon their ability to arrange confidential agreements with other nations, as a high degree of continuity is expected and executed on both administrative and executive levels. Additionally, permanently appointed state officials are trusted with a high degree of power and the ability to make professional, expert decisions (Esu, 2017).

Furthermore, Jones (2008) confirms that there had often been a great amount of confusion caused among Classical Greek leaders, due to the fact that no departmental documentation or contracts had been kept on record, while therefore lacking in key information as a point of reference. Therefore, the ability to remember conversations and agreements accurately, as well as the ability to hold people accountable for promises and agreements which they had previously made, had been exceptionally difficult to prove in the event of disputes (Jones, 2008).

As a result of this highly flawed system of governance, Fleck & Hanssen (2006) further explain that the decision-making processes, more specifically pertaining to the strategic planning of new legislation and external policies, had often been ineffective. Moreover, the entire summation of available knowledge, expertise, and intelligence, which had been required to plan ahead successfully, had been mostly reliant upon the limited degree of insight and understanding that the statesmen and politicians of Classical Greece had to offer themselves. Therefore, Greek society had been frequently subjected to the ignorant guidance of their rulers, who hadn't had access to external expert advice regarding a number of critical issues (Fleck & Hanssen, 2006).

4.1.2.1 The Social & Cultural Context of Classical Greece

Vernant (1988) notes that ancient Greek city-states had been culturally diverse, although little interaction between classes had taken place and while society had been dominated by male figures. Not only had men been entitled to have all legal rights, but they had also had the right to vote, to hold positions of public office, and to own land or property (Vernant, 1988).

However, as mentioned by Walcot (1996), all societal classes within Classical Greece, such as the servants, slaves, skilled laborers, women, children, and immigrants alike, had been unified by their rich cultural heritage and special ceremonies of celebratory events, such as the Hellenic Games. The interactions which had taken place within communal spaces, including the society's general participation in religious ceremonies, had therefore been considered to be of great importance during the Classical Greek Period. In fact, these two 'cultural aspects' had been so highly valued, that they had been

intentionally prioritized throughout the further city-planning and architectural construction of Classical Greece (Walcot, 1996).

An excellent observation is also made by Vedantu (2023), who further states that ancient Greek maps had served as substantive evidence regarding the diverse number of independent city-states and subdivided communities, which had originally operated independently from one another. Yet, at the same time, these city-states had been unified through means of their strong shared religious convictions, practices, and dialects.

4.1.2.2 The Social Hierarchy of Men & Women During Classical Greece

According to the insightful research of Padgug (1975), the male figures had most certainly been favoured, honoured, and glorified during the Classical Greek Period. However, the men had been categorized into three primary groups, of whom the highest in ranking had been the aristocratic landowners who had obtained or had inherited the most wealth. In second place had been the tradesmen and artisans who had been considered to be of middle-class stature, while hardworking men from the farming communities had been classified in third place (Padgug, 1975).

It's important to note, however, that some of the aristocratic landowners had often been members of prominent and powerful families within the community, who had either succeeded in obtaining prominent roles within the realm of politics or had managed to influence political outcomes. Therefore, these rich landowners and their families had monopolized their wealth in order to rise into true positions of power (Vedantu, 2023).

Padgug (1975) and Vedantu (2023) both confirm that right above the middle-class businessmen, traders, manufacturers, and artisans, had been a small group of second-class landowners who had been located far from the city centres. As a result, their fields and properties had unfortunately received a much lesser degree of protection, while their plans to influence the ancient Greek political spectrum had also been far less successful. At the same time, males who had been considered to be part of the utmost lowest tier within Classical Greek society had included the Helots of Sparta, as well as semi-free low-skilled labourers.

Cohen (1989) mentions that the females had naturally belonged to the same classified groups as men, except that they hadn't had any rights to citizenship. Apart from an inability to cast their votes in these democratic elections, female activities had predominantly been limited to remaining indoors while their main purpose had been understood to be raising children in the community. Women had also had no interactions with male family members other than their own husbands, while they had been encouraged to partake in hobbies such as weaving and knitting.

It is further noted by Cohen (1989) that the noblewomen from wealthy families who had been able to afford slaves to do their most strenuous daily household chores, had been able to pursue social interactions with other women of stature. Mostly through means of joining religious networks and activities, however, women from wealthier families had been to some degree able to establish friendships stretching beyond their closest female relatives. In rare cases, women who had been married to exceptionally rich men from large cities and had been far removed from the villages, had been 'ostentatiously isolated' by their partners who had done so in order to display their success and wealth (Cohen, 1989).

4.1.2.3 The Social Hierarchy of Royal/Ruling Family Structures and Marital Arrangements

Pertaining to marriage arrangements which had been approved between men and women during the Classical Greek Period, the practice of 'endogamy' had been widely accepted and respected. This term refers to the practice of only marrying others within one's own clan, tribe, or cultural group. In certain instances, however, more prestigious and influential families from the upper echelons of society during this particular period had carefully and strategically arranged for their cousins to marry within their very own bloodlines. The overarching goal had been far more than the mere accumulation of wealth; their ambitions had extended toward acquiring immense influence and establishing a firm, almost suffocating grip over the lives and destinies of others. These exclusive and meticulously planned internal bloodline marriages had not only solidified familial power but had become highly coveted due to the strengthening of deep-rooted loyalty and unwavering allegiance within the inner familial circles. This process had ensured an almost impenetrable elevation of status and a successive line of power that transcended generations (Mitchell, 2012).

More specifically among the royal and wealthy families of the ruling class, as mentioned by Cuchet (2016), the practice of polygamy had also not been unusual. These rich and powerful male leaders had married multiple wives to demonstrate both their wealth and prominence, while they had simultaneously attempted to broaden their influence and legacy through means of producing a large number of royal offspring.

Mitchell (2012) however states that it's essential to note that Plato, (the notorious ancient Greek Philosopher), had strictly prohibited similar relations between direct brothers and sisters, or similar relations between fathers and their daughters (and vice versa), within the official written laws of the land. In strong support of these laws, Xenophon (who had also been a Greek Philosopher, Military Leader, and Historian) firmly stated that forbidden romantic relations between parents and children had

been one of the widely understood unwritten laws during former time periods within ancient Greece as well (Mitchell, 2012).

4.1.2.4 The Social & Educational Expectations of Children During Classical Greece

Similar to the universal perceptions which had existed during the 21st century regarding children, Robertson (2018) confirms that society during the Classical Period had recognized children as being between the ages of eighteen years or younger. In Sparta more specifically, an incomparable emphasis had been placed upon the physical training of children under the supervision of older teenagers who had been given the purpose of heightening their level of strength and endurance through rigorous training.

As it relates to their academic development, the foundational subjects which had been mandatorily required were arithmetic, comprehensive reading, and writing. Once these primary areas of learning had been concentrated upon, children had further been trained to obtain skills in either music, poetic interpretation and writing, or further literary studies (Robertson, 2018).

4.1.2.5 The Social Hierarchy of Low-Skilled Labourers Versus Slaves During Classical Greece

It is further mentioned by Cohen (1989) that the low-skilled labourers during Classical Greece had formed part of the Greek societal structures and therefore hadn't had the right to live with their families. However, since their earnings had been significantly low and they had been considered as the equivalency of 'semi-free' workers, they had been entirely dependent upon those who had provided them with employment. Land labourers who had been farming on their own, however, had given an estimated percentage of their harvest to the landowners as common practice. The Helots of Sparta had been a perfect example of this type of self-sustaining community.

In agreement with Cohen (1989), Silver (2006) confirms that slaves had been at the lowest tiers of Classical Greece, while they had either been purchased or kidnapped through means of conquering surrounding regions or by winning battles against external invaders. As part of the spoils, therefore, the slaves who had been kidnapped by Greek soldiers had not only been viewed as inferior, but their bloodlines had also been viewed as being impure. As a consequence of these tragically false perspectives pertaining to the devaluing of human life, slaves had not only been treated poorly, but the concept of slavery had unfortunately become normalized as a by-product of Classical Greek culture. Furthermore, slavery had been present throughout all the cities of Ancient Greece (Cohen, 1989; Silver, 2006).

4.1.2.6 Social Status of Fine Artists & Artisans During Classical Greece

Tanner (1999) provides a detailed account of the manner in which Fine Artists and Craftsmen had been perceived during the Classical Greek Period, by firstly acknowledging that a select few artisans had been successfully recognized for the distinctly superior talent and skills which had been evident within their brilliant work. Despite a few prominent artists who had therefore risen to fame, wealth, and influence as a result of their comical playwrights, poetry, sculptures, and other inspiring works of art, the general public still hadn't made positive associations with art-related occupations (Tanner, 1999).

Secondly, Seaman & Schultz (2017) had pointed out that the artists of Classical Greece had not had much freedom or autonomy in regard to the work they had been able to produce. And I would like to add to this particular observation made by Seaman & Schultz (2017), by speculating that many artisans had most likely worked on a commission basis, which would have meant their income had been primarily dependent on the requests of wealthy consumers. Therefore, although speculative on my part, these artists had most likely not had the ability (as modern-day contemporary artists do) to merely create whatever they had envisioned – while then selling their products to any willing buyer.

Additionally, as stated by Hurwit (2015), different forms of artistry as full-time occupational careers during the Classical Greek city-states had also been frowned upon, as the ruling class had expected their citizens to be physically fit, hardworking, and ready to defend their country at any given time in the unforeseen event of an invasion. The physical work of farmers and laborers had, for example, trained them to become stronger over time, while it had been easy for them to fight alongside Greek Soldiers at any unexpected point in time. Therefore, the ideal concept of a male occupation had been a soldier-citizen of some sort, or another line of work that had required physical tenacity and endurance (Hurwit, 2015).

Xenophon (a highly respected Greek Philosopher, Military Leader & Historian) had once stated that the 'banausic crafts,' (referring to the works of goldsmiths, welders, glass-blowers, sculptors, weavers, painters, pottery artists, and leatherworkers, etc.), only 'spoils an individual's mind and physical body.' He had also mentioned that these occupations had required craftsmen to remain indoors next to their fireplaces, causing them to become weak and incompetent protectors of their country (Tanner, 1999).

The broader Classical Greek society, which had therefore been highly influenced by these strong political and philosophical perspectives during this time period, had both marginalized these skilled artisans on practical and social levels. At the same time, they had also been subjected to incredibly tight rules and regulations within the context of a hierarchical and military-funded system (Seaman & Schultz, 2017).

Therefore, in agreement with Tanner (1999), Hurwit (2015), and Seaman & Schultz (2017), the artworks that had been created by Classical Greek artisans and craftsmen had caused them to become dependent upon others (instead of being self-sustaining and self-sufficient like the farmers). Coupled with the fact that they hadn't been trained for combat, this had resulted in them becoming both culturally and socially isolated.

4.1.3 Four Prominent Classical Greek Fine Arts Examples, Serving as Reflection of Classical Greek Culture:

4.1.3.1 Spear Bearer Sculpture Doryphoros

Figure 1: Spear Bearer Sculpture Doryphoros, from Pompeii. Kept within the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, (Koortbojian, 2002).

Note. Koortbojian (2002) referred to **Figure 1** within the research study titled, 'Forms of Attention: Four Notes on Replication and Variation'. *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes, 1*, 173–204.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4238451>, p.184

Cafá (2014) had explained that the renowned bronze Classical Greek statue named Doryphoros (meaning Spear Bearer) had originally been sculpted by Polykleitos around 440 B.C. However, similar to many other ancient sculptures from the Classical Greece Period that had been lost, the original Doryphoros sculpture had later been replicated by Roman Copyist Artists, otherwise referred to as 'Graeco-Roman Copyism' (Koortbojian, 2002).



In support of a number of scholars, Koortbojian (2002) had suggested that the 'representational themes' of these original Classical Greek sculptures had been both deeply valued and highly admired by the ancient Romans. Not only because they had exuberated male dominance through means of the bold glorification of male warriors or athletes, but also because of the prestigious level of fame that had been associated with these brilliant sculptures and their creators. Since the ancient Romans had therefore sought to construct a revered reputation of strength and dominance for themselves, the attainment of these impressive sculptures had aided them in achieving their goal through means of association (Koortbojian, 2002).

Cafá (2014) had indicated that some of the most exquisite and best-preserved Graeco-Roman replicas of the original Doryphoros sculpture are currently kept within the National Museum of Archaeology in Naples.

Vermeule (1974) had further confirmed this information by stating that the marble replica, which is currently being safeguarded in Naples, had originally been excavated in Pompeii during the last few years of the 19th century. In addition, archaeologists had uncovered another bronze berm from Herculaneum within the exact same collection, providing further substantiation hereof (Vermeule, 1974).

Unfortunately, due to the large number of replicas that had been made by Roman Copyists of Polykleitos's original Greek sculptures, the true identification of these ancient Roman replicas had been prevented. However, more recent evidence had made it possible for archaeologists to determine the estimated original locations of these sculptures, despite their 'namelessness' (Koortbojian, 2002).

A detailed description provided by Meyer (2021) regarding the Spear Bearer named Doryphoros represents a physically strong and skilled warrior. Even though the powerful warrior had seemed ready for battle (while the original sculpture had held a spear in his hand), the figure had been depicted without protective clothing or armour. Therefore, if the sculpture hadn't been armed with a spear, it perhaps wouldn't have been accurately identified as a warrior.

A very interesting observation made by Meyer (2021) regarding the facial traits of the Doryphoros sculpture is that they're quite subtle and therefore void of strongly distinguishable attributes. Hill (1970) had added further commentary, noting that one distinct feature regarding the ovular and strangely broad Doryphoros heads is the mouth, of which the lips are subtly parted. Since the thinly rounded lips and nearly shapeless upper lips are also significantly different from other Polykleitan sculptures, Hill (1970) had argued that this must have been an accurate key feature of the original Doryphoros sculpture, as it had since been repeated so distinctly within many replicas.

Other information provided by Cafá (2014) mentions that 'contrapposto' or 'counterpoise,' which refers to a particular sculptural technique, had been typically applied within the sculptural prototypes of Polykleitos. The application of 'counterpoise' within the sculptural process refers to the asymmetrical positioning of a figure, where the alignment of the hips, legs, and feet is slightly contrasted with the alignment of the shoulders and arms. In doing so, the artist had achieved balance and stability within the stance of the sculpture. As seen in many sculptural reproductions of Polykleitos's original Doryphoros, the figure within this replica had also been portrayed in mid-stride. Only the ball of the left foot is seen touching its foundation, while the left leg is slightly bent. The right leg, however, had firmly supported the majority of the sculpture's mass (Cafá, 2014).

Pertaining to methods through which the Spear Bearer named Doryphoros had served as a representation of Classical Greek culture, Meyer (2021) and Hill (1970) both had highlighted the originally intended purpose of capturing what the idealized, masculine version of the perfect Greek male citizen would have looked like. Meyer (2021) had also mentioned that the nudity seen within most Classical Greek sculptures symbolized the 'physical superiority of agility, skill, and strength' that the ancient Greeks had believed distinguished them from their inferior and barbaric enemies in the surrounding regions.

Cafá (2014) had supported this perspective but further added that the Doryphoros sculpture had also represented the relentless pursuit by male citizens and competitive warriors during the Classical Greek Period, who had aimed to achieve a strong, perfect, and most superior male physique. From a sculptural perspective, the accurate geometric proportions and well-balanced visual attributes had been intended to inspire the male citizens of Classical Greece, despite possibly having known that this exemplary vision of the male figure had been somewhat unrealistic and unachievable for the average person.

Schneider (2021), along with a number of other historians, had presented the suggestion that the Doryphoros sculpture could have most likely represented Achilles (known as an ill-omened immortal mythological hero) who had taken off to fight in the Trojan Wars. Determining whether this interpretation is entirely accurate without any reasonable doubt, however, had unfortunately not been possible (Schneider, 2021).

Vermeule (1974) had also stated that many historical authors had upheld the scholarly opinion that the Doryphoros sculpture (similar to many other Classical Greek sculptures of its kind) had served as a vehicle for symbolizing both the strong cultural unity that had been present during the Classical Greek Period, as well as forming part of a 'combined visual representation' pertaining to their impressive accomplishments and conquered victories on the battlefield (Vermeule, 1974).

4.1.3.2 Discobolus

De Bruyn (2020) had made the accurate observation that replications had often clearly captured the neat and sleek lines of the original sculpture, particularly regarding the defining lines within the facial expression(s) and muscular form of the athlete's body, which had appeared somewhat similar to folded sheets of metal.

The Discobolus, as explained by Valentine (2022), had served as an impressive representation of the Classical Greek ideals surrounding athleticism, physical perfection, and human movement. Myron of Eleutherae, who had originally sculpted the Discobolus, had been particularly known for his ability to convey movement in his sculptures. The Discobolus had depicted a nude male athlete in the process

of throwing a discus, with his body's dynamic form frozen in a state of intense concentration and physical effort.

According to Valentine (2022), this sculpture had been intended to symbolize the ancient Greeks' cultural emphasis on the human body as a reflection of divine beauty and physical perfection. Furthermore, the precise anatomical details and the portrayal of the athlete in a highly naturalistic pose had demonstrated the skill and innovation that Classical Greek sculptors had achieved during this period.

De Bruyn (2020) had further emphasized that the symmetry and balance seen in the Discobolus had not only captured the athletic prowess of the individual but had also reflected the broader cultural value placed on harmony and proportion during the Classical Greek era.

Additionally, since there had been an increased interest in the 'symbolic theme,' 'emotional state,' and 'psyche' of the 'sculpture' among artists and philosophers during the Classical Greek Period, a 'window of opportunity' related to narrative and storytelling had also been opened within the cultural thinking of Classical Greek artisans. According to De Bruyn (2020), this had been achieved through the depiction of micro-expressions.

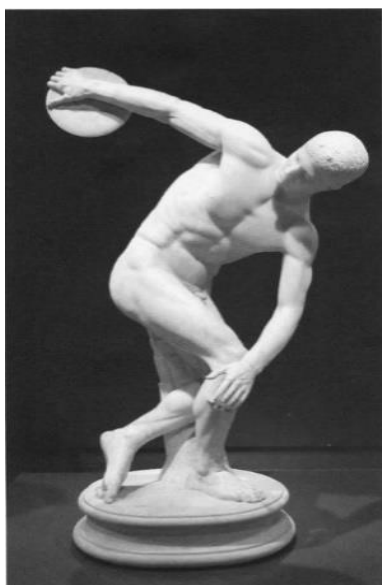


Figure 2: Discobolus, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, A.D. 2. Roman marble copy of the 5 B.C. Greek bronze original (Pestilli, 2013).

Note. Pestilli (2013) referred to this **Figure 2** within the research study titled, *'The Noble Sense of The Curve' From Antiquity Through Borromini. Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 58, 17–29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24616454>, on p.2013.

Regarding the application of micro-expressions within Classical Greek sculptures as commented upon by De Bruyn (2020), Schmalbeck (2015) confirms that nearly blank or subtle facial expressions had been commonly applied within Classical Greek artworks while having been characterized by the 'Severe Style.' One noteworthy comment made by Schmalbeck (2015) proposes that the subtle (nearly blank) facial expression, which had been depicted on the Discobolus, had most likely been intentional on the part of Myron (the sculptor), with the purpose of drawing explicit attention to the impressive physical brilliance and superiority of the figure (Schmalbeck, 2015).

Chappell (1973) further supports this interpretation by proposing that the external and generic expression seen upon the Discobolus figure's face, which exerts concentration, had been sculpted in such a manner as to draw the viewer's interest towards the actions of his body.

Sturgis (1916), in support of both Chappell (1973) and Schmalbeck (2015), provides additional commentary regarding 'sculptural modelling' by stating that the process had primarily focused upon expressing the particular attitude of a figure while capturing the concurrent actions. Therefore, this suggests that the intentionality of sculpting 'aesthetic beauty' had typically served as a secondary function, whereas the strikingly beautiful lines of the discus-thrower's curvature, in the case of the Discobolus sculpture, had seemed to have received the main focus.

In regard to the Discobolus sculpture, which had served as both a reflection and representation of Classical Greek Culture, Valentine (2022) argues that the discus-thrower had also been a symbol of fleetness, strength, and the achievement of sheer human excellence. Schmalbeck (2015) further confirms this interpretation by emphasizing that Classical Greek society had expressed an exceptional interest in both 'humanism(s)' as well as 'visually portraying' the human form to perfection.

During the Classical Greek Period, these symbolic attributes would have been directly associated with accomplishing the highest degree of male status and success, especially when considering the societal culture of this particular time period. Moreover, Schmalbeck (2015) also points out that the Discobolus sculpture had also reflected the high value and admiration which had been placed upon athletes within the cultural norms of the Classical Greek Period (Schmalbeck, 2015).

Jenkins (1926) mentions that the light, swift, enchanting, and captivating nature of the Discobolus figure had made it stand out among many other impressive Classical Greek Sculptures from the same time period. Jenkins (1926) also makes the excellent observation by noting that there couldn't have been a more accurate and more appropriate sculpture which had embodied the essence of a 'victorious spirit' more successfully than this particular sculpture.

In regard to the cultural value which had been placed upon athletes, Schmalbeck (2015) further highlights that conflicting battles and wars had literally been paused mid-way by the ancient Greeks in order that their best athletes and athletic warriors were enabled to participate in the Olympic Games. Therefore, the theory is proposed by Schmalbeck (2015) that the Discobolus sculpture may have served as decoration either leading up to the Olympic Games or during the official event itself. Although this theory seems plausible, there isn't sufficient confirmational evidence to support this perspective.

Pestilli (2013), however, alludes to the idea that Myron (the original sculptor) had intended Greek society to admire and praise the high level of craftsmanship seen within the execution of his Discobolus sculpture. In addition to the curvilinear depictions seen within ancient Classical Greek sculptures (which had been held in high esteem by the Romans), they undoubtedly had also had great appreciation and admiration for the sculptural originality, the unusual, the unexpected, and the unique characteristics observed within this particular work of art.

As a representation of cultural values, Valentine (2022) points out that the calm facial expression which had been modelled on the Discobolus (despite the fluid movement created throughout the entire figure with such great precision) creates the 'visual impression' that the figure had achieved complete control over 'mind, spirit, and body.' The accomplishment of achieving the highest degree of self-control, discipline, and achievement over one's own mind and body had also been one of the foundational cultural and societal values of the Classical Greek Period.

De Bruyn (2020) lastly makes the excellent point by arguing that Myron (the original Classical Greek sculptor) had quite clearly intended to memorialize and eternalize the athlete's 'momentary action.' In doing so, De Bruyn (2020) supports the perspective that Myron had attempted to exalt both the theme of the sculpture and the sculpture itself into a 'paragon,' which refers to an exemplified model of excellence. This, of course, had served as a direct reflection of Classical Greek values.

4.1.3.3 The Parthenon Frieze

Root (1985) refers to the Parthenon Frieze as a monument of iconic proportions, encompassing many symbolic associations with the Athenian cult and the patron goddess Athena. This mythological Greek goddess had been viewed as a 'heroic guarantor' who had provided divine assistance to four ancient Greek heroes named Jason, Heracles, Perseus, and Bellerophon by guaranteeing them triumphs in battle.

Marconi (2009) highlights a unique revelation by confirming that the top of the Parthenon Frieze had been far more distinctly and deeply carved out compared to the bottom. Scholars such as Lothar Haselberger, Bernard Ashmole, and Arthur Smith had gone through extensive lengths to present a more accurate understanding pertaining to the exact measured depths and angles at which the top part of the Parthenon Frieze had tilted forward. It had also been confirmed by multiple archaeologists, historians, and scholars that the original artists of the Parthenon Frieze had intentionally sculpted the figures viewed on the decorated relief panels (around the top part of the Parthenon Temple) in such a manner to ensure that Greek citizens had been clearly able to see them from a significant distance, as well as from ground level underneath the 14-meter-high structure (Marconi, 2009).

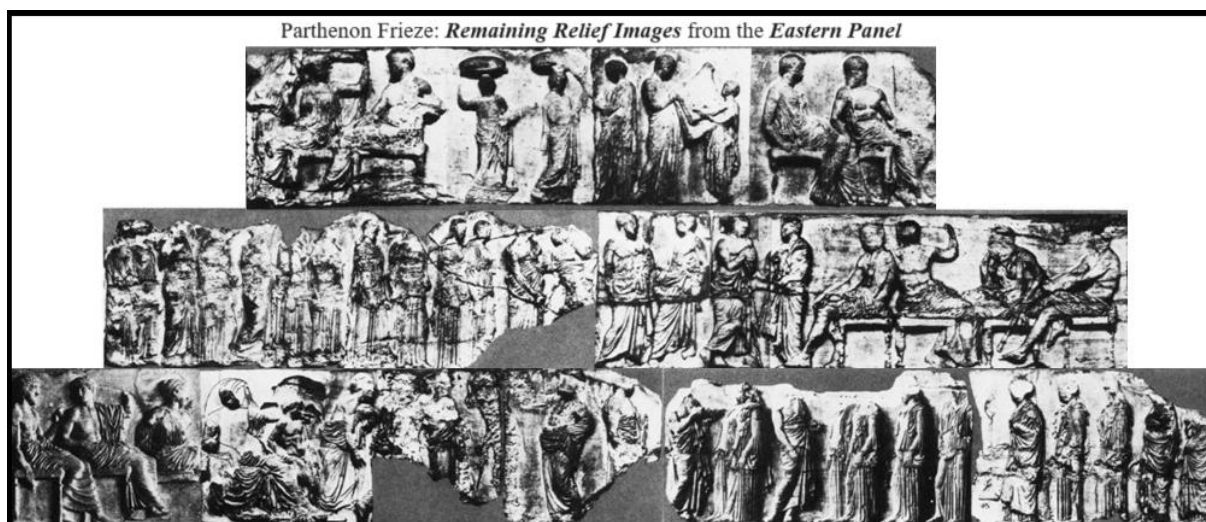
Osborne (1987) further proposes the theory that when ancient Greek citizens had walked through the entrance of the Parthenon Temple, an overwhelming sense of wonder, awe, and perhaps an element of shock had been present, since multiple sculptures had faced towards them, creating somewhat of an entrance frame. The potentially superior placement which the goddess Athena had been given in comparison to other mythological Greek gods also had raised a strong debate among academic scholars pertaining to her degree of prominence within this temple.

Additionally, Neils (1999) emphasizes the significance of the four time-periods related to Athenian history, which had been identified within the four panels of the Parthenon Frieze. However, this author also questions the Parthenon Frieze by rhetorically asking whether the 'role of time' (in context to the heavenly setting of the deified gods) might have been intended as a temporary setting. Yet, this particular comment had remained unanswered.

As seen below, the following research-based observations, interpretations, and explanations provided by various scholars had collectively contributed towards providing a clearer picture and deeper understanding of the 'symbolic storytelling' captured within the four relief panels of the Parthenon Frieze.

Eastern Relief Panel of the Parthenon Frieze

Figure 3: Remaining relief images from the Eastern Panels of the Parthenon Frieze, which had originally surrounded the Parthenon Temple during the Classical Greek Period (Root, 1985).



Note. Root (1985) referred to **Figure 3** within the research study titled, *'The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis: Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship'*. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 89(1), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.2307/504773>, on p.122

Osborne (1987) states that the eastern pediment of the Parthenon Frieze had been dedicated to Athena's birth (from which the earliest origins had been connected to the head or mind of Zeus), while Zeus had been illustrated as seated amongst other deified gods. Simultaneously, the entire birth scene had been framed by the horses of Helios and Selene.

Elderkin (1936) further alludes to the fact that the twelve deities depicted within the eastern panel of the Parthenon Frieze had been gathered around the birth of the goddess Athena. This special event had also referred to the Panathenaic procession. It had been noted by Elderkin (1936) that the

portrayal of these twelve mythological gods had been divided into two sections of six members each, which had created sufficient space for the 'woven robe of Athena' to be displayed.

Most scholars who had attempted to identify these twelve ancient Greek gods, however, had based their theories upon the notion that they had either been divine beings who had carried unique importance amidst Athenian religious ceremonies, or that they had been Olympians themselves. These interpretations made by scholars had stemmed from the mythological contest which had taken place between the goddess Athena and Poseidon (the god of the waters and sea), as illustrated in the western gable of the Parthenon Frieze. Furthermore, the procession or parade which had been illustrated in such a detailed manner on the Eastern Frieze, also had pointed to the significance of these deities (Elderkin, 1936).

Western Relief Panel of the Parthenon Frieze

Neils (1999) and Lee (2015) reveal that most scholars had been positively certain that the four relief artworks of the Parthenon Frieze collectively had begun on the West Façade of the Parthenon since it had been the only access point through which all oncoming visitors or travellers could have journeyed to reach the Acropolis. The portrayals seen within the relief frieze facing westwards had essentially illustrated young males travelling on horseback while having been accompanied by other figures travelling on foot. Those who had been depicted on foot had seemed to provide directional orders to the entire group of advancing men. Evelyn Harrison further notes in her research that the presence of Theseus seen within the Western Frieze (who had been better known as the heroic founder of Athens) could have served as a symbolic representation of 'early times.'

Northern & Southern Relief Panels of the Parthenon Frieze

Lee (2015) provides an interesting interpretation, explaining that the northern and southern relief panels of the Parthenon Frieze had been situated parallel to one another, while both panels had depicted a procession on their western borders which had portrayed armour-plated soldiers leaving their moving chariots. On the eastern borders of both the northern and southern relief panels, 'martyrs' preparing for ceremonial sacrifices carrying water jugs, serving platters, and animals had also been illustrated. Lee (2015) makes further mention that these visual portrayals had seemed to culminate and align with the scenic images of the Eastern Frieze.

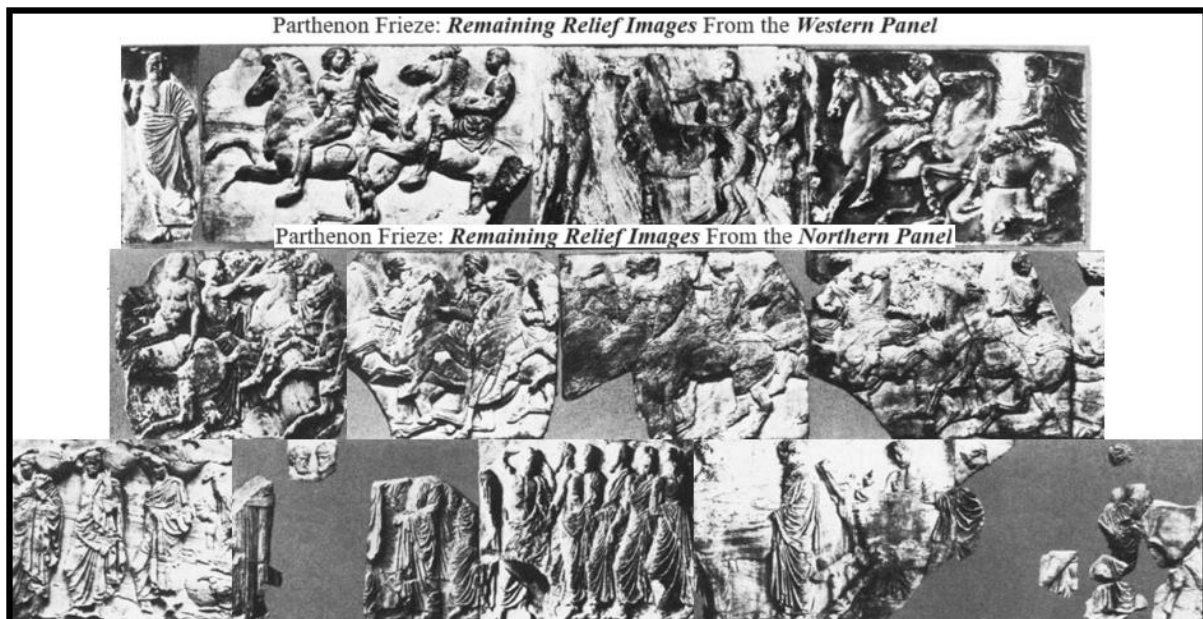
Simon (1983) provides additional details by arguing that the Northern Frieze had illustrated an honorary parade for Athena Polias, whereas the Southern Frieze had depicted an honorary parade for Athena Parthenos. Simon (1983) primarily had based her interpretation upon the various sacrificial animals which had been represented in each of these two panels. For example, sacrificial cows had been

illustrated within the Southern Frieze, while both cows and sheep had been illustrated in the Northern Frieze.

Neils (1999) additionally mentions that Evelyn Harrison had interpreted the arrangements seen within the northern panel containing groupings of four, as perhaps being “pre-Kleisthenic” (referring to the existence of the Kleisthenic Tribe). Harrison (1996) further suggests that the repetitive ‘number four’ seen within the Northern Frieze pertaining to sacrificial elders in the community, as well as musicians (or worshippers), water-bearers, and animals, had most likely been a representational illustration of the four prominent familial tribes, which had originally populated the regions of Archaic Attika.

Harrison (1996) also notes that the repetitive visual arrangements of the ‘number ten’ related to chariots, charioteers, and sacrificial martyrs within the Southern Frieze, had most likely been depicted as a symbolic representation of the ‘democratically ruled’ city of Athens, following the reformations which had been made since the reign of the Kleisthenic Tribe. Harrison (1996) is also strongly convinced that the overarching images of the Parthenon Frieze had encompassed ancient Attika’s historical context within the broader Paphlagonia (Harrison, 1996).

Figure 4: Remaining relief images from the Western -and Northern Panels of the Parthenon Frieze, which had originally surrounded the Parthenon Temple during the Classical Greek Period (Root, 1985).



Note. Root (1985) referred to **Figure 4** within the research study titled, *'The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis: Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship'*. American Journal of Archaeology, 89(1), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.2307/504773>, on p.121

The Parthenon Frieze Serving as a Reflection of Classical Greek Culture

In regards to the reflection of Classical Greek Culture, Sprague (2007) states that the four relief panels of the Parthenon Frieze had been collectively intended for the purpose of symbolizing the highly

idealized 'Great Panathenaia.' However, not merely the ritual proceedings of the procession itself, but also the entirety of the festival at large (Sprague, 2007).

Root (1985) confirms that the vast symbolic elements of the consecrated Parthenon relief panels had become tightly intertwined with the 'city-state' politics of the Classical Greek Empire and had thereby served as a reflective trait of Classical Greek culture. Root (1985) also puts forth the argument that the four relief panels of the Parthenon Frieze had become a 'public proclamation' during this time period, encapsulating the idolized ambitions and goals of the Athenians. Moreover, this grandiose public work of art heralding the goddess Athena, had further become a 'visual symbol' declaring the imminent advancement and strength of the Greek nation.

Multiple scholars have also agreed upon the interpretative understanding that the depiction of a 'procession symbolizing governmental advancement' had most likely been imitated from pre-dated Persian Art. Thereby suggesting the possibility that this specific artistic concept may have been simply copied into an Athenian context (Root, 1985).

Holloway (1966) makes the interesting observation by mentioning that the Parthenon Frieze is not the first example in ancient Greek Art, where a collective group of revered and deified figures had been assembled through sculptural depictions on the Athenian Acropolis. Holloway (1966) argues that the depictions seen on the four panels of the Parthenon Frieze had been an attempt to restore the ancient dedications of the Acropolis during Classical Greece. In other words, the Parthenon Frieze had potentially been an attempted effort to unify Classical Greek society through the revival of ancient Greek religious values and practices (Holloway, 1966).

As it further relates to the reflection of Classical Greek culture, Mark (1984) draws the excellent connection between the city's 'patron goddess' Athena (recognized as the guarantor of Classical Greek society) and the mythological god of 'goldsmithing' and 'metallurgy' known as Hephaistos, as having been representational of the skilled artisans who had worked in the city. The other three mythological gods who had also been depicted within the Eastern panel of the Parthenon Frieze, had served as symbolic representation of citizens who had either garnered agricultural or other labour-related skills in the countryside. For example, Hermes had been known as the mythological god of protection over the 'herding of cattle,' while Dionysos had been known as the mythological god of protecting vineyards and bringing forth fruitful harvests to produce quality wine. Lastly, Demeter had been known as the mythological god guarding over the fertility and reproduction of cattle, as well as agricultural processes and the successful growth of crops (Mark, 1984).

In agreement with the culminating perspectives of Sprague (2007), Root (1985), Holloway (1966), and Mark (1984), it is therefore my understanding that the four relief panels which form part of

the Parthenon Frieze as displayed around the Parthenon Temple, had been created with the main purpose of unifying Greek citizens through the spiritual representation of all societal classes and through means of proclaiming their ever-progressing strength as a nation. The glorified portrayal of goddess Athena's Procession, who had been perceived as the guardian of Athens, along with the ceremonial rituals and other activities of the entire festival, had been aimed towards providing Greek citizens with cultural pride while simultaneously reassuring them of their prominence as a nation. The multiple mythological gods who had also been unified around goddess Athena in the Parthenon Frieze, further intended to create the 'visual appearance' of both spiritual and cultural unity, while proclaiming their imminent societal advancement. Furthermore, by specifically including mythological gods who had represented different social classes within Classical Greek society, a distinct attempt had been made to encourage a revival of ancient religious values and practices during the Classical Greek Period (Mark, 1984; Root, 1985; Sprague, 2007).

Based upon the perspectives of Sprague (2007), Root (1985), Holloway (1966), and Mark (1984), I would therefore like to make the argument that the Parthenon Frieze had served as a direct reflection of Classical Greek belief systems, values, and cultural practices.

4.1.3.4 The Nike of Samothrace

Coskun (2015) provides a thorough overview of the Classical Greek sculpture titled the 'Nike of Samothrace,' which otherwise can be interpreted as the 'Winged Victory of Samothrace.' Archaeologists determined that this enchanting sculpture can be traced back to the 4th century B.C., and had been discovered by Charles Champoiseau (a French vice-ambassador) on the Samothrace Island during 1863.

According to Coskun (2015), Charles Champoiseau had uncovered the fact that this island had been a notorious location for conducting religious rituals during ancient times. These revelations had



Note. Coskun (2015) referred to **Figure 5** within the research study titled, *'Tracing the Trajectories of Memory: The Nike of Samothrace.* Middle East Technical University'.

<http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12619461/index.pdf>, on p.110

Figure 5: The 'Nike of Samothrace' Classical Greek sculpture symbolising 'Winged Victory' above the Daru staircase, which since 1932 had been kept in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France (Coskun, 2015).

become more clearly evident to the vice-ambassador during the time period he had been sent there to reclaim political influence over the Black Sea and Balkan regions. In support of the research-based interpretations made by many archaeologists and historians, Coskun (2015) notes that the faceless 'Nike of Samothrace' sculpture, which looks like a victorious angelic being, had originally served as an honorary illustration of the ancient Greek goddess, Nike.

Regula (2019) explains that the goddess Nike had been distinctly different from all the other 'winged gods,' since she had been the only god who had kept her wings throughout these mythological tales. All other 'winged gods' documented within Classical Greek mythology had the ability to transform into birds, but only for limited periods of time in order to fulfil various purposes or assignments. However, the goddess Nike had been portrayed as an athletic 'messenger of Victory' carrying Hermes's staff in her one hand, while holding a palm frond in the other. She had also been depicted with exceptionally large wings compared to other mythological gods and had often been illustrated as a 'protector' on the battlefield. In addition to the strength of her large wings, Nike had also been characterized by her superior skills as the 'divine coachman or charioteer,' along with her lightning-fast running capacity. According to these mythological tales, she had furthermore also been known for distributing 'laurel wreaths' to soldiers and warriors during ancient times of war, while bestowing magnificent victory and glory upon them (Regula, 2019).

Stewart (2016) adds further clarification by mentioning that the Nike's figure had been sculpted from Parian white marble, which typically had a clear and bright appearance. Due to the use of white marble, the sculpture had therefore easily captured the light, which in return had created the 'visual impression' of a superior being. In contrast, however, her ship's base and foundational block had been created from much darker Lartian marble, which had a blue-grey colour scheme containing pink-grey veins.

In regards to the physical appearance of the originally excavated 'Nike of Samothrace' sculpture, Grove (2018) notes that the figure had been portrayed wearing very finely draped material clearly revealing the goddess's bodily shape. She had also been depicted wearing a chiton tightly belted underneath her chest, while her lower body from the waist down had been covered by a 'himation' (a mantle made of thick cloth). At the same time, it's clearly evident that the original sculptor had intentionally attempted to depict the 'illusion of wind movement' pressing against the body of the goddess, which had then more clearly revealed her left leg since a piece of drapery had been lifted while flying backwards in the strong wind (Sariyildiz, 2018).

Sariyildiz (2018), makes the compelling argument by suggesting that the sculptor of the 'Nike of Samothrace' had deliberately depicted the goddess in such a manner which made it seem like she had

just been captured in the act of 'landing on the deck'. Especially with her right foot firmly placed upon the ground, while her left foot and wings had remained in the air.

Grove (2018), further proposed that the reason for this 'landing posture' with the strong suggestion of movement seen in the legs, material, and raised wings (still raised in the air), had been intentionally sculpted in such a manner to capture a sense of 'victory'. In many restitution versions of the original sculpture which had later been recreated by a number of different artists, the goddess Nike had been portrayed lifting up her right arm to announce and declare victory.

It is further noted that the Nike's right hand, which had been found 87 years after the original discovery of the main sculpture had been made on the Island of Samothrace during 1863, revealed an open palm with extended fingers. This additional revelation, which had been uncovered in 1950 by Jean Charbonneaux, also confirmed that the original statue's right hand did not hold a coronet, trumpet, or another object (Sariyidiz, 2018).



Figure 6: The Classical Greek 'Nike of Samothrace' sculpture from approximately 400 years B.C., is seen declaring 'victory', while standing on the Panathenaic ship kept in the Louvre Museum, in Paris (Wachsmann, 2012).

Note. Wachsmann (2012) referred to **Figure 6** within the research study titled, *Panathenaic Ships: The Iconographic Evidence*. *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 81(2), 237–266. <https://doi.org/10.2972/hesperia.81.2.0237>, page 251.

As a representation of Classical Greek societal and cultural values, Pruski (2019) states that the angelic demeanour of the goddess Nike had been intended as a representation of the exceptional bravery and valour which had been both associated with the 'victory monuments' serving as distinguishing features of this particular time period, as well as the typical Classical Greek iconography.

Pruski (2019) further argues that the portrayal of the Nike goddess's stance on the front of the ship can be viewed as a symbolic representation of 'successful victory,' which had literally extended beyond the risk of drowning, especially when considering ancient Greek superstitions.

In context to many ancient Greek wars and battles which had taken place against their surrounding nations, Pruski (2019) proposes the idea that the 'Nike of Samothrace' had been created as a symbolic, yet 'visual declaration' to enemy nations of ancient Greece. Therefore, proclaiming the Nike's victorious protection of 'watching over' and 'fighting on behalf' of the ancient Greek armies, with the purpose of intimidating their adversaries. This had been even more relevant to soldiers fighting battles in the ancient Greek navy.

Stewart (2016), further explains that many mythological Greek gods, such as the "Dioscuri" (known as the 'sons of Zeus'), had been believed by Classical Greeks to protect their ancient navies and sailors against shipwrecks, while simultaneously awarding them with victorious voyages. Ancient literary texts also make it clear that these special protections had only been provided to those who were considered devoutly religious by the 'sons of Zeus,' especially individuals who had gone through the initiation rituals of Samothracian mysteries.

Pertaining to the 'cultural perceptions and interpretations' which had been upheld regarding the 'Nike of Samothrace' by Classical Greek society, Wachmann (2012) presents the viewpoint that the deep level of respect and admiration expressed for this sculpture had been far more clearly understood by the citizens of this time period, compared to modern-day scholars. Mainly since their traditions had not only been oral in nature, (referring to both public declarations which had been combined with extensive ideological texts), but were also known for having 'picturesque' and 'visual' attributes. More specifically, as it relates to the 'psychological' and 'visual impact' which these grandiose ancient buildings, temples, statues, and sculptures (of brilliant military leaders, skilled warriors, and mythological gods) had upon Classical Greek society.

When considering the extraordinarily large-scale, 'visually grandiose,' and somewhat intimidating nature of these imaginative structures, as noted by Wachmann (2012), I would like to argue that it's therefore unsurprising that the male populace of Classical Greece had such a strong desire to prove their self-worth through physical strength and achievement.

4.2.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Prosperous Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.)

4.2.1.1 Origins of the Han Dynasty

Fangyin (2023) notes that the Han Dynasty came into fruition once Liu Bang had seized the title as emperor during a short revolt which had occurred during the Qin Empire, and then named himself Emperor Gaozu. Once he had become the new Chinese Emperor, he then established the new capital of Han as 'Chang'an' nearby the Wei River, (which had been one of the last few remaining locations of the Qin Dynasty), which in return had become a region known as Western Han. This new region, which had been established, lasted until 23 years A.D.

Since Emperor Gaozu's reign at the beginning of the Han Dynasty, D'Haeseleer (2020) mentions that he had immediately provided recognition to various kingdoms within Ancient China, but had then begun to gradually replace the already existing kings with the new members of his own family from the Liu bloodline, before he had died in the year 195 B.C. The purpose behind his strategy to promote his own family members into leadership positions had been intended to prevent rebellions from occurring. However, the Kings from the Lui family bloodline had been so invested in their own selfish ambitions that Chinese society during the Han Dynasty had been greatly tested with the corruption of their leaders (D'Haeseleer, 2020).

Once Emperor Gaozu had died, however, Ilyas et al. (2020) state that Empress Lu Zhi had attempted to take over control of the empire by executing a number of Emperor Gaozu's sons. In addition, this historically evil Empress had also killed and tortured her own mother, as well as Lady Qi, who had been Emperor Gaozu's preferred mistress. This power struggle had continued for another 15 years until Emperor Wan (Gaozu's son) had put Lu Zhi's entire family to death (Ilyas et al., 2020).

4.2.1.2 The Han Dynasty: An Era Characterized by Significant Economic Growth & Wealth

The Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty (206–220 B.C.) that shortly followed the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.) had been known as the 'Golden Age' of China, since it had been marked by innovation, technological advancements, political changes, and significant cultural progress (Moses, 2023).

The Silk Road

Swingle (1921) notes that one of the most fundamental accomplishments which had been achieved during the Han Dynasty, was China's successful expansion of its physical territory, as well as further economic influences which had been made in the South-East Asia region. The result of China's

expansion had led to the prosperous increase of trade along China's new Silk Road, which ultimately had produced great wealth and brought unique consumer goods to the mainland.

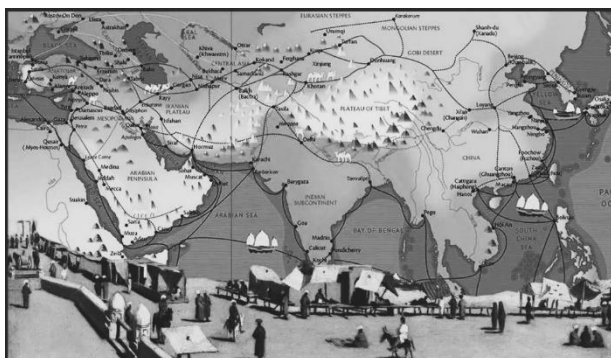


Figure 7: A newly illustrated version of Zhang Qian's original Ancient Silk Road Map (Skinner, 2021).

Note. Skinner (2021) referred to **Figure 7** within the research article titled, 'What was the Silk Road & What was Traded on it?' *MA Asian Studies, MA Archaeology. The Collector.*
<https://www.thecollector.com/what-was-the-silk-road/>, para 1.

In addition, Neelis (2011) elaborates upon this understanding by stating that this era had also been characterized by vibrant social and business interactions, while the Silk Road had created new opportunities for interactions with foreign nations and different cultures. In return, these interactions had further resulted in the exchange of new ideas and technology (Neelis, 2011).

Regarding the former Qin Dynasty, it is stated by Mark (2016) that Emperor Wu had sent one of his officials named Zhang Qian on a quest to make contact with—and to build lines of communication with—tribes to the west of Ancient China. Although Zhang Qian and his men had later been captured during their mission by the Xiognu Tribe, he had managed to escape and had continued traveling further towards the west.

When Zhang Qian had eventually reached modern-day Afghanistan, formerly known as Bactria, he had realized that this region had been subjected to the control of the ancient Greeks. However, to Zhang Qian's surprise, he had then discovered that both oriental Chinese textiles and bamboo from China had somehow been sold to the local citizens of Bactria. As a result of this discovery, he had then made an inquiry into the origins of these goods, while he had been told that they had come from Shendu (which had been a kingdom within Afghanistan during that time period) (Mark, 2016).

Mark (2016) further states that once Zhang Qian had returned and had reached Emperor Wu after 13 years, he had informed the emperor regarding everything which he had discovered and had observed throughout his expedition. Furthermore, he had also provided the emperor with a detailed map containing routes which had then guided the emperor's military to travel back there with ease. It is noteworthy to mention that Zhang Qian's routes, as he had mapped them out, had become frequently used in Ancient China. At the same time, his original map had continued expanding to such a great extent that it had eventually developed into an international trading route, better known as the Silk Road.

4.2.2.1 The Societal & Cultural Atmosphere of the Han Dynasty, As It Relates to the Invention of Paper and The Expansion of Literature & Education:

An interesting point to take note of, pertaining to the cultural atmosphere which had existed during the Han Dynasty of Ancient China, is that the entire time period had most likely been ruled by young boys who had still been in their early teenage years. This not only would have created an intriguing palace situation, but some scholars believe that this may have directly led to the kingdom's demise and unravelling (Scobell, 2002).

As further elaborated upon by Szczepanski (2019), during the emperor's early years of reign, his mother had had more power and influence, while she simultaneously had also depended upon her broader family's support to attain both her leadership and influence. However, these young emperors had been guarded in isolated confinement along with the eunuchs who had eventually become their most trusted confidants, as well as their co-conspirators. These unique brotherly allegiances, which had been formed between the young rulers and the eunuchs who had protected them, often had led to the eunuchs' murdering families who had opposed these young emperors in order to assist with their attainment of power (Lai, 2016).

Invention of Paper:

The court eunuchs had been much more useful than merely assisting the emperors with remaining in power. Mark (2016) states that during the period of the Han Dynasty, Cai Lun (one of the court eunuchs) had received recognition for developing paper around 105 A.D. Some of the ingredients which had been identified from the pulp of his paper-making process included mulberry tree bark, fishing nets, rags, bamboo, and hemp, which had all been pulverized and had been mixed together with water before it had been thinly spread out. The use of Cai Lun's new paper-making recipe had spread remarkably fast across the land during the Han Dynasty. The invention of paper had therefore naturally accelerated the distribution of information and had also expanded the progress of educational debates.

As further mentioned by Wang (1964), the invention of paper had also significantly accelerated their ability to document scientific and historic information (in order to record accurate information regarding important events), while it had also increased their ability to communicate more effectively with both their own leaders and foreign leaders. Furthermore, the invention of paper had also led to an acceleration of progress within Chinese literacy, as well as within the administrative branches of Chinese governance and the broader development of education.

Additionally, Xu Shen had also developed the first documented Chinese dictionary, which had included Chinese characters from this particular time period, while Xu Shen's dictionary had still been

referred to by scholars during the recent 20th century, more specifically as it had related to the deciphering and accurate interpretation of ancient archaeological inscriptions (Scobell, 2002).

Apart from the consequential advancements which had been made related to written literature, education, and communication, the foundational platform which had been established during the Han Dynasty also had created the ideal platform for historians to expand upon their areas of expertise and to gain further recognition. Needless to mention that the Han Dynasty had also led to the rise of Chinese literary scholars such as Ban Zhao and Sima Qian, including the birthing of Confucianism as a new ideology and belief system (Scobell, 2002).

Li (2022) mentions that a 'Confucian Revival' had reoccurred during the Han Dynasty when 'Confucianism' had once more gained great favour among key figures of royalty around 135 B.C. Confucianism as an ideology had also remained alive during ancient China due to the scholars of their time. For example, Fu Sheng had been responsible for preserving significant literary texts throughout the Qin Dynasty, as well as for many years thereafter.

According to Peng (2010), many ideological texts rooted in Confucianism had been destroyed and lost throughout the prior Qin Dynasty, while an imperial library had been burned during a civil war that had taken place around 210 B.C. The ancient literary scholar Fu Sheng had succeeded in preserving 'The Book of Documents,' while forceful efforts had simultaneously been made to gather all surviving Confucian texts during the Han Dynasty. Certain Confucian texts had, however, been found in the possession of royal leaders, while other transcripts had been discovered hidden within the walls of Confucius's own home.

Once these historic texts had been found, Hui (2020) states that the Imperial University, as the forerunner of education during the Han Dynasty, had created a program in 136 B.C. with the purpose of teaching the following texts: 1.) the 'Book of Changes'; 2.) the 'Book of Rites'; 3.) the 'Book of Documents'; 4.) the 'Five Classics of Confucianism'; 5.) and the 'Spring & Autumn Annals,' which had later been translated into a more modern dialect. By 200 A.D., the Imperial University had enrolled thirty thousand students who had been studying the ideology of Confucianism.

As observed by Wu (2021), the majority of credible information that archaeologists had gathered from Fine Arts artefacts dating back to the Han Dynasty had mostly come to light due to the uncovering of royal tombs. For example, two underground tomb chambers had been discovered, which had originally been built underneath four shrines. Within these chambers, the walls and ceiling had not only been covered with decorative and illustrative depictions of key historical royal figures but had also contained seventy engraved stones.

Waring (2021) provides further commentary regarding the fact that this site had also contained three thousand Fine Arts figurines which had honoured figures from the Han Dynasty. Within the making processes of these figurines, however, ancient artisans had applied gold, silver, bronze, jade, ceramics, and silk. Approximately two thousand pieces of jade had also been discovered within two suits, found within the same tomb. In addition, models of houses made from ceramics had also been discovered within these Han Dynasty tombs, with differing degrees of intricacy and sophistication regarding their designs. The main reason ascribed to the survival of these tombs, with all their artefacts, valuable jewellery, adornments, and expensive treasures still intact after many centuries, seems to be the fact that they had only been marked by large dirt piles above the ground. This wise approach had therefore successfully camouflaged the contents of these tombs for many generations.

As noted by Chaffin (n.d.), the excavation of tombs had revealed that there had also been another type of revival that had occurred during the Han Dynasty. This reformation had been specifically aimed at renewing the diverse cultural traditions from particular regions, including certain religious practices that had originated from the Eastern Zhou period yet had been suppressed throughout the Qin Dynasty. Evidence of these changes had mostly been observed by archaeologists in the context of localized burial customs and practices from the Han Dynasty, which had expanded upon earlier cultural attempts to imitate the living world in the afterlife.

These attempts to imitate the world of the living, as noted by Campbell (2010), had not only been visible within the uncovered construction sites of the Han Dynasty's burial chambers but had also been seen among the types of burial offerings that had been made to those buried within these chambers. Some tombs from the Han Dynasty had also modelled palaces that had been built above the ground, while others had been divided into various chambers that had been separately characterized by different functions.

4.2.2.2 Cultural Values Related to Daily Living, which Characterized the Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty (206–220 B.C.)

Cartwright (2017) notes that one important cultural aspiration of Chinese society during the Han Dynasty had been the documentation and retelling of mythological stories to both young and old, as well as the reiteration of educational stories which they had deemed to be of high value within their daily experiences. In agreement with Cartwright (2017), Chinese society during this time period had viewed it as important for all their citizens to have a firm understanding regarding their personal heritage, while cultivating a strong sense of cultural pride.

During this particular time period in Chinese history, all forms of Fine Arts and craftsmanship had flourished due to the economic wealth, abundance, and political stability which had been enjoyed

throughout the territories of their land. Cartwright (2017) also mentions that the production of high-quality new arts materials such as inks, papers, and paint brushes had contributed towards the advancements and progress that had been made by Chinese artisans during this historical time. In addition, artists had aimed to consistently increase the aesthetic beauty and technical intricacies which had been applied within their artworks, in order to meet the increasing expectations which had been set by Ancient Chinese Art collectors and connoisseurs (Cartwright, 2017).

Within the writings of the well-known Art Historian named Tregear (2017), it is stated that the art forms which had originally been created during the Qin Dynasty had been further developed during the Han Dynasty. However, these art forms had been significantly different in regards to having been notably more focused upon capturing key events or tasks reflecting their 'daily lives,' as well as myths which had been considered as 'credible.' In other words, art forms from these two dynasties had been primarily expressive in nature and had therefore aimed at communicating specific narratives, whereas art forms from earlier dynasties had been merely connected to ceremonial rituals or the portrayal of varying degrees of social stature, through the application of decorative art techniques.

Rossabi (2013) adds to this understanding by stating that royal leaders from the Han Dynasty had begun to realize that art forms could be utilized as a powerful avenue for 'visually communicating' and presenting a unified Chinese worldview or perspective, which would promote their cultural sovereignty. Some of the daily cultural activities which had been depicted within various artworks from this era had included landscape scenery, fishing scenes, hunting scenes, and scenes of rural farming communities. Furthermore, these unifying depictions of hard-working citizens had gradually gained traction and preferability among ancient Chinese society. At the same time, these artworks containing fairly simplistic themes had acquired borders with excessive decorative motifs which had seemed fairly similar to the borders that had been seen in pattern books. These decorative and organic-shaped motifs had also been increasingly added to ceramics, bronze mirrors, and different forms of lacquered artefacts by artisans (Rossabi, 2013).

4.2.3.1 Reflections of Culture Through Calligraphy as Art from During the Han Dynasty

Watson (2000) explains that right next to painting, calligraphy had been established as a highly important art form during the Han Dynasty. Since paper had been developed during this era, it had led to a natural increase within the production of diversified literary texts, which further had caused an increased need for advanced writing skills and illustrative depictions to accompany these writings. Therefore, both calligraphy and painting had become the most pivotal forms of artistic communication and expression during ancient China, for the following 2000 years. Although simple 'paper and brush calligraphy techniques' had expanded significantly during this time period, 'engraved calligraphy' had already been recognized as a fine-tuned art form during this point in history. Archaeologists have also

found engraved techniques of calligraphy which had been embedded on bronze, bone, and stone objects of distinction (Watson, 2000).

As elaborated upon by Feng (2013), those who had been considered to form part of the educated populous of the Han Dynasty, (including certain court women), had been required to be both skilful and fluent in the application of calligraphy. In addition to the expectation of memorizing approximately 4000 unique Chinese characters, those of noble stature had also been required to obtain exceptional calligraphic capabilities. This cultural expectation had encompassed the ability to write in an eloquent and speedy manner, while further demonstrating exceptional brushwork, a strong sense of hand control, and a clear awareness of what had constituted as 'a successful composition.' The overall layout and manner in which the lettering had been arranged on a piece of parchment had also been critically important in regards to the value placed upon the final product (Feng, 2013).

Clunas (2017) provides extended details regarding calligraphy tools which had been used during the Han Dynasty, by stating that certain writing techniques had produced very stylish methods, while other writing techniques had been more 'visually weighty,' more 'light and fluent,' or in some cases had been altered to make fast-paced writing more achievable. The advancements which had also been added to calligraphic apparatuses by designing them from the finest pressed wood, diluted fixatives, and soft animal hair, further had provided calligraphy artists with a limitless range of options to excel within their craft (Clunas, 2017).

It's most interesting to note, however, that the foundational philosophical beliefs which had originally led towards the development of Chinese calligraphy, as well as the specified brushwork techniques which had been established along with the associated materials that ancient calligraphers had used, directly had impacted the painting styles which had later developed during this time period, more specifically in regards to different styles of landscape painting (Feng, 2013).



Figure 8: A Chinese calligraphy inscription was found on a wooden tablet which dates back to the Han Dynasty, 206 B.C. - A.D. 220. The wooden tablet was excavated in Juyan, Gansu, while the artefact is currently being kept in the Gansu Provincial Museum of China (Little, 1987).

Note. Little (1987) referred to **Figure 8** within the research article titled, 'Chinese Calligraphy'. *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 74 (9), 372–403.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25160005>, p. 374.

The photograph provided by Little (1978) is an example of a calligraphic inscribed tablet which had been made from wood and had been originally discovered in Juyan, Gansu. This inscribed tablet also dates back to the Han Dynasty, while it is currently being preserved within the Gansu Provincial Museum.

Compared to calligraphy styles which had been excavated from other ancient Chinese dynasties, the calligraphy examples which date back to the Han Dynasty had typically been less complex or challenging in style. According to the investigative research by Little (1978), this particular example of calligraphic writing had been designed by clerks who had administrative duties to fulfil. Thus, this style of writing which they had developed was much more fluid and simplistic in comparison to ancient 'seal script.' This style of calligraphy was therefore also much easier to imitate, while using a brush on multiple surfaces, such as silk, parchment, paper, and wood (Little, 1978).

Regarding the manner in which 'calligraphy as an art form' had reflected culture during the Han Dynasty, my observation in accordance with the views of Little (1978) would be that the early developments of calligraphy during this time period of exceptional economic growth and production had originally begun as a means to produce written documentation at a faster and more productive rate. Therefore, 'aesthetic beauty' and impressive intricacies had not been the original focal point of calligraphy styles which had been used during the Han Dynasty. However, in later dynasties which had followed, such as the Song Dynasty in particular, far greater value had been placed upon the visual attributes of calligraphy itself (Little, 1978).

4.2.3.2 Reflections of Culture Through Portraiture Paintings from the Han Dynasty

As a result of increased economic wealth among society during the Han Dynasty, Fenollosa (2007) states that more wealthy citizens had become advocates and consumers of specialised art forms. At the same time, as consumerism demands had systematically continued to grow while being accompanied by an increased appetite for new innovative improvements within different genres of art, figure painting in particular had greatly benefited from these new consumer interests. The accelerating availability of parchment and paper production had therefore been another factor which had drastically influenced the rapid progress that had been made in regards to silk painting and figure painting (Fenollosa, 2007).

In regards to an escalation within portraiture painting which had been observed regarding noble figures of the Han Dynasty, this genre of painting had seemed to gain remarkable popularity. Moreover, the portraits of different people had been more frequently illustrated upon multiple surfaces such as construction beams (known as lintels), tomb pillars, stone walls, wooden chests, coffins, as well as ordinary objects which had been used in daily life (Fenollosa, 2007).

In agreement with Fenollosa (2007), an increased desire to recognize important individuals within society during the Han Dynasty had become more clearly reflected in Fine Arts through the expansion of portraiture paintings. Apart from merely depicting aristocratic or noble figures, however, 'familial themes' which had depicted relationships between father and son, mother and daughter, or other forms of family relationships, had become more frequently seen as well. In agreement with the views of Fenollosa (2007), one could therefore argue that the emphasis which had been placed upon 'cultural pride,' 'familial pride,' and the 'pride of the individual,' which had been intended to elevate the importance of 'personal identity,' had become more evidently reflected through an increase within the production of portraiture artworks.

Figure 9: A Figure Painting & Portraiture example found on the outer surface of a wooden basket from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), which had originally been in the possession of North Korea's commandship. (Artist, (2017).



Note. Artist (2017) referred to **Figure 9** within the research World History Encyclopaedia titled, '*Han Figure Painting*. World History Encyclopaedia.

<https://www.worldhistory.org/image/7345/han-figure-painting/>, para. 1.

Ebrey (2013) highlights one of the most prominent and iconic portraits from the Han Dynasty, which had been discovered on the outer surface of a basket many years ago, and which had been in the possession of North Korea's commandship. On the sides of the basket, a highly skilled artist had painted intricate 3-inch-high figures depicting prominent historical individuals, who had been illustrated with detailed facial expressions and gestures. It's worth noting that figures during the Han Dynasty had typically been painted in either profile form or in a 3-quarter view. It's equally impressive that the

original artist had gone through the extended effort of labelling each of these important historical figures. The act of having labelled these prominent figures further strengthens the perspective that giving recognition to important figures had been increasingly more reflected through Fine Arts during the Han Dynasty. This also emphasises changes which had taken place within the societal norms of the historical time period (Ebrey, 2013).

4.2.3.3 Reflections of Culture Through Tomb Paintings from the Han Dynasty

Figure 10: A Tomb Mural illustration of 'A Couple's Banquet', from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220). The tomb mural had been discovered in Tanggong Rd, near the Glass Factory in Luoyang, China (Jiachuan, 2019).



Note. Jiachuan (2019) referred to **Figure 10** within the article titled, 'Folklore Thoughts in the Tomb Murals of Han Dynasty', 310 (Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research).
[file:///C:/Users/Sumari/Downloads/55915720%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Sumari/Downloads/55915720%20(1).pdf), p. 414

As confirmed by Watson (2000), the Silk Road trading route had connected the ancient Chinese civilization with influences from many other cultures during the Han Dynasty. One such example pertains to Buddhist Indian monks who had influenced Chinese artists in regards to their portrayal of certain narratives, their visual communication related to storytelling, and the implication of meaningful moral messages through their artworks. Since the time when Chinese artists from the Han Dynasty had first started adopting the approach of communicating different narratives through their paintings, this new trend had become primarily more noticeable within tomb murals and paintings. These types of paintings had also typically been painted upon wooden panels with lacquer-paint, while different scenes from stories of timelines had been exhibited in a vertical or horizontal manner, similar to the way in which a silk scroll or parchment scroll would have been painted (Watson, 2000).

As seen within the insightful research and photograph provided by Jiachuan (2019), which had been found in the Tanggong Road Glass Factory in Luoyang, China, the artist had painted a master and his beloved mistress sitting next to one another on a bed-sofa. On the left side of this tomb painting, a

servant can be seen wearing a long garment with extended sleeves, who had been gracefully stirring a dish being prepared. Another female servant had been standing or appearing behind the mistress of the prominent male figure, although her image is somewhat unclear and faded. It's also noteworthy to mention that, similar to the simplified lines which had been noticeable within the calligraphic brushstrokes of the Han Dynasty, these figures had also been portrayed through the application of flexible and fluent long lines. Simultaneously, the organic shapes of these figures had also been painted in a facile and simplified manner, while they had been filled with flattened colour planes.

In addition, Jiachuan (2019) makes the accurate observation that the portrayal of these characters had been simplistic in regards to their form. The fact that these figures had also been somewhat exaggerated in regards to their length is believed to have been done intentionally by the artist in order to showcase the light, beautiful, and elegant nature of these individuals. In agreement with both Jiachuan (2019) and Watson (2000), the painter had therefore once again revealed that he or she had purposefully illustrated a certain narrative or perspective through their artwork.

Note. Cartwright (2023) referred to

Figure 11 within the article titled, *'The Art of the Han Dynasty*. World History Encyclopaedia.
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1128/the-art-of-the-han-dynasty/>, para. 6



Figure 11: Portraiture Painting of two prominent women from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220). This portrait had been found in the Dahuting Tomb in China (Cartwright, 2017).

Another observation made by Wallace (2011) regarding this tomb painting is that the 'societal ranks' of the Han Dynasty had been clearly noticeable, as the relational interaction between the master and his servants had clearly referred to the feudal ethics of 'superiority versus inferiority,' which had originally stemmed from Confucian ideology. Furthermore, the cultural values which had been adopted during the Han Dynasty were strongly reflected through this painting, as it's one of many examples which had showcased either 'hierarchy,' 'loyalty,' 'filial religiosity,' or 'respect' for the rules of royal leaders and even heaven itself. In the instance of this particular painting, however, it is evident that the relational differences or barriers between those who had been considered as being from 'dignified nobility' and those who had been perceived as being 'inferior,' could not be crossed.

Through the portrayal of the deceased's 'life scenes,' which had been painted as an honorary immortalization of individuals, the argument could be made that artists from the Han Dynasty had depicted narratives in their paintings which had essentially revealed that the 'societal culture' of the Han Dynasty continually pondered about the 'power and authority' which life had to offer them. Artists who had therefore adhered to consumer demands during the Han Dynasty had attempted to capture this cultural infatuation regarding the attainment of eternal honour and authority into the afterlife. These portrayals are more specifically seen within tomb paintings from the Han Dynasty (Jiachuan, 2019).

The following portrait example from the Han Dynasty, which had been discovered on one of the stone walls of the Dahuting Tomb, captures the portrayal of two noble women wearing fold-over garments, referred to as 'mandarin gowns,' who had been having a friendly interaction. Although it is unclear whether the glass object held in the hand of the woman on the right had been intended to represent an oil lamp or not, their subtle facial expressions had suggested a deep bond of sisterly love. Since this painting had been found on the inner wall of an underground tomb, it would also be fair to assume that these two women had been directly related (Cartwright, 2017).

In agreement with Cartwright (2017), the tomb painting of these two noble women from the Han Dynasty displays and reflects the cultural importance which had been placed upon the recognition and remembrance of prominent key individuals within society. The painting is also reflective of ancient Chinese culture, as it had been created to honour familial relationships. The cultural focus of the Han Dynasty Era had therefore greatly shifted towards empowering, glorifying, honouring, and remembering 'the individual,' (which had included a broad spectrum of scholars, philosophers, religious figures, and wealthy figures of great royalty), during former eras in history.

4.2.3.4 Reflection of Culture Through Silk Paintings from the Han Dynasty

Figure 12: Silk Painting example from Lady Dai's Funeral Banner from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220). The Funeral Banner had been discovered in 1972 at Mawangdui in China, while currently being displayed in the Hunan Provincial Museum (McIntire, n.d.).

Note. McIntire (n.d.) referred to **Figure 12** within the article titled, '*Funeral Banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*'. Smarthistory.org. The Center for Public Art History.
<https://smarthistory.org/funeral-banner-of-lady-dai-xin-zhui/>, para. 1



Bush (2014) states that three royal burial chambers which had been excavated in 1972 at Mawangdui (in the Hunan Province within Eastern China) were credited as the most astonishing and ground-breaking discoveries made during the 20th century in Chinese history. The tombs had contained the remains of the Marquis of Dai, his wife Lady Dai, their son, including another high-ranking official and civil servant who had attained significant prominence during the Han Dynasty. The Marquis himself had passed away during 186 B.C., while Lady Dai and their son had later passed away in 163 B.C. When archaeologists had found the tomb of the Marquis, it had no longer been in good condition. Yet the quality of the objects which had been discovered in the burial chambers of his wife and son were of exceptional value and had served as evidence that they had lived a luxurious life (Bush, 2014).

And, interestingly enough, as Hung (1992) had noted, the burial chambers of aristocratic and even royal women who had lived around the same time and place as Yi, had been distinctly smaller and less elaborate than the grand and multi-chambered tomb of their illustrious predecessor, the last Marquis Yi of Zeng. That noble had previously been laid to rest somewhat three centuries earlier, which had made the contrast rather difficult to miss (Hung, 1992). In Lady Dai's tomb, archaeologists discovered that it had been filled with everyday objects which had been personally cherished by her. This included everything from kitchen utensils, heirloom items, silk garments, and beautiful cosmetic boxes. Archaeologists had also found "spirit objects" or replications of real people and objects in her ancient

tomb, which had already been crafted prior to her burial so that she would then be able to use them during the afterlife (Hung, 1992).

The Silk Painting example seen above from Lady Dai's Funeral Banner, which had been excavated in 1972 from Mawangdui during the Han Dynasty, is currently being displayed in the Hunan Provincial Museum in China (Chaffin, n.d.).

Mencher (n.d.) argues that one of the most unique discoveries made within Lady Dai's tomb had been this T-shaped banner (and silk painting), which had been found intact and in excellent condition. This T-shaped banner of more than 6 feet in length had also been placed over the top of the 'innermost' of 4 nesting coffins. Despite many scholarly debates which had occurred regarding the functionality of these banners, most researchers are certain that the banner had a direct connection to both the spirit realm and the afterlife of the 4 deceased individuals within these coffins (Mencher, n.d.).

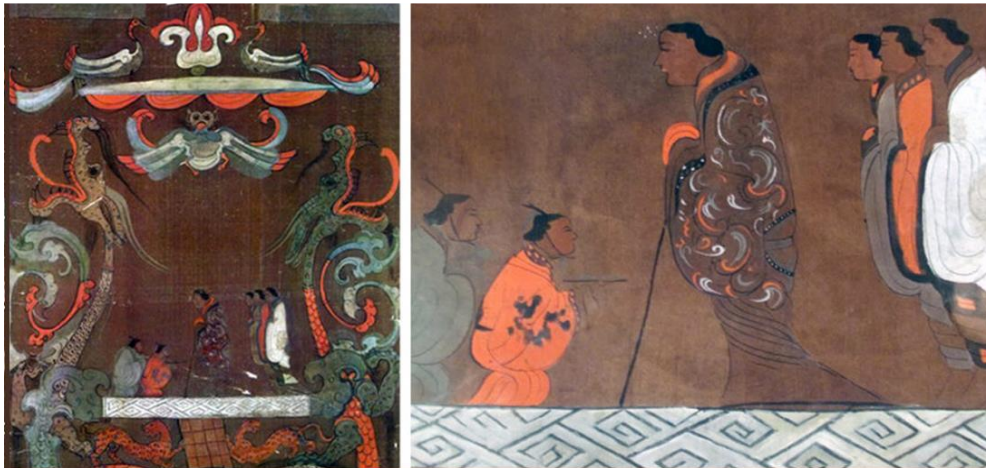
The weaker argument made by some scholars suggests that these types of banners had perhaps been used as 'name banners' to identify individuals during mourning ceremonies. Yet the more credible argument instead proposes that, similar to the objects which had been placed within these tombs, these banners had most likely been intended for guiding the soul of the deceased into the afterlife (Chaffin, n.d.).

Liu-Perkins (2014), however, provides the following perspective by highlighting that Lady Dai's personalized banner had seemed to have been of great importance for two main reasons. Firstly, in regard to the style of ancient Chinese painting which had been applied to the silk banner, the depictions observed had represented an early portrayal of natural scenes rather than abstract shapes. Secondly, the painted illustrations had seemed to capture the earliest form of Chinese portrait painting (Liu-Perkins, 2014).

Hirst (2012) makes the further observation regarding Lady Dai's banner by pointing out that its design had been divided into four horizontal registers. Within the central lower section of her funerary banner, she had been illustrated leaning onto her staff while wearing a luxurious silk robe. This particular illustration of Lady Dai as a royal figure had been the earliest example of its kind, extending into modern times.

As seen in the next photograph below, Lady Dai had also been depicted standing on a platform with two of her servants bowing in front of her, while three of her servants had been standing guard behind her (Hirst, 2012).

Figure 13: Enlarged Sections of a Silk Painting on Lady Dai's Funeral Banner from the Han Dynasty, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), discovered in 1972 at Mawangdui in China, is currently being displayed in the Hunan Provincial Museum (McIntire, n.d.).



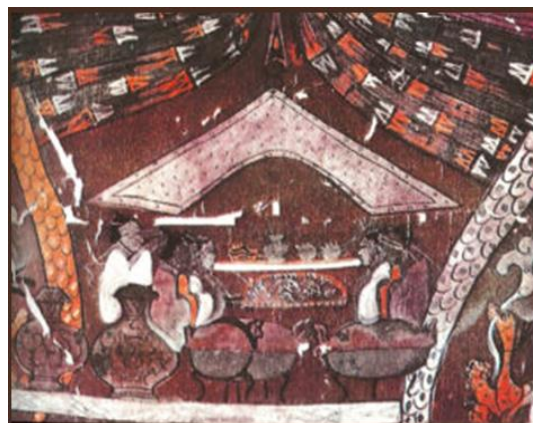
Note. McIntire (n.d.) referred to **Figure 13** within the article titled, '*Funeral Banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*'. Smarthistory.org. The Center for Public Art History.
<https://smarthistory.org/funeral-banner-of-lady-dai-xin-zhui/>, para. 4

As observed by Bush (2014), winding serpentine-like dragons had been painted framing Lady Dai's portrait on both sides, while their bodies had seemed to loop through a 'bi.' The term 'bi' had referred to a disc with a hole in the middle, which had been representational of the skies underneath Lady Dai's deified character. According to the interpretation of archaeologists and historians, this portrait had aimed to suggest a future glimpse of Lady Dai's glorified appearance within the afterlife while taking pleasure in the eternal comforts of her burial chamber, before ascending toward the heavens.

Additionally, seen within this enlarged section of Lady Dai's funeral banner that is currently being displayed at the Hunan Provincial Museum in China, funeral mourners had also been illustrated (Chaffin, n.d.). While these mourners had been seated in two rows facing one another within the funeral banner's lower midsection, Hirst (2018) notes that the sacrificial funerary rituals which had been taking place in the mourning hall had also been clearly illustrated. Hirst (2019) further mentions that a variety of decorated vases and jugs which had been utilized during food offerings and the preservation of wine had also been depicted rather prominently in the foreground of this silk painting.

Figure 14: Enlarged Section on Lady Dai's Funeral Banner depicting '*Mourners*' from the Han Dynasty, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), discovered in 1972 at Mawangdui in China, while currently being displayed in the Hunan Provincial Museum (McIntire, n.d.).

Note. McIntire (n.d.) referred to **Figure 14** within the article titled, '*Funeral Banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*'. Smarthistory.org. The Center for



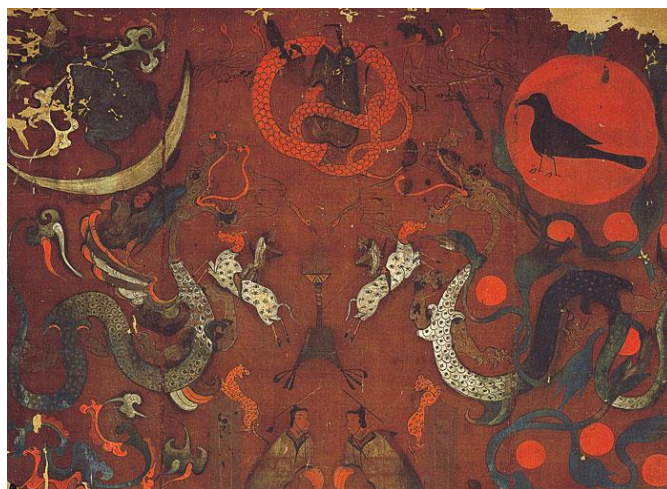
When taking a closer look, however, Hirst (2018) points out that the patterns which had been illustrated within this particular section of the funeral banner had been perfectly matched by Lady Dai's robe in the scene slightly higher within the banner. Furthermore, vessels had also been illustrated in the background.

Trospen (2023) calls attention to the fact that the artist(s) who had created the silk painting on Lady Dai's banner evidently had attempted to create perspective and depth within this artwork through the overlapping depiction of the mourners' figures. It is also clearly noticeable that objects in the foreground had been illustrated much larger in comparison to the items in the background, which had been illustrated much smaller to create the illusion of space.

The last but important observation made by Hung (1992) points to the scenes above and beneath Lady Dai's mourners, within which heavenly realms had been depicted as well as the underworld. Within this portrayal of the spiritual world, two male guards had also been illustrated protecting the

eternal gates of heaven. At the same time, a deified character with a dragon-like figure and human head had further been painted right at the top of the funeral banner.

Figure 15: Enlarged Section on Lady Dai's Funeral Banner depicting the '**Heavenly Realm**' from the Han Dynasty, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), discovered in 1972 at Mawangdui in China, while currently being displayed in the Hunan Provincial Museum (McIntire, n.d.).



Note. McIntire (n.d.) referred to **Figure 15** within the article titled, '*Funeral Banner of Lady Dai (Xin Zhui)*'. Smarthistory.org. The Center for Public Art History. <https://smarthistory.org/funeral-banner-of-lady-dai-xin-zhui/>, para. 8

In regard to reflecting the cultural beliefs and values of the Han Dynasty as elaborated upon by Chaffin (n.d.), Hirst (2018), Troster (2023), Hung (1992), Liu-Perkins (2014), and Mencher (n.d.), the silk paintings on Lady Dai's funeral banner had clearly captured the societal fascination and preoccupation

which Chinese nationals had regarding the spiritual realm. Furthermore, Lady Dai's funeral banner had also reflected the exceptional value which had been placed upon the preservation of mythological beliefs and narratives related to Chinese culture during the Han Dynasty, including the importance which had been placed upon passing these views onto other generations. In addition, the elevation of important leaders and royal figures had been evident in many similar artworks which had dated back to the Han Dynasty, while these highly esteemed rulers had often been deified by society into godlike figures, far removed from human error.

4.2.3.5 Reflection of Culture Through the Early Beginnings of Landscape Painting from the Han Dynasty

As confirmed by Dillon (1998), 'landscape painting' as a genre of ancient Chinese art had only become a recognized painting style during the Sung Dynasty (960–1279). However, the early beginnings of Chinese landscape painting had been understood to have been traced back to the Han Dynasty, and it is moreover argued by Dillon (1998) that the illustration of the heavens, which had gained significant popularity during the Han Dynasty (including the importance of capturing the

quintessence of themes and representing scenery from multiple angles), is what had later led to the development of landscape painting styles.

Figure 16: A Painting from the Han Dynasty, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), depicting the Emperor and His Military Men in a Procession. This painting is an example of the early beginnings of 'landscape painting', within context to Ancient Chinese Art (Szczepanski, 2019).



Note. Szczepanski (2019).) referred to **Figure 16** within

the article titled, '*Emperors of China's Han Dynasty*'.
ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/han-dynasty-emperors-of-china-p2-195253>, para. 1

Seen within the Han
Dynasty painting above as cited by
Szczepanski (2019), a procession

which had been made by an early Han Dynasty emperor and his military men had been painted in a detailed manner. Although the focus of this painting had clearly been the importance of the procession itself, the surrounding landscapes had been painted from interesting angles, while the illusion of perspective had also been successfully achieved through the layering of flat color planes and overlapping brushstrokes, which had appeared as subtle lines (Szczepanski, 2019).

Although ancient Chinese artists had been aware of color-mixing methods that had been intended to add depth and perspective within their paintings, the preferred Chinese technique for imitating the illusion of depth in their artworks had, however, been applying thinner or broader brushstrokes across their paintings (Dillon, 1998).

In regards to the 'reflection of culture' which had been captured within paintings from the Han Dynasty as suggested by Dillon (1998), it is evident that paintings from this era had mostly displayed important royal -and historical figures of prominence. It can therefore be reasonably argued, that the 'background,' referred to as 'negative space' within Fine Arts, had not been considered as important for artists who had lived during the Han Dynasty, especially as the majority of paintings which had been excavated from the Han Dynasty had been illustrative, pictorial, and in some instances decorative in nature.

Yet these paintings had mainly been lacking in finer background details. Therefore, in correlation with the societal culture of this time period, which had been focused upon both elevating and

honouring 'the individual,' it is unsurprising that this cultural stance had been clearly noticeable within artworks from this period in time (Dillon, 1998).

4.2.3.6 Reflection of Culture Through 'Relief Art' From the Han Dynasty

Figure 17: Example of a Stone Relief Artwork excavated in Taishang, from the Jiangsu Province in China. The depiction includes two characters playing an Ancient Chinese game known as 'Liubo', similar to Chess (Yan et al., 2012).

Note. Yan et al. (2012). referred to **Figure 17** within the journal titled, 'Western Han Sarcophagi and the Transformation of Chinese Funerary Art'. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 61/62, 65–79.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23647821>, p. 71



The photograph of an excavated stone relief artwork from the Han Dynasty that had been provided by Yan et al. (2012), as seen above, depicts two characters who had been playing an ancient game named 'liubo,' (similar to modern-day chess), which had been found by archaeologists in the Jiangsu province of China.

It is stated by Yan et al. (2012) that 'liubo,' (of which the rules had been similar to chess), had been a particularly well-known game mostly played by Chinese society, long before the Qin Dynasty and Han Dynasty. However, the stone relief artwork itself, which had illustrated two 'liubo' players, had dated back to the Han Dynasty.

It is therefore interesting to note that this ancient game, which had been nearly forgotten for hundreds of years, had sparked a heated debate among academic scholars when the findings of archaeologists had first come to light. Yan et al. (2012) mentions that pieces of these archaeological artifacts had not only included broken sections of chessboards, but also had contained artistic images of chessboards that had been found as decorations on the back of bronze mirrors from the Han Dynasty. At the same time, 'liubo' chessboards, which had been carved or engraved underneath 'sarcophagi' (ancient coffins), especially those discovered from Qingyunshan and Xiaoshan, had been exceptionally rare.

Additionally, artisans from the Han Dynasty had often depicted characters playing 'liubo' in various forms of art, while the patterns seen on these chessboards mostly had included a central square pattern (Yan et al., 2012). Yan et al. (2012) further elaborated upon the details of the central square

patterns which had decorated these 'liubo' chessboards, by explaining that four 'reversed L-shapes' had been carved into the middle sections of each of the square's sides, while V-shaped patterns also had served as decorative elements on all four corners within the square.

In regards to the cultural significance of these squared patterns, which had been a trademark of 'liubo' chessboards, it is believed by scholars to have represented the "Twelve Branches" of the cosmic creation (Yan et al., 2012). Shuttleworth (2008) provides further interpretation by pointing out that in order to measure time accurately, Chinese astronomers had fractioned the heavens into 12 equal regions and 10 stems, which had been organized around the ecliptic. According to ancient Chinese astronomers, these heavenly divisions had helped them to base their predictions regarding sunspots, solar flares, comets, stars, and planets upon a 60-year cyclical time-frame (Shuttleworth, 2008).

In agreement with the observations made by Yan et al. (2012) and Shuttleworth (2008), artists during the Han Dynasty had frequently depicted 'liubo' chess players within multiple art forms such as stone reliefs, engraved ceramic artifacts, sketches, and paintings as highly prestigious cultural symbols for academic advancement and intellect. Artworks containing pictorial depictions of 'liubo,' which had been recognized as a challenging mathematical game, also had represented the great educational progress that had been made during the Han Dynasty.

As a result, it had therefore been popular among art connoisseurs and wealthy Chinese citizens from the Han Dynasty to purchase artworks of caricatures who had played 'liubo,' especially since this ancient mathematical game had represented noble stature by mere association. In other words, the societal culture of the Han Dynasty had placed remarkable value on education and cognitive superiority, as these had been greatly sought-after attributes. Furthermore, since the broader society had also desired to either achieve—or to be associated with—intellectualism, this cultural value had also understandably been reflected through the artworks of this time period (Cartwright, 2017).

4.2.3.7 Reflections of Culture Through Sculptures from the Han Dynasty

An excellent example of a gilded bronze sculpture from the Han Dynasty, referred to by Bulling (1972), had been found within Princess Dou Wan's tomb that had been excavated at Lingshan (Mancheng) in the Hebei province of ancient China. Her tomb had contained an example of a cherished heirloom: a special bronze lamp that had been gilded in the form of a kneeling servant girl, while the kneeling girl's right sleeve had been sculpted as a chimney providing warmth and light.

Figure 18: Gilded Bronze Lamp shaped as a Servant Girl, excavated from the Tomb of Dou Wan in Ancient China's Hebei Province. Height: 48 cm; Date: 173 B.C. (Chun, 2014).



Note. Chun (2014).) referred to **Figure 18** within the presentation titled, 'Arts of Asia Part II. Chinese Art 3 Power-Point Presentation - ID:3285566. Slide Serve. <https://www.slideserve.com/chun/vis21b-summer-i-2014-arts-of-asia-part-ii-chinese-art-3>, slide, 6.

An interesting observation made by Bulling (1972) is the fact that the lamp's sides had been able to shift with the purpose of decreasing the lamp's opening as needed. As a result, this function had created a 'spotlight' effect which could have been used to shine a brighter light onto precious objects. Besides the long sleeve of the servant girl's beautiful dress—which had almost been more alluring the design of the lamp itself, the hood which had been cleverly transmitted through her sleeve had accomplished the effect of a funnel. It had also effectively collected the soot pigment, which had been a deep and rich black colour, from the sparking lamp and had then moved it into the hollow midpoint of the lamp. This had in particular been a smart bit of engineering which had kept the mess contained (Bulling, 1972).

Additionally, Gujian (2016) mentions that the sculptural design of this bronze gilded lamp had been very ingenious for its time period, as both the servant girl's head and hood could have been detached from its main sculptural frame so that it could have been cleaned without difficulty. The small inscriptions which had been found on this lamp also had suggested that the Empress Dowager (the grandmother of her husband Liu Sheng) had gifted her with this precious item (Chaffin, n.d.).

In regards to the reflection of culture in accordance with the views of Bulling (1972), Chaffin (n.d.), and Gujian (2016), this bronze gilded lamp had been ingeniously and meticulously sculpted by an artist for royalty, while detailed attention had been given to its complex design. This, in particular, makes it apparent that the lamp had been made as an honorary gift, which had attempted to capture the highest artistic ingenuity that sculptural design had to offer during the Han Dynasty.

In agreement with Moses (2023), it's also noteworthy to mention that it had been customary among the societal culture of the Han Dynasty to strive towards excellence in all facets of life—whether in education, literature, or any type of craftsmanship which had required cultivating a higher set of skills.

Furthermore, as it had been a cultural norm during this time period to strive towards achieving some form of 'important stature' within the societal structure (although hierarchical boundaries had limited this desire), society during the Han Dynasty had also attempted to reach beyond death into the afterlife. Israel (2022) supports this cultural understanding by stating that rulers had placed great value upon individuals who had been highly educated and who had understood etiquette.

The cultural value of 'displaying learnedness' had therefore been held in such high esteem during the Han Dynasty, that the notorious Imperial Academy had been established in the year 124 A.D. Its main intended purpose had been to ensure that ancient Chinese society would eventually become more educated through means of adopting more virtuous conduct. Simultaneously, familial superiority had also been celebrated through both Fine Arts and written texts (Israel, 2022).

Based upon the cultural interpretations provided by Moses (2023) and Israel (2022), it would be fair to suggest that this gilded bronze sculpture had not only reflected the cultural attributes of the Han Dynasty in regards to the artist's own desire for achieving excellence through the lamp's complicated design but had also represented this prestigious era through means of the servant girl offering light to her master. The light which the servant girl had therefore offered her master can also have been interpreted as 'wisdom' and 'knowledge,' which relates to being educated. In addition, the sculpture's gilded bronze material had also been far more exquisite and superior compared to simplistic materials like clay or stone that had been more commonly used.

4.2.3.8 Ceramics / Pottery Sculptures as a Reflection of Culture from the Han Dynasty

Zhang et al. (2024) elaborates upon the understanding of Han Dynasty artworks which had already been established, by explaining that the progress and accomplishments achieved within ceramics during this era, had been exceptional. Despite basic knowledge of glazing processes which had already been attained during previous time-periods in Chinese history, further advancing techniques related to the glazing processes of ceramics had been becoming increasingly popular during the Han Dynasty. Scholars ascribe this due to the fact that ancient Chinese artisans had come into contact with artists from a variety of different cultures through means of their first trading route, known as the Silk Road. For

example, artists from the Han Dynasty had become familiarized with Greco-Roman ceramics which had been fired with lead glaze, at a comparatively lower temperature (Zhang et al., 2024).

Figure 19: As seen on the left, is Model of a Ceramics Estate from the Han Dynasty, (206 B.C. - A.D. 220), which had been excavated from the Yuzhuang Han Tomb in Henan During 1981 and is currently kept in the Henan Museum Collection (Jiaran et al., 2021) The photo on the right provided by Kelly (1941), is an ancient ceramic artefact which illustrates a farm worker of a lower social status.



Note. Jiaran et al. (2021) referred to **Figure 19** within the antiques website page title, '*On the Transition from Ming Dynasty Ceramic Courtyard to North China residence---Take the Ming dynasty Pottery Courtyard of Henan Museum as an Example*'. International Journal of Frontiers in Sociology, 3(4), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.25236/ijfs.2021.030420>, p.96

It is further noted by Tsiang (1976) that a vast amount of pottery and ceramic artefacts had been buried with the deceased in underground burial chambers. Pieces of ceramic artefacts which had been discovered in tombs, included items symbolizing either the status which an individual had upheld during their lifetime, or dwellings which the individual would have required in the afterlife, connecting to various religious beliefs from the Han Dynasty (Tsiang, 1976).

The photograph on the left containing a prototype of a Han Dynasty estate which had been made from glazed ceramics, is an example of an artefact that had been both disassembled and reassembled, in order to restore a clear image of what the original ceramic sculpture would have looked like (Jiaran et al., 2021).

It's further stated by Jiaran et al. (2021) that the areas around the walls of the estate itself had been intended to depict an atrium, as well as a front -and backyard. In other words, the original dwelling had three points of entry which included stables on both sides of the property, as well as towers with lookout chambers which had been designed symmetrically on both sides of the guardhouse.

Jiaran et al. (2021) also explains that the central structure of the atrium had been designed with a double-storey, while the top canopy had been constructed on a high platform. Furthermore, two

staircases had led towards the first level of the central structure, while smaller structures had been built within the backyard that included a pigsty, a lavatory and a kitchen area. In addition, three sides of the estate had been encircled with walls, while ditches for irrigation purposes, water wells and ridges had been depicted in the field area along the border of the garden.

Dong & Wei (2022) make the observation that the approaches to governance during both the Qin Dynasty and Han Dynasty had gradually begun to change from a long history of aristocracy to a ruling style which allowed important decisions to be made by high-ranking officials. However, these decisions had been bureaucratic in nature. Therefore, the ruling class had often kept their power and alliances within family ties, while they typically relied upon independent forces, which had been known for building docks. Furthermore, these alliances had often gathered clansmen who were willing to pledge their loyalty to the ruling class.

In regards to a reflection of the societal and cultural attributes as confirmed by Truong (2022), Kelley (1941), Jiaran et al. (2021) and Tsiang (1976), the self-sufficient properties and estates which had been depicted in these pottery examples that were excavated from Yuzhuang, had been symbolic of the tyrannical families which had lived during the Han Dynasty, as well as the celebrated values of economic growth, wealth, accomplishment and having a respected status within society, which had been admired and pursued.

The second photograph example on the right provided by Kelly (1941) of a ceramic artefact which had illustrated a farm worker of a lower social status, also commemorated the generalized cultural values of the Han Dynasty which had promoted self-sufficiency, hard work, individual efficacy and being trained in a particular field of expertise. Within the burial chambers of underground tombs, the accomplishments of individuals had therefore been 'immortalized' through the accompaniment of these pottery artefacts.

4.3.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Early Byzantine Era 330 A.D. – 750 A.D.)

4.3.1. Contextual Understanding Regarding the Cultural & Societal Structures

McCormick (1987) states that the Roman Emperor named Constantine had originally accepted Christianity during his reign in the Early Byzantine Era from 330 A.D. –to 750 A.D., and as a result thereof, had moved the capital of his empire to Constantinople. In modern times this region is known as Istanbul, which had formerly become the new eastern boundary line of the ancient Roman Empire during this timeframe (McCormick, 1987).

Kazdan & Epstein (1990) further notes that people living within the Early Byzantine Era had viewed themselves as Roman, however the empire had become more multicultural over many years. For example, Persian cultures, Coptic culture, Armenian culture, Latin culture, as well as various Islamic cultures had influenced the Byzantine Empire during its latter years, despite Greek and Christian values having been the main two influences during the early years of this time-period.

Confirmed by the perspectives of Baynes et al. (1948), the Byzantine Empire had not only played a pivotal role in both shaping and establishing the Christian Orthodoxy within Roman society, but the Orthodox Christian Church itself had been an integral component in the historical shaping of societies within Serbia, Greece, Russia, Bulgaria and many other nations.

Constantinople as referred to by Alexander (1962), had been an exceptionally diverse city while the inhabitants had been both multi-ethnic and multi-religious in their 'way of life'. An interesting point to note, is the fact that taxes for both foreign tradesmen and local residents had been exactly the same, which was a rather unprecedented cultural phenomenon considering the context of this particular time period. Merchants within the city of Constantinople, had also traded with foreign nations near the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Black Sea and other Mediterranean regions.

Despite the multicultural and multi-religious nature of daily life and trade within Constantinople, Kazdan & Epstein (1990) emphasises that Orthodox Christianity had still remained an integral -and foundational feature of Byzantine culture, while certain values had also been held in high esteem. For example, Byzantine society had had a deep appreciation for 'law and order', as well as the attainment of other traditional hierarchies. It is therefore unsurprising that the importance of the 'family unit', had remained at the very heart of Byzantine culture. Likewise, both purity and celibacy had been well-respected and celebrated throughout the Early Byzantine Era.

As it pertains to the significance which had been placed upon the preservation of the family unit during Byzantine culture, both womanhood and motherhood had been openly celebrated. Simultaneously, women who had decided to join monasteries and had become nuns, had also been granted the freedom to make their own decisions regarding this life-style option (Nicol, 1967).

Nicol (1967) further states that although certain cultural perceptions of women during this time period had promoted the idea that moving women into more isolated areas through segregation, (with the intended purpose of limiting them from being too opinionated and outspoken), had certainly not always been the practical arrangement within the societal norms of the Early Byzantine Era. Although it is historically accurate that Byzantine women had been allocated to unique spaces named 'gynaikonitis', (where they had been involved in various activities such as embroidery, weaving and

spinning), other areas within Byzantine society hadn't been segregated among men and women in such a strict manner (Nicol, 1967).

In spite of certain restrictions which had been placed upon women during Early Byzantine culture, Nicol (1967) mentions that many women had still been engaged in commercial activities such as selling woven fabrics. At the same time, other women had fulfilled certain roles in public life, while having been further granted the right to inherit wealth, or to own dowry independently.

Ennslin (1967) notes that within royal, female circles during the Byzantine Era, the Empress Theodora (500–548 A.D.) and the Empress Irene (752–803 A.D.), had both been well-known for the influence and power that they demonstrated. Empress Theodora had, for example, brought about great reformation in regards to the betterment and 'quality of life' for women during her time of reign. She had not only instituted severe punishment for any kind of assault, violence, and rape against women but additionally had created convents as places of refuge and safety. Furthermore, she had also strictly prohibited prostitution while she had expanded property ownership rights for women, rights related to child guardianship, including rights related to divorce (Ensslin, 1967).

Kazdan & Epstein (1990) add further context to Early Byzantine culture by mentioning that Eunuchs (castrated men) had also played an important role within the culture of this time period. For example, the Eunuchs had been able to achieve and uphold high positions of authority within the Byzantine Courts. More specifically, as they had been considered honourable and trustworthy due to their inability to obtain followers and descendants of their own, as well as their inability to claim the Roman throne for themselves.

Furthermore, Byzantine society had multiple social constructs and hierarchies, which had even existed among the peasants. The quality of life among peasants had, however, been significantly different as it pertained to whether or not they had been able to own land or whether they had remained dependent upon landowners (Baynes et al., 1948).

4.3.2 Reflections of Culture, Values & Belief-Systems, Through Early Byzantine Artworks

As Christianity had gradually begun to replace the mythological Greco-Roman gods who formerly defined the worldviews, religion, cultural practices, and 'way of life' among Roman communities, the role that traditional art-making processes had played within the Early Byzantine society also had shifted significantly (Frothingham, 1895).

Hunger (1982) states that architectural structures from the ancient Byzantine Era, such as churches, can still be found across various parts of the world, from Russia to Egypt. Since literature and artistry had flourished during the Early Byzantine time period, artisans had adopted a realistic and

natural style along with more complex techniques that had originated in ancient Rome and Greece, and they also had focused upon Christian themes. It is also worth noting that art from the Early Byzantine Era had strongly influenced painters from the Italian Renaissance, who became prominent many years later (Hunger, 1982).

The intentional key purpose of religious Byzantine artworks, as suggested by Drewer (1996), had been aimed at guiding Roman society into a revelation of the heavenly mysteries and divine truths of Orthodox Christianity, while edifying the culture through means of creating 'alternate paradigm portrayals' of Christian values and qualities—values which had been considered as worthy of imitation and pursuit. Additionally, religious imagery had also been intended as vehicles through which Roman followers of the Christian faith had been able to converse and interact with the spiritual realm, more specifically with Christ, the Virgin Mary, and even other 'biblical saints,' which had been deified by artists during this time period (Drewer, 1996).

Weitzmann (1947) also mentions that the general perception regarding the 'role of Fine Arts' during the Early Byzantine Era had mostly been that decorative religious artworks were meant to serve as 'objective archetypes' or 'blueprints' of the heavenly realm. Another 'role of Fine Arts' which had been identified from the Early Byzantine Era is that it had been viewed as providing a form of 'standardization' across all artistic expressions. Furthermore, the majority populous who had formed part of Roman society during the Byzantine Era had preferred and favoured the approach of repeating well-established iconographic art styles, which were predominantly related to artistic origins that had stemmed from 'Late Antiquity' (Weitzmann, 1947).

In ironic contrast, Moorhead (1986) makes the interesting observation that the entrapments of materialism and the material world had also played a pivotal role in the promotion and expansion of religious iconography. Especially since it had enabled artists to 'dress spiritual themes' of the heavenly realm into visible and tangible forms. In doing so, symbolic religious objects which had been created within this particular time period therefore had attempted to make the spiritual themes more accessible to its viewers while encouraging them to become intertwined with the artworks themselves. Moreover, these artworks had been created for elevating society towards upholding higher moral standards (Moorhead, 1986).

Hence, it would therefore be inaccurate to regard this type of iconographic art as merely reflecting 'everyday life' from the Early Byzantine Era, and it would be equally unwise to simply dismiss it as key information regarding a potentially 'material-focused culture' which had existed, while ignoring other substantive 'textual evidence' and archaeological findings (Pirani, 2013).

Iconoclasm and Religious Art

In accordance with the views of Brown (1973), 'iconoclasm,' which had brought the greater part of Byzantine artistry to a halt near 726 A.D., refers to the 'breaking of imagery' in a rather literal sense. It had contributed towards the ultimate destruction of many pictorial religious artifacts. The sole purpose for destroying these religious artefacts had been to further prevent both a minimization of God and idolatry from becoming the 'norm of their day' during this time period.

This controversial cultural debate, which had taken place during the Byzantine Era, came to a critical decision-making point under the reign of Emperor Leo III, who had entirely banished the creation of newly crafted religious artifacts and imagery. He had further ordered the destruction and removal of all surviving religious artworks. Throughout the reign of Emperor Leo III, Shedlock (1968) states that the only religious imagery which had been deemed 'acceptable' was the cross as the focal point of church interiors. Shortly thereafter, following the iconoclastic movement, Empress Theodora had once again restored the practice of revered hand-made icons. Through this new religious ruling, however, she had ushered in a new era of craftsmanship and architectural ingenuity, which had led to the Middle Byzantine Period from 843–1204 A.D. (Shedlock, 1968).

4.3.2.1 Virgin (Theotokos) & Child Between Saints Theodore and George

Figure 20: '*Virgin (Theotokos) & Child between Saints Theodore and George*' from the 6th or early 7th century, has been identified as a 'hot wax painting', (to which colour pigmentation had been added), otherwise known as an 'encaustic painting' on wood. The painting is currently preserved in St. Catherine's Monastery, in Sinai, Egypt (Allen, 2015.).



Note. Allen (2015) referred to **Figure 20** within the website page title, '*Virgin (Theotokos) and Child Between Saints Theodore and George*'. Smart History the Center for Public Art History. <https://smarthistory.org/virgin-theotokos-and-child-between-saints-theodore-and-george/>, para.1.

During the Early Byzantine Era, as stated by Cameron (1978), many churches had been constructed with detailed and decorative interiors, which typically contained intricate mosaics. An iconic encaustic painting which had, however, been made during this time period (known as 'hot wax painting,' to which colour pigmentation was added), titled the 'Virgin (Theotokos) & Child Between Saints Theodore and George,' had been perceived by the Christian community to serve as a pathway for 'accessing the spiritual realm,' mainly pertaining to followers who had been faithful to Christianity and its values (Cameron, 1978).

As pointed out by Kalavrezou (1990), the composition and layout of this particular early Byzantine painting had caused the viewer's attention to be moved both upward and inward toward the central figure. Therefore, the illusion of 'visual movement,' which had been successfully created within this painting, points to the Virgin Mary, from where one's eyes had then been drawn upward and beyond the angels, toward the very hands of God. Furthermore, the two saints who had been depicted standing on the Virgin's left and right-hand sides had been seen readily awaiting to receive the viewer's reverence, in order to pass their prayer onto the central figure of Mary as well as toward the sacred heavenly realm (Kalavrezou, 1990).

As referred to by Liu (2022), the Basilica of San Vitale, which had been built in Ravenna (the last capital city which formed part of the ancient Western Roman Empire), was not only majestic in height, size, and its unique architectural structure, but particularly in regard to its towering, intricate, and inspiring interiors. Considering the decorative, faith-based, and sophisticated mosaics which had illustrated processions undertaken by Theodora and Justinian (reaching beyond the Basilica of San Vitale's impressive frescoed dome and the labyrinth that had been depicted on the floor of this ancient church), the complex adornments within the apse had overwhelmed viewers. More specifically, in regard to the awe-inspiring messages which had provided encouragement and guidance to Roman citizens during this time period (Liu, 2022).

4.3.2.2 Justinian's Procession in the Basilica of San Vitale

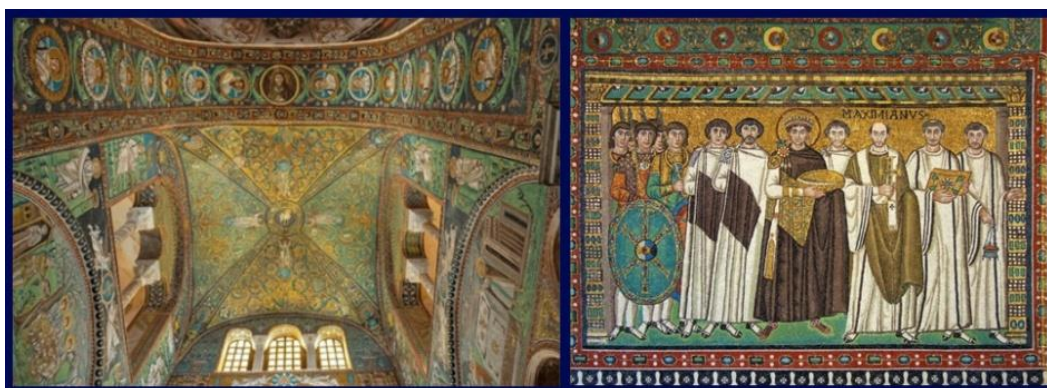
Rupley (2009) mentions that not only had the greatness and intricacies within these artworks been intended to instill a sense of respect among those visiting this church, but also to further ingrain a true reverence and commitment toward both God and Emperor Justinian, who had been the new leader over the religious state of Constantinople (Rupley, 2009).

Bassett (2008) further highlights that within the mosaic titled 'Justinian's Procession in the Basilica of San Vitale', Justinian (482–565 AD), who had first been chosen as the Emperor of the Roman Empire in 527, had been honoured here as one of the greatest leaders of 'Late Antiquity'. He had

therefore been honoured and remembered for establishing the basic foundational principles of civil law, which are still having an impact during modern times.

On Justinian's left side, as observed by Angelova (2015), three figures of religious stature had been illustrated, of whom one had been identified as the Bishop of Ravenna named Maximian—since his name had been clearly written above his head. On Justinian's right side, two court dignitaries had been depicted, while many theories had remained regarding who the man standing between the Bishop and Justinian could have been. Speculative hypotheses argue that he could perhaps have been a high-ranking Imperial official, a Praetorian Prefect of high stature, or perhaps Julian Argentarius, who had financed the Basilica's construction. At the same time, honorary guards, who had been entirely armed, had been illustrated following Justinian's procession within the background of this mosaic (Angelova, 2015).

Figure 21: Basilica of San Vitale & '*Justinian's Procession in the Basilica of San Vitale*' (482-565 A.D.), which has been created during the Byzantine Era (Turismo, 2022.).



Note. Turismo (2022) referred to **Figure 21** within the website page title, '*The Procession of Justinian and Theodora in the Basilica of San Vitale*'. Ravenna Turismo.
<https://www.turismo.ra.it/en/myravenna/city-of-art/procession-justinian-theodora-san-vitale/>, para.2-4.

Across the various mosaics of the Basilica, as noted by Andreescu-Treadgold & Treadgold (1997), Justinian had frequently been depicted wearing 'Imperial purple' while holding a golden basin. Yet, his clothes had seemed somewhat brown in the photograph provided by Turismo (2022). The basin, which had been held and offered by Justinian, marked the special occasion of consecrating the church. He had even been illustrated wearing a golden halo, despite not having been recognized as a saint.

However, since Justinian had been directly responsible for the advancement of Christian values within Roman society, as well as having been a respected leader in regard to his territorial governance, artists had deified Justinian's image to eternalize his legacy. In agreement with Rupley (2009) and

Bassett (2008), one could therefore argue that religious leaders such as Justinian had not only been held in high esteem according to the societal norms of the Early Byzantine Era, but that the culture during this time period had also strived toward immortalizing these religious figures. Yet this had been done through means of imitating their suggested 'way of life,' beliefs, and values as a 'moral compass.'

4.3.2.3 The Procession of Empress Theodora in the Basilica of San Vitale



Figure 22: *'The Procession of Empress Theodora'* is facing towards the Procession of Justinian within the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna (482-565 AD), which had been created during the Byzantine Era (Turismo,

Note. Turismo (2022) referred to **Figure 22** within the website page title, *'The Procession of Justinian and Theodora in the Basilica of San Vitale*. Ravenna Turismo.

<https://www.turismo.ra.it/en/myravenna/city-of-art/procession-justinian-theodora-san-vitale/>, para.10 - 12.

Empress Theodora's entire collective procession as highlighted by the author Wainwright (2018), had been directly turned in the direction of Justinian's Processions as had been depicted within the well-known Basilica of San Vitale (in Ravenna). In accordance with the perspective of Wainwright (2018), as seen within this decadent mosaic artwork, the Empress Theodora had been illustrated making an offering to the altar with a golden chalice, which had been decorated with exquisite precious gems. The jewelled headpiece, which had been depicted above her head, emphasized the fact that she had been of noble stature, while various pearls and a 'diadem of stones' had framed her face in contrast to the bright golden background and halo (Wainwright, 2018).

In addition, the embellishments and decorative clothing of Empress Theodora's court ladies, as noted by Michael Shin (2020), had accurately captured the luxurious, pomp, and magnificent nature which had characterized the Byzantium Court and had still been present within the golden ornamentation of these intricate mosaics. The surroundings of these ladies had also been illustrated having ancient columns and a water fountain, while tents had further adorned the background (Michael Shin, 2020).

Chapter 4.4: Semiotic & Cognitive Theories Which Had Reaffirmed the Understanding Among Scholars That Fine Arts Had Historically Served as a Visual Mirror, Which in Return Exhibited a Broad Spectrum of Socio-Cultural Values

4.4.1.1 A Brief Introduction Related to the 'Mere Exposure Effect' – Which Had Been Constructed and Formulated by Robert Zajonc

Zajonc (1968) had exhibited practical ways in which repeated exposure to a certain set of stimuli had resulted in an increased positive reception among audiences, which had additionally implied that the effect of "mere" familiarity with a particular stimulus had had a direct correlation to the subjective inclinations and emotional reactions among certain demographics of people. His "Mere Exposure Effect" had widened to include an array of stimuli — words, images, and even people — while the proof had indicated that the more you viewed a particular object, item, image, or symbolic representation, the better your assessment, regardless of the intrinsic quality of the visual representation, symbol, or relevant object. This had been particularly applicable as it had related to Fine Arts, artistic symbols, and themes of previous historical Art Periods like the Byzantine Era, Han Dynasty, and even Classical Greece, which had been introduced repetitively and had reoccurred to subsequent generations, shaking hands across generations by suppressing differing values that were embedded in cultural and traditional practices (Zajonc, 1968).

Extending upon the investigation by Zajonc (1968), Obermiller (1985) had argued that repeated exposure to a certain set of visual stimuli could, over a period of time, potentially evoke positive affective responses without the involvement of any cognitive processing. The author had argued that customary selections had developed primarily through exposure rather than through means of a conscious analysis, placing them at a non-cognitive mediation process in which emotions had emerged independently from – and separately to – rational cognitive assessment. This specific interpretational viewpoint had further emphasized the part of the research findings which had suggested that Fine Arts had fulfilled a definite role in popularizing culture, thereby proposing the credible argument that individuals or cultural groups had most likely connected with historical pieces of art on various levels and, more specifically, through familiarization, which had, in return, affirmed their collective values over an extended time period (Obermiller, 1985; Zajonc, 1968).

Nickerson (2022) had moreover provided additional confirmation of the understanding that the 'Mere Exposure Effect' had dramatically impacted the subjective inclinations of individuals who were being observed, while it had been discovered that the initial stages of exposure were the most effective. Nickerson (2022) had broadened this theory to more widespread cultural circumstances and within the context of Fine Arts in particular, whereby the early historical repetitions of certain artistic styles and motifs had led to their gradual acceptance, relevance, and perceived importance. Based upon this interpretation of the 'Mere Exposure Effect,' Fine Arts had not only mirrored cultural identity by

reaffirming aesthetic values and social norms but had also promoted and perpetuated them within multiple societies (Nickerson, 2022).

Heath (1990) had extended this investigation to provide a visual illustration of the understanding that customary selections had increased with familiarity, even when the person involved had not been consciously aware of their own recognition. Heath (1990) had further debated that cognitive appraisal had had to have originated prior to affective response, proposing that even exposure to stimuli could have solidified and cemented any emotional connectivity. It is worth noting that this insight and angle of interpretation had been especially pertinent within Fine Arts. Consequently, the exposure to Fine Arts had been expected to reinforce cultural appreciation and associated societal values through means of repeated encounters with a broad variety of artworks (statues, sculptures, mosaics, carvings, paintings, sketches, woodwork, glasswork) – and other related artistic artifacts (Heath, 1990).

Where Nickerson's (2022) focus had been more generally linked to the perceptions and thoughts related to different cultural conditions and varying contexts, Heath (1990) had been far more concerned with the design of familiarity in supporting the purposeful setting of values amongst communities. Altogether, the views of these two scholars had remarkably assisted in arguing that Fine Arts had not simply cantered around reflecting selective cultural contexts and practices, but that it had also played a conscious role in the perpetuated application of repeated exposure as an intentional method (Nickerson, 2022).

And therefore, these scholars had altogether presented the perspective that Fine Arts had been pre-emptively involved in the stereotyping of cultural beliefs and standards through its employment of exposure as a solution to cultural prescriptivism. Zajonc (1968) had, for example, demonstrated that subjective inclinations had increased with familiarity, and Obermiller (1985) had shed light on this theory's non-cognitive premise. At the same time, Nickerson (2022) had traced and effectively drawn deeper connections between these theoretical interpretations of cultural circumstances and settings, while the information provided by Heath's (1990) had not only emphasized, but also reinforced the role of 'the familiar' as it pertained to both social and cultural values. As a result, these authors had argued that Fine Arts had been contributing to varying cultural reinforcements through repetitive exposure (Obermiller, 1985; Zajonc, 1968).

4.4.1.2 How 'The Procession of Empress Theodora in the Basilica of San Vitale' (from the Byzantine Era) Had Been Indirectly Supported by the Mere Exposure Effect by Zajonc, within the Context of Fine Arts as a Reflection of Cultural Practices, Beliefs, and Standards

Through the allegorical imagery of aristocracy and ceremony as noted by Wainwright (2018), the mosaic 'The Procession of Empress Theodora' in the Basilica of San Vitale had therefore served as an echo of cultural and religious mythos that had reinforced hierarchical values and social structure through means of an aesthetic representation. From within this temporal space, the tapestry had become an icon of Robert Zajonc's (1968) Mere Exposure Effect, as it pertains to ways through which exposure to particular artistic and symbol-graphic components had sequentially changed cultural perception and societal norms over time. By visually repeating all three forms of status, authority, and religious piety, this mosaic had served to reinforce cultural identity through the embedded aesthetic familiarity and recognition existing in the collective consciousness of Byzantine society (Wainwright, 2018; Zajonc, 1968).

In the same vein as commented upon by Shedlock (1968), the mosaic known as 'The Procession of Empress Theodora' in the Basilica of San Vitale had also been recognized as an artistic representation of cultural and societal ideals within the sociocultural context of the Byzantine Era, which had been created during the height of the Byzantine Empire. In this vein, the "mosaic" had been representative of Robert Zajonc's (1968) Mere Exposure Effect, which had highlighted how visual interactions with certain artistic artefacts and symbolic forms had influenced views surrounding these elements and subsequently had brought about cultural and social paradigms over an extended time period throughout history. Similar to its visual reproduction of status, authority, and religious piety, this mosaic had additionally acted – and had attempted to reaffirm cultural identity within the interior of Byzantine society through means of the imbuelement of aesthetic cohesion and recognition, which had further collectively appeared within the minds of those among Byzantine society (Shedlock, 1968; Zajonc, 1968).

The perspective had been proposed by Zajonc (1968) that 'mere exposure' and acquaintance with a specific visual stimulus had substantially elevated positive responses by individuals and collective cultural groups toward it, independent of the objective value of the artistic artefact, artwork, or visual symbolism. Consequently, in support of this theory, the mosaic of 'Empress Theodora' had served as a vehicle of visual confirmation, reaffirmation, and cultural reflection, while having depicted the empress and her entourage in a very organized, ceremonial context that had underscored heavenly authority, as well as imperial magnificence.

In unison with this investigative interpretation and information, Wainwright (2018) had further mentioned that the luxurious clothing, diadem, and golden chalice in Theodora's hands, as seen within the example presented in this thesis, had both signified a noble status—considering the background which had intentionally been depicted in gold, including the halo which had exerted an additional level

of sanctity and divine right. Similarly, the historical context of Byzantine civilians, who had been exposed to these images over time in both religious and imperial contexts, had developed a familiarity with power, divinity, and legitimacy, which had conformed to Zajonc's (1968) premise that the derivation of 'preference' and 'acceptance' had correlated with exposure in a positive manner (Wainwright, 2018).

In fact, prior to the research which had been directed by Zajonc (1968), Obermiller (1985) had already made the observation that repeated exposure to visual stimuli could indeed produce positive—and in this case, affective responses—without conscious cognitive processing. Through the prism of this perspective, the overall impact of the mosaic of Empress Theodora could be understood through the frequency of its visual iteration and long-term presence, with the purpose of visually instilling the empress's authority into the cultural norms of Byzantine daily life (Obermiller, 1985).

This interpretation had resonated with the earlier analysis of Shin (2020), which had suggested that the ostentatious attire and lavish decorations of Theodora's courtesans had served as an intentional and deliberate visual aesthetic reaffirmation pertaining to more impactfully grasping the magnificence of the Byzantium Court. Therefore, through means of repeated encounters with this imagery, Byzantine audiences had not only internalized the implied messaging and symbolic meanings but had further allowed such representations to become both the culturally accepted aesthetic standard and ideological paradigm, which had been representational of imperial identity (Shin, 2020).

Moreover, Nickerson (2022) had provided a detailed illustration of the Mere Exposure Effect and had revealed that the influences of this 'effect' had extended much further than individual preferences in the form of cultural preferences, accentuating that the Fine Arts (where images had been repeated multiple times over) had eventually become accepted by the majority of society.

Along with visual features such as water fountains and columns, Theodora's retinue, assembled here carefully framed within the context of sophisticated architectural structures, had been poised to deliver the public with a largely premeditated account of the ceremonial power of the Byzantine Court (Shin, 2020).

As citizens and religious devotees had therefore encountered such imagery in churches and public spaces, the association between artistic representation and cultural ideology had been solidified, since Zajonc (1968) had noted that the existence of an object had served to increase positive feelings through repeated exposure. In return, reflecting human exposure in itself had shaped, transformed, and informed both perception and taste.

Finally, as commented upon by Brown (1973), data related to the Byzantine Era had provided sufficient context for the analysis of both the impact of the 'Mere Exposure Effect' and this civilization's long-term influences upon iconoclasm and any restoral episodes, including its eventual consequences. The destruction of religious icons during the iconoclastic controversy, as mentioned by Brown (1973), had briefly disrupted remarkable visual reinforcement of Byzantine theological ideals.

Yet, after Empress Theodora had restored religious imagery, as highlighted by Shedlock (1968), enormous returns of mosaics and painted icons had restored common Arts-related signs, which had ichnographically ingrained certain symbolic associations within the religious consciousness of the Byzantine Era's civilization. This phenomenon had further re-enacted the premise suggested by Heath (1990) that these repetitive aesthetic situations had produced emotional connections and cultural ties, which had ultimately verified the role of Fine Arts as it related to preserving and endowing cultural virtues (Heath, 1990; Shedlock, 1968).

Consequently, the application of the 'Mere Exposure Effect' by Zajonc (1968) to the interpretations of the related potential repercussions of the mosaic of Empress Theodora had uncovered the finding that the contribution of Fine Arts had not merely reflected but had also transformed the Byzantine cultural identity. The repeated representation of imperial figures within this divine and ceremonial space had, after all, reaffirmed the legitimacy of hierarchical systems and religious authorities. An additional and supportive argument made by Nickerson (2022) had proposed the viewpoint that repeated exposures to these 'artistic motifs' had ensured their perceived importance.

Together, these revelations confirmed by Zajonc (1968), Nickerson (2022), Wainwright (2018), Shin (2020), Brown (1973), Heath (1990), and Shedlock (1968) had unveiled the importance of Fine Arts in relation to cultural continuity, having provided a process by which the artistic practices, productions, and foundations within societies had been visually reinforced and had further transmitted value systems across multiple generations. This had simultaneously ensured the 'functional survival' of diverse Fine Arts disciplines and artistic mediums.

4.4.2.1 A Brief Introduction Related to the 'Schema Cognitive Theory – Which Had Been Constructed by Frederic Bartlett

Frederic Bartlett's Schema Cognitive Theory had gone into great details when having explained how individuals who had participated in his study had relied on pre-existing cognitive frameworks, or schemas, as elaborated upon by Axelrod (1973), in order to more effectively interpret complex information. Axelrod (1973) had mentioned that Frederic Bartlett had repeatedly claimed that schemas had allowed for new experiences to be more accurately classified and organized in accordance with

previously acquired knowledge, which had further influenced perceptions – as well as how former decision-making had been conducted. This perspective had been more specifically supportive of the previously agreed-upon notion that Fine Arts from the Byzantine Era, Han Dynasty, and Classical Greek Era had embraced and celebrated more relevant and newly adopted societal schemas which had been strategically mapped. Especially with the attempted purpose of exposing an interwoven dependency between culture and cognition (Axelrod, 1973).

It had been additionally revealed by Brewer (2000) that 'schemata' had influenced memory, as well as had dynamically interacted with the formation of newly gained information. However, Brewer (2000) had drawn a clear distinction between Bartlett's original framework and subsequent theories, which had gradually come to the realization and view that schemata had been fundamentally both 'unconscious' and 'general-purpose' cognitive structures. As a result, this evolution had reaffirmed the significance of Frederic Bartlett's Schema Theory, especially since it had increasingly been applied to examine how historical artworks had encoded collective cultural knowledge, as well as social cognitive structures.

In agreement with this information, Wittrock (2000) had moreover explored the role of schemata within context to the learning and acquisition of knowledge, and had, in response, argued that the construction of knowledge had been an active process, which had uniquely differed from mere cognitive storage. Fine Arts, as Wittrock (2000) had argued, had mainly operated like cultural vaults, which had transported critical knowledge in relation to successfully sustaining cultural ideological beliefs. This research-based viewpoint had further reinforced Frederick Bartlett's conviction and perspective that cognition had been highly important in regard to the interchanges which had taken place between both existing knowledge and potential new future experiences (Wittrock, 2000).

In correlation with Wittrock (2000), Garro (2000) had also built on Bartlett's theoretical claim, which had suggested that 'memory' had been a dynamic process and had been continually moulded not only by the cultural contexts of people – or their relevant settings – but by individually personalized experiences. Thereby ultimately rejecting the interpretation that memory had been static in nature, Garro (2000) had stressed that the memories of individuals who had participated in a research study had been dynamically reconstructed through their respective cultural schemas. The indirect assumption based upon this understanding had proposed the notion that Fine Arts from past epochs had operated as cultural mirrors, which had reflected value systems while having further consolidated socially shared schemas, which had also determined collective memory and identity (Garro, 2000; Wittrock, 2000).

Steffensen (1979) had also investigated the role of schema theory in connection with the interpretational abilities of 'texts,' showing that individuals had most often depended on their own cultural background knowledge in order to better understand and make sense of certain implied cultural recitals. Steffensen (1979) had also observed that, in order to relate to foreign or unfamiliar visual texts, readers had either adequately adjusted or justified elements with the attempt to make more sense within their own cultural schemas. These insights shared by Steffensen (1979) had impressed upon psychologists that distinctly profound historical artworks had not merely encapsulated cultural standards that had been accepted and upheld during certain time periods but had also been subject to reinterpretation by later observers through the personal prisms and lenses of their own life experiences and cognitive frameworks.

Wertsch (2008) had already expanded on the theory by Frederick Bartlett in connection with his stance on 'social memory,' having highlighted the point that recollection had been actively shaped by both an individual's cultural settings and social background. Wertsch (2008) had also drawn a distinction amidst individual interpretative ideas—or narratives—and what he had referred to as 'schematic templates,' which had most often provided broadened frameworks of meaningful explanations related to the deeper historical narrative. To Fine Arts in particular, this had been relevant and consequential, as the representation(s) of society had often been embodied in artistic expressions, a visual manifestation of the cognitive structures that had been collected within a particular culture.

In correlation, support, and unison with one another's slightly differing interpretations, Axelrod (1973), Brewer (2000), Wittrock (2000), Garro (2000), Steffensen (1979), and Wertsch (2008) had shown how Bartlett's Schema Cognitive Theory had been instrumental in understanding the relationship between cognition and cultural expression. Through demonstrating how memory, learning, and interpretation had been informed by pre-existing schemas, they had not only reinforced the idea that Fine Arts had been reflective of cultures but had also upheld, maintained, and celebrated culturally driven values within the cognitive framework posited by Bartlett.

4.4.2.2 How the Discobolus Sculpture (from the Classical Greek Time-Period) Had Been Indirectly Supported by Frederic Bartlett's Schema Cognitive Theory, within the Context of Fine Arts as a Reflection of Cultural Practices, Beliefs, and Standards

I had been able to link the 'Schema Cognitive Theory constructed by Frederic Bartlett (1932) quite effectively with the Discobolus Sculpture, (a recreated Roman copy of the lost Bronze original by Myron c. 5th century BCE), which had more accurately belonged within the domain of the Fine Arts, as an object of culture. Bartlett's (1932) theory had proposed that human cognition had operated

on the basis of established mental frameworks, alternatively known as 'schemas', which had influenced the processes of interpretation, as well as decision-making patterns (Axelrod, 1973). The distinct specificity of this perspective had made it relevant in regards to more insightfully understanding the recasting of how cultural schemas had not merely been encoded into historical Artworks, but also in relation to how such artifacts had acted as generational repositories, which had reinforced and transmitted these schemas (Brewer, 2000).

The Discobolus had, for example, also been one of the archetype examples of how visual representational aesthetic attributes had embodied and reaffirmed cultural cognitive structures. Classical Greek Fine Arts had also been closely bound to this particular era's ideological celebration of humanism, athleticism, and idealized beauty, as it had systematically been articulated by Greek social schemas (Valentine, 2022).

The sculpture had therefore portrayed an athlete in a suspended moment in time, which had been directly aimed at representing the Classical Greek societal ideals of control, physical excellence, and competitive superiority (De Bruyn, 2020).

Such cultural ideals, as elaborated upon by Garro (2000), had served as cognitive templates, which had eventually encouraged the production and later reception of these artworks as well. By therefore having been 'schema-driven,' as defined by Garro (2000), the collectiveness of cultural memory had ensured that the meanings or interpretations which had been produced in the earlier audiences, framed around Classical Greek identity and values, had indeed also been understood and appreciated by audiences which had followed in relation to the Discobolus.

Bartlett's (1932) Schema Cognitive Theory had further touted that memory had been an active, reconstructive process, which had been profoundly altered and shaped through the application of cultural contexts (Wertsch, 2008). In the case of the Discobolus, however, the near-blank stare carved into the athlete's face had represented the 'Severe Style' of Classical Greek sculpture, which had sought to consciously downplay emotional individuation in order to underscore larger cultural ideals (Schmalbeck, 2015).

The absence of overt emotionality had also further directed the viewer's cognitive attention towards the flowing motion and muscular body of the athlete, reiterating the Greek model that had equated physical prowess with intellectual and moral ascendancy (Chappell, 1973; Sturgis, 1916).

This had even more significantly supported what Steffensen (1979) had discovered, in that people's surmises about unfamiliar cultural texts had often been formulated through means of the

application of their own pre-existing schemas, which had in return shaped their individualized perceptions in order to fit the dominant—or predominant—cultural narrative.

Furthermore, the Discobolus had functioned as a schema-driven cultural vault, carrying knowledge and validating ideologies of athleticism and competition (Wittrock, 2000). It had been even more evident within its reproduction and veneration across history and had been an additional clear demonstration of the understanding that collective cultural memory had not only been shaped by—but had also been sustained through—Fine Arts representations (Brewer, 2000).

The marble replica from the Roman Era had endowed the Classical Greek exceptionalism of the athletic male form with a persistency, as it had related to enacted ideas of the male human body, which had ultimately reaffirmed Bartlett's invitation to conceive and perceive cognition as a mode which had negotiated relations between past knowledges and future experiences (Axelrod, 1973).

The Discobolus had therefore perfectly illustrated the fundamental principles of Bartlett's Schema Cognitive Theory by embodying Classical Greek ideals and reinforcing their cultural standards. It had operated not only as a visual embodiment of cognitive frameworks but as a further product and perpetuator of collective social schemas, while at the same time having illustrated the ways in which Fine Arts had served as a cultural mirror. Sculptures with friezes of idealized form, competitive excellence, and harmony had fit into the framework of this schema, as it had pertained to the development of the theoretical model of cultural memory formation advanced by Frederick Bartlett within the domain of Fine Arts (Garro, 2000; Wertsch, 2008).

4.5 Extended Psychological and Sociological Theories Substantiating the Idea That Fine Arts Had Acted as a Visual Mirror of Culture

Concerning the submission of important evidence influenced by well-studied theories of psychology and sociology relating to how Fine Arts had long been perceived and interpreted by Art historians and scholarly experts as a snapshot or reflection of different cultures throughout societies, and due to specialist arguments of historical context, Bardon's study in 2024 had outlined how social values and visual production of Fine Arts had often been complex and convoluted to understand within artistic expression and, similarly, visual interpretations of different cultures. As such, Fine Artists—which include sculptors, painters, printmakers, illustrators, calligraphers, ceramicists, mosaic artists, glass blowers, welders, and other artisans—had created evocative images reflecting and disclosing cultural particulars along with social values through representational techniques that had been manipulative with persuasively visual imagery. Well, this had once again begotten further influence on certain Art Movements—for example, Impressionism, which had begun to concentrate thereafter on not simply

familiar or restricted experiences and subsequent interpretations of such, nor any further degenerative propagation of progressive developments that had been achieved across so effective dynamic developments (Bardon, 2024).

While further strengthening this sociological argument, Baumberger (2013) had highlighted the research-based perspective that artworks from varying Art Movements and time periods had conveyed deeper revelations of societal belief systems and cultural values through means of having intentionally incorporated preferred cultural ideologies, viewpoints, interpretations, or symbolic narratives that had amplified their collective cultural consciousness—or biases. As emphasized by Baumberger (2013), this research-based understanding had further reinforced the proposition that a broad spectrum of historical statues, sculptures, paintings, frescoes, mosaics, and ceramic artefacts had served as ‘cultural mirrors’ which had reflected the societal structures, religious belief systems, traditions, and practices of the historical contexts within which they had originally been created.

Bolwerk et al. (2014) states that the explorative investigation which had aimed to determine the extent to which the creation of Fine Arts had impacted perceptual and psychological processes had moreover substantiated the assertion that Fine Arts had fulfilled a reflective role pertaining to the portrayal of diverse cultural identities throughout multiple historical time periods. Bolwerk et al. (2014) had, for example, conducted an experimental examination of the psychological impacts and outcomes of applying differentiated Fine Arts activities, which had unveiled that these engagements, which had been of a physical, cognitive, and practical nature, had not only facilitated psychological introspection but also emotional responses—including an additional emotional realization of connections to broader cultural narratives. Therefore, through the strategic placement of expressive artistic engagements in context to selected combinations of collective societal or cultural values, Bolwerk et al. (2014) had succeeded in effectively exhibiting that both the creation processes and interpretative evaluation of Fine Arts (requiring objectivity and critical thinking) had consequently assisted in gaining far deeper insights pertaining to the identities of individuals in accordance with their socio-cultural backgrounds. As a result, therefore, the interconnected relation between cultural contexts and the production processes of Fine Arts had strongly emphasized the distinctly significant role of Fine Arts as not merely having been central to the articulation of societal norms, cultural belief systems, and related practices, but also its deliberate reflective purpose.

Furthermore, the practically engaging and interactive nature of Fine Arts interpretation, analysis, and evaluation had been uniquely underscored by Bruder and Ucok (2000), who had discovered that the viewership and audience interactions with Fine Arts displays and activities had effectively

assisted with the 'formation of new meanings' related to cultural artifacts and the extended ideological convictions embedded within them.

Bruder and Ucok (2000) had presented the argument that the act of either beholding aesthetic experiences or engaging with aesthetic experiences on a practical level had far exceeded the impact of altering perception on an individual scale. Instead, their research findings had suggested that these aesthetically engaging activities had additionally fostered mutually comprehensive and consensus-based understanding among audiences regarding their shared societal or cultural values. Accordingly, the collective group participation in the interpretation of Fine Arts displays had further substantiated the interdependent and corresponding nature of Fine Arts within specified cultural contexts and time periods throughout history. In return, this had also confirmed the presumptive viewpoint that Fine Arts had served as visual reflections of culture and had fulfilled an essential role in the affirmation, formation, and establishment of societal identities (Bruder and Ucok, 2000).

From a slightly different angle of investigation, Chamberlain (2022) had integrated psychological and sociological theories to reinforce and expand the research-based perspective that Fine Arts itself had served as an embodiment of societal or cultural values. The research findings directed by Chamberlain (2022) had disclosed that observing viewers had drawn upon their personal and relevant life experiences—as well as their formerly understood contextualized knowledge—in order to most effectively attempt to either 'make sense of' or interpret the artworks showcased to them. This occurrence had shed light upon the remarkable importance of human cognitive and emotional experiences in connection with the eventual formation of cultural perceptions on both an individual and collective level.

This revelation had further ascertained a firm theoretical foundation to more effectively understand how Fine Arts production had not only mirrored the 'dominant cultural consciousness/climate' of a particular group of people within a society but had also, through visual portrayals, represented the values, norms, ideologies, restrictions, traditions, practices, goals, and innovative aspirations of specific time periods throughout history. This had moreover suggested the existence of a uniquely interdependent relationship between societal dynamics and the related end results of artistic expression that had followed (Chamberlain, 2022).

In alignment with this premise, the highly interesting research findings of Chatterjee (1970) had produced incredible insights into ways through which societal lifestyles, ideological belief systems, and the upholding of traditional practices had impacted and influenced the emotional and cognitive responses to Fine Arts. The research hypothesis by Chatterjee (1970) had emphasized the subtle yet

multifaceted relationship between creative or expressive works of Art and their relevant cultural contexts. The findings had presented the understanding that varying styles of artistic creation had activated distinct neural pathways in the human brain, which in return had corresponded with the emotional reactions or experiences of the viewer.

Furthermore, this correlation to cognitive responsiveness had greatly assisted in establishing the collective viewpoint among scholars, that various forms of artistic production and artistic expression from different time-periods had entailed small cultural differences. As a result, this specific research-based connection had both validated and strengthened the conclusion that Fine Arts had truly served as a reflective measure of situation-based life experiences (Chatterjee, 1970).

Additionally, more recent studies which had been conducted had persisted in the exploration of this interwoven and interdependent relationship. Cheung et al. (2019) had, for example, established the understanding that Fine Arts had fulfilled the role as a vehicle for in-depth emotional engagement, which in return had reflected foundational core values and cultural beliefs underneath the surface. The research directed by Cheung et al. (2019) had strongly supported evidence to suggest that emotional responses provoked from audiences through means of gazing and reflecting upon aesthetically beautiful, pleasing, joyful, ethereal, and calming artworks had significantly differed from emotional reactions towards 'commercialized visual stimuli,' which had been observed, analysed, and documented.

These distinct dissimilarities in reactionary findings by Cheung et al. (2019) had drawn attention to the fundamental differences that socio-economic and cultural contexts may have had in regard to shaping an individual's or a cultural group's perceptual, interpretational, and emotional responses towards Visual Arts. These documented differences in findings had contributed remarkably towards validating the research-based perspective among certain scholars that Fine Arts had historically served as a multifaceted reflection of both societal etiquette and conventions, as well as cultural traditions and practices (Cheung et al., 2019).

As further elaborated upon by Christensen et al. (2023) regarding the potential correlations and interwoven parallels which may have existed between a certain set of societal ideals or values and expressive artistic representations from a particular time period, it had been proposed that either physical engagement with Fine Arts-making processes or visual engagement with powerful works of Art had possibly greatly contributed towards the obtainment of new knowledge, which had been reflective of more widespread and extended socio-cultural concepts. Through their unique research, Christensen et al. (2023) had presented strong evidence to suggest that artistic expressions had often conveyed critically important cultural narratives regarding societal belief systems, practices, traditions, and ethical

standards pertaining to various forms of etiquette, thus reinforcing the collective viewpoint amongst many scholars that Fine Arts had not merely served as a mirror of diversified cultural dynamics but had also played a pivotal role in regard to its continued preservation (Christensen et al., 2023).

In further support and substantiation of this investigative analysis, Deuel (2013) had expanded and enhanced this perspective by conducting research that had demonstrated that significant works of Art had distinctly reflected the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts in which they had originated. Thus, the research findings had suggested that a closely interconnected correlation had existed between societal structures, values, religious belief systems, and related lifestyles as they pertained to the artistic portrayals and expressions of artisans from the same time periods. Moreover, the in-depth analysis of varying artworks had demonstrated ways in which thematic portrayals that had revolved around moral controversies or violence, for example, had ultimately been created with the intent of readdressing the societal standards which collectively had to be aimed towards, thereby reinforcing collective cultural values. This aspect of the research-based discovery had increasingly strengthened the perspective among scholars that there had been a distinct correlation between the reflective nature of Fine Arts production and the attainment of certain cultural standards (Deuel, 2013).

Through means of the amalgamation and integration of these varying research findings, as commented upon by Gago and de Almeida (2013), it had become increasingly evident that historical statues, sculptures, paintings, frescos, mosaics, and ceramic artifacts had served as essential reflections of cultural contexts throughout different time periods in history, which had simultaneously encapsulated a rich combination of societal ideologies, beliefs, related values, practices, traditions, and cultural etiquette. Furthermore, emotionally provocative visual stimulation as it pertained to certain works of Art, as underscored by Gago and de Almeida (2013), had profoundly contributed towards the formation of specific cognitive functions in the human psyche, which in return had created new cognitive pathways for more effectively understanding the cultural dynamics and standards which had been visually captured and illustrated within artistic depictions.

As noted by Gago and de Almeida (2013), this interdependent aspect of the relationship between Fine Arts expressions and cultural norms had encompassed both the psychological and sociological areas of human development and societal progress. Consequently, these revelatory discoveries and insights by Gago and de Almeida (2013) had recognized and affirmed the profoundly reflective role of Fine Arts in regard to revealing a variety of characteristics and attributes that had determined a particular cultural identity.

In regards to the distinct paralleled connectivity which had existed between artistic interpretational processes and the emotional perceptions by different cultural audiences, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) had argued works of Art had both contained the provocation of certain cognitive and emotional responses, which in and of itself had served as a passageway and avenue of cultural expression.

Their research had therefore suggested that the diverse interpretative and perceptual reactions by varying observers and beholders had overwhelmingly depended upon their personal socio-economic, societal, and sub-cultural backgrounds. These findings by Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) had conveyed the understanding that significant Fine Arts products had mirrored the specified cultural values and belief systems which had been foundational to their respective societal backgrounds or personalized 'frame of reference.' Through means of therefore highlighting the irreplaceable value of artistic expression and artistic creativity as pivotal to the appreciation and assessment of Fine Arts, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008) had emphasized the correlating alliance between cultural identity and Fine Arts—more specifically in regards to supporting the research-based premise that the appreciation of Art, as well as the creation thereof, had been profoundly impacted by both societal and cultural influences.

Beyond the information which had already been established among the researchers and their findings as discussed, Gunaratne et al. (2019) had provided additional substantiation through means of having illustrated an undeniable connection and link between both the self-reported emotional reactions of individuals as well as the self-reported physiological responses of individuals in regards to various visual stimuli. Gunaratne et al. (2019) had discovered the reactions of individuals towards varying works of preselected Art had most certainly reflected their personal worldviews, belief systems, and societal guidelines. Through the incorporation and integration of 'biometric measurements' with emotional evaluations, a remarkable connection amongst physiological and emotional reactivity and response to visual stimulation through Fine Arts expression had been determined. As a result, this had validated the insight among researchers that Fine Arts had indeed fulfilled the role of visually representing different sets of contrasting collections of cultural contexts (Gunaratne et al., 2019).

Supplementary to this understanding, the mobilisation of the 'Geneva Affective Picture Database' had impactfully showcased how varying collections of cultural perceptions had unquestionably influenced the emotional response of both individuals and groups from different societal demographics. These corroborating findings had therefore strongly expanded the perspective among researchers and scholars that Fine Arts, throughout various disciplines thereof, had served as reflective representations of predominant cultural dynamics, frameworks, ideologies, and suggested values (Gunaratne et al., 2019).

The extended investigation of processes related to 'human attention' within context to 'visual perception' had been further progressed by Hopfinger and Mangun (1998), who had found that both 'reflexive human attention' and 'voluntary human attention' had impacted the manner in which selected individuals had interacted with works of Art. In other words, apart from fulfilling aesthetic purposes of decorating or beautifying spaces and creating a certain attempted atmosphere, Fine Arts had also served a representational role in regards to mirroring extended societal standards and cultural values. Therefore, the modifications and inflections of 'sensory processing' related to human brain activity, which had been embedded within certain historical contexts, had strongly suggested that Fine Artists had engaged with cognitive systems of knowledge. More specifically, mental structures which had mirrored persistence and a continuance of particular sets of cultural values and societal belief systems had illustrated the core attributes of 'cultural identity' through their creative artistic presentations (Hopfinger and Mangun, 1998).

From a fairly similar investigative research-angle, the findings produced by Ikei et al. (2020) had exemplified ways through which stimulus derived from visual imagery, which had particularly been affiliated with 'natural elements,' had triggered a state of relaxation amongst participants and had generated increased psychological well-being. Ikei et al. (2020) had further suggestion and proposed the idea that works of Art, which had incorporated natural characteristics or qualities, had evidently resonated with more widespread cultural values which had highly esteemed cultivating both an atmosphere of harmony and tranquillity. Consequently, physiological responses and reactions, which had been inspired by these visual attributes, had been directly connected to the cultural emphasis that had been placed upon the emotional states of individuals or collective groups. These findings therefore had underscored the perspective that Fine Arts had encompassed the inherently underlying values and end goals found within varying societal structures (Ikei et al., 2020).

Through means of having conducted an in-depth analysis and examination of the historical progression, trends, and developmental stages of Fine Arts, Heft (2021) had presented a compelling argument to suggest that as shifts in societal perceptions had occurred over time, especially throughout the Renaissance, the works of Art, which had been produced, had increasingly revolved around topics which had touched upon 'Humanism.' The uniquely clear focus, which had been shifted towards the significance of portraying 'individualism' or the 'individual human experience' in comparison to the former broader societal themes which had previously been depicted in Artworks during earlier time periods in Art History, had undeniably served as a reflection of ever-changing cultural and societal values, ideas, interpretational viewpoints, and perceptions, which had in return impacted societal behaviours as well. This revelation had of course substantiated the understanding that Fine Arts had

served as an impactful instrument for communicating collective cultural thoughts, insights, and sentiments over time (Heft, 2021).

Furthermore, the complicated and fine details pertaining to 'viewer perception and interpretations' had been thoroughly investigated by Hagtvedt et al. (2008), who had brought great attention to the importance of considering a series of 'contextual factors' as they had pertained to categorizing various disciplines or products of Fine Arts. Their research-based findings, presented by Hagtvedt et al. (2008), had also demonstrated that the communication of emotional aspects through visual imagery had remained traceable and had been connected to the specific sets of cultural values which had been esteemed amongst different societal structures. The confirmation hereof had therefore strengthened the notion that Fine Arts had not merely reflected cultural perception but had also played an essential role in the active formation, development, and process of shaping cultural perceptions. Therefore, its reciprocal correlation had confirmed that Fine Arts had equally been influenced by and had simultaneously impacted societal beliefs, values, and standards (Hagtvedt et al., 2008).

Moreover, the research produced by Frascaroli (2022) had made it known that works of Art, which had been produced, investigated, and evaluated, had successfully extracted critical insights regarding inherent cognitive values within the context of better understanding cultural representations through Art as a medium. The research by Frascaroli (2022) had discussed methods through which the 'reception of Fine Arts' could have revealed critical information regarding 'collective group/cultural psychology,' in doing so, had further corroborated the perspective that the interwoven and interdependent relation between societal standards, cultural values, and the creation of Fine Arts had resulted in historical works of Art serving as embodiments of societal frameworks and culturally influenced products of artistic expression. Consequently, the findings from Frascaroli (2022) had also greatly assisted scholars to more effectively grasp the specific points of connectivity between cultural expression and representational artistic portrayals.

In extended support, Herwig et al. (2012) had contributed significantly by shedding light upon the human brain's self-referential processes, as well as the brain's reception and responses towards the viewing of artworks. Through means of having illustrated how the act of engaging in personal introspection and self-reflection of an individual had been deeply intertwined with their cultural background, the findings of Herwig et al. (2012) had strongly pointed to the understanding that art-making processes and works of Art had not only encompassed characteristics of self-representations but had also included cultural rationalization as well (Herwig et al., 2012).

Hitch et al. (1995) had investigated the categorical differences between 'superficial-visual-recall-patterns' and memory pertaining to 'higher-order image abstractions,' which had alluded to the

fact that stimulation through visual imagery had profoundly influenced the development of memory-building processes and other transformative cognitive processes in the human brain. The end results of the research findings, discovered by Hitch et al. (1995), had indicated that the production of historical crafts and artefacts (whether decorative or realistic in representational style) had seemed to attempt the preservation and illustration of both the 'intangible' and 'tangible' components of societal ideologies and related religious belief systems. The results of this research study, which had therefore evaluated the impacts of 'mental imagery' upon varying spheres of cultural development, progress, and transformation, had further showcased the valuable potential that visual stimulation through the creation of Fine Arts had in regards to the effective visual communication of laborious and comprehensive attributes related to social standards within the context of a specified time period. In doing so, these historical Fine Arts representations had therefore transcended 'literal representations' of objects or subject themes, but had become symbolic in nature, metaphorical, allegorical, and had fulfilled a culturally reflective purpose (Hitch et al., 1995).

The research conducted by Nader and Moosa (2011) had presented evidence to suggest that Fine Arts had encompassed the psychiatric and psychological states, as well as the emotional states of individuals or collective cultural groups of people. The argument had therefore been made that Fine Arts products had served as a powerful channel or avenue for the depiction and portrayal of culturally significant identity-traits, including foundational cultural values throughout different historical contexts. Nader and Moosa (2011) had also upheld the viewpoint throughout the entire debate in their research angles, that renowned painters, sculptors, and ceramicists had historically served as impactful 'social commentators' within their respective cultural structures and time-periods, since they had either intentionally or unintentionally incorporated biased cultural chronicles, descriptions, or belief-systems within their artworks.

This research-based interpretation had also been expanded upon. This perspective was further enhanced by Marczak-Czajka et al. (2024), who had conducted a study regarding the visual psychological impacts of 'abstract Art' and concluded that this style of Art had aided the further experimentation of provoking raw emotional responses from audiences. Findings produced by Marczak-Czajka et al. (2024) had determined that Fine Arts had not only served as a mirror of the personal psychological well-being of specified individuals, but also more widespread and extended cultural circumstances which had influenced certain emotionally-driven reactions and responses.

Moreover, the research conducted by Mamassian (2008) had underscored the critical importance of considering visual standards and design principles from certain time periods throughout history as essential reflective portrayals of related societal changes which had taken place. The research results discovered by Mamassian (2008) had also found that these preferred standards of visual aesthetics had

originated from 'perceptual challenges' which had been internalized by individuals and collective cultural groups from varying societal demographics over an extended time period. These findings had therefore alluded to the understanding that Fine Arts portrayals had strongly correlated with the cultural expectations, worldviews, practices, traditions, ideologies, values, and religious beliefs of the 'collective consciousnesses' of their own societal contexts. Therefore, the 'internalization process' which had been demonstrated with the research methods of Mamassian (2008) had made a strong case for the perspective that 'visual perception' and the 'end result of artistic expressions' had been directly dependent upon each other. In return, this had further underpinned the viewpoint that Fine Arts had most certainly mirrored both cultural and broader societal values.

In unison and support of multiple research studies and findings which had already been discussed pertaining to emotional reactionary responses towards visual stimuli found within Fine Arts, Rentschler et al. (1999) had also conducted an investigation into the relationship between varying cultural groups—or ethnicities—and their respective preferences related to symbolic representations, visual dynamics, and aesthetic inclinations. This supporting study had illustrated within its findings and final hypothesis that the visual preferences of differing societal groups had not only been influenced, impacted, and formed in a certain direction due to biological considerations but also by their varying socioeconomic settings, social milieus, and environments. Rentschler et al. (1999) had found that visual preferences related to visual aspects like 'symmetry' and 'complication intricacies' among different cultural groups had, for example, significantly resembled certain familiarized societal values related to acceptable imagery—which, needless to mention, had only reinforced the already established perspective regarding the reflective nature of Fine Arts within historical contexts.

From a similar research angle, Wijntjes and Middelkoop (2024) had assessed ways through which Fine Arts had potentially either insinuated or communicated specified sets of cultural values, societal views, standards, practices, or related symbolic information. Through means of having assessed student responses—as well as their interactions with a series of pre-selected artworks that had been significantly opposite in their appearance and subject themes—this study had exposed the fact that the distinct dissimilarities in the interpretational perceptions amongst students had been remarkably impacted by their respective background settings. Likewise, therefore, this study too had confirmed the broadly accepted notion among Art Historians and scholars that artistic artefacts and crafts had indeed, to a considerable degree, reflected societal belief systems, ideologies, values, goals, and aspirations (Wijntjes & Middelkoop, 2024).

The experimentation with 'neuroimaging' which Mastandrea et al. (2019) had conducted had disclosed that certain areas of the human brain affiliated with the processing of receiving recognition, affirmation, praise, and reward had also been further connected to the processing of emotions as well as

emotional reactions towards visual stimuli. On this basis, Mastandrea et al. (2019) had concluded that reactions or responses could have varied exceptionally, depending on the cultural or societal backgrounds of individuals—especially considering that emotional reactions towards imagery had most commonly been directly impacted by the cultural attitudes, interpretations, perceptions, and correlating beliefs of a particular individual.

In further support of these determinations, Mizumoto et al. (2024) had found that the visual stimulus related to imagery had supported the broader understanding and associations across multiple cultures with generalized societal perceptions of serenity, calmness, relaxation, mental health, and wellness. Mizumoto et al. (2024) had, through means of the application of physiological measurements, effectively illustrated that visual response and appreciation towards natural aesthetics had profoundly resonated with the societal importance which had been placed upon the attainment of psychological, emotional, and physical well-being. These results had therefore underscored the significant importance that nature scenery within Fine Arts production had fulfilled in regard to various therapeutic practices which had been highly esteemed within some cultural contexts throughout history (Mizumoto et al., 2024).

In unison with this particular angle of investigation, Schreuder et al. (2016) and Pelowski et al. (2016) had also analyzed the impact of 'multisensory experiences,' and in doing so, this group of researchers had come to a similar conclusion. Through means of experimentation, which had more closely considered the impacts of diversified sensory stimuli, which had in return produced a wide range of varying emotional reactions, responses, and emotional states, the evident results pertaining to the interdependent nature of visual stimulus and related responses had uniquely demonstrated how Fine Arts had encompassed the 'collective emotional landscape' of cultures.

By integrating the collective results of Nakamura et al. (2019), Vessel et al. (2012), Šola et al. (2022), and Starr (n.d.), had generated qualitative data that had continued to strengthen the proposition of a correlation between visual stimuli in Fine Arts and responses through the years. For example, Nakamura et al. had found that representations in Art had largely endeared the natural element to the audience and thus had significantly reduced negative moods tied to societal attributes about it. Elsewhere, Vessel et al. had noted that people's response to the Arts had been personal and cultural depending on individual and collective emotional occurrences. Similarly, Šola et al. (2022), through the eye-tracking system, argue that the response to human expressions had supported cultural occurrences and shared narratives in the society. In allowing individuals to analyse and interpret artistic content, Starr (n.d.) shows that Fine Arts, therefore, had effectively acted as a mirror of societal values and emotions over the years.

In a related area of visual perception and cognitive stimuli, Vaitonytė et al. (2022) had observed that face perception processes within cultural bounds had been closely related to culture. Their findings suggested that not only had cognitive processes been the main cause for face recognition, but also culturally grounded facts which had shaped people's beliefs and interactions. Studying works of Art thus had appeared to mirror cultural aspects such as social beliefs and values (Vaitonytė et al. (2022)).

In the joint integration of personal and societal replies, Ulbricht (2007) contends that Fine Arts had captured both the social and cultural contexts to uphold the findings under this theme. Ulbricht's research study findings, relying on personal Arts experiences, had effectively captured how people had identified with cultural issues vis-à-vis works of Art. The study thus confirms that Fine Arts had profoundly assisted in the effective articulation of the public's dominant beliefs and values throughout various generations and time-periods.

Elsewhere, Vaitonytė et al. (2022) had demonstrated that human visage relationships had also captured cultural values. The finding underscores the importance of visible skin contrasts when one had been seeking to identify an individual, within the context of representing the norm in social interactions.

Together with the findings of many authors listed, such as Bardon (2024), Baumberger (2013), Bolwerk et al. (2014), Bruder and Uçok (2000), Christensen et al. (2023), Deuel (2013), Frascaroli (2022), Gago and de Almeida (2013), Gunaratee et al. (2019), Herwig et al. (2012), Hitch et al. (1995), Ikei et al. (2024), Mamassian (2008), Pelowski et al. (2016), Rentschler et al. (1999), Schreuder et al. (2016), Wijntjes and Middelkoop (2024), Hopfinger and Magun (1998), etc., these collective research findings had profoundly demonstrated how Fine Arts had served as mirrors of culture, encapsulating a range of social factors, including beliefs, interests, and lifestyles. The literature had consistently corroborated the claim that Fine Arts had provided deep understanding, which had mirrored the ideals and societal standards of particular communities. Moreover, these artworks had struck a chord with audiences and had established a vocabulary of collective cultural experiences.

CHAPTER 5: FINE ARTS AS CATALYSTS FOR CULTURAL CHANGE THROUGH THE RENAISSANCE, ROMANTICISM & CUBISM

Jones (2019) states that when the extent of 'social change' achieved through the avenue of Fine Arts had exceeded its former purpose of merely being reflective of a particular culture, its degree of success could be measured by determining the scope of new artistic expressions, (as it relates to 'individual' and 'cultural identity'), which had taken place. More specifically, the role of Fine Arts as promoting, advocating for, and serving as a catalyst for cultural change had been evident in the portrayal of artworks from the Renaissance, Romantic, and Cubism time periods in Art History (Jones, 2019).

5.1.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Renaissance Time Period (1350 AD – 1620 AD)

5.1.1.1 Origins of the Renaissance

Benoit (n.d.) confirms the general understanding among Art historians and academics that the Renaissance as a formal Art Period in History had begun around approximately 1350 AD and had ended around 1620 AD. However, Benoit (n.d.) argues that Italian paintings, frescos, mosaics, and sculptures which had already been identified as Renaissance artworks could, in some cases, be traced back to the 13th and 14th centuries, which had been referred to by some scholars as the 'Proto-Renaissance' period, and which had preceded the Renaissance between 1200 AD–1400 AD. This 'Proto-Renaissance', as acknowledged by some Art historians, had been a period during which certain forward-thinking artisans, literature writers, and scholars had perceived themselves to be honouring and reigniting the incredibly high former accomplishments and goals which had been set by the classical culture of ancient Rome (Benoit, n.d.).

It is also mentioned by Toffolo (2016) that Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) and Petrarch (1304–1374) had served as two relevant examples of noteworthy literary scholars who had reminisced about reviving the intellectualism, cultural values, and richness of linguistics which had been present during the ancient Greek and Roman time periods, especially considering the extended period of stagnation which had followed since the entire ancient kingdom of the Romans had been disassembled and systematically undone by the end of the 500's CE (501–600).

In addition, Monfasani (2015) adds to this understanding by affirming that although the existence of the Italian Renaissance had not been denied by any Art historians, the most important point of inquiry would be to determine exactly 'how' it had come into fruition and when exactly it had both begun and ended. Monfasani (2015) also makes the excellent point by stating that it's important to understand that the phenomenon of the Renaissance had neither been considered as the 'inception of modernism' or a rebellious movement against the Middle Ages, but rather an era of 'heightened foresight

and success' which embodied a culmination of the best attributes that the Middle Ages had to offer. In accordance with the views of many Art historians and scholars, Monfasani (2015) similarly argues that when Italy had eventually taken over key cultural leadership roles of Europe, which had directly influenced political, religious, educational, and cultural decisions, the broader Renaissance movement across multiple European countries had come into its most iconic time period, around the 1490s–1520s.

Rosenthal (1978) highlights that Georg Voigt and Renap are collectively of the opinion that the Renaissance most likely had begun sometime during the 13th century, as confirmed by Benoit (n.d.) as well. This estimated timeline is exactly right before the estimated time frame which had formerly been determined by Buckhardt. It would therefore be fair to assume that all four of these scholars had been correct regarding the estimated time period which had preceded the Renaissance in regard to the ideological thinking processes, values, perspectives, and the practical interpretative application thereof by fine artists and artisans in Italy.

It is further noted by Neumeyer & Hay (1962) that the competing dictatorships referred to as 'signori' and 'popolo' had emerged within the main Italian city-states during the 13th century. In addition, Venice had, during the exact same time period, launched the formation of its very first organization, which had undertaken their Fourth Crusade, including the formation of their first governing Senate, as well as their interim into establishing the 'terraferma'. The 'terraferma' had referred to all of the mainland regions which had belonged to Venice, from Udine to Milan. These regions had also included Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua (Neumeyer & Hay, 1962).

5.1.1.2 General Societal Attributes & Developmental Changes Which Had Occurred During the Renaissance

Furthermore, the concept of 'double-ledger bookkeeping', different forms of 'bills of exchange', the first 'letters of credit' among different countries, multiple 'disciplines of Fine Arts' and craftsmanship, and the first educational institutions and universities, (which included the expansion of Italian literature), had all been emerging during the 13th century, while these collective societal developments had distinguished Italian culture throughout the remainder of the Renaissance time period until 1620 AD.

Toffolo (2016) also mentions that the nation of Italy had formerly been swept up in the ideological changes of new intellectual currents of the northern European countries during the 12th century. In return, this had caused Italian literary scholars to adopt a more practical attitude towards grammatical language structuring based upon the classic Latin literary texts during this time period. However, these influences caused by northern European countries had failed to persuade Italian linguistic scholars and academics to adopt anti-classical views and perceptions of old Latin texts. On

the contrary, the nation of Italy had successfully preserved the majority of its historic traditions and practices. Italian society during the 13th century had begun to forge a new legacy revolving around the 'humanist philosophers and visionaries' of 'Lovato dei Lovati' in Padua, as well as independent Italian scholars from the north with whom they had been connected (Toffolo, 2016).

According to the interpretations provided by Randolph (2007), the author John Addington Symonds made the statement that the Renaissance period had been the most significant and unique time period throughout history as it relates to intellectual, scientific, academic, creative, and artistic human progress and development. This perspective stands in stark contrast to many critics who had argued that the Renaissance as both an 'ideological concept' and 'period in Art History' had formerly been declared as 'being dead' so many times during the past, while many medievalists among the historians and scholars had also expressed disdain for this time period in history (Randolph, 2007).

Additionally, the passing of the Renaissance and the officially approved academic interpretations and narratives thereof had been firmly subjected to William Bouwsma's oversight and had consequently been preserved at the presidential address of the American Historical Association in 1978. To further restrict diverse academic views regarding the Renaissance which may have existed among historians during the 20th century, the 1996 edition of the 'Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies' had additionally been established as the 'Journal of both Medieval & Early Modern Studies'. Therefore, the views and interpretations within this journal had been considered as the 'only accurate perspective' – which in return had limited any potential debates regarding the subject matter (Bouwsma, 1979).

Chastel (1981) confirms that modern-day knowledge among historical scholars regarding the 'way of life' which had taken place during the 1500s in France, is scarce. In fact, Chastel (1981) states that very little had been factually known regarding the various societal mentalities and thinking processes of different societal classes, while a lack of interest by historians to gain in-depth insight regarding the cultural context of Medieval French society had been highly unfortunate. It is further noted by Chastel (1981) that from approximately 1480 until 1530, a 50-year void of key information which had existed had been too easily dismissed and accepted by historians.

Findlen (1998) makes the observation that one of the most uniquely impressive attributes of the Renaissance from a modern-day perspective, is the fact that it had continuously reproduced the past throughout many different time periods which had followed. Findlen (1998) shares the interesting viewpoint by arguing that various societies and cultural groups had identified with the richness and expansiveness of materialism which had been captured and elevated during the Renaissance. And as a result, there seems to have been a 'selectiveness' in regards to the portions of history which various societies from different time periods following the Renaissance, had wanted to associate with or revive.

In agreement with Findlen (1998), this may arguably have been one of the reasons why art historians, academics, and scholars had disproportionately devoted their interest to better understanding and investigating this particular time period in history.

However, as De Jésus et al. (2001) further elaborates, generations which had followed since the Renaissance had visually grasped the main attribute of this 'material inheritance' as it had been originally presented by its founders and expert advocates. This historical legacy had therefore been intended for the purposes of being held in high esteem, being admired, being reinvented, and to some degree copied or 're-lived' time and time again. As a result, the imitation of this visual time period had continued to recreate our perception of what culture and society should 'strive to be like' (De Jésus et al., 2001).

However, as noted by Landauer (1994), further important investigative questions to ask should include the consideration of which specific key qualities and characteristics of the Renaissance might have been most relevant as they pertained to their value possibly translating into capital gain. Furthermore, how might art historians and scholars improve and recover the negative perspectives of Western Civilization's haughty adoration of the Renaissance, which had been driven by former academics? This is an important question to consider as it had related to effectively educating future artists, craftsmen, architects, designers, inventors, and scientists regarding the Renaissance, while simultaneously inspiring them to utilize the best qualities which this time period had to offer.

In support of the views of Landauer (1994), it would therefore have been a definite educational and cultural loss, as well as a step in the wrong direction, to overemphasize negative critique of this significant time period in history.

5.1.1.3 The Creation & Glorification of Sentimental Objects During the Renaissance

Starn (1998) notes that one of the most fundamental and noteworthy attributes which had characterized the Renaissance had been the creation and glorification of sentimental objects. Some of the wealthiest Europeans who had lived during the Renaissance had taken pride in collecting a number of valuable objects which, during the time period and relevant cultural context, had represented their nobility and financial superiority—and had thereby elevated their social status in the eyes of others. Ironically, during this particular time period, the wealthy Europeans themselves had not attributed or placed as much value on the artifacts which are currently considered highly valuable during the 21st century, such as sculptures, paintings, ancient manuscripts, and cultural antiques of various kinds. Instead, during the Renaissance period itself, those from wealth and nobility had placed much higher value on owning rare objects such as ancient jewelled goblets, ostrich eggs, and relics—due to their exceptional scarcity. An interesting point to note is that acquiring, owning, and attaining these rare objects had not only solidified their social hierarchy and status in their own eyes, but had seemed to play

into narratives pertaining to 'what it had meant to their familial lineage'—to own such rarities and items of luxury (Starn, 1998).

During 1595, as elaborated upon by Vadillo (2011), Jacomo Contarini, who had been a senator in Venice at the time, had referred to his home residence as brimming with "exquisite things," which among Italian nobility had reflected a collective pride in the ability to decorate their homes with objects of significant value. Likewise, the appraisal and valuation of other artifacts which had betokened and symbolized the Renaissance (such as detailed paintings, intricate sculptures, manuscripts, and books), had taken place during a time period when the culture of the societal climate had attributed great worth to gathering physical possessions. Many scholars and academics had therefore confirmed that the Renaissance had encompassed a heightened curiosity and interest in attaining special artifacts from other cultures. In addition, it had been noted that a strong sense of pride had been connected to excellent quality craftsmanship which had been able to make the most simplistic merchandise far more admirable and desirable (Vadillo, 2011).

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, as mentioned by Goldthwaite (1987), trading businesses had greatly expanded, while the flourishing aristocratic and artisanal culture which had significantly increased during this time period, had all contributed towards a growing cultural perception that 'social statuses' were directly connected to possessions. In other words, the societal understanding that the ownership of valuable objects had been significantly important, had continued to grow among the public consciousness of this era. An interesting tale from the Renaissance which had accurately captured this cultural perception is the tale of Diogenes, who had entered the abode of a gentleman and had been so appalled by its severe lack of ornate decorations that he had spat in his face due to his great offense. In his characteristic denunciation, Diogenes had shamelessly declared this abode as bereft of any good whatsoever. Perhaps predictably, a sophisticated Italian nobleman had shared his vehement view on the matter. He had argued that the mark of true sophistication and beauty in a home had been a ratio between the detailed oil paintings that had decorated its walls, the gaudy decorative ornaments, and rare, exotic artifacts that had been laid out across a home—forming a fragile combination of lust, art, and wealth. This folktale had also been recounted by Sabba da Castiglione (Goldthwaite, 1987).

5.1.1.4 Different Social Classes Which Had Been Recognized During the Renaissance

Chastel (1981) states that different social classes within French society had upheld different cultural traditions and practices. Those who had been from an aristocratic lineage, for the most part, had not been impressed by new modern developments at the time, and to a large degree, had ignored cultural

progress made as it had related to 'humanism,' 'human rights,' and so forth. Instead, they had been more focused upon protecting their elite circles, elite views, and elite traditions. In addition, they had also been collectors and connoisseurs of rare and expensive treasures of various kinds (Chastel, 1981).

The new class of education known as 'Bourgeois Cultives,' which had been the second-highest societal class in France during the Renaissance, as discussed by Zukin (1977), had been explicitly rooted in hedonism while they had simultaneously been focused upon capitalism and solely devoted to upholding the country's material, economic, and political interests. This class had included businessmen, lawyers, clerics, military officers, and those who had been academically or scientifically gifted. However, this particular societal class (unlike the abundantly wasteful royals, aristocrats, and families from noble descent) had been strongly in opposition to being visibly wasteful, while so many poverty-stricken people on the streets of France had been struggling to eat three meals per day and to make ends meet (Zukin, 1977).

Chastel (1981) summarizes this as the number one critique of the French Renaissance, referring to the understanding that the cultural perspectives, views, traditions, practices, and different mindsets as the 'third power of influence' had predominantly influenced the formation, progress, and expansion throughout Europe.

Yet, as explained by Chastel (1981), the more appropriate question that should have been asked by art historians is 'how' exactly these varying societal classes within the broader culture, money, and the power of affluent key individuals, had been combined in order to shape the direction and progress which the Renaissance had made within different fields of development?

As it pertains to the main roles which the new class of education known as 'Bourgeois Cultives' had played within French Renaissance culture, Danylova & Hoian (2020) explain that they best support the investigative perspective of Eugene Rice. This author's view and understanding (based upon a study which had been conducted through means of interviewing supporters of the 'humanist ideology') is that the main purpose of the new educational class had been to make an entourage (an elite club) from noblemen and gentlemen from merchants and shopkeepers. In doing so, their aim had been to unify these men toward meeting commonly shared business values and economic targets through the type of services which they had offered. These services had also included the level of loyalty which they had demonstrated toward the sovereignty of the ruling class within their own territorial states (Danylova & Hoian, 2020).

Hohti (2010) makes the compelling argument by highlighting the fact that the overall 'cultural climate' of the Renaissance most certainly cannot have been ascribed to one particular social class or to those of elevated hierarchy. Despite the great success of the Renaissance, the entire movement and

period in history had ultimately been enabled by the approval of the King of France who had reigned during that period of time. In support of the views of Hohti (2010), it is my further added opinion that, in order for a cultural movement to have been highly successful, not only in regards to its monetary prominence but in regards to the long-term legacy that it had left behind, all cultural groups and facets of society would have had to fulfil their separate roles to the utmost of their abilities and with a high standard of excellence. This would have had to include everyone from low-skilled farmers, craftsmen like weavers, silk manufacturers, leather workers, carpenters, iron casters, welders, and goldsmiths; small-business owners like bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and carpet traders; artisans like sculptors, ceramicists, stained-glass artists, mosaic artists, and painters; as well as individuals who had possessed rare skill sets, like city planners, architects, scientists, doctors, playwrights, poets, lawyers, financial investors, clerks, and bankers. It is also important to note that individuals from different facets of society and from different social classes would have been collectively dependent upon one another in order to achieve success within each of their separate areas of expertise.

Despite certain key individuals during the Renaissance who had fulfilled higher roles carrying significantly greater responsibility, influence, and prominence, it would have been nearly impossible for one specific cultural group within the hierarchical societal classes of the Renaissance to claim superior credit for the development and progress of the Renaissance at large (Hohti, 2010).

As it pertains to King Francis I, however (the notorious French King who had enabled a significant amount of development during the Renaissance period), Knecht (1981) had been unable to find any other leader from any other European country during the Renaissance (even compared to highly regarded leaders from modern times) of whom the selective individual opinions, tastes, and influences as a supreme ruler had been granted such extravagant prominence and importance. The exceptional popularity, high regard, and rise of King Francis I can have been ascribed to the fact that the cultural climate during this particular time period had best served as its own form of propaganda, which had not required any further promoting. In addition, the rise and prominence of King Francis I can also have been attributed to the fact that the system of governance during this time period had been the first example of a centralized political system which had made society more dependent upon the governance of the state under the rulership of the king (Knecht, 1981).

During the Renaissance, Howard (1962) mentions that the general perception among nobility and those from prominent leadership positions had been that upholding cultural traditions and practices with the aim of celebrating their cultural heritage had been foundational in regards to the attainment of human dignity and human efficiency moving forward. Within some of the historical artifacts and miniature depictions of King Francis of 1530 which had been discovered and preserved, the 'seriousness' of King Francis's character had often been captured. His serious expressions, eloquent

clothing, and strong stance had been intended to resemble the fact that he had become a model for European society to follow and imitate. From this perspective, King Francis had been greatly successful in regards to his 'cultural authority.' The moment of King Francis I, which had been sculpted and had been known as the 'moving-heart' monument, also had contained features of more physical beauty. This had served as an honorary 'visual acclamation' and testament of his unparalleled contributions toward France and the greater Renaissance throughout his lifetime. This monument by Pierre Bontemps had been further magnified by the artistic representation in beautified medallions (Howard, 1962).

5.1.1.5 The Removal of Theological Oversight from Academia During the Renaissance

Earnestly working towards disqualifying and entirely removing ineptitude, Ford (2006) explains that illiteracy and incompetence from French society had been the exact thematic depiction which had been displayed within the first fresco painting that had been exhibited for public viewing within the Francis I Gallery. This fresco had already been painted ten years prior to the opening of the official gallery and foundation known as the "College de France." Erasmus, who had initiated the establishment of this gallery, however, had upheld the perspective that the practice of studying literature (of either a historic, academic, fictitious, or poetic nature) was no longer to remain under the strict ownership and review of the theological university. In thereby removing all literature review from the oversight of the church, the power of religious censorship and restraints which had been upon 'independent thinking' as well as 'independent debate and reasoning' had caused religious institutions to become less intertwined with academia in the public square – including government reign (Ford, 2006).

This ground-breaking change had not only defended the humanists, as confirmed by Murphy (2008), but had protected the free and unregulated study of literature and classical languages against the censorship of critics, who had formerly both scorned them and simply dismissed them as barbarians. Evidence of the rejoicing humanists can be found in a letter which had been written by Erasmus to Cajetan in the year 1561. In regard to historical changes which had been made to theological texts during the Renaissance, the official arrangement and added text of the New Testament to the Bible within its entirety as a completed book during 1516 had most certainly caused great optimism and hope for the future among writers, academics, and religious figures alike. Additionally, princes throughout Europe who had upheld the Christian faith and who had been considered as having been both enlightened and educated within their own right had viewed the humanists favourably. Some of these Renaissance rulers had included Charles of Habsburg, Henry VIII, Leo X (who had been referred to as a 'prince of peace'), and, of course, King Francis I, who had been known for his advantage of appealing to – and alluring remarkable talents (within the medical field, scientific fields, architects, sculptures, etc.) due to his exceptional fame, influence, and reverence that the other leaders had held for him across multiple European nations (Murphy, 2008).

As had been somewhat customary, the adoration could have been likened to a request – since the highly regarded ethics, successes, and qualities which had been assigned to heroic or legendary figures had to have been based upon factual performance. Due to the government model and structure of France during the Renaissance time period, Chastel (1981) argues that the difference in the scope, capacity, and level of responsibility of the role which Francis I had to uphold had been revealed as being very different compared to the roles of his other royal opponents (Chastel, 1981).

Shapiro (1967) presents the argument that many different groups of ideological thinkers, such as the Christian theologians (from both Catholic and Protestant churches), Arabic commentators, Neoplatonists, along with the Humanists, had all philosophized and debated on the motives, origins, and causes of various types of intelligences. In addition, these various areas of human intellect and development during the Renaissance period had been categorized as being either 'hypostases,' 'souls,' or 'pure essences,' which had classified humans into various hierarchies and 'states of being.' From the stance of the ancient Greek Platonist philosopher named Plotinus, (who had been considered the founder of Neoplatonism), four stages of 'hypostases' had been identified in context to the concept of the manifestation of 'many from one.' This had particularly pertained – and referred to both the widespread dissemination and assimilation of diversified – or opposing concepts, philosophies, and methodologies. Therefore, not only by a singular individual, but by a number of different 'thinkers' from this time-period. Further viewed through a more religious church-based context, the 'human intelligences' had been perceived as an interconnected-component with different angelic beings (Shapiro, 1967).

From the perspective of church theologians, according to Shapiro (1967), the highest intelligence had been ascribed to the Creator God, who is unchanging, forever steadfast, almighty, and unshakable. The second highest level of intelligence had been interpreted as beings who had existed within the shifting and rotating spheres of heaven, while the third level of intelligence had been viewed as those who had fulfilled earthbound roles.

5.1.1.6 The Significance of 'Aureola Symbols' Related to Distinguishing Between Various Degrees of Intelligence & Excellence During the Renaissance

Hall & Uhr (1985) state that it had become evident that the 'aureola symbols' (referring to crowns, halos, and other visual symbols which had been intended for distinguishing various degrees of excellence among saints) had resurfaced and featured once again within the Fine Arts of both Medieval times and the Early Renaissance time period. This reappearance and revival of the application of 'aureola symbols' within Fine Arts had been both unlikely and unique, since it had been forgotten for approximately a hundred years prior, while nearly half of Christian iconographic research had forgotten about these symbolic meanings and interpretations.

According to Jalal & Siddiq (2022), the historic Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d'Alembert within the original text had described the 'aureola symbols' as representational of a 'crown of honour and glory.' This honour and glory had been attributed to all those who had laid down their lives for others in service, such as doctors rescuing lives, military martyrs in defence of a nation, or virgins who had dedicated their lives to God through their acts of selfless kindness. Furthermore, all of these individuals had been considered as 'saints' within their own right.

Hall & Uhr (1985) further note that the academic and theological context for the term 'aureola' had originally stemmed from a Bible excerpt found in Exodus 25:25. This particular scriptural passage refers to the preparation of the table containing bread which had been blessed for sacrificial offering. Within this passage, God had given Moses instructions to create two golden mouldings around the offering table, which had to serve as a "polished crown," and on top of this structure, an additional tier – or "smaller crown." The medieval understanding and interpretation of the "polished crown" had represented the ultimate and eternal reward from heaven that would be enjoyed by all those who had achieved sainthood.

This reward, as commented upon by Hoffman (2023), had been perceived as representing the joy that one would experience while being surrounded by the manifest presence of God and being in perfect union with Him. In a metaphorical or symbolical sense, this 'state of bliss' had been referred to as the 'aurea' or the divine golden crown, and it had later been depicted within many Renaissance artworks. During latter years, the divine golden crown had then become better known as the 'halo.' Furthermore, the passage from the book of Exodus had been clear about the fact that the "aureola" (little crown) had been added onto the "aurea" (polished crown and first tier) in an analogous manner, while all academic Art historians are in agreement that the second crown had been added to the first crown. In other words, therefore outlining two distinct and separate entities (Hoffman, 2023).

Jalal & Siddiq (2022) confirm that this interpretation, which had been determined by theologians during medieval times and during the Renaissance, had been rooted in the Bible from Isaiah 62:3, which declares that those who had lived a 'just' (honest, fair, and righteous) life would, as their heavenly reward, receive a 'decorated crown' as well as a 'fair diadem' (coronet, headpiece, or tiara) from the very hands of God Himself. As Albertus Magnus had explained, the 'beatitude,' as described within the Biblical text, had seemed to contain two crowns. He had referred to the first crown as being 'substantive' (known as "aurea"), while referring to the second crown as being 'accidental' or a special gift (known as an "aureola"). In fact, many historians and academic scholars had interpreted the "aureola" as being an incredibly rare and uniquely special award, which in heaven would only be granted to the souls of doctors, nuns (virgins), and martyrs who had made significantly selfless sacrifices during their lifetimes (Jalal & Siddiq, 2022).

5.1.2. The Societal & Cultural Values During the Renaissance

5.1.2.1 Impact Upon Societal Perceptions During the Renaissance, Through the Contributions Made by Leonardo Da Vinci & Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simon

Bardon (2023) states that cultural perceptions during the Renaissance period had been greatly influenced and impacted among society, due to his extraordinary contributions made to the studying of the human body.

As confirmed by Perloff (2013), Leonardo Da Vinci had managed to obtain his first human skull for scientific dissection and investigation during 1489, while his meticulously anatomical sketches, illustrations, and artworks regarding the inner workings of the human body, which had been exhibited around 1513, had resembled an impeccable attention to detail after he had successfully dissected approximately 30 human corpses. Perloff (2013) makes mention of the fact that, as a central cultural value (aspiring to become like the ancient mythological gods), the ancient Greeks and Romans had also dedicated an incredible amount of time to examining human biology, with the aim of imagining the 'perfect human form.' With some similarities in mind, Leonard da Vinci, on the other hand, had not necessarily been interested in depicting the 'perfect idealized form of a human' but had rather aimed at depicting the most realistic and detailed version of 'human muscular anatomy,' as this 'subject matter' had truly been designed (Perloff, 2013).

Jones (2012) mentions it had been believed by historians that Leonardo Da Vinci had first convinced grave robbers to provide him with cadavers to dissect and study, although it had been illegal to do so. Yet the law had not been enforced within this regard. Later in time, the director of a hospital, anatomist—and personal friend of Leonardo Da Vinci—named Prof. Marcantonio della Torre, had provided Da Vinci with access to cadavers to study in detail. In addition, it is further noted by Jones (2012) that Leonard da Vinci had had unusual and significant favor and support from three different French Kings, namely King Charles VIII, King Louis XII, and King Francis I (Jones, 2012).

Although there isn't any substantive evidence to unequivocally support my perspective as it supports the views of Jones (2012), I would like to propose the idea that perhaps, due to Leonardo Da Vinci's great reputation, prominence, and unmerited favor among high-ranking individuals (including medical experts and three French Kings), a 'blind eye' might have been turned towards his illegal investigations of deceased bodies (Jones, 2012).

During 1511, however, noted by Campbell (2008), when Prof. Marcantonio della Torre had passed away due to a plague which had taken his life, Leonardo Da Vinci had discontinued his groundbreaking anatomical research approximately two years thereafter. It is speculated among scholars that

this had most likely been due to the fact that he had lost his frequent access to investigating corpses safely within the security of a hospital. Unfortunately, at this point in history, all of his unmatched anatomical sketches as a form of documented research had been discontinued. His incredible sketches and annotations had remained unpublished and had only been discovered many centuries thereafter (Campbell, 2008).

As confirmed by Bernardini (2006), based upon the opinions, observations, and interpretations of many historians and academic scholars, one could therefore argue that Leonardo Da Vinci's many sketches, paintings, and sculptures, which had revealed both his fascination with—and his fearlessness to pursue—a deeper understanding of 'how the human body works,' had served as a 'catalyst for cultural change.' Not only had other sculptors, painters, and artisans begun to gain a more in-depth understanding of the human body, but these revelations had begun to impact, alter, and shift the general knowledge, understanding, and perceptions which society at large during this time period had formerly upheld. Furthermore, as Da Vinci's anatomical depictions had begun to inspire and influence many other Renaissance artists, the sphere of public influence through means of 'visual knowledge sharing' or 'visual communication' had forever changed public understanding, education, and the field of medical science (Bernardini, 2006).

Bardon (2023) rightfully states that the following renowned Renaissance artist needs no introduction. Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simon had had a long and healthy life, considering the era within which he had lived from 1475 to 1564. It has been confirmed by multiple art historians and scholars that Leonardo Da Vinci's unparalleled studies of human anatomy during this time-period in history had been Michelangelo's greatest source of influence and inspiration as it pertains to painting figures with dedication and a high standard of perfection (Bardon, 2023).

Similar to the historic artistic contributions made by Leonardo Da Vinci, as commented by Eknayan (2000), Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simon's depictions of human anatomy had produced significant changes among societal views. His in-depth and supernaturalistic depictions of both the earthly—and heavenly—realms had not only brought biblical texts to life but had had an incomparable impact upon human perception, interpretative understanding, and the human psyche on a broader cultural and societal level. Within a religious context as it relates to a shift within cultural values, Michelangelo's depiction of 'The Last Judgement' had throughout centuries stood the test of time as a timeless work (Eknayan, 2000).

Although some academics argue that Michelangelo had been best recognized for his extraordinary talent as a sculptor, having created many masterpieces from marble, he had remained widely celebrated for his breathtaking frescoes, which he had painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (Bardon, 2023).

Brooks (2020) states that many turbulent times and crises which had taken place during the Middle Ages had coincided with the Renaissance time period. Brooks (2020) explains that many of these catastrophes, emergencies, upheavals, and turbulent turning points in history which had occurred during the Renaissance time frame, can be ascribed to the fact that many regions within Europe during the Renaissance had persisted in remaining 'medieval' during this era while being resistant to change. Within Italy, for example, the structures of governance and political systems, the outdated forms of technology, tools, and equipment which had been utilized within various fields of craftsmanship, including the societal perception regarding their 'way of life,' which had been upheld, nearly hadn't changed at all (Brooks, 2020).

On the contrary, as confirmed by Amaker et al. (2020), the innovative inventions and ground-breaking advancements which had been designed during the Renaissance period within Italy itself, had not only taken a uniquely long period of time to be adopted throughout all regions of Italy but also to distribute and expand beyond the borders of Italy as well. Since holding onto -and upholding traditions which had been common practice during medieval times, it had taken exceptionally long for the adoption of new inventions and methods of manufacturing certain items, for example, to be approved and accepted across society (both within and outside of Italy). Furthermore, Brooks (2020) also underscores the understanding that the majority of Italian society who had lived in small towns beyond the border of larger cities during the Renaissance period around the 1500s, had lived identical lifestyles to their ancestors from many centuries prior (Amaker et al., 2020).

5.1.2.2 Economic Developments Which Influenced Societal Perceptions & Values During the Renaissance

Brooks (2020) confirms the broadly accepted view among art historians that the financial stability and prosperity produced within Northern Italy during the Renaissance had been this time period's most foundational support system which had enabled the continuation of this movement. In stark contrast to a historical time of turmoil, instability, and war, which had lasted for approximately one hundred years throughout France, Italy had remained fairly peaceful and financially stable. Although Italy had been harshly affected by the outbreak of a deadly plague, it hadn't been impacted more significantly compared to other nations throughout Europe. Two historical events which had the potential of having been catastrophic in nature, namely 'The Great Western Schism' and 'The Babylonian Captivity,' had unexpectedly played into Italy's long-term benefit and favour.

Padgett & McLean (2011) explain that due to the fact that the religious and political authority of the Roman Catholic Popes during the Renaissance had been greatly limited, cities within Italy's borders had been fairly easily governed without much interference from these religious leaders. Instead, wealthy and influential Italian families had frequently interfered with the election of religious leaders in

their city-states, with the aim of best fulfilling their personal needs and gains. Therefore, the financial power and stability of Italy had only been strengthened, despite not all interventions by wealthy Italian families necessarily being helpful to religious communities on interpersonal levels or in regards to charitable contexts (Padgett & McLean, 2011).

Simultaneously, other royal and political leaders throughout Europe had no valid reason to engage in rivalry with Italy. While the old Roman Empire (referred to as the 'Holy Roman Empire') had been severely weakened, while France and England had been engaged in continual battles, and while Spain had remained ununited until the end of the Renaissance era, Italy, which had been considered a safe haven and refuge of strength. As a result, and due to the fact that they had been located in a different geographic location, Italy had not only benefited economically and financially, but also diplomatically and in a number of other ways as well, as it pertains to their European neighbours (Brooks, 2020).

Glassman (2019) states that during the Renaissance time period, Italy had also been far more urbanized compared to other countries throughout Europe. Not only had Italy's geographical location separated them from most of the turmoil and unrest which had occurred throughout Europe during this period in history, but it had also served as an intersection and geographic junction between nations of the West and nations of the East. This intersection and multicultural assembly point had caused Italian cities to develop into much larger urbanized areas in comparison to other regions or well-known cities in Europe during the Renaissance.

Furthermore, Vigneswaran (2007) mentions that due to the busier streets and international trade which had taken place within urbanized Italian cities, they had quickly become more sophisticated and more prosperous. This economic advancement had transpired so rapidly that Italy had 23 urbanized city-states around the 1300s, with approximately twenty thousand inhabitants living within each of these cities. Compared to medieval standards, these numbers had surely been incredibly impressive while having been symbolic of Italy's economic superiority and success.

However, Malanima (2017) confirms that around the 15th century, the populations of some Italian cities had grown to approximately one hundred thousand occupants. As it pertains to an increase in numbers among the general population, an increase in the numbers of those who had become educated or had been trained in different fields of expertise, cities such as Milan and Florence had therefore developed into notorious locations for trading to flourish, and for the further advancement and expansion of different types of artistry and craftsmanship. It had been documented within historical texts, that many of Italy's old city centres had boasted workshops and special craft guilds which had produced highly sought-after luxury items. Consequential to the lucrative expansion of trade within Italy during the Renaissance, the significant elevation of more effective, stable, and successful banking systems had been another development during the Italian Renaissance (Malanima, 2017).

According to Wilson et al. (2024), Italian bankers had obtained great prominence and power through the Catholic Church's demise and disempowerment, the Great Western Schism, as well as the social and economic turbulence of the Babylonian Captivity. As a result of these tragic events, the Italian bankers had started charging additional interest on bank loans (for safety-net purposes), while it had made them the first group of religious followers to rebel against the Catholic Church's prohibition upon "usury" in a continual and extended manner. This term refers to the lending of finances upon the understanding and principle of charging exceptionally high-interest rates (Wilson et al., 2024).

Although the stigmatized application of the "usury" principle by bankers continued to have negative connotations, many bankers, as noted by Goldthwaite (1987), along with the wealthy and influential Medici family from Florence, had become unprecedentedly wealthy. The exceptional expansion of their wealth and influence had, however, exceeded the negative stigmatization, which in return had continued to secure their ongoing success. Unfortunately, the ongoing success among bankers and influential families, which had impacted considerable financial decisions behind the scenes, had caused a rise in anti-Semitism throughout Europe. This can be ascribed to the fact that Italian Christians had been resentfully tolerating bankers who were often of Jewish descent (Goldthwaite, 1987).

Additionally, as commented upon by Fratianni & Spinelli (2006), the Italian merchants had adopted certain advanced trading techniques and practices from the Arab nations during the Renaissance period, which had assured them of obtaining a continuous financial advantage over their neighbouring countries. For example, the double-entry bookkeeping system had been adopted by accountants throughout Italy, while the businessmen and traders within Italy had also created the invention of the 'commenda.' Both of these practices, which had been incorporated within the early business and accounting models of Italy during the Renaissance, had not only greatly assisted in the elimination of potential mistakes made within the context of transactional calculations but also had served as a form of early financial insurance amidst risky financial decisions and enterprises. In addition, Italian bankers, businessmen, accountants, and bookkeepers had also adopted the Arabic numerals into their mathematical calculations, which also had highlighted errors more effectively (Fratianni & Spinelli, 2006).

As a result of these advanced trading, banking, accounting, and bookkeeping practices within Italy, Italian bankers had quickly gained credibility and reliability across Europe. In return, this had enabled both businessmen and tradesmen to become mobile and to travel around whilst making transactions, without physically carrying large amounts of cash around (Wilson et al., 2024).

5.1.2.3 'Humanism' as a Characteristic Societal -and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

During the Renaissance, as stated by Gray (1963), there had been a rise in the necessity and value which had been placed upon educating the general population, the importance had been placed upon studying classical literature, as well as instilling civic morality and virtue within European society. It is further noted by Gray (1963) that society during the Renaissance had become increasingly aware of the importance of their children reaching and fulfilling their highest potential on an individual level—not only for their personal benefit but for the sake of society's collective gain. This belief system, although ever-changing in its attributes, had been highly regarded during the 1400s–1600s throughout Europe.

Much later during the 19th century, as described by Frary (2018), this ideological shift and movement had eventually received its official name, known as 'Humanism,' which had been meant to describe the Renaissance perspective that studying ancient works of art (forming part of one's education) had ensured the quality of one's learning experience to be more holistic in nature while further adding additional insight and knowledge. Over time, however, this viewpoint regarding the nature of education had evolved into prioritizing the necessity for studying humanity and human behaviour above religious matters. Yet the adoption of 'humanist views' had not been intended to either contradict or neglect the personal religious convictions of the individual (Frary, 2018).

Furthermore, Rossi (2007) notes that some of the former classical values which had still fascinated the 'humanists' included the importance of an in-depth understanding of Latin grammar, poetry, language rules related to various forms of literature, upholding virtue in both private and public settings, as well as upholding strong moral ethics for the edification of everyone within their societies.

Kristeller (1962) provides an extended explanation of the 'Humanist movement,' by explaining that this ideology had been built upon three foundational principles, which are: 1) humanity as the central point of study (referring to artistry, politics, literature, and philosophy); 2) a renewed zeal to study the ideological perspectives presented by the ancient Greeks and Romans with humanity as the focal point; and 3) a revived interest in making corrections to classical languages and texts, while simultaneously producing new and improved work in the style of classical literature (Kristeller, 1962).

That which had set the humanist movement apart from the different ideological practices of medieval times (prior to the Renaissance), as commented upon by Testa & Salamone (2005), is that studying theology based upon the biblical perspectives of both God and church-related doctrines had no longer been the main topic of study within universities. Instead, literary texts of pagan and Greco-Roman writers had been reintroduced into the public sphere of education for the sake of debating alternative perspectives as well. Finally, the philosophies of Plato had also become more centrally discussed among academics, while Virgil, Cicero, and Livy had also been reintroduced as exemplary figures of style and oration.

However, it is explained by Cooper (1999) that this movement had not been intended as being 'atheistic' or 'paganistic' in nature. On the contrary, it had been the perception among Renaissance humanists that humanity had been created in God's image (as referenced within the Bible) and that humanity had therefore been gifted with a "divine spark," enabling mankind to envision, innovate, invent, and create both in artistic and intellectual capacities (Cooper, 1999).

5.1.2.4 'Civic Humanism' as a Characteristic Societal -and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

Jurdjevic (1999) states that, similar to the value and movement known as 'humanism,' which had been embraced by Europeans during the Renaissance, 'civic humanism' had been an extended cultural value which had been adopted during this time period. 'Civic humanism,' as a virtue among Europeans, had referred to their love for their city-states, regardless of whether they had been governed as republics, by oligarchies, or whether the rulership had been considered tyrannical. City-states had been honoured by the general public, since they had produced financial gains for the people, had preserved and protected their societal values, and had ensured the well-being of each citizen. Therefore, civic pride and loyalty had risen as highly regarded societal values, while it had been a shared societal understanding that every citizen had been indebted to their country and ruling cities (Jurdjevic, 1999).

'Civic humanism,' as noted by Hart & Wright (1998), had referred to the societal value of understanding that each citizen had owed their loyalty to either serve their city-state freely with their talents, gifts, or skills; to make the necessary military sacrifices in times of crises when it had been required of them; or to fulfil their civic duties (whether serving in politics, in a local municipal context, or in the context of local charities). This was not only for the sake of the 'greater good' of their country but also to boast of their nation's beauty and achievements.

5.1.2.5 Individualism as a Characteristic Societal and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

Another societal and cultural value, which had been commented upon by multiple art historians, including Furlong (1930) and Nelson (1933), had been the unique value placed upon 'individualism.' In prior years, during the Middle Ages, the concept of having an 'identity' had been viewed as a 'collective' attribute connected to an individual's cultural heritage, cultural traditions, cultural practices, cultural religion, or group that a person had belonged to. Therefore, the idea of being entirely 'individualistic' and set apart from the predominant culture of a town or city had been highly frowned upon, especially since people had feared becoming outcasts in the midst of strictly conformist European societies and cultural contexts.

However, as confirmed by Becker (1972), these traditional views had suddenly begun to change during the Renaissance. In contrast, unique and personalized expressions and communication of

thoughts had been highly valued and prized, even if that had meant being separated from the majority and masses within society.

5.1.2.6 Secularism as a Characteristic Societal and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

Palmer (2017) states that, although the majority of men and women during the Renaissance had been earnest followers of the Christian faith, the rise of 'secular' worldviews and belief systems had not been perceived as being anti-religious in nature.

During medieval times, as explained by Ruvoldt (2006), society's main focus had been attaining salvation and eternal life beyond the temporary material world. Yet, during the Renaissance, European society had begun to strive towards fully enjoying everything that the mortal world had to offer. In other words, society had become more inwardly focused on satisfying their own needs, comfort, well-being, and contentment, instead of merely waiting for the joys of heaven during the afterlife (Baron & Rice, 1960).

Doherty & Izicki (2015) therefore confirm that, although the Renaissance had still been a very religious time period in history, the culture within society had become more secular in placing greater value upon trading, doing business, earning money, making one's home as comfortable as possible, and travelling.

5.1.2.7 Scepticism as a Characteristic Societal and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

Another societal value mentioned by Paganini (2019), which the Renaissance period had been known for, had been the attitude of questioning everything and not merely accepting information as 'fact' without further investigation, in-depth inquiry, or debate.

As stated by Eichorn (2014), this had not only been true of growing societal attitudes regarding the 'truth' of religious beliefs, church doctrines, or different philosophical ideologies, but had also been true of what humanity had known about math, engineering, architecture, various fields of medicine, and diverse fields of science at the time (Eichorn, 2014).

For during the Dark Ages—or Middle Ages as mentioned by Watson (1990), as it had been commonly known—any idea of a challenge against or opposition to the long-standing traditions of Europe had been considered a positively sinful act, representing rebellion and betrayal. It had been during this epoch that new knowledge, acquired through adventurous exploratory endeavours, courageous experimental expeditions, and audacious discoveries, had not only been permitted but had also been venerated and exalted as the most esteemed achievements in all of Europe. Therefore, 'challenging the status quo' had been viewed in a much more socially accepting and positive light (Watson, 1990).

5.1.2.8 Materialism as a Characteristic Societal and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

As previously discussed, and stated by Cohn (2012), acquiring beautiful objects to decorate one's home—or gathering rare objects that had resembled a wealthy social status—had been a notorious 'materialistically focused value' associated with the Renaissance time period.

However, in this regard, the Roman Catholic Church had been tremendously hypocritical in the double standards which the leadership of these churches had demonstrated. On the one hand, they had preached that when an individual gathers great wealth and many earthly goods, such a person had surely been pride-filled, sinful, and corrupt within their soul. They had conveniently quoted selective passages from the Bible to prove their arguments, such as that it would be a simpler task for a camel to travel through a needle's eye than for a wealthy man attempting to enter the eternal gates of heaven (Cohn, 2012).

However, as confirmed by Brüntrup (2009), they had forgotten to mention that this text refers more specifically to the level of a person's greed, becoming a slave to money above all other convictions in life, and only living for the accolades of others versus merely owning things as blessings received in this life. On the contrary, when it had suited their own personal ventures, agendas, or causes, the Roman Catholic priests had abused the biblical principle of 'tithing,' 'sowing,' or 'giving' to charitable causes to such an extraordinary extent that these churches had acquired incredibly large fortunes for themselves.

At the same time, it had also been preached to the masses in European society that anything irrelevant to sustaining one's eternal salvation and life after death had been considered as sheer "vanity" and of "no use" (Brüntrup, 2009). Therefore, as explained by Hawkes (2004), the majority of European society during the Renaissance had not found any reason why the comforts of material wealth were a problem—or should present obstacles to gaining salvation and entering heaven. For society had reasoned that if artistic gifts and other forms of ingenuity had been gifts from God Himself, owning these items in abundance had presented no threat to a person's character or soul (Hawkes, 2004).

5.1.2.9 Naturalism/Nature Appreciation as a Characteristic Societal and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

Another interesting value noted by Rüsen (2006), which had been characteristic of the Renaissance time period, had been a new appreciation for nature. During this time period in history, European society had perceived nature as something tameable and somewhat controllable to an extent.

At the time when the Renaissance had come to fruition, Summers (1987) explains that more advanced infrastructure, such as trading routes, roads, bridges, railways, harbours, the expansion of

towns and cities, along with newly established institutions of centralized authorities, had “tamed” nature to a large degree in the eyes of European society.

Olszewski (1982) had added to this understanding by mentioning that what had made this newly added cultural value of ‘nature appreciation’ so unique was that it had been the first time throughout European history that people had made intentional plans to observe nature, to enjoy its beauty, and to take pride in the cultivation of their natural surroundings. This cultural value had been best demonstrated in the exceptional time, effort, finances, and labour which wealthy individuals had invested into growing, cultivating, and sustaining exquisite gardens with beautiful flowers of great diversity.

As an additional extension of this newly embraced cultural value of nature appreciation, Munro (1960) and Smith (2006) had confirmed that “varietas” paintings (referring to flora and fauna) had become a new trend among Renaissance artists. From their perspective, since it had been evident from biblical texts that God had breathed life into creation through designing flowers and plants observed in nature with many different types of textures, colour-pallets, shapes, patterns, and unique characteristics, the rhetorical question had been asked whether man-made creations (serving as a mirror in the image of God) should not also have resembled diverse intricate details in context to paintings, frescos, mosaics, sketches, embroidery, leatherwork, clothing, and architecture. Therefore, there had been a significant increase in the practice and perfecting of life-like and naturalistic artworks, which had attempted to resemble reality in a super-realistic manner (Munro, 1960); Smith, 2006).

A further secondary value highlighted by Koenigsberger (1989), which had supported the value of ‘nature appreciation,’ was “virtù,” which translated from Italian to English as meaning ‘manliness.’ In context to the Renaissance, humanity had been both encouraged and praised for developing their talents, crafts, and skills to the highest extent while constantly reaching towards continual progress. For example, it hadn’t been socially perceived as being sufficient for a man during the Renaissance to merely become a successful businessman. In addition, a businessman had also been expected to be well-versed in philosophy, to write in both Italian, Latin, and preferably in Greek as well, to be eloquent in public speaking as it related to demonstrating excellent pronunciation and having an impressive vocabulary, to be well-versed in knowledge regarding historical events, to have good taste in the aesthetic beauty of quality items, to own a respectable or decorative home filled with expensive objects, and to be trained in sword fighting, horse riding, gallantry, and demonstrating the good manners of a true gentleman (Koenigsberger, 1989).

Ruan (2023) had noted that although the latter description of these unreasonably high expectations which European society had placed upon the ideal ‘Renaissance Man’ had been very similar to the value of materialism, the emphasis placed upon obtaining “virtù” or ‘manliness’ had supported

the societal value of 'nature appreciation' in context to recognizing that man had been viewed as being far superior to nature and therefore had the ability to both conquer and rule over it (Ruan, 2023).

5.1.2.10 'Classicism' as a Characteristic Societal -and Cultural Value of the Renaissance

The final prominent societal value named 'Classicism,' as commented upon by Kelly (2011), which had been valued during the Renaissance, referred to a nearly obsessive interest that European Renaissance society had had with the former Classical Age, which had previously existed among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

More specifically, considering the fact that ancient Greek and Roman nobility, rulers, and philosophers had also highly praised cultural values such as humanism, secularism, and individualism, which had encompassed man's ability to reach towards godlike development or 'status' through means of applying higher-order thinking, reasoning, debating, philosophizing, literary writing, physical training, and craftsmanship (Dundas, 1998).

Wheat (2014) therefore stated that although the majority of Europeans during the Renaissance time-period had rejected pagan deities such as the mythological Greek and Roman gods and had both embraced and upheld Christian belief systems, they had still looked back in reminiscence towards the foundational principles from these two highly successful ancient civilizations as it pertained to the exemplary academic developments, literary productions, philosophical expansions, mathematical progress, medicinal improvements, scientific advancements, and vast historical fields of artistry -and craftsmanship, which had enriched humanity with significant benefits (Wheat, 2014).

In other words, European society during the Renaissance, as noted by Moran (2018), had placed great importance upon upholding key societal principles from the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, which had been remembered as their historical context and cultural roots. Likewise, the strong lessons that had been learned by the dynamic America of the Renaissance era would surely have cast a palliative spell on the society of the 21st century, if only we had been able to return to such learning experiences. To create a more successful future, we had needed to deal with these threats and had strived to hold onto the things that had been proven to create miraculous and longer-lasting outcomes (Moran, 2018).

5.1.3 Five Prominent Historical Paintings from the Renaissance, Which Had Served as Catalysts for Cultural Change

5.1.3.1 Mona Lisa (1503-1506) – Painted by Leonardo Da Vinci

The infamous and iconic Mona Lisa, with her enigmatic smile immortalized in the exquisite painting by Leonardo Da Vinci, had been the subject of fervent speculation and heated controversy for

centuries, as Cust (1915) had remarked. While countless attempted replicas of the Mona Lisa's face had been painted throughout history, none of these imitations had stood out beyond being mere duplications (Cust, 1915).

Greenstein (2004) had provided an interesting perspective by noting that Da Vinci had intentionally applied the 'sfumato' technique within the depiction of Mona Lisa's facial appearance and expression since she had been perceived as being breathtakingly beautiful. The term 'sfumato' referred to the 'toning down' of colour and shading transitions between different tonal values. In doing so, the overall appearance of a person's face had seemed far softer and gentler, perhaps somewhat angelic.



Figure 23: The '*Mona Lisa*' currently preserved in the Louvre Museum in Paris behind bulletproof glass, which had been painted during the Renaissance (1503-1506) by Leonardo Da Vinci (Greenstein, 2004).

Note. Greenstein (2004) referred to **Figure 23** within the journal titled, '*Leonardo, Mona Lisa and "La Gioconda"*'. *Artibus et Historiae*, 25(50), 17–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1483789>, p. 18

Further insightful commentary made by Greenstein (2004) had suggested that Leonardo Da Vinci had regularly employed jesters, musicians, and singers for 'merry-making,' in order to fill the atmosphere with a joyful spirit while he had painted her. Da Vinci had intentionally done so to remove all eerie, gloomy, and downcast emotions which had typically been associated with the portrait-painting process and portraits themselves. In return, this had evidently helped him to produce the Mona Lisa's iconic smile, which had frequently been associated with the 'divine' (Greenstein, 2004).

But Clémence (2023) had continued by explaining that many art historians and curators had attempted to decipher and solve the multifaceted symbolic meaning of her beautiful and eternal smile. Many learned observers had suggested that her wry smile had belied her inner thoughts and hidden feelings. However, other scholars had claimed that the key to Da Vinci's genius had lain in his allegiance to highlighting his more superior artistic achievements versus the careful execution of the 'sfumato' method (Clémence, 2023). Thus, he had exhibited a transformative and expressive portrayal of human emotion.

From the viewpoint of Arbiter (1917), the Mona Lisa had often been referred to as "La Joconda," while her painting had radiated with a 'distinct rarity,' which had given the viewer the sense that she must have been born from a noble bloodline.

In order to successfully portray the Mona Lisa's nobility, Arbiter (1917) had made the interesting observation that Da Vinci had painted this portrait on an elevated 'aristocratic plane' – while he had intentionally given her an enormous lifting of status and character. Da Vinci had achieved this through the triangular composition which he had applied in the Mona Lisa painting, since her folded arms had created a horizontal baseline for a pyramidal contour of her outline. This triangular composition had been the exact reason why somewhat of an eternalization of her 'elevated power' could not escape the viewer's attention, as well as her superior societal status.

In addition, Clémence (2023) had mentioned that in 2004 Pascal Cotte (a well-known French engineer) had applied advanced 'reflective light technology,' which had unexpectedly revealed that a set of eyebrows and eyelashes had originally been painted underneath the Mona Lisa's surface layer of paint, which is currently visible to the human eye. Furthermore, his advanced technological investigation had also revealed that the Mona Lisa had appeared to have had a much more vibrant colour scheme centuries ago. Yet, the colour-pigmentation had faded over time.

Barolsky (1994) adds to the explanation of the Mona Lisa's strong presence, by observing that her visual prominence could be ascribed to the powerful glance which Da Vinci had depicted her with, while her glamour had been further amplified due to the nearby distance of the mountains in the background. Barolsky (1994) also noted that her firm presence and gaze at the audience had been further strengthened as these 'geological formations' had been intentionally placed next to the Mona Lisa's 'eye-level', drawing the viewer's attention to her piercing glance.

Therefore, despite the fact that the subject matter of the Mona Lisa had been intended as being mortal as noted by Flanigan (2019), the intensity of her glance had been likened to that which is both timeless and divine. As a result of her association with the divine, this portrait had also been referred to as a 'Secular Madonna', similar to the devotional paintings of Mary which had also been painted by Da Vinci (Flanigan, 2019).

Carperter (1963) states that the refined and subtle modelling of her facial features had transformed Da Vinci's painting of her into a 'spiritual presence felt', despite the invisibility to the viewers. Carperter (1963) also upholds the perspective that the achievement of this convincing artistic illusion could only have been attributed to the incredible skill, talent and superior expertise which Da Vinci had acquired through means of his discipline and dedication to his craft.

An interesting argument made by Clark (1973) suggests that the fame of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa painting, which had been painted during the Renaissance time-period, had most likely been popularized and rekindled by the Romantic Art Movement – and that this new rekindling had perhaps been in later years a 'by-product' of the 'femme fatale' concept (meaning lethally alluring woman), the

Italian phrase known as 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' (referring to a woman who is beautiful but lacks a gracious and merciful heart), and the deception revealed within the poem titled Christabel - written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Although it is an opinion which I don't necessarily agree with strongly, Clark (1973) argues that the Mona Lisa painting had re-entered the consciousness of the public sphere upon the premise of the Romanticism Art Movement and upon the foundational understanding which had been upheld among Art curators and Art connoisseurs during this time-period.

In addition, Clark (1973) highlights that nearly all of the Art critics from Felibien -to Vasari had analysed and described the Mona Lisa painting as being an exemplary work of superb and refined 'realism' – while the Mona Lisa figure herself had become an iconic representation of mystery, secrecy and divinity. Only much later in 1859, as noted by Clark (1973), Theophile Gautier had written the first romanticised analogy of the Mona Lisa painting, by having compared her gaze to that of someone who had been harbouring inexpressible and infinite thoughts, as well as repressed desires and hopes. Gautier had also suggested that these potentially overwhelming desires might have driven the all-knowing Mona Lisa to despair. However, since Gautier had been a devout romanticist, he was clearly biased in his perspectives – and therefore one cannot rely upon his interpretations in their entirety.

Queiros-Conde (2004) however, presented a theory regarding the Mona Lisa by suggesting that Leonardo Da Vinci had intended her painting to serve as a representation of an 'eternal life-cycle'. Queiros-Conde (2004) also investigated and searched the details of this painting extensively, in order to find any potential symbols or signs that would support this theory. He then encouraged viewers to look at her radiant depiction with one eye closed in support of the 'Claparede effect,' from her upper left to right under her left shoulder across the surface of the artwork in a 45-degree angle relative to the vertical line. From this new angle and perspective, it is argued by Queiros-Conde (2004), that a specific form can be seen which looks similar to that of a human skull. Although this is a unique and compelling perspective provided by Queiros-Conde (2004), there most certainly had not been enough substantive research and evidence to support this theory.

In regards to the Mona Lisa's role as 'catalyst for cultural change' during the Renaissance time-period, this masterpiece had mainly reflected and promoted a variety of different ideals and societal values strongly characterized by the Renaissance era. Similar to the values of 'individualism' explained by Furlong (1930), Nelson (1933) and Becker (1972), and 'appreciation of nature/naturalism' as elaborated upon by Rüsen (2006), Olszewski (1982) and Koenigsberger (1989), the Mona Lisa painting had supported the understanding that recognizing, honouring and even celebrating an individual for his or her own character, personal thoughts and unique attributes and stature, (outside of the collective culture and unlike medieval times), had been considered a positive societal action.

Since Da Vinci had painted her portrayal on a lofty plane, her refinement and aristocracy had been purposely showcased while the Mona Lisa painting also had advocated for the 'humanist cultural perspective' as explained by Frary (2018) and Rossi (2007), that humanity had been blessed with a 'divine' or 'heavenly spark' in the image of God, by God Himself. Therefore, recognizing 'greatness' in whichever form it had been presented (whether through means of a person's intelligence, craftsmanship, skill, religious devotion, social prominence, or unparalleled beauty and purity of character), had been perceived as being praiseworthy (Frary, 2018; Rossi, 2007).

The nature scenery in the background of her portrait further had resembled and had advocated for the newly adopted cultural value of nature appreciation referred to as 'naturalism' during the Renaissance time-period. As confirmed by Bardon (2023), the realistic depictions of both Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo had awakened the general psyche of European society by bringing religious scenes of the 'heavenly realm' and 'the divine' to life.

Likewise, the uniquely glowing presence of the Mona Lisa's smile, which had been painted by Da Vinci, somewhat had resembled the cultural value of 'classicism' that had been characteristic of the Renaissance since the Classical Greeks and Romans had upheld the belief that humans were able to reach a god-like status. The connections of divinity and eternity which had been associated with the Mona Lisa's mysterious presence, smile and all-knowing glance, similarly had advocated for the cultural value— as discussed by Kelly (2011), Dundas (1998), and Moran (2018).

Finally, the incredible realism which Da Vinci had achieved in the depiction of the Mona Lisa portrait had continued to influence the standard of portraiture painting throughout the centuries which followed, while it had also continued to alter European society's perception of what had been considered 'beautiful' (Bardon, 2023).

5.1.3.2 School of Athens (1509-1511) – by Raphael

According to Normandin (1995), Raphael had been known as one of the most highly respected and esteemed artists during the High Renaissance Era. He had also been highly supported and regarded by the influential Medici family, the Pope of the Catholic Church during this time-period, and other Fine Artists of his time.



Figure 24: *'The School of Athens'* currently preserved in the Vatican Museums in the 'Stanza della Segnatura', which had been painted during the Renaissance (1509-1511) by Raphael (Du Plessis, 2021).

Note. Du Plessis (2021) referred to **Figure 24** within the journal titled, *'The School of Athens Raphael - A Homage to Greek Philosophy'*. Art in Context.
<https://artincontext.org/the-school-of-athens-raphael/>, para. 4

Normandin (1995) notes that Raphael had originally created the School of Athens painting for the Vatican's library within its apartments, during the time-period of the Renaissance.

Its commissioned purpose had been to capture and symbolize the various 'divisions of philosophy' and to encapsulate the significance and beauty of 'High Renaissance Philosophy.' Therefore, celebrating a stunning human achievement and milestone within European history (Bell, 1995).

However, as commented upon by Gardener et al. (2013), it is interesting to note that Raphael's students had taken careful note of his representational thinking processes and style of artistic expression. While having been inspired by Raphael, they had begun drafting sketches upon the other walls in the library and had painted the remaining divisions of human knowledge on the other walls, which had been recognized as poetry (literature), law, and theology during the Renaissance. It is important to note that drafting detailed compositional sketches prior to executing the actual paintings had been common practice during this era in history. In this particular instance, it had been documented that although Raphael had sketched his figures and depictions on the wall, he had been less rigid in allowing the movement of these figures and images to further guide the direction in which the overall painting later developed.

Most (1996) provides a more detailed description of the School of Athens painting, by stating that the 58 philosophers occupying the magnificent architectural composition of the painting, which had created the atmosphere of grandiose splendour as well as devout and sober-minded intellectualism, had accurately captured what philosophers, academics, intellectuals, and great minds typically do with great precision. By taking a closer look, it's evident that these philosophers had been intentionally portrayed as being in deep thought. Some had been illustrated as pondering, questioning, debating, arguing, and even appearing doubtful in their conversational interactions, while others had been depicted in the act of listening, lecturing, writing down their ideas, and reading.

Although it may have seemed fairly obvious to the audience that these would have been appropriate activities for philosophers to engage in after viewing Raphael's painting, Most (1996) makes the excellent point that it would have required an exceptional degree of imaginative ingenuity on Raphael's part to successfully envision and visually communicate that which had not seemed likely at the time—and that which had not yet come into being.

Bell (1995) makes the interesting observation by stating that since Socrates had been successfully identified in Raphael's School of Athens, it's been agreed among most Art historians that these three significant philosophers had been strategically placed within the very centre of this painting. These three key philosophers had also been compositionally placed without any other figures in their midst separating their interactions and conversations. Dante (a comedian who had written Divine Comedy and whom Raphael had greatly admired) interpreted these three prominent philosophers seen within the School of Athens as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, while also having referred to them as the "virtuous pagans" (Bell, 1995).

As part of an in-depth study which had specifically been conducted regarding the School of Athens, Quinlan-McGrath (2016) reveals that Art historians from the 19th century had emphasized the concurrence of various pagans, including Aristotle and Plato, who had mingled with—and had debated religious theologians (mainly from the Christian Church). Not only had this been true in context to the various disciplines of Fine Arts, but in context to a number of Italian literary publications which Raphael had been familiar with as well.

However, in regards to this interpretation, there had also been some oppositional controversy, as Gutman (1941) states that the following three 16th-century commentators named Lomazzo, Vasari, and Borghini had not shared the broadly accepted interpretations of Raphael's School of Athens. Instead, they had viewed this fresco painting as a celebratory exaltation of Christian theology. For these three historical commentators during the Renaissance time-period had argued that Raphael's painting symbolized a reconciliatory interaction between Christian theologians, astrology, and the concept of philosophy at large. For they had also perceived all the 'great thinkers' of the world to be grouped together while being occupied in various disputes. Yet many scholars have since rejected this particular stance regarding the School of Athens (Gutman, 1941).

Regardless of these interpretational differences, Most (1996) argues that this complex visual representation of philosophy and the 'coming together of great minds' in the form of such a meticulous painting, which reflects the application of higher-order thinking skills, had been incredibly forward-thinking for the early 16th century. Furthermore, it had most certainly been ground-breaking in many of its executional and communicative aspects while breaking with the former traditional traits and trends of European Fine Arts.

Brilliant (1984) adds to the recognition of Raphael's innovative approaches to the art-making process by referring to him as a 'great assimilator.' Especially since he had effectively communicated the symbolic meaning of this painting, while he had also incorporated visual references that had been identifiable to the public. Furthermore, he had achieved both his goals of exceeding the expectations of Julius II, who had been his financial benefactor, as well as provided an honorary tribute to the iconic classical painters who had originally inspired him. If it hadn't been for Raphael's devout study of his artistic predecessors, he may not have achieved such a powerful, awe-inspiring, and captivating portrayal of these brilliant 'past and present thinkers' who had been celebrated during this specific time-period in history.

Within the context of utilizing 'fine arts as a catalyst—and advocate for cultural change,' Wallace (2010) explains that the Classical Greeks had formerly gained the insight and understanding that the act of engagement in various intellectual activities such as reading literature, writing, questioning, philosophizing, having theological conversations, as well as debates regarding a broad spectrum of investigative topics, had been the characteristics and trademarks of a society at its highest level of cultural development. In response to this revelational understanding, which had existed among the Classical Greeks, this concept was then 'personified' into a distinct group of notorious scientists, philosophers, and statesmen, which had been referred to as the "Seven Sages." This cultural inheritance, which had therefore originated from the Classical Greeks—followed by the ancient Romans, had also been adopted into the 'humanist' thinking of European society during the Renaissance (Wallace, 2010).

More specifically, as it pertains to Raphael's School of Athens, Normandin (1995) explains that these renowned philosophers as depicted in the School of Athens had been intended to demonstrate the glorious rebirth of Greco-Roman values, as well as Raphael's own personal influence, legacy, and role, which he had played in bringing this into fruition during the 16th century in Italy. In other words, Raphael had strived towards being recognized and remembered by future generations for his artistic contribution as it relates to fulfilling this particular societal shift. Brilliant (1984) further confirms the fact that Raphael had purposefully aimed to solidify his legacy among the 'great men' of his time-period through his unparalleled level of extraordinary work produced (Normandin, 1995).

In addition, Brilliant (1984) makes the following interesting observation by pointing out that since the architectural structure within the background of Raphael's School of Athens had been depicted in such an open compositional manner (being open right at the top, towards the far back, and more specifically in the foreground of the painting), an atmosphere of 'visual enclosure' had been eliminated altogether. Therefore, his overall composition and layout of the School of Athens had been strategically planned with the intention of causing the audience to feel that these grand cultural traditions of philosophy, literature, law, theology, and engagement within various intellectual debates, had been

intended to be claimed as their own societal inheritance. As a result, the School of Athens had not only reflected the cultural change of the Renaissance but had also been intended to both encourage—and advocate for—the adoption of these new ‘humanistic’ societal changes (Brilliant, 1984).

Unger (2012) presents an extended perspective by arguing that the combination of identifiable historical figures depicted within the School of Athens (like Pythagoras, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Plato), along with the unrecognizable characters painted with a Classical appearance (such as the younger man, boy, and baby), had been incorporated to represent both groups which had co-existed within European society. Through further means of the unique facial expressions and gestures which had been illustrated in these classical-looking figures, their sheer awe, admiration, and attentiveness to the philosophers had been effectively communicated in this painting. At the same time, the School of Athens had also encouraged the audience to pay attention to these important figures within society (Unger, 2012).

5.1.3.3 The Birth of Venus (c. 1484–1486) – by Sandro Botticelli

As described by Thompson (2022), the Birth of Venus had been painted by Sandro Botticelli between 1484–1486, while the compositional depiction illustrates how Venus (the “goddess of love & beauty”) had arrived on the island known as Cyprus. According to the mythological tale, after having been given birth to by the spray of the ocean’s waves and after having travelled there by the winds of Aura and Zephyr, she had arrived in a standing position on an enormous shell which had had the appearance of a shimmering pearl. As typical of any type of birth, Venus had been illustrated as entering the world naked, while shyly covering her private female parts with both her long hair and hands.

Within Botticelli’s painting, as noted by Barolsky (2013), Venus had then been met by a young female figure which some Art historians had identified as either the “Hora of Spring” or one of the “Graces.” Within this pictorial style painting, the young woman had been illustrated while holding out a beautiful flower-patterned cloak toward the goddess Venus, to cover herself. Furthermore, the light pink roses which had been blown into the image around these key figures and drifted freely in the air had been a symbolic remembrance of the arrival of Spring (Barolsky, 2013).

Long (2008) elaborates by explaining that the subject matter of this painting had been aimed at celebrating the goddess Venus as a symbolic representative of elegance, attractiveness, and love. According to Long (2008), Art historians and scholars are mostly in agreement regarding the fact that Botticelli had represented a mythical and fantasy-like edition of an ancient story which had been known among pagans and had been deemed as important among those who had upheld “humanist” values and worldviews during the Renaissance period. More specifically, many scholars uphold the perspective that Botticelli’s Birth of Venus had been based upon a former poem written by Agnolo Poliziano, while Sandro Botticelli’s “artistic licence” suggested that the painting had most likely been painted for one of

the humanist patrons in Europe during the Renaissance. Due to a lack of historical information and documentation, the exact person for whom this painting had been made remains uncertain (Long, 2008).



Figure 25: 'The Birth of Venus' currently preserved in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Italy), which had been painted during the Renaissance (1484–1486) by Sandro Botticelli (Ovadia, 2016).

Note. Ovadia (2016) referred to **Figure 25** within the journal titled, 'The Venus Problem: An Examination of Botticelli's Venus and Mars'. *Art in Context. Scholar.Umw. Edu*, 1–47.
https://scholar.umw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1084&context=student_research, p.38

However, Zorach (2007), along with many other scholars, argues that the Birth of Venus painting had most likely been commissioned upon request by one of the members of the notorious Medici family, since Giorgio Vasari had provided a description of this artwork having been in the Medici family's Villa of Castello. According to the most plausible information found, this Villa had belonged to the "cadet branch" within the Medici family, from the middle of the 15th century onward. This theory, as confirmed by many Art historians, therefore seems to hold a high degree of validity. Unfortunately, at the same time, nothing had been documented regarding the Birth of Venus prior to the year 1550.

Zorach (2007) further explains that this hypothesis regarding the origins of Botticelli's Birth of Venus can be ascribed to the presence of the orange trees which had been painted in the background, behind the nymph who offered Venus a flower-patterned cloak for coverage. These orange trees had also been undeniably emblematic of the Medici Dynasty, especially in regard to the assonance ("vowel rhyme") which had a striking resemblance between the "Medici" family name – and the name of these orange trees which, at the time, had been known as Mala Medica (Zorach, 2007).

Another argument which further strengthens this theory, as noted by Thompson (2022), is that the Birth of Venus had been uniquely painted upon a canvas, whereas other paintings made by Sandro Botticelli, such as his Allegory of Spring, had merely been painted upon wood, considered as being a far less superior medium during the Renaissance time period. Within the further historical context of this time period, canvasses had been specifically used for the making of commissioned paintings requested by aristocratic or noble households during the 15th century.

It is further suggested by Debenedetti and Elam (2019) and Thompson (2022) that Botticelli had found his inspiration regarding his particular style of painting figures, from the subtle gestures seen in some of the Classic Greek and Roman statues. Based upon this interpretation, it would therefore clarify as to why Venus had been depicted with such a shy, innocent, pure, and modest posture – not only covering herself as a “mythological goddess” but additionally through the vivid rays of light seen in her golden hair. Especially since she had been ‘gilded’ and formed by the two mythological winds.

In addition, these two mythological figures (representing ‘angelic winds’), which had been portrayed embracing one another in mid-air while witnessing the ‘Birth of Venus,’ had been based upon ancient written texts and works from the Hellenistic Greek Period. This had apparently belonged to ‘Lorenzo the Magnificent’ (Debenedetti & Elam, 2019).

In regard to the ‘Birth of Venus’ by Sandro Botticelli having been a ‘catalyst for cultural change,’ Heckscher (1956) had compared the pagan ‘Birth of Venus’ painting to the biblical ‘Baptism of Christ,’ which had been well-known among European society during the Renaissance time period. This comparison had been made upon the premise that both of these revered religious figures had received their ‘divine blessings of approval’ and ‘divine introductions’ into the realm of this human world through means of a water birth—or baptism of water. Although these two religious figures and what they had essentially represented couldn’t have been further apart in light of their true religious contexts, Heckscher (1956) had made the argument that Botticelli, in contrast to the predominantly Christian (Catholic and Protestant) societal culture of Europe during the Renaissance, had attempted to encourage—and advocate for—a cultural shift in human perception and behaviour. Heckscher (1956) had suggested that the ‘Birth of Venus’ had been intended as a ‘public declaration’ of humanity’s renewed faith in themselves through means of excelling at their own talents, innovative capabilities, and intellectualism, in order to both envision and create a new future for themselves.

When viewed through the prism of this perspective, the ‘Birth of Venus’ had embodied the following three elements: a ‘baptism’ (which can be likened to a birth, rebirth, or revival); ‘adventus’ (which can be interpreted as an arrival); and ‘triumph,’ which can be associated with the many victorious achievements and excellent accomplishments of the Renaissance era. Therefore, through means of Venus’s triumphant stance and arrival in unblemished integrity, Heckscher (1956) had suggested that the symbolic depiction of Venus had been intended to offer both the Neo-Platonists and Humanists ‘good tidings’ of regeneration.

Furthermore, Long (2008) had confirmed that contemporary art historians and scholars had investigated the Platonic Academy of the Medici Patronage in order to accurately interpret the symbolic meanings connected to the ‘Birth of Venus.’ According to ancient Greek mythology, ‘Plato Venus’ had consisted of two spiritual entities, namely ‘Aphrodite Urania’ (known as Heavenly Venus), who had

inspired love in the context of intellectual capacity, as well as 'Aphrodite Pandemia' (known as Common Venus), who had been perceived to be the original source of all physical desires. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato had, in the context of this mythological belief system, presented the theory that an appreciation for aesthetic or outward beauty may cause the human mind to resist or fear spiritual beauty. By therefore seeing the most breath-taking 'goddess' in a physical representation, it had been argued that this would perhaps turn the focus of the human mind to strive—and reach—towards the 'ideal realm,' as a clear 'humanistic principle.'

As a 'catalyst for cultural change,' the 'Birth of Venus' had therefore urged European society during the Renaissance to strive towards excellence, acceleration, and elevation in all areas of their development.

Ovadia (2016) had presented another perspective by claiming that Botticelli had intended to depict a female role model for young women during the Renaissance through the application of formal iconographic elements. Therefore, suggesting that being a 'catalyst for cultural change,' the 'Birth of Venus' painting had encouraged young women to fulfil the characteristics expected of the 'ideal Renaissance wife,' while advocating and promoting highly desirable qualities such as eloquence, modesty, fertility, and the capacity to wield power within her sphere of influence for the betterment of humanity.

In agreement with the strong arguments made by Thompson (2022), Long (2008), Heckscher (1956), Zorach (2007), Lightbrown (1989), and Ovadia (2016), the 'Birth of Venus,' as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' had therefore promoted the revival of pagan themes related to Classical Greek mythology during the Renaissance. While this painting had focused upon aesthetic beauty, love, and mythological concepts, it had mainly advocated for a new cultural shift among the ideological thinking of European society during the Renaissance. More specifically, it had been aimed towards opening European society up to the possibility of considering, investigating, embracing, and debating a vastly wider range of subject areas.

5.1.3.4 The Arnolfini Portrait (1434) – Jan van Eyck

Howell (2020) had stated that Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait, which had been painted during the early 15th century, could be considered one of the most iconic and discernible paintings which had originated from Northern Europe during the Renaissance. However, there had been significant debates and conflicting theories among art historians and scholars throughout the years regarding who exactly this Flemish couple had been.

Carroll (1993), along with the support of Panofsky and other scholars, had argued that this painting had been a depiction of Giovanni di Arrigo Arnolfini and his wife Jeanne de Cename, who had

been highly esteemed among the community of Italian traders and merchants in Bruges from the Lucca region. It had been further noted by art historians and scholars that Arnolfini had become increasingly wealthy through means of his engagement in international trading, acting as a financier, and lending funds to both Burgundian and French courts.

On the contrary, Howell (2020) had stated that newly discovered documentation, which had been revealed around the 1990s pertaining to historical 'ducal accounts,' had proved that these two figures had not married until the year 1447, approximately 13 years after the portrait had already been completed.

Indeed, the contemporary theory as mentioned by Brine (2014), and as had been refracted through the prism of Margaret Koster, had even suggested that the imagery had functioned as a mourning 'post-mortem' tribute to Giovanni di Arrigo Arnolfini, also known as Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini, a cousin of the latter and his wife, the illustrious Costanza Trenta. However, this interpretation had been altogether encumbered by Brine (2014), who had supported such imagery with grave difficulty. It is, however, documented within historical archives that Costanza Trenta had passed away in 1433, only one year after this portrait had originally been painted. Although Margaret Koster had not presented a speculative argument pertaining to possible reasons regarding the manner in which this painting had been showcased as a potential 'memorial' or the exact location thereof (Brine, 2014).



Figure 26: *'The Arnolfini Portrait'* currently preserved in the National Gallery in London, which had been painted during the Renaissance (1434) by Jan van Eyck (Billinge & Campbell, 1995).

Note. Billinge & Campbell (1995) referred to **Figure 26** within the journal titled, *'The Infra-red Reflectograms of Jan van Eyck's Portrait of Giovanni(?) Arnolfini and his Wife Giovanna Cenami(?)'*. *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 16, 47–60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42616093>, p.48

A substantive comparison of other familial artworks which had served as 'memorialized' symbols during the Renaissance time-period as noted by Bedaux (1986), are the two portraits of Saint Francis (painted by Jan van Eyck) which had been inherited by the daughters of Anselm Adomes during 1470. These two examples confirm the perspective that Renaissance portraits didn't necessarily have to be connected to burial sites (such as sculpted tombstones) in order to effectively accomplish an eternalizing role of commemoration. According to historical documentation, the daughters of Anselm Adomes, who were both nuns, had been instructed to

commission highly realistic paintings of him and his wife, which had to be painted onto the small shutters connecting to the two images. Anselm Adomes had also requested that these portraiture be realistic and of a convincing resemblance, to ensure that their legacy was to be remembered by the devoted religious people within their community (Bedaux, 1986).

Another indication noted by Howell (2020), which may validate the argument as to 'why' the pious gentleman within this portrait could be Nicolao Arnolfini, is the fact that another similar portrait, which had been painted during 1435, was also titled 'Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini'. After further investigation, it had not only become clear that the second painting had been commissioned by Arnolfini himself, but that he had also personally known the painter, Jan van Eyck. Moreover, the facial features and overall visual resemblance of the two men in both of these paintings had shared a number of significant similarities.

Panofsky (1934) states that the main purpose and most important aspect of this painting is the fact that it had been intended to serve as an evidentiary confirmation of Nicolao Arnolfini's holy life of religious devotion, as well as a 'good faith pledge' and 'offer of reassurance' to the other merchants within his sphere of influence. In context to the customary practices of merchants during the Renaissance time-period, receiving some form of 'good faith pledge' from those with whom they had been trading with cannot be underscored enough as it pertains to guaranteeing their success in future business. The reason why this had been such an important point of caution among various businessmen and traders during the 15th century is the fact that it had been nearly impossible for them to seek recompense for any financial losses which they may have suffered in the European court systems during the Renaissance. Especially in the instance of a potential contract violation, while it had been even more challenging for merchants trading with one another across different European regions and cities. Therefore, the economic success and progress of these merchants had greatly relied upon reassurances of 'good faith' when doing business with one another (Panofsky, 1934).

Within the Arnolfini Portrait, as noted by Seidel (1989), the painter Jan van Eyck had provided three different evidentiary traits to confirm Arnolfini's integrity, honesty, and admirable character. He had firstly portrayed the 'good faith' of Arnolfini by means of depicting him with his right hand raised in the air (as an oath-taking sign), secondly painted him holding hands with his respected wife (as a sign of her 'consent,' 'unison,' and 'agreement'), and thirdly depicted a small dog standing in the foreground, which had been compositionally placed in the middle of the vertical axis—as a symbolic confirmation of 'loyalty,' 'faithfulness,' and 'fidelity' (Seidel, 1989).

Within context to this understanding, Carroll (1993) makes the compelling argument by suggesting that the visual representation of Arnolfini's occupational integrity and trustworthy moral character through this painting for public viewing by potential business partners and clients would not

only have assisted him in gaining a well-established reputation among the trading community but would have also elevated his status and 'good name' among his financial benefactors in the Burgundian court systems. Especially since these financial sponsors and backers may have had their biased doubts regarding the trustworthiness and integrity of these merchants.

In regard to the Arnolfini Portrait's symbolic interpretations as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Colenbrander (2005) mentions that the exceptional attention to finer details (referring to the many decorative components, dramatic application of value, complementary color schemes, and intricate reflections) which Jan van Eyck had incorporated, demonstrated a strong advocacy for both the fascination of monetary and material wealth, including the application of an exceptional degree of 'realism' within painting—which had been uniquely characteristic of Renaissance artworks. Therefore, the new application of multiple nuanced symbolic meanings, which had been hidden among the household objects portrayed in this painting, promoted a societal shift pertaining to 'visual communication' in a far deepened manner. Furthermore, the advocacy for this collective shift in 'societal thinking' had attempted to provoke the public into 'thinking for themselves' versus merely accepting an image at face value (Colenbrander, 2005).

In regard to the multiple symbolic elements seen within this painting, as commented upon by Seidel (1989), most had been associated with a variety of different concepts related to gestures of betrothal, the legitimacy of a legally binding marriage, and gestures of 'agreement' and 'good faith,' which existed among both marriage partners, seen within the single candle burning as a symbol of unison as well. In addition, their own reflections, including another reflection which had seemed to be that of a third person, were depicted in the mirror behind them as witnesses. Within a further attempt to strengthen and solidify their integrity, trustworthiness, and 'good characters,' Jan van Eyck had also gone the extra mile of painting a variety of different scenes pertaining to the Crucifixion of Christ on the small wooden panels of the frame around the mirror—as a symbolic oath of their 'promise' in the presence of God Himself.

In regard to the multiple symbolic components seen within the 'Arnolfini Portrait,' which had served as 'catalysts for societal and cultural change' during the Renaissance time-period, Baldwin (1984) argues that the overall artwork had been significantly preoccupied with the reformational authority of marriage. More specifically, in context to the passion of Christ's ultimate sacrifice for humanity, as an example of 'sacrificial love,' which ought to be demonstrated within the relationship between a husband and wife.

The reformational authority of matrimony and the sacrificial nature thereof, as noted by Criminisi et al. (2004) and Baldwin (1984), had therefore been perceived as guaranteeing them of obtaining a public status of 'eternal virtue' and 'good standing' in the eyes of both man and God (as the

ultimate witness). The imagery and reflections which had been strategically painted in the background had therefore confirmed this couple's perspectives and intentions. Baldwin (1984) further notes that these simplistic legal and religious beliefs had become broadly accepted among Europeans during the 15th century and Renaissance time-period.

In agreement with the perspectives of Carroll (1993), Howell (2020), Brine (2014), Bedaux (1986), Panofsky (1934), Seidel (1989), Colenbrander (2005), Criminisi et al. (2004), and Baldwin (1984), the 'Arnolfini Portrait' had therefore not only reflected the cultural perceptions of European society during the time-period of the Renaissance but its meticulously detailed symbolic elements, which had been purposefully incorporated, clearly promoted these religious and legal societal views. This portrait had therefore clearly advocated for a particular perspective to be adopted by the broader community and, in doing so, had fulfilled the purpose of serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change.'

5.1.3.5 Harvesters (1565) – by Dutch Artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder

As noted by Hoakley (2022), the Dutch artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder had painted *The Harvesters* during 1565, which had been 119 cm by 162 cm in size. Not only had this painting been considered as one of the first "modern landscape paintings," but it had also been an artwork which had clearly been intended as a celebration of nature.

Considered as a compositional masterpiece, the summer season had been captured with immense details which had included a portrayal of the tall sheaves of golden wheat ready for the harvest, while the leaves of the trees had not yet fallen down. Kryger (2020) points out that thousands of single wheat stalks had been depicted in this painting, and the artist's attention to detail had been so meticulous that he had even illustrated the heads of these single wheat stalks as well. The fact that no clearly visible shadows had been painted suggests that the time of day which had been pictorially depicted had most likely been around noon or lunchtime, during the brightest and warmest part of the day (Kryger, 2020).



Figure 27: '*The Harvesters*' is currently preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which had been painted during the Renaissance (1565) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (McMahon, 2023).

Note. McMahon (2023) referred to **Figure 27** within the journal titled, '*On Bruegel's The Harvesters*'. Painters Table.
https://www.painters-table.com/article/on-bruegels-the-harvesters/_para.1

The compositional details and perspective which had been incorporated could easily have been missed, however, had been quite significant when paying close attention (Smee, 2022).

Ingold (1933) had explained that *The Harvesters* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder had been determined by art historians and scholars to be one piece of historic Renaissance art which had originally been part of a series consisting of 12 paintings that had been meant to portray the 12 months within a year. In addition, each of these 12 paintings had contained a landscape portrayal while the colour schemes and details had resembled the characteristics of each month. In regard to the thematic content and finer intricacies which had been added within these paintings, the focus had mainly been placed upon the European laborers, farmworkers, and harvesters who had been occupied in doing multiple agricultural tasks which had typically been associated with each month and season of the year (Ingold, 1933).

The particular painting being discussed (which is one of only five remaining paintings which had unfortunately survived) as mentioned by Stańska (2017), had illustrated harvesters working, sheafing, and reaping an abundant wheat field, while the others had been portrayed resting after their long morning of hard physical labour — and having lunch (Stańska, 2017).

Burroughs (1921) had described the scene by mentioning that one harvester had fallen asleep from exhaustion and had slipped from his seated position onto his back, lying down flat while snoring. One woman had been painted cutting a loaf of bread, while a young boy had been depicted drinking water from a large clay pitcher which had most likely been shared among those enjoying their midday meals. Not far behind those who had been resting, a female harvester had leaned over her sheaf in a humorous position which would have been rather shocking for Jean Francois Millet to witness due to a number of reasons. Furthermore, a boy towards the left side in the foreground had been portrayed appearing tired and straining due to the heavy weight of the water jar which he had carried all the way from the top of the hill down the footpath which had been cut through the grain field. In the distance, an ox had also been painted while pulling a cart filled with a large amount of hay (Burroughs, 1921).

As commented upon by Smee (2022), each of the figures in this detailed painting, of which there are more than forty in total, had been provided with intricate visual details by Bruegel while having been focused upon a variety of different tasks and physical actions.

Gibson (1977) had argued that the overall harmonic atmosphere which had been captured within this August scene might have been intended as somewhat of an "idealized representation" by Bruegel. Gibson (1977) further suggests that the artist might have portrayed these farm workers, laborers, and "peasants" — similar to the perspective from which a wealthy farmer might have viewed them. Therefore, perhaps having depicted them as the landowner's prized possessions and merely "anonymous

individuals” tending to his luxurious and abundant harvest of wheat. It had been noted by Gibson (1977) that although any farmer would have been very proud of such abundant crops ensuring him of a great profit and economic status, these workers who had poured their physical labor and sweat into producing these fine crops for the landowner, most likely had very different experiences and sentiments toward the landowner. Perhaps even a degree of animosity.

In regard to *The Harvesters* as a visual symbol and “catalyst for cultural change,” it’s evident that this portrayal of rural life cycles and humanity’s interdependent relationship with nature had both been representational of — and had promoted “humanism” as a European value, which had been specifically characteristic of the Renaissance time period (Burroughs, 1921).

Although Bruegel had painted *The Harvesters* in the Netherlands during the Renaissance when the country had experienced great economic wealth and prosperity, this had not merely reflected the increased attentiveness and preoccupation amidst European society to better grasp the world around them, but had advocated for recognizing the importance of the “human experience,” “human intervention,” and “human governance” within different contexts. More specifically, in regard to the productivity of human efforts as it had pertained to achieving excellence in all spheres of societal expansion and elevation (Gibson, 1977).

Serebrennikov (2002) had explained that Bruegel’s artworks had a tremendous influence on artists who had studied his stylistic paintings during the generations which had followed the Renaissance. In accordance with the Renaissance societal value of “nature appreciation” and “naturalism,” Bruegel’s detailed portrayals of humanity’s relationship with nature and the interesting landscape scenery which he had illustrated uniquely had impacted the future progress of the “landscape painting” genre among European painters.

Moreover, as noted by Serebrennikov (2002), Bruegel’s paintings had flourished amidst the Renaissance time period during which the new societal ideology of “humanism” had been broadly accepted and adopted by the majority of Europeans. Since “humanism” had emphasized the necessity to recognize “individualism” while emphasizing the importance of considering the impact of the “human experience” in context to their “natural surroundings,” Bruegel’s landscape paintings had promoted these cultural values through means of portraying both the challenges, struggles, and triumphs of the “common man” in context to the natural space which they had occupied and populated. Although he had painted some religiously symbolic artworks in the past, Bruegel’s most outstanding and popular paintings mostly had captured activities of everyday life, the tasks of peasants, and a variety of different landscape scenes.

As a “catalyst for cultural change,” Bruegel’s series of seasonal paintings had therefore been a defining moment and crucial juncture in the historical development of Western and European Fine Arts. Since *The Harvesters* had therefore been celebrated for both its successful embodiment of “rural existence” during the Renaissance time period and for its admirable attributes pertaining to “realism,” all “religious pretexts” had therefore been inhibited and restrained for the sake of exalting “humanism” (Ingold, 1933).

5.2.1 Historical Overview of the Romantic Period known as the ‘Romanticism Movement’ (1770–1870)

Klancher (1989) makes mention of the fact that the ‘Romantic Era’ or the ‘Romantic Movement,’ otherwise referred to as ‘Romanticism,’ had been a movement which was not only intellectual in nature but had also been a poetic and artistic cultural development which had come into fruition throughout Europe during the late 1770s or late 1780s. Art historians and scholars have noted that the Romantic Movement had reached its heightened period of progress and prominence between 1800 and 1850, while, according to research, it had not seemed to continue past the 1860s. Yet it is further documented that the specific ‘beginning-and-ending dates’ somewhat had differed depending upon the region, country, and specific form of artistic developments—whether in context to poetry, literary texts, musical compositions, or Fine Arts.

As noted by Burns-Dans (2018), Romanticism can also be regarded as an ‘ideological cultural shift,’ irrespective of the time period during which it had gained a great following and had become influential among many countries. This movement had mainly celebrated and had placed a distinct emphasis upon individualism, emotionalism, and the human imagination, while it had further exalted the past in melancholic reminiscence, had glorified the magnificence of nature, and evidently had preferred medieval themes above that which had been considered ‘traditionally classical’ (Burns-Dans, 2018).

As further noted by Klancher (1989), some scholars argue that the Romantic Era had been a reversion and counteraction against the development of the ‘Industrial Revolution,’ as well as a reaction against the ‘scientific rationalization’ of natural surroundings. More specifically, it had been a retaliation against the ‘Age of Enlightenment,’ which had been most evidently encapsulated within the musical arrangements, literary masterpieces, ground-breaking artworks, development of natural sciences and historiography, educational progress, and expansion of social sciences. In addition, it had consequently also impacted European society’s perspectives as it pertains to a new rise and invigorated sense of national pride, while both conservative and liberal values had been redefined and impacted as well (Klancher, 1989).

Dupré (2023) puts forth the perspective that the 'Enlightenment' (referring to the European movement of intellectualism which had developed during the late 1700s to the 1800s) had significantly impacted the occurrence of the French Revolution. It's therefore interesting to note that France, which had mainly been responsible for the birth of 'European Romanticism' within Arts, philosophy, science, and literary contexts, had embraced ideologies pertaining to 'romantic ideas of expression' quite some time after England and Germany had already adopted this movement. Furthermore, France's rapid unfolding of life-altering political unrest and a series of significant events had left French society with barely any time for adequate reflection (Dupré, 2023).

Artz (1962) argues that artists from the Romantic Era had purposefully aimed towards visually expressing subjective themes related to the individualistic human psyche, while many artists who had followed Romanticism had upheld the perspective that true honesty and transparency may only have been known through the expression of one's emotions and imagination, instead of applying mere human reasoning to rationalize everything. In doing so, artists from this Art movement had indirectly acknowledged that human reasoning is often limited on many fronts. In a practical sense, Romantic painters had therefore expressed their visual ideas through the application of strong contrasting colours and the application of loose brushstrokes which had been intended to disclose untamed human emotions, while it had also been intended to reveal the internal turmoil and emotional endeavours of the Romantic artists themselves.

Melani (2009) highlights the fact that disagreements had existed among scholars regarding the regional birthplaces and true regional origins of 'Romanticism,' while many agree upon both Germany and England to be among the two key locations, instead of countries typically associated with having 'romantic languages.' Melani (2009) therefore had suggested that the inherited timelines and dates pertaining to the Romantic Period can be ascribed to the German and English literary historians, especially since 1798 had been the year during which the musical composition of *The Hymns for the Night* by Novalis had been completed, as well as the year during which the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* had been published, which had been written by Coleridge and Wordsworth. In regard to literary icons, Melani (2009) further notes that Goethe and Sir Walter Scott, who had also been known as literary icons, both had passed away during 1832, which approximately had marked the ending of Romanticism as it pertains to 'romantically inclined' literary masterpieces. Yet, in regards to the broader global Romantic Period, which had encompassed all forms of expressive Arts (referring to the various disciplines of Fine Arts, different genres of Music, and Theatrical performances), the earliest documented evidence pertaining to this international movement had dated back to the 1770s—and consequently had persisted to the middle of the 1800s.

However, this movement had ended much later in context to the production of American Romantic literature in comparison to the published works of European Romantic literature. At the same time, the Romantic Period in context to the application of Romanticism seen within Fine Arts and Music had continued for much longer versus the historical evidence of Romantic literature being published across Europe and America. When considering the application of 'romantic themes' across all divisions of The Arts (Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts), as well as historical Poetry and other forms of Literary texts, the internationally recognized Romantic Period had therefore begun around 1770—and had ended during 1870. In other words, the entire time period had stretched across a century worldwide (Melani, 2009).

Both Burns-Dans (2018) and Rubin (1993) had confirmed that aesthetic attributes which had most effectively captured Romantic expressions had been best demonstrated by artists such as Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), William Blake (1757–1827), Théodore Géricault (1791–1824), and John Constable (1776–1837). Yet, despite the Romanticism Movement being definitely characterized by the emotional and psychological state of Fine Artists, it had been equally valuable to understand the social and historical context of the Romantic Period during which this movement had flourished.

Additionally, it had been highlighted by Caruso & Caruso (2015) that the Romantic Period of the 1700–1800s had furthermore been recognized and heralded by the production and generation of historically iconic literary figures like Hugo, Goethe, Shelley, Dumas, Scott, Stendhal, and Byron. Théodore Géricault, as an example, had incorporated literary themes which had exalted and uplifted the intrinsic Romantic values and belief systems which had honoured individualism beyond the rationality of the 'intellectual mind' that had been produced by Europe's 'cultural Enlightenment.' The overarching Romantic Period, which had therefore encapsulated Fine Arts, seemingly had failed in its key attempt to entirely unshackle the 'human spirit.' More specifically, this had been due to the critical cultural lens of 'pure rationality—and reason,' through which a variety of different subject matters had been viewed during the 1700–1800s.

Additionally, the ruling class had also still restricted, owned, and managed the financial subsidizing of Fine Arts, while it had only been during the final years of the 1800s when mass broadcasting and journalism had finally begun to effectively act as 'catalysts for cultural change' on behalf of the broader public (Caruso & Caruso, 2015).

As further noted by Klancher (1989), some scholars had argued that the Romantic Era had been a reversion and counteraction against the development of the 'Industrial Revolution,' as well as a reaction against the 'scientific rationalization' of natural surroundings. More specifically, it had been a retaliation against the 'Age of Enlightenment,' which had been most evidently encapsulated within the musical arrangements, literary masterpieces, ground-breaking artworks, development of natural

sciences and historiography, educational progress, and expansion of social sciences. In addition, it had consequently also impacted European society's perspectives as they pertained to a new rise and invigorated sense of national pride, while both conservative and liberal values had been redefined and impacted as well (Klancher, 1989).

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pertaining to this international movement had dated back to the 1770s and had consequently persisted to the middle of the 1800s.

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Additionally, Caruso and Caruso (2015) had highlighted that the Romantic Period of the 1700–1800s had furthermore been recognized and heralded by the production and generation of historically iconic literary figures like Hugo, Goethe, Shelley, Dumas, Scott, Stendhal, and Byron. Théodore Géricault, as an example, had incorporated literary themes which exalted and uplifted the intrinsic Romantic values and belief systems that had honoured individualism beyond the rationality of the 'intellectual mind' produced by Europe's 'cultural enlightenment.' The overarching Romantic Period, which had therefore encapsulated fine arts, seemingly failed in its key attempt to entirely unshackle the 'human spirit.' More specifically, this failure had been due to the critical cultural lens of 'pure rationality and reason' through which a variety of different subject matters had been viewed during the 1700–1800s (Caruso and Caruso, 2015).

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5.2.2.1 Key Features and Characteristics of the Romantic Period Known as the 'Romanticism Movement' (1770–1870)

As noted by Rubin (1993), all of the European architectural constructs, sculptures, paintings, and musical arrangements which had been perceived as having 'romantically idealized', 'emotional', or 'nostalgic' themes and portrayals, had originated during this time period. Since the artistic application or incorporation of 'Romanticism' within artworks—and the Romantic Period during Art History itself—had been challenging to interpret and to accurately define, it had been far simpler to merely evaluate what the 'Romanticism Movement' had visually—or audibly—presented itself as through artistic expression, whether referring to either the visual characteristics of romantic artworks or the tonality, music chords, and emotions conveyed through musical compositions.

Rubin (1993) adds to this understanding by proposing the idea that the Romantic Period had become characterized by its unique spontaneity, originality, and artistic honesty regarding the 'human condition', the 'human psyche', 'human expression', and 'human emotionalism' (Rubin, 1993).

Bundock (2023) states the scholar named Mark Salber Phillips had characterized the application of 'romanticism' as having been an Art Movement of "formal experimentation," which, according to his interpretation, had not only modified the cultural nature of 'historical reading' but had also transformed the interpretative structure and representation of 'historical accounts.'

Another characteristic and trademark of the Romantic Period, as commented upon by Burns-Dans (2018), had been the significant prominence which had been granted to the 'individual freedoms' of the artists themselves in order to uniquely communicate and visually portray their ideological ideas, as well as their personal emotions and sentiments pertaining to a variety of different topics. Whether the general public had agreed with the personal stances and interpretative viewpoints of these romantic artists in context to the religious, political, or social representations depicted within their works of art remains mostly unknown; however, the artists as individuals had been granted much more importance themselves. Casper David Fredrich, who had, for example, been a romantic German painter, had upheld the perspective that the emotional sentiments and reactions of romantic artists should have guided their formal approaches in the final execution of their artworks.

Another example of this ideological thinking, as noted by Burns-Dans (2018), points to William Wordsworth, who had been a romantic poet. Similar to the perspectives of Casper David Fredrich, William Wordsworth had also declared that the poetic-writing process should have begun with an instinctive overflow of compelling emotion, which he had argued that the poet should then have drawn from in order to write a poem which had effectively captured the essence of the Romanticism Movement.

Moskvichova et al. (2019) highlights the perspective of Berkovsky (1973), who states that Romanticism had, during the 1700s and 1800s, been characterized by—and accepted as—a new 'cultural phenomenon' among European and Western societies, while it had gradually progressed into

an integrated cultural movement which had connected people across countries. Apart from the Romantic Period having been defined by notorious works of art and musical masterpieces, Berkovsky (1973) explains that Romanticism had not only been a 'school of The Arts', but also a 'school of science,' a 'school of philosophy,' and a 'school of poetry.'

Based upon this understanding, Moskvichova et al. (2019) and Berkovsky (1973) therefore note that a key characteristic of the Romantic time period had been its 'universalism' while it had combined Art, Theatre, Music, Philosophy, Poetry, and Science. Furthermore, it can also be perceived as having been a new form of 'ideological awareness' or 'cultural consciousness,' which had spread throughout many facets of European and Western society. The influence of Romanticism had also impacted legislative law-making and historical analyses, since the cultural prism through which congressmen and lawmakers had viewed the consequences of societal actions—and the prism through which Art historians had viewed historical accounts—had been altered.

Another character trait of the Romanticism Movement, which is highlighted by Moskvichova et al. (2019), suggests that the individuals within society had been viewed as each being incomparable 'microcosms'—and that both achieving a state of 'personal freedom' while maintaining one's sense of 'individual identity' had required a person living during this time period to reach beyond the physical and monetary realm while transcending their own limits.

Paharenko (2013) consequently states that this revolutionary shift in having perceived the existence of humanity as a collection of separate microcosms, as well as the expectations placed upon individuals to maintain their personal freedom and identity in the midst of a broader society, had therefore become a defining characteristic of Romanticism. Secondly, Paharenko (2013) notes that the main quest and goal of Romanticism, which had been to establish universal ties among the interpretative responses pertaining to philosophy, literature, politics, various genres of Art, cultural traditions, and Christian practices, is the approach through which the world had been accepted and understood by Romanticists.

Silver (2015) points out that the German philosopher named Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel had proposed that the Romanticism Movement had been the most effective and successful genre of Fine Arts and painting since it had had the ability to both expose and more adequately communicate the secret thoughts of a person's soul. In addition, the emotional approaches of expression which had formerly been captured in Christian mosaics, paintings, and frescoes during prior decades had been a necessary precursory era which had prepared the ground in regard to 'societal and cultural thinking' in order for society to evolve towards an understanding and collective embrace of Romantic paintings.

G.W.F. Hegel, as confirmed by Silver (2015), had ascribed the foundational origins of 'Romanticism' to Giotto, the artists and painters from the Italian Renaissance—along with the 'quattrocento' time period during the earlier Italian Renaissance, which had embodied a more simplistic and pure style of classical painting. This style of pure and simplified classical painting had also been suggestive of subtle emotional expressions which had been communicated with clarity.

Silver (2015) further mentions that the German-Swiss Art historian named Werner Weisbach had supported the view of Hegel and had reasoned that since the paintings produced during the Romanticism Movement had been void of having strict boundaries or limitations in regard to their style and messages communicated, the movement had reached its most prominent pinnacle during the latter period of the 'trecento' and early stages of the 'quattrocento.' Weisbach further upheld the perspective that the application of Romanticism had lasted until the end of the 1800s, while he had argued the Fine Arts during the Romantic Period had been influenced and characterized by both 'chivalric' and 'courteous' French culture, which he had perceived to have been adopted by court systems in Northern Italy and then further endorsed by Florentines. As a result of this perspective, Weisbach had therefore argued that artworks from Florentine mainly fulfilled religious goals during the 1400s, while he had proposed that Romantic Art had prospered upon the successive progression of 'secular decoration,' along with the cultural shift which had embraced the engagement with battles, rivalry, games, and tournaments (Silver, 2015).

Esaak (2019) further points our attention to another identifiable characteristic of Romanticism, Charles Baudelaire (1821–1879), who had once stated that Romanticism was centered in the midst of individual feeling or emotional responses, yet was most definitely not based upon obsolete truthfulness or upon the choice of subject matter. Esaak (2019) then proceeds to state that, in agreement with Baudelaire, the first flaw of the Romantic Movement had been revealed as that the movement itself, as a concept or ideological interpretative approach to various subjects, couldn't have been adequately defined with specificity. For example, when referring to Romanticism as a Movement, the term 'romance' or 'romantic' had not been applied or understood in context to embodying or portraying 'romantic feelings' but had instead been applied with the intention of glorifying emotional responses in correlation with historical events, social issues, or religious beliefs.

Based upon this understanding, Esaak (2019) therefore argued that the topics, themes, or ideological perspectives pertaining to a variety of different subject matters, which had been celebrated and glorified by Romantic artists, were almost never physical in nature. For example, the artists belonging to the Romantic Movement had glorified a certain set of ideals pertaining to hopefulness against all odds, heroism, the freedoms of individual liberties, awestruck wonder, emotional reactions

related to feeling despair, and emotional responses capturing that which was 'larger than life.' Additionally, they had also elevated sensations or emotions which had naturally been evoked within all of humanity. Esaak (2019) argues, however, that one should keep in mind that all of these emotional provocations, which had been experienced on a highly subjective and individualistic level, were highly questionable when attempts had been made to apply factual analysis.

Esaak (2019) continues to make an excellent point that the universal Romanticism Movement, in a broader sense, can also be characterized by concepts which it had resisted. For example, Romanticism had resisted scientific reasoning, calculative analysis, industrialism, aristocracy, and elitists who had prescribed societal guidelines and rules in order to preside over others in a dictatorial manner. However, instead, they had heralded instinctiveness, spiritualism, freedom of thought, democratic values, simplicity, humility, and nature.

In agreement with Esaak (2019), one could therefore argue that the Romanticism Movement had been characterized by resistance-driven motivation or an act of rebellion against dictatorship, aristocracy, and elitism, while the overarching movement had been led on an international scale by a handful of leading literary scholars, poets, musical composers, and Fine artists who had depicted either highly emotional, glorifying, or terrifying scenery.

In addition, Esaak (2019) notes that another characteristic of Romantic paintings, in particular, is that they had exploded with such compelling emotionalism that it had felt as if the canvasses were brimming over with the maximum amount of passion and expression which they had possibly been able to contain. Therefore, a painting illustrating a crowd of people would have had to portray the exact facial expressions, movements, and actions of every individual with exceptional detail; paintings of animals would have preferably had to capture an impressive, lofty, or magnificent key feature being admired; landscape paintings would have had to either provide an awe-inspiring, breath-taking, mysterious, melancholic, eerie, or provocative atmosphere; while portrait paintings, although fairly straightforward, would have had to include a subtle emotionally driven mannerism, such as a strategic tilting of the individual's head, the depiction of perhaps a grimace, a mesmerizing stare, an expression of longing or despair, while the depiction of eyes had always served as a reflective window into the soul of the person portrayed. Therefore, the Romantic painters had aimed at illustrating their chosen subject matters in the midst of a definitive 'visual atmosphere' capturing either virtue, innocence, wonderment, longing, loneliness, sadness, greed, or even madness.

Unlike the whimsical, fashionable, and aesthetically beautiful themes of the Rococo Art painting style, the moods which had been captured within Romantic paintings embodied a far broader

spectrum of atmospheric emotions. Consequently, these included cynical, dark, grim, and shocking scenic illustrations which would have made European society highly uncomfortable in an attempt to shift cultural perceptions regarding specific topics.

Similarly, unlike the Impressionist Movement, Romantic painting hadn't focused upon capturing light effects through the means of applying loose brushstrokes, but had, as a typical character trait, adopted a painting style which had been more smooth, glossy, highly intricate, and monumental within its overall appearance. Although these trademarks had been typical of the Romanticism Movement in the context of Fine Arts, the application of technique and manner of execution had been entirely based upon individual artistic discretion.

In addition, Kaufman (1925) described another characteristic of Romanticism as having been an attempt to 'escape reality,' an astonishing evolutionary change of 'imaginative sensibility,' as well as a visually expressive revelation pertaining to both the 'impulsiveness' and 'expansiveness' of human nature and earthly desires.

Kaufman (1925) further claimed that the Romanticism Movement had been chaotic in nature, not only in regards to the application of Romanticism by painters but arguably also in regards to the general analysis thereof. Therefore, Kaufman (1925) made the argument that the traits, characteristics, and metrics with which Romanticism had formerly been analyzed by and measured against had seemed far too vague, indefinite, and ambiguous across the spectrum to ensure a high degree of uniformity among scholarly opinions. In response, this author suggested that a brand-new set of measurable standards among Art historians and scholars should have been determined and agreed upon, to ensure future accuracy when analyzing and identifying 'what constitutes' or 'qualifies' an artwork as being 'Romantic.'

Rubin (1993) & Crawford (2024) characterized the Romantic Movement from another perspective, by referencing the works of Eugene Delacroix, who had, since the passing of Gericault, become the main representative of the Romantic Movement as far as Fine Arts were concerned. He is also described by Art historians as having been a solitary individual with a highly disagreeable and passionate temperament. In one of Delacroix's journals, he had declared that real men were 'savage' in nature, while having been enthralled by the 'flame of brilliance' and having been entirely immersed in his obsession with 'being passionate.' Similar to the visual characteristics of many other iconic Romantic paintings, Delacroix had also selectively drawn inspiration for his historical artworks from catastrophic humanitarian events or from dramatic literary texts. Therefore, in stark contrast to the Neoclassical painting styles, which had captured serene and calm atmospheric depictions, the portrayals

by Delacroix had been filled with exotic, passionate, and distinctly violent imagery of traumatic historical events. Like many other Romantic Artists, he had not aimed at reproducing reality with distinct realism or accuracy but had instead attempted to capture the atmospheric weight, turmoil, raw emotions, and core essence of particular key events in history.

Three interesting characteristics of French Romantic Artists as noted by Pękacz (1990) & Robinson & Savarese (2022) were that they had never taken any significant inspiration from iconic musical compositions and had an irretrievable fascination with the obscene depictions witnessed in Flemish paintings. Thirdly, many Romantic artists from other European or Western countries had portrayed a unique admiration for the depiction of exotic foreign regions of the world, which had still been untouched by the influence of European society.

Lastly, Moskvichova et al. (2019) noted that Romanticists had highly encouraged the concept of being productive through means of 'artistic interaction' within a broad spectrum of different subject matters on a personalized level. Romanticists had also strongly opposed the Classical theoretical approach to visual expression, which had formerly been recognized as 'high genres' versus 'low genres.' Therefore, Romanticism had aimed to remove the previously 'normalized genres' of artistic categorization entirely and had intended to replace them with the interpretive approach of 'opposite-traits-syntheses.' In agreement with Moskvichova et al. (2019), one could therefore argue that this particular Romantic artistic approach had served as a 'catalyst of cultural change' in promoting the societal and cultural value of refusing to conform to the rigid structures and rules that had been predetermined by their authoritarian aristocratic leaders. Instead, they had promoted the value of 'independent thinking' while having valued 'reactionary responses.'

5.2.2.2 Societal and Cultural Values of the Romantic Period

In regard to the societal and cultural values upheld by European, English, and American nations during the Romantic Period, Dixit (2022) stated that the movement itself as a foundational thought process had a life-altering impact upon society's view of the role of literary texts, philosophical texts, and religious texts. Therefore, it had led society to increasingly question the formerly established patterns of reasoning and worldviews that had been broadly accepted without being challenged for a very long time. This cultural shift had more specifically occurred due to a cultural resistance that had emerged against the Enlightenment Era, which had disproportionately invested great confidence in logical human rationality, despite the fact that human knowledge related to scientific, medical, and psychological discovery had been very limited during that time period. These developments in the 'collective consciousness' of European and Western societies had produced new psychological and emotional sentiments, which had further caused a renewed and earnest quest to seek 'the truth.' No

longer had the adoption of former intellectual and rational theories been enough to satisfy the human psyche, which, in return, had resulted in far greater value being placed upon 'personal intuition,' the 'imagination of the individual,' and an unquenchable desire to find 'human liberty' and to establish 'humanitarian rights.' In other words, there had been a collective societal and cultural longing to seek personal freedoms for the average person, regardless of their social class, without being ruled by aristocrats with an iron fist (Dixit, 2022).

Dixit (2022) presented the further argument pertaining to the societal and cultural values that had been upheld by European, English, and American nations during the Romantic Period by stating that the Romanticists had aimed towards reconciling the 'human psyche' and the human 'way of life' with the former origins of simplicity and being at peace with nature. In regard to the adoption of new cultural values, they had upheld the perspective that nature was pure, simplistic, beautiful, and untainted by the corruption of the human condition and, therefore, had embodied the divine. This belief had stemmed from the fact that those who had supported the Romantic Movement had believed that people were born innocent, pure, and without a sinful inclination and that society's norms had gradually corrupted their spirits, minds, and actions as they had become older. Therefore, their adoration of nature, as well as the cultivation and nurturing thereof, had represented a purer and simpler lifestyle that had broken ties with modern civilization (Dixit, 2022).

Moskvichova et al. (2019) had noted that cultural changes seen towards the end of the 1700s, with new interest and admiration for nationalist and populist ideas, had already served as evidence of renewal taking place among European societies. In regard to the formation of these new cultural references (which the new interpretations and perceptions had been founded upon), sources of Artistic Folklore rooted in ancient traditions had replaced the philosophical pretexts of the Classical Era. In other words, artistic expressions had become inspired by supernationalist visual aesthetic qualities. One of the most significant and widely supported diversions of this movement had become known as 'Folk Romanticism.' This particular 'branch' of Romanticism was originally birthed in Germany after they had fallen into the hands and rulership of French leadership. Since the Germans had been greatly oppressed during this time period, their rebellion had produced a powerful movement of national resistance. Simultaneously, when these events had occurred, the adoption of folklore in literature had notably intensified with much more widespread support among literary scholars and writers (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

This movement had also included the works of J. Eichendorf, V. Grimm, A. von Arnim, and C. Brentano, all under the 'umbrella' of the "Heidelberg School of Artists", while the Heidelberg Romanticism had officially announced themselves as being the leading representational publishing

group of a compilation of German Folk Songs that were known as the 'Magic Horn of Boy' during 1806–1808, written by C. Brentano and A. von Arnheim. This particular musical compilation had, however, resonated with -and impacted- German society to such a large extent that Germans had believed this compilation encapsulated their collective mindsets, societal moral beliefs, and values, as well as the nature of their emotional lifestyles under British rulership to absolute perfection. The unifying sentiment among Germans had been so strong that this musical compilation was referred to by the people of Germany as the very "soul of Germany." Especially since the storytelling and poetic expressions within the songs of this musical compilation had been reflective and representational of the experiences of differing social groups as well. As all facets of German societal peculiarities and cultural attributes had been communicated in such a tasteful and articulate manner, it had been a significant leap towards demonstrating shared values within the earlier Romantic Era (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

In context to the development of German societal and cultural values, therefore, Moskvichova et al. (2019) had stated that the collective engagement with the Romanticism Movement had greatly impacted the further development of the 'collective German consciousness,' while it had simultaneously also assisted in establishing a strongly unified historical national identity. These societal and cultural values had not only been embodied within the poetic and musical expressions documented within Germany during this time period but also within the distinctive literary texts, languages, paintings, as well as the traditional -and cultural practices (Moskvichova et al., 2019).

In regard to the adoption of a new set of societal and cultural values, Crawford (2024) had stated that Romanticists had often challenged that which had been determined to be the 'acceptable societal norms,' while the literary texts, poetry, musical compositions, and artworks had often illustrated representational narratives in regard to the angle of storytelling, which had greatly deviated from societal standards that had been broadly accepted.

Crawford (2024) further explains that since Romantic literary scholars had been culturally accepted as having been somewhat rebellious in nature, it consequently had led them to be frequently misunderstood by the general public and therefore feeling uniquely isolated. However, the continual example that they had set for society in regard to the profound value and emphasis placed upon 'individualism' undeniably had caused the eventual adoption of this particular cultural value throughout Europe, even though it had taken time to be fully embraced by everyone during the 1800s.

Since Romantic literary, musical, and artistic content had therefore often focused upon -and in certain instances even elevated- the depiction of society's 'rebellious outsiders,' their collective works had ironically garnered increasing 'sympathy' for -and accelerated 'empathy' with- these marginalized groups or rare individuals. One could even make the argument that these outcasts had been somewhat elevated to the point of providing them with a degree of admiration and almost glorifying them as

'eccentric geniuses' in certain instances. The admiration of those who had not blindly followed in the footsteps of society's preconditioned guidelines and rules was therefore evident in itself as yet another societal and cultural value which had gradually been adopted within the cultural consciousness of European society (Crawford, 2024).

Crawford (2024) further emphasises the fact that Romantic Artists had not been afraid of publicly resisting traditional and orthodox belief systems through means of shock tactics, while they had also brazenly demonstrated boldness in expressing both their scorn and contempt for the stifling rules of European society during the 1800s. These strong feelings of contempt and critical objections to the 'standards of living' and values of European society, which had been so bravely rebelled against, most certainly had served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' which undeniably had made an impact upon European society. More specifically, in regard to influencing and altering the thought processes, perceptions, and societal values of Europeans who had lived during this time period.

In addition, it had been noted by Crawford (2024) that the changing characteristics of European societal -and cultural values as it pertains to the significance which 'individual perspectives,' 'individual emotions,' and 'individualism' at large had been granted during 1770–1870 most certainly had contributed toward collective changes in the perceptions and behaviours of Europeans throughout the Romantic period. As a result, Crawford (2024) also argues that the Romantic Movement had opened the pathway for the deep and extensive analyses of 'character studies,' which are currently well incorporated into the modern-day filmmaking processes.

Galitz (2004) makes the interesting observation by stating that since Romanticism had counteracted the attempt by critics to define and categorize this movement in a simplistic manner, while it had also been diverse in regard to the spectrum of subjects, themes, and stylistic techniques it encompassed, the movement itself had encouraged European societies to accept the value of 'open-mindedness' towards multiple avenues of critical thinking, problem-solving, and pursuing one's personal aspirations.

Although an interest in Neoclassical ideas, Classical concepts, and faith-based religious principles had still been popular among European society during the Romantic Era, Galitz (2004) makes the interesting observation regarding the fact that the Romanticists had rejected the belief in -and support of- systems of governance and rulership which had been 'absolute' and had therefore not been able to be challenged. This most definitely had impacted the public psyche of European society during the Romantic Period and had caused a shift in their cultural values as it relates to placing greater importance upon critical thinking, the application of reasoning, being unafraid to ask questions when necessary, and not merely accepting all of the information at 'face value.' Those who had supported Romanticism had

therefore strongly upheld the perspective that both individuals within a society and humanity at large were destined to create their own systems and rules to follow (Galitz, 2004).

As lastly noted by Galitz (2004), since Romantic artists had often viewed and processed the world around them through their strong emotional responses as demonstrated in their works of art, which had frequently commented upon controversial social and politically motivated issues, they had indirectly encouraged European society to follow their examples and to no longer remain silent in the face of tyranny and oppression. As a societal and cultural value, one could therefore argue that their artworks had served as 'catalysts for cultural change' by advocating for values such as resilience, resistance, and bravery among the broader public.

5.2.3 Five Prominent and Iconic Paintings from The Romanticism Era, Serving as Catalysts for Cultural Change

5.2.3.1 Liberty Leading the People (1830) – by Eugène Delacroix

One of the most emblematic paintings by Eugene Delacroix, which had been considered as one of the most 'revolutionary' Romantic artworks as confirmed by Carroll (2017), had been painted during 1830 and named 'Liberty Leading the People.' This painting had illustrated a historically significant uprising which had occurred in France's main capital, Paris, over a three-day period during July of 1830. During this uprising, the majority of commoners had strongly demanded for the royal family and the entire French Monarchy to be overthrown and dismantled entirely, especially since these royal oppressors had regained control, power, and rulership over French society once again after the event of the 1st French Revolution, which had taken place during 1789–1799.



Figure 28: 'Liberty Leading the People' currently preserved in the Louvre Museum in Paris, which had been painted during the Romantic Era (1830) by Eugene Delacroix (Maltz-Leca, 2013).

Note. Maltz-Leca (2013) referred to **Figure 28** within the journal titled, '*Spectres of the Original and the Liberties of Repetition*'. African Arts, 46 (4), 32–45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43306189>, p. 133

Carroll (2017) notes that this painting by Eugene Delacroix had been publicly introduced and exhibited for the first time during 1831 in the Paris Salon, yet it had received a complex combination of diversified responses from those among French society. The centralized key figure which Delacroix had depicted was the portrayal of a brave, bare-breasted woman wearing a torn yellowish-golden dress with two strands of crimson-red cloth tied around her waist and a crimson-red beret upon her head. She had lifted up the French national flag (in red, white, and blue) in her right hand into the air with a stance of resilience and strength and had also carried a 'bayonnetted musket' gun within her left hand.

Although this painting would have been considered a 'contemporary,' 'new,' and 'modern' artwork for French society who had lived during this time period and had been both intriguing and inspiring to many Europeans, Gao (2017) notes that others had been both shocked and horrified by the graphically blunt illustration of the bare-breasted woman leading the revolt for freedom's sake. Furthermore, the hyper-emotionalism and controversial nature of this painting had been frowned upon by key individuals within French society, especially those from the aristocratic ruling class who had desired to remain in control of the cultural narrative and perspectives of French society at large. Therefore, during the very first year of 'Liberty Leading the People's' debut exhibition in the public square, it had been banned by King Louis-Philippe of France and consequently had remained concealed for many years (Gao, 2017).

As further explained by Carroll (2017), the key figure as seen within this painting had served as an allegorical and symbolic representation of 'idealized freedom' for all classes who had lived in France. Therefore, capturing a potential moment of victory and freedom for all social facets within European society had been aimed at encouraging and challenging European society to arise and fight for their humanitarian rights.

Carroll (2017) mentions that the female depiction of Liberty had been a rather traditional portrayal of 'victory,' which points to its origins rooted in antiquity. Despite the fact that Delacroix had not intended to illustrate a particular female but instead had illustrated her as an allegorical symbol, the iconic associations established between Liberty and the concepts of 'freedom' and 'liberation' had endured for centuries. More specifically, Liberty had re-surfaced on numerous occasions amidst many other artworks throughout various time periods in Art history which had followed. In response, the author therefore suggests that Liberty herself had perhaps developed into a personification of a genuine 'woman representing humanity and the common man.' In other words, through means of her traditional appearance, the symbolic value of Liberty as a representational figure had served as a 'catalyst of cultural change' through the process of becoming the embodiment of a 'real woman' (Carroll, 2017).

Maltz-Leca (2013) provides a very different perspective by stating that since Liberty had become an iconic and enduring symbol of France's quest for personal, social, and economic freedom

throughout the past 200 years, it had encapsulated the reoccurrence of both 'political transitions' and 'exaltations of wartime violence' throughout recent history.

In regards to the compositional arrangement of 'Liberty Leading the People,' Ringbom (1968) elaborated upon the fact that Liberty, as the focal point of the painting, had been placed within an 'equilateral triangle' next to a culminating pinnacle on her right side. However, within this triangular composition had been both a horizontal arrangement of deceased bodies lying in the foreground of the painting, as well as a vertical arrangement around Liberty as the focal point with a young boy as accomplice on her left side (Ringbom, 1968).

It's quite interesting to note, however, as confirmed by both Brown (1984) and Ringbom (1968), that this triangular composition had originally been a Neo-Classical arrangement, which had formerly been applied by successful Neo-Classical painters, including Pierre-Narcisse Guerin, Delacroix's personal Fine Arts mentor (Brown, 1984: Ringbom, 1968).

In regards to the visual portrayals and illustrations seen within the painting, Chaulagain (2018) makes the observations that Liberty had been presented as a silhouetted figure against a brightly illuminated segment of the 'negative space' (background) that had been highlighted by the shades of blue, grey, beige, and white in the smoky sky towards the top-right and top-left corners of the painting. Despite the painting having been radiantly lightened from the left side of its overall composition, the most highlighted section of this painting had confirmed the fact that a second angle of light had been depicted behind the central allegorical figure. Similar to the compositional arrangements which Delacroix had been taught by his mentor Guerin, the key features of emphasis through means of brightened illumination, which had been placed upon the focal point, had once again pointed towards the tutelage and influence by Guerin. However, the illuminated skies as illustrated within 'Liberty Leading the People' had also represented the glaring reflections of the sun, which had shone with extreme heat and brightness over the disorderly streets of Paris during the revolutionary turmoil which had taken place (Chaulagain, 2018).

Marrinan (1980) states that the collective French resistance which had been undertaken against the Bourbon Monarchy, who had formerly ruled over France's society from 1589 to 1793 and once more from 1814 to 1830 (during this King Louis XVI, King Louis XVIII, and King Charles X had reigned in a dictatorial style), had been captured to perfection within 'Liberty Leading the People' as it pertains to an increase in nationalism, which had risen among lower societal classes during this time-period (Marrinan, 1980).

Since 'Liberty Leading the People' had therefore contained both fictional and realistic components within its portrayal, Hoffman (1990) states that this painting had served as both an allegory

of a symbolic nature, as well as a relevant and contemporary topic during the time-period which it had been created. At first, critics of this painting had expressed their disdain for the fact that Liberty's social class had been that of a 'lowborn commoner,' while during the years which followed, far greater attention had been given to the analyses of her aesthetic beauty and visual features of the painting, which seemed to have been rooted in Classical and Neoclassical styles of painting. Furthermore, the half-naked corpse in the foreground wearing the blue stocking had been described by Art historians during recent years as a symbolic portrayal of the brutal, blatant, and heartless destruction caused by war, which had created a stark 'visual contrast' in comparison to the main figure (Hoffman, 1990).

Considering that the other figures within this painting had been portrayed with such distinct and intricate details in their clothing, some Art historians argued that the gentleman painted with the top hat may have been an intentional illustration of Delacroix himself. However, Pinkney (1964) provides a cynical reaction towards the idea that Ferdinand Delacroix had illustrated himself as a prominent heroic figure within this painting, dressed as a middle-class citizen of French society during the 1800s, while having been placed in such an ominous and dangerous position. Especially since the artist himself had not physically risked his life for the obtainment of societal freedom in a literal sense, despite having taken a great social risk in regards to the public exhibition as creator of such a daring artwork (Pinkney, 1964).

Toussaint had further suggested that the gentleman which had been depicted on the left side of the painting had been intended to represent the three stereotypical classes of laborers and workers from the mid-1800s in Paris (Hoffman, 1990). Similar to the warrior-like and brave Classical Greek sculpture known as the 'Nike of Samothrace,' Hoffman (1990) notes that the light golden dress which Liberty had been illustrated wearing had also been portrayed flowing slightly backward in the wind as an emblem of 'victory over freedom.' At the same time, the fallen heroes and fallen French soldier illustrated within the foreground of the painting had served as a 'Romantic symbol' of the personal sacrifice and high cost there is to pay for obtaining liberation from oppression and other social and humanitarian freedoms (Hoffman, 1990).

In regards to the 'persuasive' elements of this artwork, Olmsted (2009) presents the argument that since 'Liberty Leading the People' by Ferdinand Delacroix had failed to contain historically accurate visual elements, he had perhaps done so intentionally with the aim of enhancing the artwork's level of 'societal persuasiveness' through means of provoking an 'emotional response.' Additionally, Olmsted (2009) notes that Delacroix had documented his personal views regarding the effective attributes of 'artistic persuasion' and upheld the perspective that maintaining a certain degree of 'generality' when creating an artwork had provided an opportunity for key features or symbolic messages to surface with distinction. In contrast, he had believed that hyper-realistic intricacies within paintings had stifled the

creative imagination of his audiences and therefore minimized the intended impact behind his paintings. For Delacroix had himself stated that emotionless, cold, and exact imitation of reality with precision had lacked true artistic expression (Olmsted, 2009).

In agreement with this understanding, Mora (2000) further explains that Delacroix had aimed to portray the 'soul of the French people' and that the 'unspecified' and 'universal' visual characteristics seen within 'Liberty Leading the People' had enabled viewers to reach beyond merely 'factually analyzing' the content of the artwork and to connect to their subconscious emotions.

In regards to 'Liberty Leading the People' having served as a 'catalyst for cultural change' during the Romantic Period, I stand in agreement with Carroll (2017), Gao (2017), Maltz-Leca (2013), Brown (1984), Ringbom (1968), Chaulagain (2018), Marrinan (1980), Hoffman (1990), Pinkney (1964), Olmsted (2009), and Mora (2000), who had collectively supported the understanding that Ferdinand Delacroix, (a pivotal and leading painter of the Romantic Movement), had captured and visually portrayed the 'spiritual essence' of the revolutionary uprisings within France, in both a compelling and convincing manner. Considering that the painting had been intended as a symbolic representation of 'victorious liberation' against oppressive French monarchical leadership, it had not merely advocated for unification around the concept of 'renewed national pride,' but a further uprising among the common people against authoritarianism. Although advocacy pertaining to these ideological aspirations had produced successful outcomes later in history, they had also made a significant contribution towards political changes which had been rooted in Romantic ideology.

Although not directly tied to the original purpose behind Delacroix's 'Liberty Leading the People,' Carroll (2017) further notes that as a result of Liberty's traditional appearance, her symbolic value during recent years had also served as a 'catalyst of cultural change' by means of becoming the embodiment of a 'real woman' who rises victoriously to achieve her liberation and freedom in society.

5.2.3.2 The Third of May 1808 – by Francisco Goya

Pitargue (2018) explains that 'The Third of May 1808' painting by Francisco de Goya had been based upon the historical events of Charles IV (a former Spanish King) who had sought the co-rulership of King Napoleon from France, for the purpose of having joined their military forces to conquer Portugal. As a result of this initial agreement between the King of Spain and the King of France, France's Army had seamlessly entered the borders of Spain. At this point, however, it had been revealed that Napoleon had set a trap for the Spanish Army while his soldiers had rapidly taken control of the country. Once occupied, King Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, had consequently been crowned as the new King of Spain (Pitargue, 2018).

However, as noted by Leshnoff (1995), among Art historians and scholars, there had been many varying interpretations regarding Francisco de Goya's 'Third of May (1808)' painting, depending upon which cultural and political stance the theme of the painting had been perceived from. Yet most interpretations had agreed upon the fact that this painting was 'timeless' in nature, as it pertained to the 'visual expression' of human tragedy and what some had considered as 'war crimes' committed against innocent Spanish civilians by the French Army (Leshnoff, 1995).

Licht (1979) argues that there had been no reliable and dependable evidence to support the true perspectives and feelings which Francisco de Goya had regarding the event which he had captured in this painting, especially during his later years as a matured artist. Licht (1979) further notes that the painting had originally been intended as a celebratory immortalization of the return of Spanish Royalty (referred to as 'Bourbons'), whose soldiers had, after nightfall, 'victoriously' unified as allied forces against defenseless civilians. With their rifles pointed in unison against the central figure among the group of local Spanish citizens, his arms had remained raised while having faced inevitable execution and while still being surrounded by others who had been killed minutes prior and others who had continued to watch the executions (Licht, 1979).



Figure 29: 'The Third of May 1808' is currently preserved in the Prado Museum in Spain, which had been painted during the Romantic Era (1830) by Francisco de Goya (Leshnoff, 1995).

Note. Leshnoff (1995) referred to **Figure 29** within the journal titled, 'Art, Ambiguity and Critical Thinking'. Art Education, 48 (5), 51–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3193532>, p.2

A square lantern, which had been depicted on the ground near the middle of the painting's composition, as mentioned by Leader (2014), had served as the only light source within the physical and thematic darkness of this painting. The centralized source of light had, however, been immensely effective in causing a dramatic emotional effect of contrast between the civilian victims, the martyr, and the opposing perpetrators. Although the painting had been meant to be symbolic of King Ferdinand VII's bravery and his faithful devotion to the 'Bourbon Dynasty,' the painting had instead caused the central figure and martyr to be visually portrayed as a white, brightly lit, pure, and holy 'Christ-like figure' against the darkened color tones of the painting. Furthermore, the crimson bloodshed of the murdered victims in the foreground, seen in unison with the golden tints of crystal-white color tones painted upon the central figure, had created a 'powerful visual association' with the ultimate sacrifice that Christ had

made on the cross in the selfless act of laying down His life for the sake of redeeming humanity. Similarly, the selfless martyr had also chosen to sacrificially lay down his life in an attempt to redeem the freedoms of his fellow Spanish countrymen (Leader, 2014).

In order to further emphasize and draw attention to the victims and central martyr within this painting, Glathom & Baron (1985) explain that Goya's strategic placement of the lantern within the composition of this painting underneath the French soldiers' pointed rifles had further caused a number of horizontal lines and shadows to be directed towards the central martyr (Glathom & Baron, 1985).

In regard to Francisco de Goya's 'Third of May' painting serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Trancart (2022) states that the original expectation from Goya's 'war painting,' which had been commissioned by the Spanish government to commemorate the historical event of Napoleon's occupation of Spain, had been to create a heroic scene in honour of the 'victors' and 'champions.' Therefore, despite the fact that the 'Spanish freedom fighters' had heartbreakingly lost their lives in this tragic and culturally devastating historical event, the leaders within the Spanish Government who had requested the depiction of the event had still expected the 'visual message' captured within the artwork to have been one that essentially exonerated, praised, and glorified the 'victorious accomplishments' of the new Spanish rulership. Since Napoleon had successfully annexed Spain, he had crowned his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as Spain's new King. Consequently, they had greatly desired a heroic depiction of their victory to be documented within an iconic and timeless painting, for the purpose of being remembered by future generations (Trancart, 2022).

In agreement with the views of Arn (2019), Francisco de Goya had however cleverly swayed the 'New Spanish Government' of French Rulers to include more 'emotionality' within the final product. To the shock and surprise of both the Spanish Government and Goya's fellow countrymen however, once his final painting had eventually been revealed for public viewing, the cold brutality and horrific atrocities committed by Napoleon, Joseph Bonaparte, and the French Army against the people of Spain had been effectively exposed. The grotesque reality of the situation through means of Goya's painting had been 'laid bare' for all to see (Arn, 2019).

Francisco Goya had therefore not only applied his superior academically-trained painting skills to convey the brutality and raw emotions of these 'advanced war tactics' to perfection, but had also been highly successful in utilizing this painting as a 'catalyst for cultural change' and a 'visual sword' with which he had victoriously swayed 'public opinion' against the French Invaders. At the same time, his painting had also garnered significant sympathy for the local citizens of Spain who had been invaded and, in many instances, murdered (Trancart, 2022).

Furthermore, Pitargue (2018) explains that the 'Third of May' had been perceived by many Art Historians as being the first painting from its era which had leaned towards being recognized as a more 'modern style' of painting. It had additionally been noted by scholars that Goya's application of painting techniques – as well as his application of loose brushstrokes (of which some had appeared to be rather 'chaotic'), had been distinctly different from the far smoother Romantic painting styles of his peers. Simultaneously, his overall 'visual depiction' of a war scene had significantly differed from the typically standardized depictions of war scenes during this time period (Pitargue, 2018).

For example, instead of undertaking an 'idealized' approach of glorifying the heroic figures as mentioned by Bann (1987), Goya had taken the artistic approach of a 'realist' through means of depicting the central figure among the Spanish martyrs with his arms stretched open wide in a vulnerable position, awaiting his execution. This sort of 'emotional realism' had been highly unusual within the societal context during the early 1800s as it pertained to what had been considered as both 'socially acceptable' and 'acceptable academic Art.' Furthermore, the 'visual associations' which had been made by the public viewers had compared the main figure and martyr to the self-sacrificial and martyrdom of Jesus Christ, who had sacrificed Himself for the sake of humanity's forgiveness and eternal salvation. Similarly, the Spanish martyr had been perceived by the public as both innocent and having pure intentions as it pertained to sacrificing his life for the freedom of his fellow countrymen (Bann, 1987).

In addition, Arnold et al. (2005) proposes the compelling perspective in regard to swaying 'public perception,' by suggesting that Goya's confrontational painting had indirectly forced European society to ask themselves a number of self-reflecting questions. For instance, how would the innocent martyr facing the French firing squad perhaps have felt in his final moments? Would the soldiers among the French firing squad perhaps either have felt proud of their loyalty towards France or perhaps conflicted, guilty, or shamed for their actions? And lastly, this confrontational historical painting would have similarly forced the audience to place themselves in the shoes of the central martyr and other victims within this execution scene. In doing so, therefore not only asking the audience how they would have felt within this situation but posing the question itself would have acted as a 'catalyst for cultural change' in regard to shifting the societal understanding, insight, and perspective regarding who the 'real perpetrators' had been and who the 'real victims' had been (Arnold et al., 2005).

Serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Bruner (1994) and Felisati & Sperati (2010) further note that Goya's 'Third of May' painting had visually advocated for the idea that the best intentions and endurance of heroic human efforts 'may prove to be in vain' amidst the overpowering endeavors of war.

Furthermore, through means of finally having provided an accurate account of the brutal and traumatic realities of the military invasion which had taken place and by refusing to adhere to that which had been considered as 'socially acceptable' standards of Art, Goya had greatly assisted in shifting the

direction within which Spanish - and European paintings had further developed in the years following the Romantic time period (Pitargue, 2018).

5.2.3.3 Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog (1818) – by Caspar David Friedrich

The Romantic German artist named Casper David Friedrich, had painted one of the most iconic and culturally impactful paintings during 1818, titled 'Wanderer above the Sea of Fog' (Gaete, 2020).

Du Plessis (2022) explains that this artwork had been painted during a time period when the Romanticism Movement had been thriving throughout various disciplines of Fine Arts, including diverse Musical Genres and varying styles of Literature. Many scholars uphold the perspective that the former German Sturm und Drang Movement, which alludes to 'storm' and 'stress' when directly translated to English, had greatly contributed towards the further development of Romanticism. Du Plessis (2022) also states that this German movement had already gained a significant following and traction during the late 1800s, while it mainly had sought to reveal the self-expressive emotions of the artists themselves and had been referred to as a movement that was therefore 'subjective' and 'intrinsically focused' (Du Plessis, 2022).

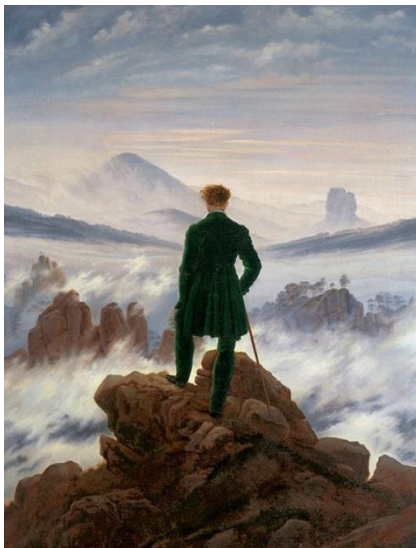


Figure 30: 'Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog (1818)' is currently preserved in the Hamburger Kunsthalle in Germany, which had been painted during the Romantic Era (1818) by Casper David Friedrich (Hencz, 2024).

Note. Hencz (2024) referred to **Figure 30** within the article titled, 'Caspar David Friedrich: Style & Legacy: 250th Anniversary'. Art Land Magazine.
<https://magazine.artland.com/caspar-david-friedrich/>, para. 1

Gaete (2020) states that while keeping the characteristics of the Romantic Movement in mind, 'Wanderer above the Sea of Fog' by Casper David Friedrich had embodied these principles. This painting's heroic champion had been painted from behind by Friedrich, which thus had kept the main figure's identity hidden from the audience.

Despite a large amount of debate which had taken place regarding who this individual might have represented, many Art Historians uphold the unified perspective that this wanderer had been a portrayal of Friedrich Gotthard von Brincken – a ranking military officer from the Saxon foot-soldiers. Gaete (2020) notes that since this military officer had also been depicted wearing a dark green uniform

similar to those which belonged to the 'volunteer rangers,' this painting had most likely intended to symbolize a loyal and nationalistic allegory (Gaete, 2020).

Cohen (2018) provides further insight by revealing that Friedrich had journeyed all the way to the South-Eastern part of Dresden towards the Elbe Sandstone Mountains for the purpose of meticulously studying rock formations and organic forms, from which he had found inspiration for his paintings. After returning to his Art studio, he had then re-arranged his scamp-drawings into new compositional arrangements, which had been used as reference images for his new fictional landscape paintings (Cohen, 2018).

Yet the 'lone figure' depiction against the boisterous and turbulent landscape, as commented upon by Hencz (2024), had embodied Friedrich's personal curiosity pertaining to the spiritual and transcendental aspects of nature, including the incorporation of muted, artful, and elusive political messages within paintings through means of applying symbolism (Hencz, 2024).

Furthermore, Koerner (2009) states that many scholars are also in agreement regarding the interpretation that this painting by Casper David Friedrich had been created with the purpose of visually portraying an intense and 'deep emotional and mental state of mind,' as well as having been emblematic of a 'spiritual connectedness' which far exceeded the patriotic messages communicated through this work of Art.

Ribas (2023) and Du Plessis (2022) had confirmed the distinct characteristics of Romanticism within this painting, which had glorified and celebrated sentiments related to 'heroism,' 'patriotism,' 'solitude,' along with 'emotional, mental, and spiritual self-reflection.' Therefore, Friedrich's painting had in of itself become identifiable with the Romanticism Movement.

In regard to 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) by Friedrich serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Delphi (2016) explains that this painting had been intended to showcase an encounter with one's natural surroundings from an inherently personal, psychological, and emotional experience. From the position of the high-ranking officer's stance, one can naturally conclude that he had climbed to the highest point of this mountain for the sole purpose of enjoying the majestic views of the landscape, which had been covered in the fog from a heightened aerial view (Delphi, 2016).

Christian (2004) proposes an interesting perspective by suggesting that, similar to the manner through which Friedrich had illustrated the aerial view from the wanderer's perspective, Romanticists had believed that the past could have been either symbolically illustrated as a distant landscape or a landscape which remained within close proximity of the viewer's reach. Comparable to that of an individual's distant memory or more recent memory which still had impacted that psyche (Christian, 2004).

In addition, Riou (2004) highlights that it would be reasonable to presume that this military officer had not merely sought after the elated joy of experiencing the breath-taking scenery from on high, but had most likely desired a spiritual encounter with God through means of appreciating and contemplating nature. The thematic perspective of Friedrich's painting, through which he had therefore suggested that engaging in introspective self-reflection and emotional contemplation forms an important and necessary component of human well-being and the overall human experience (Riou, 2004).

Through means of portraying a particular perspective and worldview through Friedrich's eyes, Gaete (2020) argues that the European audience had been provided with an opportunity to gain a different perspective of man's interconnectedness with nature. Although the foggy skies had effectively veiled the majority of the landscape within the painting, the distant trees, mountains, and oceanic waters hadn't been portrayed in a definitive manner either. Therefore, unlike formal and classical styles of painting, which had been popular during the Renaissance and other time periods throughout Art history for capturing contour-lines, forms, shapes, and other intricate details to perfection, the ethereal landscape seen within Friedrich's Romantic painting had been void of clear outlines or boundaries. In return, this style had therefore captured a sense of 'mystery,' 'spiritualism,' and was suggestive of the incomprehensible and inexplicable attributes of life (Gaete, 2020).

In regard to this painting having served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Hencz (2024) further adds to this understanding by explaining that all the visual characteristics of sombre ruins, the barren trees, and figures of solitude had been symbolic of a divine existence which reached beyond the limitations of mortality.

In the context of the utilization of spiritual, mythological, or metaphorical themes within artworks, Kaminski (2016) states that both literary scholars and paintings during the early 1800s in Europe had still perceived their main characters as having been able to roam, wander, and travel between the dimensions of a certain 'cultural context,' for example, into a varying dimension of nature. Simultaneously, the fictional abilities of these main characters and their metaphorical attributes had still been viewed as moving to and from two entirely separate realities. Therefore Friedrich's 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) had altered the 'perceptual prism' through which nature and its mystical qualities had been viewed by European society—not only as a means for escape but as a point of connection with the divine (Kaminski, 2016).

Day (2013) confirms this understanding and interpretation by Kaminski (2016) by highlighting that the mountaintops and clouds portrayed within 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) had been intentionally blended, for the purpose of accentuating the indivisibility and union between the natural landscape and the heavenly realm.

Providing further historical context, Haladyn (2016) explains that some scholars support the perspective that 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) had additionally been created as a symbolic representation of both societal and political changes which had occurred during the Romantic time period of the 1800s. From this particular stance, Friedrich's landscape painting had encapsulated what it meant to 'be human,' more specifically having provided further context to the "right-of-man" declarations which had taken place during the 1800s and that had gradually developed into the establishment of a 'nation-state' (Haladyn, 2016).

In agreement with the unifying views of Delphi (2016), Christian (2004), Riou (2004), Gaete (2020), Hencz (2024), Kaminski (2016), Day (2013), and Haladyn (2016), 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) by Casper David Friedrich had therefore promoted the Romantic Movement's fascination with 'introspection,' 'mysticism,' the 'divine,' as well as the individual's interconnected relationship with nature. Through means of depicting such a unique and impactful viewpoint from the eyes of the 'wanderer,' this painting had served as a 'catalyst for cultural change' by encouraging a shift in the European understanding and appreciation of the interconnected spiritual and emotional roles of nature. More specifically as it had positively induced the human psyche. Additionally, Friedrich's 'Wanderer Above the Sea Fog' (1808) had significantly influenced styles of landscape paintings which had subsequently followed.

5.2.3.4 The Stone Breakers (1849) – by Gustave Courbet

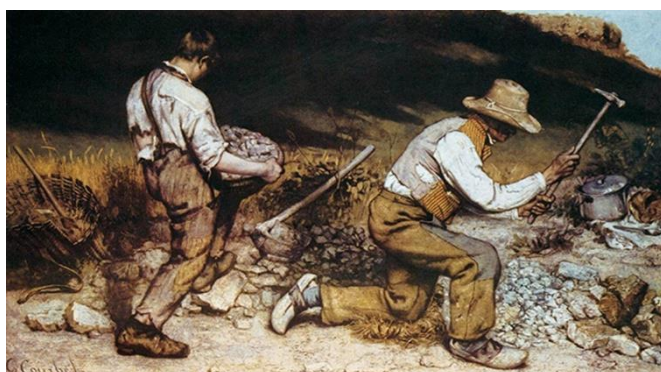


Figure 31: 'The Stone Breakers (1849)' was unfortunately destroyed in a bombing during World War II, which had been painted during the Romantic Era (1849) by Gustave Courbet (Jones, 2021).

Note. Jones (2021) referred to **Figure 31** within the journal titled, 'This Spasm Upon Canvas': George Eliot, Gustave Courbet and Realist Aesthetics'. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 26 (2), 244–266.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jvcult/vcab001>, p. 259

Wattam (2024) states that 'The Stone Breakers (1849)' by Gustave Courbet had been considered by some Art historians and scholars as one of the ground-breaking pioneers of the 'Realist Art Movement' since it had focused upon societal issues of the 'working class,' provided social commentary, and revolved around a theme pertaining to the struggles of 'every-day-life.' However, other Art

historians and scholars had considered this painting to encompass overlapping features and shared sentiments from the Romantic Art Movement, especially since it had also been painted during 1849 when Romanticism had thrived throughout Europe. Although this painting had been lacking in any attributes related to the 'imaginative,' the 'idealized,' the 'exotic,' or the 'individualistic' (as typically associated with the Romantic Movement), *The Stone Breakers* by Courbet had most certainly captured a 'dramatic' representation of the theme portrayed, more specifically as Courbet had included dramatically sombre colour tones and shadows against bright sun reflections and had therefore applied the 'chiaroscuro' light technique throughout his painting.

The main goal of these 'dramatic painting techniques,' as argued by some scholars, had been to emphasize the emotional brutality of the harsh lifestyles that these labourers had had to endure merely to survive. The Romantic component of 'emotionalism' had therefore been provoked among the audience by portraying these lowly working-class labourers as faceless and unidentifiable individuals who had been forgotten by the rest of humanity. By removing any form of recognizable 'individualism' from the subject matter—which had typically been a key trademark of paintings from the Romantic Art Movement—Courbet had instead emphasized emotionalism in a dramatic way by provoking sympathy among the audience. The two key attributes which *The Stone Breakers* had therefore shared with the Romantic Art Movement had been 'dramatic effect' and the provocation of 'emotionalism' (Wattam, 2024).

In regard to the theme of this painting, Boncza (2020) explains that Courbet had portrayed these two hardworking, downtrodden, and overburdened labourers who had been working for hours in the scorching sun and had had nothing but their shackles in life left to lose. Courbet had, however, illustrated their desperate and politically motivated plight through this painting by revealing the sheer exploitation that labourers from rural communities had had to endure. By visually depicting the harsh sacrifices that these men had had to go through daily for the sake of maintaining local roads for the middle- and upper classes of French society to travel upon, Courbet had therefore strongly condemned the oppression of the lower classes.

Boncza (2020) also comments upon the 'monochromatic colour schemes' which had been applied in all of the objects, stones, tools, and clothing portrayed in this painting, having resulted in a joyless and sombre 'visual atmosphere' with uniformity seen within the tonal values throughout the entire artwork. It's also noted that Courbet had clearly used a palette knife and rugged brushstrokes for the application of paint onto the canvas, which had contributed towards the honest and humble portrayal of the subject matter. Therefore, having removed all scholastic, perfectionistic, and pretentious approaches to painting, the application of paint along with the monochromatic colour schemes and

uniform tonal values had encapsulated the 'realistic,' 'harsh,' and 'despairing' plight of The Stone Breakers.

In regard to Courbet's painting techniques, Jones (2021) concurs that the canvas of The Stone Breakers had vividly resembled the strenuous physical effort of these two labourers through the unrelenting emphasis which had been placed upon the material attributes of the painting's theme. The physical condition of the paint and the rugged visual appearance thereof had, in return, served as a tangible component which resembled the concrete and harsh reality of the world in a 'literal sense' (Jones, 2021).

Although many Art Critics from the 1850 Paris Salon had been appalled by both the theme and manner of The Stone Breakers' portrayal, including Charles Pierre Baudelaire (a French poet and Arts critic), Eugene Delacroix—who had been the leading painter of the Romanticism Art Movement—had expressed his amazement regarding the passionate vigour of Courbet's painting and had praised him for addressing such a controversial and contentious topic (Boncza, 2020).

Fried (1982) further suggests that Courbet's motivation for having created The Stone Breakers had been fuelled by the political turmoil and distinct social difficulties which many people within French society had had to endure as a direct result of Louis Bonaparte's overthrowing of France's former Second Republic. In regard to the subtle hints of underlying political themes observed within this painting, Fried (1982) proposed the idea that Courbet would therefore have been both content with and aware of this discreet (near unnoticeable) symbolic message within The Stone Breakers.

Harris & Zucker (n.d.) further support this understanding as interpreted by Fried (1982) through means of citing a letter which Courbet had written during 1849. Within this letter, Courbet had explained that he had personally witnessed a heart-breaking scene of two labourers who had been breaking stones on the roadside near Maisières. Courbet further stated that after having been faced with such extreme poverty, he had been inspired to immortalize the reality of their daily suffering in the form of a painting. On the next morning, these two men had met with Courbet in his Art Studio where he had embarked upon the creation of an iconic painting which had become both a mirror and continual reminder to the middle- and upper-classes of European society—more specifically since they had shamelessly exploited those from the lower classes in an unconscionable manner (Harris & Zucker, n.d.).

As a further expression of the dismay and hopelessness which labourers from the lowest social classes in French society had experienced, Boime (2007) comments upon the fact that the elderly man in the painting had been depicted kneeling down, while the younger labourer had been portrayed carrying broken rocks in a basic rather vigorously. While comparing the two labourers with one another, Boime (2007) notes that within the lowest social class of French society, men had originally begun their

lives with strength, energy, and hope—while it had tragically ended in a painful manner of physical suffering.

In regard to how *The Stone Breakers* (1849) by Gustave Courbet had served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Li (2021) proposes the understanding that the facial expressions and features of the two men who had been depicted within this painting had been intentionally hidden with merely a side angle and the backside of the two labourers positioned towards the audience.

This particular stance and orientation of the two labourers had been viewed as highly unusual, especially considering that Classical paintings had formerly placed great emphasis upon the frontal view and key features of main characters. However, Li (2021) argues that Courbet had most likely attempted to represent an entire societal group of a much lower economic class instead of illustrating two burdened and exhausted labourers.

Li (2021) comments on the interpretation of Nigel Blake, who had suggested that the unique compositional orientation of these two figures might have had an underlying political theme.

In addition, Li (2021) notes that Blake had upheld the perspective that having portrayed a figure from the frontal perspective during this time-period in Fine Arts had given the character a certain degree of 'visual privilege and prestige'. More specifically, this pertained to having illustrated important key figures with perfect visibility to audiences within the former European Salon, who had been from nobility and aristocracy. Therefore, when those from high society had viewed Fine Arts depictions containing figures from the 'frowned-upon' working classes, it had, to some degree, reaffirmed the fact that they themselves had been financially, socially, and morally superior in their own eyes (Li, 2021).

Li (2021) further suggests that Courbet had intentionally hidden the faces of these two male labourers from the audience, with the sole purpose of reducing the perceived superiority that these noble audiences might have felt.

In agreement with Li (2021), Herbert (2014) had made the stunning comment by referring to Courbet as the 'stone breaker of his own Art,' similar to the figures which he had portrayed. Herbert (2014) further viewed Courbet's style of painting as having been comparable to working with the tough and hardened rocks of the merciless world (Herbert, 2014; Li, 2021).

Perhaps the French art critic named Pierre-Joseph Prudhon, who had also been an outspoken social activist during the time-period in which Courbet had painted '*The Stone Breakers*,' best expressed the impact that both the social and political circumstances of France had had upon the lowest societal classes (Prudhon, 1865).

Prudhon (1865) stated that ‘The Stone Breakers’ had truly embodied the blatant societal irony which had been generated by the developments of the Industrial Revolution. It is well understood that men had continually invented impressive machinery for the purposes of harvesting, ploughing, threshing, manufacturing, weaving, spinning, printing, etc., during this time-period in European history. Furthermore, these machines had not merely been invented with the purpose of earning greater profits, but for the sake of liberating humanity from the most challenging, rough, and loathsome tasks, which had caused both physical and emotional misery. Yet, despite the boastful praise for the impressive inventions which had been made during the Industrial Revolution by the upper classes of French society, six million people had still remained in similar living conditions comparable to those of the stone-breakers. Prudhon (1865) had therefore commented upon Courbet’s painting by exclaiming the rampant hypocrisy that had existed among French society in the 1800s.

In agreement with Wattam (2024), Boncza (2020), Fried (1982), Li (2021), Herbert (2014), and Prudhon (1865), Courbet had initially portrayed this delicate subject matter through the prism of Romanticism, as it had related to the provocation of ‘emotionalism’ and the application of a ‘dramatic effect’ through his choice of colour schemes and dramatic painting techniques. Therefore, Courbet had pioneered a unique approach related to the subject matter of ‘The Stone Breakers,’ which had encompassed the ‘emotionalism,’ ‘excitement,’ and ‘drama’ of the Romantic Movement in regard to portraying the simplistic lives of rural society. However, Courbet had also been known for his leading role in the ‘Realist Movement’ of French painting.

In regard to the manner in which ‘The Stone Breakers (1849)’ by Gustave Courbet had served as a ‘catalyst for cultural change,’ this painting had directly challenged all forms of ‘idealized portrayals’ of human labour. Instead, Courbet had intentionally depicted the tragic reality of harsh physical labour. His particular approach to this controversial subject matter and the choice of painting techniques which he had applied during this time-period in French painting had characterized a societal shift towards embracing and pursuing more truthful, honest, and realistic representations of social issues. Additionally, themes pertaining to ‘human dignity’ despite the harsh challenges of the working class had caused European society to become more open-minded and compassionate (Wattam, 2024).

5.2.3.5 ‘The Kiss’ (1856) – Painted by Francesco Hayez

In relation to Francesco Hayez’s ‘The Kiss’ (1856) and its quieter implications as a ‘catalyst of cultural change,’ it had been nothing short of remarkable how massive and profound the effects of this artwork had been on the reactionary cultural and nationalist developments in 19th-century Italy. It had been a time that had experienced a huge emotional and intellectual reaction in response to the colourful

and deeply evocative nature of the painting, which had, in turn, affected the political atmosphere and the collective psyche of Italy (Selamoglu, 2021).



Figure 32: *'The Kiss'* (1856) is currently being preserved at the "Pinacoteca di Brera" (Brera Picture Gallery) in Milan, Italy, which had been painted during the Romantic Era (1856) by Francesco Hayez (Giannini & Baratta, 2017).

Note. Giannini & Baratta (2017) referred to

Figure 32 within the journal titled, *'Francesco Hayez's the Kiss: How Many and What are the Versions?'* Finestre Sull'Arte.

<https://www.finestresullarte.info/en/works-and-artists/francesco-hayez-s-the-kiss-how-many-and-what-are-the-versions>, para. 5

Firstly, Rontondo (2016) noted that 'The Kiss' had served as a catalyst for cultural change, as it had become symbolic of the 'Italian Unification' which had been referred to as 'Risorgimento'. As this painting had been created during the exact same time-period of the 'Risorgimento Movement' which had gathered its momentum for the sake of unifying all of the formerly fragmented Italian regions and states, it had quickly become associated with 'nationalistic zeal'. As it pertained to the symbolism of 'Italian Unification', therefore, the passionate embrace demonstrated by the couple had frequently been interpreted as a metaphorical comparison of Italian society's ever-growing unity and love for the nation of Italy. Furthermore, the red cloak which the gentleman had been wearing in Hayez' depiction, as well as the woman's blue dress, had in a discreet and subtle manner symbolized the Italian national flag, which in turn had reinforced a cultural message of 'national pride -and unity' (Rontondo, 2016).

Secondly, Settimini (n.d.) suggests that 'The Kiss' had served as a catalyst for cultural change since it had evidently advocated for the cultural values related to Romantic ideals. 'The Kiss', as an Italian painting from the Romanticism Movement, had perfectly encapsulated the qualities associated with the elevation of 'individualism', 'passion', 'heroism', and 'emotionalism'. Additionally, this painting had honoured both the fervency of romantic love as well as personalized emotions, which had

not only appealed to contemporary audiences during this time-period in history but had resembled societal shifts in Italy which had increasingly demonstrated a distinct appreciation for the attainment of personal freedoms and for emotional expression (Settimini, n.d.).

Maksimova (2023) noted that ‘The Kiss’ had thirdly served as a catalyst for cultural change in regards to its impact upon Italian ‘Arts & Culture’. The emphasis which Hayez had placed upon the ‘emotionalism’ related to historical events such as zealousness, strife, turmoil, bravery, love, and tragedy had inspired other Fine Artists to investigate and attempt the visual portrayal of similar subjects. His influences upon contemporary artists and successors from among the Italian Art scene during this time-period had therefore significantly contributed towards the cultural progress and developments which had assisted in the creation of a distinguishable Italian Romantic painting style. The prominent focus which had further been placed upon themes related to ‘national pride’ had also greatly helped in the formation of a stronger Italian ‘cultural identity’ among Italian society (Maksimova, 2023).

Fourthly, ‘The Kiss’, as mentioned by Tuschka (2021), had served as a catalyst for cultural change in regards to the fact that it had played a distinct role in popularizing life-altering historical events and political themes. Although the background scene had vaguely resembled a medieval visual attribute, the overall painting had reflected the fascination which the Romanticism Movement had effectively captured regarding past events of medieval history. This particular interest, which had been demonstrated in regards to certain historical narratives and contextual settings, had assisted greatly in reviving and romanticizing historical components of Italian heritage. In addition, ‘The Kiss’ had therefore assisted in advocating for cultural -and national unity in multiple areas of social, religious, economic, and political contexts (Tuschka, 2021).

‘The Kiss’, as commented upon by Jonathan (2011), had fifthly served as a catalyst for cultural change in regards to its impact within both a ‘cultural’ and ‘social context’ amidst Italian society. The romantic and secretive manner in which the kiss between the two male and female characters had been effectively captured within Hayez’s painting had broken ties with more restrictive artistic protocols and practices which had formerly been viewed as sufficient and acceptable within European society. This artistic shift had also introduced a more modernized, freeing, and liberated perspective regarding the nature of romantic relationships, as well as the idea of openly expressing and displaying affection in the public square. The painting had therefore not only served as a reflection of internal societal norms that had already been changing but had consequently also advocated for these restrictive societal norms to change as it related to themes of the expression of love, relationships, and the role that women had played within Italian European society (Jonathan, 2011).

As a sixth aspect of having served as a catalyst for cultural change, 'The Kiss', as argued by Giannini & Baratta (2017) and Mattiuzzi (2024), had provided 'subtle visual messaging' and had become a political allegory. Therefore, beyond the evidently clear romantic theme as the 'first layer' of the subject matter, the painting's underlying political associations would have been recognizable from the perspective of contemporary Italian audiences. The secretive manner of the couple's kiss would have been interpreted by many among Italian society as having been symbolic of the conspiracies and secretive underground alliances which had been formed during the 'Risorgimento Movement'.

The second representational layer of 'The Kiss' would therefore have served as a more subtle tactic of 'collectivist resistance' against the oppressive forces of the aristocratic 'ruling class'. Furthermore, the subtle political message of 'The Kiss' would most likely have been encouraging and inspiring to followers of 'the resistance' who had supported the collective unification of Italian society across class differences and regions (Giannini & Baratta, 2017).

In agreement with Selamoglu (2021), Rontondo (2016), Settimini (n.d.), Maksimova (2023), Jonathan (2011), Tuschka (2021), Giannini & Baratta (2017), and Mattiuzzi (2024), 'The Kiss' painted by Francesco Hayez, had therefore predominantly fulfilled the unique purpose of advocating for social change through means of having incorporated 'nationalist-ideals' and related symbolisms, while specific characteristic-ideals from the Romanticism Art Movement had simultaneously been promoted. Through this intentional approach, this painting had not only challenged both politically motivated strictures of artistic regard, but also had far more culturally-agreeable standards of both aestheticisms, as well as a stronger sense of 'morality'. Therefore, the impact that 'The Kiss' had begun to have on Italian social life had gone well beyond the reach of Fine Arts and had been of utmost importance in this process of how the Italian 'national identity' had been shaped during a fundamental period of their history.

5.3.1 Historical Overview of the 'Cubism Art Movement' (1907 - 1914)

5.3.1.1 Origins of Cubism

Daix (1993) explains that the Cubism Art Movement had originated during the earliest years of the 20th century, mostly between the years 1907 and 1914. The Cubism Art Movement had not only fulfilled a revolutionary role pertaining to the artistic approaches through which 'visual perception,' 'visual interpretation,' 'visual understanding,' and the constructs of 'visual reality' had been artistically perceived and represented, but also the manner in which it had been socially understood. The two leading artists within the Cubism Movement who had served as the main pioneers within this new artistic

phenomenon were Pablo Picasso (a Spanish painter) and George Braque (a French artist). However, the very first inaugurated initiation of the Cubism Art Movement can be ascribed to Picasso's innovative and unprecedented painting named *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)* (1907), considering the time period during which it had been created. The clear geometric, cubist, and semi-abstract characteristics of this painting, which had later been categorized as key attributes of the Cubism Movement, had served as evidence for a radical and nonconformist departure from the traditional approaches to the representational art-making processes of former painters. Additionally, this painting by Picasso had laid the foundational groundwork for the typical visual aesthetics and attributes which had been associated with the Cubism Movement (Daix, 1993).

5.3.1.2 Key Artistic Figures Within the Cubism Movement

The most notorious and prominent key artistic figures within the Cubism Movement, as noted by Golding (1988), had been the collaborative artworks of Pablo Picasso and George Braque from around 1908 to 1914. The paintings of these two leading artists had served as a foundational premise upon which the future development of the broader Cubism Art Movement had greatly relied. Besides Picasso and Braque, important artists such as Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, and Juan Gris had also made significant contributions to the progress of the overall Cubism Art Movement. Juan Gris had, for example, been more notably recognized for his artistic development and expansion of 'Synthetic Cubism.' The overall Synthetic Cubism style, however, had been more decorative compared to Picasso and Braque's meticulously calculated visual constructs and geometric shapes, which had been attributed to their paintings as 'Analytical Cubism.' Furthermore, Léger had notably incorporated more cylindrical forms among the application of geometric shapes within his depictions, including bolder color schemes. Additionally, Léger's unique style of Cubism had also been easily distinguishable in regards to his thoroughly planned and highly disciplined compositional structures (Golding, 1988).

5.3.1.3 Key Attributes of the Cubism Art Movement

Fry (1966) explains that the main visual attributes of the Cubism Art Movement had included characteristics such as foreshortening, the rejection of traditionally accepted approaches to creating visual depth and perspective, an emphasis placed upon flattened shapes which had overlapped in certain instances or had been distorted within varying styles of Cubism, two-dimensional surfaces, and the application of 'chiaroscuro,' referring to dramatic and shadow contrasts, as well as modelling. Furthermore, the style had simultaneously portrayed the main subject and surrounding objects within the composition from multiple perspectives and angles. However, the differing objects within the Cubism painting themes had typically been fragmented and broken into geometric shapes, which had

then been reassembled in an abstract visual portrayal. This Cubism painting technique had been used to challenge the audience to reconstruct what they had perceived and interpreted on an individual level in their mind, while connecting with the paintings on deeper levels of cognition (Fry, 1966).

5.3.1.4 Defining Characteristics of Analytical Cubism

As elaborated upon by Cooper (1970), the formation and development of Analytical Cubism had taken place during 1908 and 1912. This representational approach to Cubism had expressly categorized the first developmental stage of the movement, which had been dedicated to the meticulous analysis and 'dissection of objects,' while it had meant to fragment them into planes which had overlapped and most often had not had a distinct focal point.

In addition, Richardson (1996) states that artists from the Cubism Art Movement who had practiced an analytical style of Cubism had typically applied colours into their artworks which had consisted of monochromatic colour schemes, such as variations of greys, browns, and chestnut colours, with the purpose of emphasizing and prioritizing compositional structure over the use of colour. In doing so, their main goal had been to capture and represent the core essence of the artworks' subject matters through means of displaying multiple angles and perspectives at the same time (Richardson, 1996).

Cooper (1970) confirms this understanding by stating that two perfectly classic examples of Analytical Cubism had most recognizably been the artwork titled *Ma Jolie* (1911–1912) by Picasso and the artwork titled *The Portuguese* (1911) by Braque. These paintings had served as examples of complicated interchanges between angles and surface planes, which had visually suggested the spatial volumes of the objects without following the 'rules' of perspective in a traditional manner (Cooper, 1970).

5.3.1.5 Defining Characteristics of Synthetic Cubism

Kahnweiler (1949) explains that Synthetic Cubism had first originated in 1912 and had served as a representation of the Cubism Art Movement's second stage. Synthetic Cubism had been far more decorative in style compared to Analytical Cubism, while it had contained simplified patterns and shapes, as well as vivid color schemes. In contrast to Analytical Cubism, which had sought to deconstruct the objects within a compositional arrangement, Synthetic Cubism had attempted to visually build or construct images through means of assembling shapes and objects. Often, the artistic process of constructing images had involved the application of collage techniques and the incorporation of mixed-media materials. Synthetic Cubism had therefore focused more upon the material nature of the paintings or artworks themselves and the tangible material nature of the objects (Kahnweiler, 1949).

As commented upon by Rubin (1989), Picasso's painting titled *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912) and the artwork named *Fruit Dish and Glass* (1912) by Braque had incorporated paper collage techniques into their compositional designs, which had been a popular trend of Synthetic Cubism. These types of artworks had combined oil painting techniques with collage materials such as patterned fabric pieces and newspaper clippings, while the boundaries between that which had been considered as 'high art' versus 'common everyday materials' had been blurred. As a result, Synthetic Cubism had therefore challenged traditional perceptions of what had formerly been considered as 'Art' (Rubin, 1989).

In agreement with the perspectives of Daix (1993), Golding (1988), Fry (1966), Cooper (1970), Richardson (1991), Kahnweiler (1949), and Rubin (1989), therefore, the Cubism Art Movement had been transformative in regard to having redefined the standards of 'visual representation' during the earliest years of the 20th century. The leading artists of the Cubism Art Movement, namely Pablo Picasso, George Braque, Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, and Juan Gris, had collectively introduced a new way of visually interpreting and understanding both a 'fragmented reality' and a 'reassembled reality' through newly innovative lenses. While the main focus and emphasis of Analytical Cubism had been placed upon the dissection of both the subject matter and objects therein, Synthetic Cubism, in comparison, had focused far more upon the process of 'construction' and the application of mixed media in certain instances to achieve the end result. Synthetic Cubism had therefore made a long-lasting impact upon the future development of the Modern Art scene in the century which had followed.

Cox (2004) underscored a highly unique aspect which had been noted regarding the early 20th-century Cubism Art Exhibition that had been held by Ferrara, titled *Il Cubismo: Rivoluzione e Tradizione*, at Palazzo dei Diamanti. This distinct quality and attributes refer to a unique set of sketches which had been specifically created for the collective theatre productions that had been conducted by the following artists: Gleizes, Exter, Léger, Picasso, and Malevich. While this series of sketches had been exhibited in two separate rooms and had both been intriguingly captivating as a result of their unique and diverse attributes, the argument that some Art historians and scholars had since put forth regarding the idea that the Cubism Art Movement had perhaps attempted to fulfill the role of 'theatrical design' or 'stage design' simply didn't have enough substantiative evidence to support this theory.

Cox (2004), however, notes that despite the fact that theatrical collaborations and performances had indeed played a significant role in the context of the Cubism Art Movement's ability to maintain its overall public visibility and public interest, the exhibition itself had significantly lacked in the area of visually connecting to any deep cultural context – or connecting to any other Cubism Artworks which had been displayed (Cox, 2004).

Davidson (1966) adds a unique perspective by referring to the research of Winthrop Judkins, within which a series of formal visual attributes commonly associated with the Cubism Still Lifes of Juan Gris, George Braque, and Pablo Picasso (during 1912 to 1916), had been listed. Some of these characteristics had included colour planes which had exhibited either a transparent or opaque appearance, foreground colour tones of objects which had naturally blended into colour tones within the background, surface areas within the artworks which had both receded and projected at the same time, outlines that had overlapped in certain parts of the paintings, and shadows which had displayed light sources from conflicting angles. Davidson (1966) notes that Judkins had reached the conclusion that these particular visual attributes had collectively symbolized an intentional fluctuation pertaining to the light reflections or 'luminosity seen within shapes,' an 'alternation of visual appearances,' as well as interpretational plurality (Davidson, 1966).

Therefore, based upon the criterion of purposeful ambiguity which had been determined by Judkins, Davidson (1966) stands in agreement regarding the perspective that many Western Cubism painters had not succeeded in bringing "actual Cubism" into fruition. This stance can be ascribed to the fact that their artworks had proven to be lacking in context to the intricately interwoven compositions of geometrically shaped colour planes and the transparent interrelationships of individual sections, which had typically been observed within Analytical Cubism. In contrast, American Cubism paintings in particular had depicted a much more distinguishable separation of shapes and spatial arrangements that had been far less obscure and visually confusing. Furthermore, futuristic repetitions of shapes and an accentuation of expressionism had also typically been seen within the paintings of American Cubism artists, which had significantly deflected from the familiar visual aesthetics of Cubism (Davidson, 1966).

From the perspective of Donnell-Kotrozo (1979), Paul Cezanne had fulfilled a highly important and often unappreciated role within Art History. Throughout his entire lifespan, he had been deeply misunderstood and rejected by Art scholars and critics, while having been ignorantly dismissed as 'barbaric' or 'unschooled,' with no followers of his own. Barely more than a century later, however, he is finally being celebrated and recognized as a visionary, a trendsetter, and the 'father of Modern Art.' Today, the works of Paul Cezanne serve as a great inspiration for numerous contemporary Fine Artists and are currently admired for his artworks by nearly every noteworthy Art historian, scholar, and critic.

Krieger (2024) & Donnell-Kotrozo (1979) state that despite this high degree of acclamation, scholarly interpretations regarding the painting techniques of Paul Cezanne vary significantly. These broad interpretative differences had further often been negatively impacted by both misconceptions and perspectives which had been void of contextual premise. Over time, therefore, the cumulative criticisms of Paul Cezanne's painting style, visual representation, and painting techniques had been continually evolving. Whereas the earliest criticisms of his work had described his painting style as being somewhat

'primitive,' 'harsh,' or 'unrefined' portrayals of reality, these exact same comments had in later years been reinterpreted in a far more optimistic manner through which he had finally been recognized as a pioneer of Modern Arts. Therefore, that which had initially been perceived as having been unusual, cragged, irregular, and perhaps viewed as 'unskilled painting,' had later been recognized for its intentional 'aim to distort.' This understanding regarding Cezanne's work had been foundational to Bell and Fry's formal art criticism of Paul Cezanne's painting style. However, since 1910, Cezanne had finally received the well-deserved acknowledgment and recognition for his exceptional command of three-dimensional and structural expressions, more specifically in regard to the unique study which he had dedicated to the arrangement and application of forms and fragmented colour planes. Hence, he had not merely been honoured for having liberated traditional styles of painting from their prior representational limitations, but he had also made a significant impact upon the development of both Abstract Art and Cubism Art (Donnell-Kotrozo, 1979; Krieger, 2024).

Mallen (2022) further noted that not all Art historians, critics, and scholars had directly associated the painting style of Paul Cezanne with Cubism Art; however, most had proposed strong ties with the foundational attributes of Cubism Art through their analyses. There had also been many scholarly debates regarding whether or not Cezanne's artworks during the latter part of his life had been either an embodiment of 'non-representational-shapes' or perhaps mere simplifications of his observations.

Certain Art critics had, for example as mentioned by Tamang (2021) & Mallen (2022), presented the idea that the shift towards subtly noticed geometric patterns in Cezanne's paintings had directly affected the Cubism Art Movement. Other scholars had only perceived Cezanne's unique style of painting as an intentional departure from traditionally more realistic portrayals of reality. However, the majority of Art historians, scholars, and critics seem to be in agreement regarding the general understanding that his unique style of painting had been both a precursor and a strong influence upon the Cubism Art Movement (Mallen, 2022; Tamang, 2021).

Flam (1990) noted that the Cubism Art Movement had been considered by many Art historians and scholars as having been one of the most influential artistic movements of the past century. In the context of the specific early 20th-century Art Exhibition to which Flam (1990) had referred, the entire core focal point of the exhibition had been aimed towards intentionally addressing various elements of 'modernism' on a much broader scale, more specifically during a pivotal time period in history within which Art scholars and artists themselves had been paying close attention to this subject matter in particular. The cumulative interest which had arisen and revolved around the impacts of modernism upon artistic expression, societal perception, and cultural behaviour had not only pronounced the start

of a brand-new era of Cubism Art but had also contributed towards re-evaluating the role of 'high modernism' as a foundational component of contemporary Fine Arts (Flam, 1990).

Flam (1990) additionally explains that since the months of June and July of 1910, Pablo Picasso had, in contrast to George Braque, proactively adjusted his painting techniques to make the surfaces of his paintings appear more transparent and illusive, with an increased 'painterly' visual presentation. The types of forms which Picasso had incorporated into his artworks had also been dispersed within his compositional arrangements in a more uniform manner across the surfaces of his paintings – which in return had produced a more powerful visual effect. This can also partially be ascribed to the fact that Picasso had consistently considered the entire canvas's compositional arrangement, perspective, and layout while he had been focused on the completion of particular sections within the broader painting. Unlike Braque, Picasso had, therefore, been more consciously mindful of the final outcome and aesthetic visual impact of his artworks upon the audience (Flam, 1990).

George Braque had, in unique contrast according to Bedn (2024) & Flam (1990), approached the planning of his visual arrangements and compositions in compartmentalized sub-divisions across his canvasses and had relied more upon the repetition of Art Elements and Principles of Design. These repetitive attributes observed within the artworks of George Braque had caused geometrically designed clusters to form towards the central focal points of his paintings, which had simultaneously made it easier for viewers to visually distinguish between compositional parts that were representational of figures and objects and compositional sections that were representational of the ground (Bedn, 2024); Flam, 1990).

Although these differences in regard to individual artistic styles, various abstracted thematic approaches, and diverse geometric interpretations of the subject matter had been evident from the very beginning, the two most stylistically contrasting Cubism paintings had been Picasso's *Ma Jolie* and *The Portuguese* by George Braque. Especially considering that these two iconic representational Cubism paintings had both been created during the exact same year (Bedn, 2024).

Another historically significant Cubism Art exhibition, which had taken place during the early 20th century and had been equally impactful and culturally memorable amidst European society, had been the exhibition named "Cubism & Abstract Art" that had been coordinated by Alfred H. Barr Junior in 1936, on behalf of the European Museum of Modern Art (Platt, 1988).

Wolf (2009) had further explained that the contrasting approaches to the execution, expression, and representation of Cubism art forms throughout its historiography had underscored the Museum of Modern Art's unique capability and determination regarding the formation of modernism. The

exhibition, which had been organized by Barr during 1936 in particular, had established a genealogical framework within which the historical progress and evolution of both post-Impressionist and non-Western artistic influences toward more abstracted forms of Fine Arts had become traceable. Consequently, the new insights, perspectives, and understandings which had been gained through the presentation of Barr's exhibition had significantly impacted studies related to Modern Art which had followed (Wolf, 2009).

According to Kolokytha (2019) and Flam (1990), the Picasso-Braque catalogue, on the other hand, had been negatively critiqued due to its narrow focus. Especially since the development of their artworks hadn't given adequate consideration and credence to external Cubism artworks from well-recognized Cubism painters from their time period, such as Robert Delaunay, Juan Gris, or Henri Matisse. Additionally, art critics had also commented upon the fact that Picasso and Braque had neglected giving substantial recognition to the societal circumstances and cultural atmosphere which had led to the development of the Cubism Art Movement. For example, the Cubism Art Movement's relationship to urbanization and industrialization had almost been ignored entirely. The exhibition, which had displayed the continuity of George Braque's artworks, had also failed to adequately recognize the influences which Primitivism may—or may not—have had on his portfolio (Flam, 1990; Kolokytha, 2019).

Furthermore, Flam (1990) had made mention of the fact that Picasso's disruptive techniques pertaining to the incorporation of collages within some of these artworks had been easily distinguishable from the harmonious paper collage techniques which Braque had applied within his artworks. Therefore, the development of collage techniques in the context of a variety of different Cubism artworks had been meticulously documented (Flam, 1990).

Einstein & Haxthausen (2004) had presented a different argument pertaining to the true origins of Cubism by suggesting that this movement had not only been a reaction toward the former traditional restrictions which had been placed upon Fine Arts but had perhaps sceptically brought the 'identification of objects' into question. In agreement with Einstein & Haxthausen (2004), one could further argue that in doing so, the Cubism Art Movement had also questioned the traditional understanding of the application of Art Elements and Principles of Design related to the illusive creation of visual depth, space, and perspective within works of art.

Einstein & Haxthausen (2004) had suggested the interpretation that Cubism Art had also served as the establishment of a symbolic 'pictorial figuration' which had represented the artist's thinking processes in a visual form. The two authors had also observed a contrasting development within the

Cubism Art Movement as it had pertained to images created from an individual's subconscious memory on the one hand—while simultaneously reconciling those memories or images to geometric Cubist forms (Einstein & Haxthausen, 2004).

In fact, this contradiction found within the Cubism Art Movement had been so concerning for Kahnweiler (1949) that it had been recognized as a historical break and consistent removal from traditional and familiar Fine Arts practices during the past. Therefore, assuming that Cubism artists had, on some level, been undermining logical human memory and had attempted to reassemble separate thoughts and ideas with one another in a fragmented and distorted manner seems to be directly misinterpreting Kahnweiler's perspective regarding the movement.

For example, Dennis (1991) in support of Fry (1988), confirms that some critics of the Cubism Movement had cynically provided the perspective that this Art movement's most noteworthy accomplishment had been the demolition of reminiscent—or recognizable—images. And this criticism had been accompanied by the viewpoint that the audiences hadn't experienced the Cubism paintings as having been representational of individually separate objects which had been strategically situated within unique compositional arrangements but rather as newly constructed ideas or conceptual images which had served as representations of the artists' own visions—as well as their own psychological and cognitive thought processes. Critics had therefore perceived Cubism artworks as having been reflective of independently self-contained new visual realities which had been unidentifiable. Furthermore, it had also been stated by critics of the early 20th century that the Cubism Art Movement had, to some extent, reflected the 'new modern man,' who had become visually active, while having served as a catalyst for cultural change in regard to establishing the societal and cultural understanding that 'humanity is able to construct its own universe' and to reject the slavery of 'prescribed forms' (Dennis, 1991).

Chang (2018) and Mundi (n.d.) explain that Cubism had become a foundational bedrock of 20th-century Fine Arts since it had unequivocally broken ties within the formerly traditional expectations and standards of what constituted as 'acceptable' or 'culturally approved.' The Cubist Movement had also demonstrated and introduced a new 2-dimensional 'modern flatness,' while having challenged cultural perceptibility and the degree to which the European audience during this time period had been willing to engage cognitively and interpretatively with non-objective Art (Chang, 2018; Mundi, n.d.).

In addition, as noted by Seitz (1961), the somewhat more biased and prejudiced approach to artistic interpretation, representation, and expression had also led to the development of the 'assemblage' techniques – as well as the application of other modernist Art practices (Seitz, 1961).

Fry (1988) elaborates regarding the understanding that the Cubism movement had represented the application and fruition of the 'Kantian critique,' which had been rooted in the philosophical theories of Immanuel Kant. This term had referred to the critical analysis of both the limitations and boundaries of human reasoning, as well as the hidden potential of human cognitive development. Notoriously, within his most highly praised and influential work titled 'Critique of Pure Reason', Kant had conducted research in order to better understand how the development of the human mind had acquired knowledge and gained applicable insight regarding the world in a logical, pragmatic, scientific, and relevant manner – with the intention to build upon former wisdom gained (Fry, 1988).

Immanuel Kant had further argued that although the attainment of knowledge, insight, and understanding had essentially begun with gaining experience, it had most certainly not been the only source from which it had originally been derived. His findings had suggested that the internal thoughts of the human mind and the level of demanding activities with which it had been actively engaged had played a significant role in determining the importance that each experience had been granted. Both through means of establishing a deep understanding of new concepts in the mind, as well as the development of new cognitive and perceptual structures, recent information had then been evaluated, interpreted, and adopted (Cheetham, 2001).

In context to therefore understanding the meaning of the 'Kantian critique,' Crowther (1987) in unison with O'Brien (2018) argues that the Cubism Art Movement had both encapsulated and become the embodiment of this theory as an artistic product in response to the Enlightenment Period, while a new modern era in Europe had simultaneously been embraced. He had further suggested that Cubism had been the first movement to break ties with all classical traits of Fine Arts and had been the first movement to be associated with modernism on an aesthetic level (Crowther, 1987; O'Brien, 2018).

Through means of having distanced itself from all visual attributes related to Classical Art, Cottington (2021) suggests that the Cubism Art Movement had initiated a new form of 'visual communication,' which had redefined the contrasting interplay between the grandeur of classicism and characteristics of modern Art. For example, the relationship between the Cubism Art Movement's interpretation and visual representation of 'time and space' had been firmly established in classical traditions, where the subject matter had been portrayed with the intention of unifying foundational ideas. Whether through means of an allegorical portrayal or mythical depiction, Cubism artworks had typically displayed their thematic portrayals in context to an illusive space governed upon the principle of one-point perspective. In return, this approach to visual depth and perspective had caused the illusion of both an uninterrupted and measurable spatial area within Cubism artworks. This particular method of visual

representation had been so ingrained in European and Western forms of art that it had often been perceived as being spontaneous and genuine (Cottington, 2021).

As noted by Fry (1988), the Cubism Art Movement had, however, uncovered these conventional techniques and approaches to the art-making process, while having involuntarily and unconsciously presented them in an evident manner. At first glance, the paintings and artworks of the two leading Cubism artists, namely George Braque and Pablo Picasso, had, from 1909 onward, seemingly lacked the application of visual depth and perspective. After more thorough investigation and analysis, however, it had been revealed that the structured layering of plane fields and 2-dimensional surfaces had successfully created both the illusion of a foreground (referred to as 'positive space') and background (referred to as 'negative space'), despite the contradictory 'spatial regression' which had been applied. Consequently, this technical approach by Cubism artists had served as both a denial and recognition of visual space, as it had traditionally been interpreted from a classical perspective. In other words, Cubism artists had, on the one hand, upheld certain rules typically associated with classical perspectives, yet on the other hand, disrupted its convergence lines and any sense of visual continuity (Fry, 1988).

Leighen (1988) elaborates regarding the observation that discussions of serious interest in the Cubism Art Movement had primarily been subdued after the First World War since the war had discredited the presumption of any meaningful value connected to human trials, ventures, or activities. Additionally, the same external, relational, and personal influences which had led Pablo Picasso to essentially reinterpret -or rewrite the historical context of the Cubism Art Movement had caused Art critics and skeptics to accept his visual distortions of reality and to advocate for this 'diminishing and derivable' Art perspective as merely having been a 'conventional recreation' (Leighen, 1988).

This viewpoint, which had been embraced by Cubism's critics, had consequently further dimmed and concealed any clear interpretation of both the intellectual and historical contexts within which Art movements related to 'pre-war time periods' had developed. As an example of this scenario, Pierre Reverdy (in "Sur le cubism") had already, during the early years of the 20th century in 1917, suggested that the Cubism Art Movement had been nothing more than an approach to Art which had been narrowly focused upon the reduction of visual imagery into abstracted components and geometric shapes. Pierre Reverdy had further described Cubism Art as a technique of 'building a compositional image, by purely incorporating randomly selected objects as 'pictorial elements,' which had been lacking in any communicative significance. Consequently, basic concepts such as 'artistic vision,' which had been an integral part of gaining a better understanding regarding the Cubism Movement's sources of inspiration and motivational drive, had become irrelevant and no further interest had been shown (Leighen, 1988).

5.3.2 Societal and Cultural Influences on the Development of Cubism

The Cubism Art Movement as elaborated upon by Dutta (2024), which had emerged during the earliest years of the 20th century, had not only been considered a movement that demonstrated a radical departure from traditional styles of painting and visual representation, but had simultaneously served as a visual reflection of the historically profound societal and cultural changes of this time period. Some of the factors that had influenced the development of the Cubism Art Movement included various technological advancements and shifts in philosophical thinking, which had consequently altered societal norms. However, both of these approaches and styles of Cubism had been the indirect result of culturally transformative influences (Dutta, 2024).

5.3.2.1 Technological Advancements

Antliff & Leighton (2001) had made the observation that the beginning of the 20th century had been distinguished by a number of rapid technological advancements, which had forever altered the prism through which society had viewed the world. For example, since photography and cinematography had been invented, artists had been offered new avenues for capturing and representing a variety of potential 'realities' in a new visual manner that had challenged formal disciplines of Fine and Dramatic Arts. Therefore, artists had been inspired and encouraged to experiment with different mediums and methods of spatial atmosphere, timelines, and motion as these pertained to visual communication.

Furthermore, the fragmented nature of the Cubism Art Movement's visual depictions, which had been portrayed through artistic investigation, as well as the multi-perspective visual style of this particular approach to painting, had been perceived as a responsive reaction towards the development of new technologies. Cubism had therefore captured a societal and cultural desire to expressly communicate the complexity of modernization (Antliff & Leighton, 2001).

5.3.2.2 Influences of Urbanization and Modernity Upon Cubism

Levine (2001) had explained that the period in history during which the Cubism Art Movement had developed had witnessed unparalleled urbanization. More specifically, the French city of Paris had undergone the highest degree of urbanization compared to other European countries and regions, where the two leading Cubism artists, namely Pablo Picasso and George Braque, had been based. Levine (2001) had argued that the bustling 'city life,' filled with more fast-paced social interactions, busy market squares, constant movement of carriages and cars, as well as the plethora of visual stimulation, had been a new societal development compared to the century prior. This environment had significantly

impacted the interest among Cubist artists to portray multiple angles and perspectives simultaneously (Levine, 2001).

5.3.2.3 The Impact of Philosophical Influences Upon Cubism

According to the perspectives of Harrison (1998), the most prominent philosophical shifts that had greatly contributed to the formation of the Cubism Art style had included the ideological perspectives of Henri Bergson, who had ascribed significant importance to 'social consciousness' pertaining to the movement and fluidity of time. In return, Bergson's philosophical perspectives had inspired Cubism artists to refrain from stationary and motionless visual presentations and had therefore encouraged them to experiment with more subjective and interactive approaches to portraying reality. Furthermore, Sigmund Freud's theories regarding potential subconscious influences upon an individual's 'perception of reality' as well as their behavior had been developed during the same time period in history. Unsurprisingly, therefore, his theories had also impacted artists from this period and had intrigued them to investigate far more deepened psychological dimensions related to their artistic themes (Harrison, 1998).

5.3.2.4 The Visual Attributes, Characteristics, and Cultural Impact Upon 'Analytic Cubism'

Since it had already been noted by Golding (1998) that the 'Analytical' style of the Cubism Movement (1908–1912) had intentionally concentrated upon the simplification of objects into geometric components through means of deconstruction, as well as portraying the subject matter from different angles, this mathematical and well-measured style of art had been a direct response to the ever-changing perceptions that European artists had been gaining due to the context of their 'new reality.' These significant societal and cultural changes had not only been caused by industrialization and the development of new infrastructure such as new railways, bridges, main traveling routes, and harbours but had also been a result of new technological advancements and considerable shifts that had been made in regards to the adoption of ideological and philosophical perspectives. The monochromatic colour schemes of the Analytical Cubism painting style had therefore not only reflected but had advocated for the intellectual stringency of this particular Art Movement while having emphasized the geometric shape and overall compositional structure (Golding, 1998).

Cooper (1971) had further added to this understanding by explaining that the fragmented approach to visual portrayals of various themes and objects, which had been characteristic of the Analytical Cubism style, had mirrored the economically and socially divided social nature of modern urban life that Europeans had experienced during this time period. As referenced earlier, the Cubism

artwork titled ‘The Portuguese (1911)’ by Braque and the artwork titled ‘Ma Jolie (1911–12)’ by Picasso had been examples of thematic portrayals within which the objects pertaining to a particular theme had been broken into constituent parts that had been reassembled into a new abstract composition. This approach to geometrically abstract visual depictions had been significantly different from former European Art Movements throughout history and had consequently challenged the public to engage with the artworks on a far deeper cognitive and interpretative level (Cooper, 1971).

5.3.2.5 The Visual Attributes, Characteristics, and Cultural Impact Upon ‘Synthetic Cubism’

As elaborated upon by Andrey (2016) Synthetic Cubism, which had originated around 1912, had marked a unique alteration in regards to the development of Cubism Art in context to the process of ‘deconstructing objects.’ Similar to the manner in which Synthetic Cubism had applied simplified shapes, brighter colour schemes, incorporated various forms of mixed media, and had been more decorative and elated in style, the excitement of the new and colourful consumer culture that had developed in Europe during the early 1900s had been visibly evident within the examples of Synthetic Cubism (Andrey, 2016).

In addition, Synthetic Cubism as commented upon by Hodermarsky (2002), had also advocated for the acceptance of modernization, which had included the expansion of media through means of radio broadcasting and the printing of newspapers. Examples of Synthetic Cubism artworks, which had encapsulated this description and blurred the boundary lines between ‘Pop Art’ and ‘High Art,’ had been best represented by Braque’s Fruit Dish and Glass (1912) and the painting named Still Life with Chair Caning (1912) by Picasso (Hodermarsky, 2002).

As stated by Onibere (2024), the fact that Synthetic Cubism had embraced techniques of paper-collage and different forms of mixed media had been viewed by many art historians as evidence that Synthetic Cubism artists had served as catalysts for cultural change in regards to both reflecting and advocating for the life-altering influences of ‘mass-produced goods’ and ‘visual advertisements’ upon European society and culture. Within the context of how communities had lived far less in unison with one another but had instead become more focused upon pursuing the personal ideals, goals, successes, and riches of the individual. In doing so, Synthetic Cubism artists had therefore both reflected and advocated for the increasingly fragmented cultural trends that had developed during this time period (Onibere, 2024).

Additionally, as mentioned by Conde-Pumpido (2020), the inclusion of printed text and the incorporation of other subtle media-related materials and imagery into the Synthetic Cubism style

artworks had been further interpreted as representational of the increasingly fractured and compartmentalized nature of modern life that had unfolded over time. It had also been interpreted as 'artistically promoting the cultural shift' towards the 'material world of marketing,' especially as it had related to perceptual complexities of contemporary culture, which had been revealed through the unique interplay between 'visual communication' and 'verbal communication' (Conde-Pumpido, 2020).

In agreement with Andrey (2016), Hodermarsky (2002), Onibere (2024) and Conde-Pumpido (2020), Synthetic Cubism had therefore served as a 'catalyst for cultural change' in regards to promoting the acceptance of mass media and consumer culture as an exciting new development within society during this time period in history, while Analytical Cubism had, through the prism of a more serious lens, attempted to present multiple perspectives pertaining to the intricacy, difficulties, and complexities of urbanization.

5.3.3 Five Prominent and Iconic Paintings from The Cubism Art Movement, Serving as Catalysts for Cultural Change

5.3.3.1 Guernica (1937) – by Pablo Picasso



Figure 33: 'Guernica (1937)' is currently being preserved in the Queen Sofía National Museum Art Centre in Madrid, Spain, which had been painted during the Cubism Art Movement (1937) by Pablo Picasso (Hoffman, 1983).

Note. Hoffman (1983) referred to **Figure 33** within the journal titled, 'Picasso's "Guernica" in Its Historical Context.' *Artibus et Historiae*, 4 (7), 141–169. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1483186>, p.142

Clarke (2004) explains that military forces led by General Francisco Franco, had, on the 26th of April 1937, proceeded to bomb the defenceless town of Guernica in the north of Spain. Only four days after this horrifically inhuman and life-altering bombing had taken place, Picasso had started painting Guernica despite the fact that he had been in a deep state of emotional turmoil and shock. This painting had, however, been commissioned upon the request of the Spanish Pavilion and had been intended to be displayed at the International Exposition during 1937. Picasso's confrontational and unapologetic visual portrayal of war-time horrors, war crimes, and the consequences thereof, which had led to the suffering of innocent families, remains a bold historical critique of tyrannical totalitarianism (Clarke, 2004).

To add further context to this understanding, Kopper (2014) mentions that during the exact same time period when Picasso had just completed painting 'Guernica', which had been going to be viewed at an International Exhibition by influential figures and leaders from around the world, 'political activists' had subsequently utilized the message of his publicly viewed artwork to garner support on behalf of the Republican branch of the Spanish Civil War. Additionally, the impact and influence of Picasso's 'Guernica' had been further amplified by having been selected for the adornment of the United Nations building in New York City, as well as the fact that it had been included in Japanese textbooks and other global educational resources during this time (Kopper, 2014).

In Picasso's 'Guernica', as noted by Doyle (2008) a variety of different figures, animals, and other objects had been arranged within a visually crowded compositional arrangement, portraying a disturbing event which had been far removed from the luxurious, grandiose, and obviously preoccupied lifestyles of European high society during this time period. This mural's contextual setting, which had been distinguished by desolate structural ruins, distorted and blurred the visual representation of the foreground (positive space) and the background (negative space) in context to that which had constituted as being 'indoors' and that which qualified as being interpreted as the 'outdoors'. 'Guernica's' contextual setting had also been personified and characterized by a repetition of patterns and motifs as seen on both floor tiles and roof tiles (Doyle, 2008).

This two-dimensional and somewhat abstracted representation of positive and negative compositional spaces had simultaneously referred to that which was of a temporal nature. Cantelupe (1971) further comments upon the fact that the different visual references of light sources seen within Picasso's Guernica, such as an image which had resembled the sun with an electric bulb above a horse's head, as well as an oil lamp which had been held by a woman in a state of overwhelming shock – had created the visual illusion of flickering patterns containing white, grey, and black planes instead of having an illuminating visual effect. This visual effect and atmosphere, which had been achieved within Guernica, provoked the interpretation among Art historians and scholars that multiple time slots during the daytime had been represented. More specifically, the noon-time, after which a horrific catastrophe had shaken the cultural and societal foundations of a particular demographic of people. The motifs resembling both smoke and flames had, for example, emphasized aerial wartime attacks, while the translucent and hazy tail of the bull and the flowing hair of the woman had echoed the tongues of fire which had consumed the building in a visually symbolic manner. These flames had also been compositionally placed in parallel alignment with the spear which had pierced the horse and the broken weapons lying scattered across the floor. The flames had simultaneously also transformed into the sharp illusive ears of the horse and bull, which also had resembled the grief-stricken tongues of the horse and mother (Cantelupe, 1971).

In regards to the multifaceted symbolisms found within 'Guernica', Harris (2010) and Sandberg (2021) states that the horse had been intended as the 'animal equivalent' of the woman who had been falling from a house on the right side of the composition, as well as of the mother with her child on the left side of the composition that had formed a triangular diagram underneath the gaping muzzle of the bull. Within this artwork, it is worth noting that the horse had also been depicted as the 'victim' – while the bull, as typically seen within the oeuvres of Picasso's paintings, was yet again portrayed as the 'victor'. Illustrated with both a triumphant and masculine appearance, the bull had calmly examined the pandemonium which he had inspired – although not solely accomplished. For instance, the symbolic portrayal of the horse had not been depicted in a state of total evisceration as typically portrayed by Picasso in some of his earlier artworks containing bullring compositions. Instead, the horse had been impaled by a spear in this gruesome scene, while the angle at which the horse had been penetrated clearly had occurred from above (Harris, 2010; Sandberg, 2021).

On the other hand, the bull, which had been depicted in half-human and half-animal form, had strategically placed this beast-like creature outside of the 'pyramid of carnage' in context to the painting's compositional arrangement. At the same time, the symbolic 'lamp of all-knowing truth' had been positioned right at the top as the pinnacle of the triangular arrangement which had overpowered the composition. The bull, it had also been contended, had started hiding away from the bright rays of sunlight—while this had indirectly been a representation of the animal's soulless state and mindlessly unaware disposition. But more than that, it had been powerful proof of the creature's 'numbness' in the face of grotesque, horrific, and heart-breaking scenes that had unfolded before it, making for a more poetic as well as chilling contrast to its reaction (Cantelupe, 1971).

In further discussions, Picasso's 'Guernica' had already been internationally recognized, celebrated, and characterized as possessing "political significance" and "deep artistic complexity," as well as for the unique "stylistic reinterpretation of its formal structure," which had challenged and reshaped artistic conventions (Hofmann, 1983).

The extensively detailed series of preliminary sketches which had preceded the execution of the final artwork had revealed that the compositional layout, arrangements of figures, objects, and animals, including the carefully considered incorporation of unconventional symbols, had gone through a significant transformational process. The attention to detail which Picasso had embedded into his initial planning had, however, greatly enhanced the ambiguity and degree of visual impact that his final artwork had. Therefore, it had been commented upon by Arnheim, that the creation of Picasso's Guernica had served as far more than a mere symbolic representation of suffering and an emotional transmission, but had become a catalyst for cultural change on many levels (Hofmann, 1983).

From the perspective of Hofmann (1983), despite investigating the originally intended meaning of 'Guernica', it is evident that the emotional turmoil and suffering which Picasso had depicted, had been executed in a formally controlled style. 'Guernica' had also represented societal disintegration, the brutality of war, and suffering in a 'balanced visual manner' in the painting's compositional arrangement, which had encompassed an interconnectedness of shapes, the 'construction -and deconstruction' of recognizable objects in an abstracted manner, as well as intertwined visual orderliness and disorder. As a result, this uniquely selected interplay of Art Elements had informed the audience regarding both the artwork's historical -and contemporary context (Hofmann, 1983).

Kopper (2014) states that 'Guernica' had conveyed a cultural message which was far stronger than a thousand words, since it had captivated audiences through the strong impact of its visual boldness, immediacy, and directly confrontational imagery. Therefore, viewing this artwork had left audiences with no opportunity to turn away from the stark reality. Furthermore, 'Guernica' had offered European audiences during this particular time period in history a multitude of interpretive possibilities, which had been influenced by their individual perspectives that had most likely been based upon their personal experiences (Kopper, 2014).

In regards to serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change', 'Guernica' had become a robust and influential symbolic representation of all societal values which opposed the grotesque crimes of war, while having played a pivotal role in 'political activism' during the Spanish Civil War. As a result of its powerful impact, political activists had utilized the symbolic messaging of the painting to raise widespread local and international awareness regarding the heinous acts of war, with the extended goal of gaining support for Republican humanitarian causes (Carter, 2009).

Secondly, Lesser (2011) mentions the fact that 'Guernica' had been displayed at the International Exposition during 1937, with a global audience that was granted the opportunity to view it. This had greatly assisted in drawing exceptional international attention to the humanitarian suffering which was taking place during the Spanish Civil War. Therefore, the 'international recognition' that 'Guernica' had gained had made a great impact upon changing cultural and societal perceptions on both a local and global scale (Lesser, 2011).

As a direct consequence of this widespread insight and new perceptual understanding, which had been gained on an international scale that had reached far beyond local Spanish and European communities into the broader global community, Rhodes (2013) suggests that these new insights had roused nations from around the world to get involved. The international response had been so enormous, that governments and organizations from various countries had taken immediate practical steps to provide humanitarian aid where necessary. These 'humanitarian efforts' had therefore made a significant

contribution towards garnering empathy and unison, while having brought a momentous societal and cultural shift to fruition (Rhodes, 2013).

Fourthly, as commented upon by Gussak (2022), the creatively innovative application of abstracted symbolism, which had been effectively incorporated in 'Guernica', had impacted multiple generations of Fine Artists in a remarkable manner throughout the past century. More specifically, in regards to the formulation, development, progress, and directional accomplishments which had since been achieved in Modern Arts, 'Guernica' had also served as an 'iconic and historically inspirational artwork', which had provided Fine Artists with enormous encouragement and motivation that had led to the emboldened continuation of experimenting with diverse techniques of visual expression (Gussak, 2022).

As a fifth key point of observation, in relation to the development of 'iconography of protest' and as alluded to by Xifra & Heath (2018), 'Guernica' had become an emblematic symbol of revolutionary resistance against totalitarianism and oppressive humanitarian injustices on an international scale that had crossed cultural, religious, and continental boundaries. As a result, the visual images and symbolic components seen within this painting had been reused and appropriated within many different contexts for other causes which also protested against political oppression, acts of violence, and crimes related to war (Xifra & Heath, 2018).

Uniquely, Potter (2003) points to the understanding that 'Guernica' had also been selected as an exemplary 'educational resource', which had been used to educate students from many nationalities regarding the pointless destruction and atrocities of war throughout recent decades. As an educational tool, the value and necessity of bearing witness to historical events had therefore proven that Fine Arts can be utilized to serve as a powerful avenue for social commentary as it pertains to shifting societal perceptions and cultural narratives (Potter, 2003).

Another noteworthy role which 'Guernica' had fulfilled, as highlighted by Harris (2010), is the fact that it had served as a painful and heart-breaking reminder of the foolish consequences of egregious wars, which had not only cost many innocent lives, but had produced unspeakable trauma to many surviving civilians across diverse demographics. It is therefore argued by art historians and scholars that 'Guernica' had played an integral role in connection with establishing 'cultural memory'. In doing so, this iconic artwork had consequently ensured that the aftermath of war had not been forgotten by the leadership of Spain, the governments of Europe, or the broader international community (Harris, 2010).

In agreement with Carter (2009), Lesser (2011), Rhodes (2013), Doyle (2008), Hofmann (1983), Sandberg (2021), Gussak (2022), Xifra & Heath (2018), Potter (2003), and Harris (2010)—in regards to having served as a catalyst for cultural change, 'Guernica' had fulfilled a unique historical purpose in

context to advocating for cultural changes, which both had challenged and inspired different societal perceptions, political positions, and actions, which had later been taken against warmongering. An alteration of attitudes towards war had further led to increased global empathy and understanding, while a shift in perceptions had simultaneously mobilized political activism and artistic expression. Consequently, these changes in societal perceptions had also greatly impacted the formation of 'collective international memory'.

5.3.3.2 Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2 (1912) – by Marcel Duchamp



Figure 34: *'Nude Descending a Staircase' (1912)* is currently being preserved in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the U.S.A., which had been painted during the Cubism Art Movement (1912) by Marcel Duchamp (Taylor, 2012).

Note. Taylor (2012) referred to **Figure 34** within the journal titled, *'Marcel Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase [No. 2] and the 1913 Armory Show Scandal Revisited'*. Archives of American Art Journal, 51 (3/4), 50–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43155387>, p.60

Cabanne & Duchamp (1971) provides retrospective analysis of Marcel Duchamp as a uniquely brave Fine Artist when considering the societal perceptions, traditions, practices, and cultural views of his time-period. Despite an occasional hint of arrogance on display, Duchamp's ability to remain professional and modest, as well as his intellectual preciseness, had been applauded by Art critics and scholars. It is further noted that Duchamp's most iconic artworks had successfully captured a rare transcendent aesthetic appearance that had embodied indirect visual attributes more often achieved through a wide spectrum of thematic interests and concerns. Additionally, it is also argued that, as a result of his artistic intelligence, which had been demonstrated through his meticulous precision, planning, and thematic investigations, Marcel Duchamp had been enabled to achieve nearly every set of goals that Modern Art had been able to aspire to during this time-period (Cabanne & Duchamp, 1971).

His unique accomplishment in the area of achieving societal shifts regarding what had been constituted as Art, as well as establishing a public reassessment of the value of Art, had earned Duchamp sustainable respect from his followers and admirers, even despite having upheld the perspective that future generations would ultimately weigh and judge his artistic contributions amidst the broader historical contexts of formal time-periods in Art history. In regard to his uniquely original approaches to artistic themes and subject matters, many Art historians, scholars, and critics had described Duchamp as an 'artistic saboteur.' Not only due to the fact that his artistic flair had often appeared to be strongly

oppositional and combative towards both traditional painting techniques and various forms of commercial Art, but since he had been preoccupied with producing artworks that had been innovative in style and provocative in the nature of their technical, thematic, and representational execution (Cabanne & Duchamp, 1971).

As underscored by Guralnick (1990), Duchamp's most noteworthy area of success and achievement, as seen in the case of his controversial *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which had been exhibited during 1913 at the Armory Show, is mainly recognized in the context of pioneering ground-breaking visual portrayals containing imitations of movements, rhythms, and speed—often as a specific 'moment in time' that had been captured as a 'still snapshot' of reality. Duchamp had also best achieved this artistic outcome in relation to renewing classical portrayals of nudes in a modernized manner, as well as through his concurrent fascination with modern machinery. These two aspects in particular had distinguished Duchamp from his artistic peers in the Cubism Movement, who at first had rejected this form of innovation in Fine Arts. It is further emphasized that the provocative and consistent modern nature of his artworks had frequently confronted and challenged ideological perspectives within the 'avant-garde' (Guralnick, 1990).

Speyer (1974) adds to this understanding by reflecting upon the earliest public responses towards *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which had once been detested as a symbolic example of 'artistic degeneracy.' However, slightly more than one century later, this painting is currently heralded as a masterpiece from the Cubism Art Movement. It is further highlighted that the initial 'vitriolic reaction' which *Nude Descending a Staircase* had provoked during 1913, while being contrasted with his later exhibitions that included 'ready-made objects' such as a bicycle wheel and men's urinal boldly professed as 'being Art,' had undeniably contested the traditional perceptions that society had had regarding artistic production and the cultural reception thereof (Speyer, 1974).

In regard to Duchamp's entire body of artworks, Steefel (1976) suggests that, although *Nude Descending a Staircase* currently remains one of Duchamp's most recognized and iconic works of Art, the majority of his collection of artworks had been interpreted by Art scholars, historians, and critics as having served as 'catalysts for cultural change,' due to the fact that they had been deemed as 'symptomatic reactions.' More specifically, reactions that had not only shed a light upon 'societal crises,' but to a certain extent had suggested 'partial solutions.' Duchamp's reactionary artistic expressions had therefore revealed his multidimensional approaches regarding a variety of different thematic subjects, in combination with the application of 'aesthetic innovation' (Steefel, 1976).

Naumann & Duchamp (1982) further elaborates upon the fact that Duchamp's deliberate retreat from seeking fame from the general public in exchange for pursuing risks related to the experimentation of innovative projects had marked a significant moment in Art history for both the Cubism Art

Movement and the further development of Modern Art, especially since Duchamp had consistently demonstrated his enduring defiance against artistic norms (Naumann & Duchamp, 1982).

In regard to serving as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Alliez (2020) states that Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which had been painted during 1912, had contested and disputed traditionally accepted visual portrayals of the human body as well as representations of 'movement' in Fine Arts, by having combined both Art Elements and Principles of Design related to characteristics of the Cubism and Futurism Art Movements. This forward-thinking and innovative step, which had been taken by Duchamp in regard to having broken away from typically motionless and static artistic visual depictions, most certainly had challenged artistic norms and practices in a significant manner (Alliez, 2020).

However, the fact that Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* had 'challenged artistic norms and practices' was also relevant in regards to the impact it had made upon 'abstract representation.' For example, Orcutt (2013) suggests that the nearly unrecognizable and abstracted visual portrayal of shape and movement which had been illustrated within this painting not only had brought the limits and confines of 'Figurative Art' into question, but had prepared the pathway for the development of extended Avant-garde -and Abstract Art Movements during the years which had followed (Orcutt, 2013).

Judovitz (1995) secondly argued that Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* had 'revolutionized American Fine Arts' when it had been displayed at an exhibition during 1913 at the 'Armory Show' in New York City. Within the historical context of what had been constituted as having achieved 'culturally acceptable standards of Fine Arts,' Duchamp's painting had caused quite a public scandal. Especially since it had brought universal attention to the development of European Modern Arts, which had been considerably different in the context of the United States during this time period in history. However, the impact of this widespread exposure had an exceptional influence upon Western Fine Artists, as well as the directional progress that Modern Arts had made in the United States (Judovitz, 1995).

According to Whiting (2005), Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* had a unique 'influence upon both the Dada Art Movement -and the Surrealism Art Movement.' The radical departure which Duchamp had illustrated in his artworks, as it had pertained to breaking away from 'traditional visual attributes and aesthetics,' including the noteworthy focus he had placed upon the importance of communicating through strong conceptual themes in particular, had prepared the foundational aspects for the further development of the Dada Art Movement. Later in his life, Duchamp had also become an integral and iconic artist within the Dada Art Movement while he had always prioritized conceptual themes above visual aesthetics (Whiting, 2005).

Additionally, Baas (2023) states that Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* had fulfilled a unique role in regards to the emphasis and importance it had placed upon the painting's conceptual theme, symbolic connotations, and aesthetically abstract characteristics. These unique visual attributes had influenced the further development of the Surrealism Art Movement in an unparalleled manner, which simultaneously had encouraged Fine Artists to investigate and experiment with the portrayal of unconscious psychological -and irrational components of human perception and behavior. *Nude Descending a Staircase* had therefore served as a 'precursor to the Surrealism Art Movement' (Baas, 2023).

As a fourth point of observation, Levine (2008) notes that Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* had brought the very 'premise and nature of Fine Arts into question.' As it had pertained to reanalyzing and re-evaluating 'artistic value,' this painting had not only contested that which either did or didn't constitute as Art but had confronted traditionally pre-determined criteria of painting techniques and standards of aesthetic representation. As a result, this philosophical angle of investigation had motivated Fine Artists to engage in a far deeper analysis of the symbolically interpretative, intellectual, and conceptualized complexities of Fine Arts (Levine, 2008).

According to Orcutt (2013), *Nude Descending a Staircase* had also inspired the 'development of new innovative approaches pertaining to artistic techniques.' The attempts to illustrate different forms of movement and rhythms through means of repetition and the fragmentation of shapes had later greatly impacted both techniques applied in the context of cinematography and other disciplines of Fine Arts. Furthermore, the exploration of artistic possibilities in relation to motion, space, and time, which had been demonstrated by Duchamp, had assisted significantly in the formation of 'Kinetic Art' and had persuaded film directors to consider other methods of sequencing energetic 'action scenes' (Orcutt, 2013).

As another point of reflection, Down (2024) explains that Duchamp's second version of *Nude Descending a Staircase* had generated new public awareness and conversations revolving around the foundational characteristics and specific purposes of Fine Arts. The public controversy and open dialogue which had been caused by this painting had led to broader debates regarding the value of 'avant-garde' artistic representations and the aesthetic contributions of modernism. *Nude Descending a Staircase* had therefore made a noteworthy 'cultural impact upon a shift in public perception' (Down, 2024).

Whiting (2005) lastly presents the argument that artworks of Duchamp, such as his renowned *Nude Descending a Staircase*, still 'continue to impact, influence, and inspire contemporary and modern artists' who seek to study the limitations and possibilities that visual conceptualization, forms, and

various artistic mediums have to offer. Whiting (2005) supports the perspective that this is deemed to be true across diverse artistic disciplines, such as Theatre, Fine Arts, and Digital Media.

5.3.3.3 At the Cycle-Race Track (1912) – by Jean Metzinger



Figure 35: *'At the Cycle-Race Track'* (1912) is currently being preserved in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice Italy, which had been painted during the Cubism Art Movement (1912) by Jean Metzinger (Vere, 2011).

Note. Vere (2011) referred to **Figure 35** within the journal titled, *'Pedal-Powered Avant-Gardes: Cycling Paintings in 1912–13'*. The International Journal of the History of Sport, 28 (8-9), 1156–1173.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2011.567769>, p.1158

The artwork titled *'At the Cycle-Race Track'* by Jean Metzinger, as discussed by Vere (2011), had epitomized the far-reaching public interest in cycling, which had been spreading across France and Europe during the earliest years of the twentieth century. Within the cultural context of this time period, the participation in *'professional cycling'* as a new fashionable sport had been viewed as a symbolic representation of embracing *'modernism.'* Simultaneously, various branches of early twentieth-century media outlets, such as the *'Burgeoning Sporting Press,'* multiple *'Cycle Manufacturers,'* and a number of different arts exhibitions and sporting competitions, collectively had contributed towards persuading European *'public perceptions'* to view cycling as a *'prestigious sport.'* Although many Fine Artists had focused upon portraying the same subject matter, the paintings had remained uniquely distinct. It is, however, noted that despite the visual uniformity which had existed among the broad spectrum of artworks pertaining to the theme of cycling during this time period, Jean Metzinger's more specifically had emphasized values of French nationalism (Vere, 2011).

Hughes (2020) and Vere (2011) further explain that from 1912 to 1913, the three most noteworthy paintings which had elevated *'cycle racing'* in a modernized and *'avant-garde'* style, were *'The Bicycle Race'* (1912) painted by Lyonel Feininger, *'At the Cycle-Race Track'* (1912) painted by Jean Metzinger, and *'Dynamism of a Cyclist'* (1913) painted by Umberto Boccioni. Although these three notorious paintings had originated from separated regions across Europe, they collectively had proposed essential questions for culturally self-reflective purposes. For example, why had Fine Artists that were representative of competitive and opposing Art Movements all selected the depiction of cycling as a

theme? Which perceptual traits of professional cycling, which had existed prior to the First World War, had caused it to become an attractive or alluring subject matter? Is it a possibility that these stylistically diverse Fine Artists had perhaps been intrigued and impacted by one another's artworks? Are there any significant differences between these paintings which may have revealed certain identifiable societal or cultural perceptions and attitudes towards the modernization of sport? (Hughes, 2020; Vere, 2011).

In addition, Vere (2011) makes the observation that the sudden propagation and rise in popularity of cycling-themed artworks had been an unusual occurrence, considering that bicycles had not been a new invention during 1912. At this point in time, professional cycling races in Europe had already been in existence for more than twenty years. Comparatively, the Futurist artist named Giacomo Balla and the Cubism artist known as Robert Delaunay had already been experimenting with the portrayal of more advanced and modernized inventions, such as automobiles and airplanes. It is, however, argued that the 'individual interests' of certain artists might have had an influence upon the fact that this artistic trend had rapidly expanded. For example, both Metzinger and Feininger had been dedicated cyclists. Furthermore, the historian named Eugen Weber had mentioned that cycling had been considered an elitist pastime, since the cost of one bicycle had been three times more than the monthly salary of a teacher (Vere, 2011).

According to Hemmingway (n.d.), Jean Metzinger had successfully captured the closing sprint of the athlete named Charles Crupelandt, who had won during the Paris-Roubaix race in 1912, within his notorious painting titled 'At the Cycle-Race Track.'

Hemmingway (n.d.) notes that from the perception of Futurists, Metzinger's comprehensive painting had served as a visual embodiment of multiple components pertaining to 'an object instantly captured in motion.' His clear application of geometrical planes, which had been characteristic of the Cubism Movement, also had created 'invisible lines' which extended into the surrounding spatial areas (referred to as 'negative space' in the background), while the figural outlines within the painting's composition had also stretched beyond the characters themselves. Additional attributes of 'At the Cycle-Race Track,' which had caught the attention of the audience, included the predominant dashing grey stripes across the race track, the second racer's spinning back wheel, as well as transparent sections seen within the depiction of the cyclist's figure, which collectively had portrayed the disappearing and dissolving impacts of speed. The proposed gesture of movement, as had been typical of Futurism, had therefore also been encapsulated within this artwork. Furthermore, the swirling handlebars of the bicycle had been intended by Metzinger as a representation of the intense side-to-side movements by Crupelandt, as he had attempted to sustain his forwardly-pressed pose through means of strength and determination. In an additional manner of playfulness, the artist had also included a number 4 within the upper left corner of the composition, which had served as a subtle portrayal and reference to the 'fourth

dimension.' Yet in spite of these energetic and powerful visual features, the more important characteristics related to the Cubism Art Movement, which had been emphasized, such as the application of emboldened colours and a diverse incorporation of shapes, had remained intact. Most impressively, despite the strong Cubist style of this artwork, the cyclist and his bicycle had still remained distinctly clear and recognizable (Hemmingway, n.d.).

Hughes (2020) makes the interesting observation by highlighting that the earliest cyclists in Europe around the time when it had first been invented would not have considered it to be a 'slow' form of transportation. Especially since the invention thereof, its technological refinements, as well as the fact that it had been broadly adopted by the public and had consequently been mass-produced, had symbolized urbanization, modernization, mobility, and speed. However, during the 1880s, the orderly and perfectly arranged 'track-and-road racing events' had exalted the status of professional cyclists to an equivalence of heroism, more specifically due to the impressive levels of endurance and speed they had been able to achieve. Another unique aspect of these artworks, which had focused upon the illustration of cycling as an admirable skill or attribute, is the fact that they had often portrayed the human body in a mechanized manner. This metaphorical artistic concept had been described by Bernard Bere as a 'fusion of the professional athletic man' in combination with the 'precision of machinery' (Hughes, 2020).

From an entirely different societal and cultural perspective, cycling had been highly esteemed due to its symbolic correlations with self-determination, excellence, independence, freedom, and liberation. Cycling had a particularly significant impact upon women as well, since it had offered them an avenue for independent transportation and mobility. Needless to mention that this had supported the broader cultural shift in favour of the expansion of equality (Hughes, 2020).

From the viewpoint of Mallen (2022), Jean Metzinger had fulfilled a momentous intellectual purpose pertaining to the progress and advancements which had taken place in the Cubism Art Movement. Mallen (2022) also argues that since Metzinger had incorporated various geometrical characteristics pertaining to Cubism into his often-futuristic depictions and had successfully created distinguishing compositional frameworks, the innovative quality of his artworks had rightfully allowed him to view himself as one of the Cubist forerunners, despite the fact that the true origins of the Cubism Art Movement had been accredited to Picasso (Hemmingway, n.d.).

In agreement with this understanding, Wheeler (2019) also supports the perspective that Metzinger had continually been working upon refining his personalized Art style with the aim of distinguishing himself from other artists.

Tillieux (2018) explains that instead of depicting athletes in their moments of difficulty on the race track, Metzinger had preferred to capture and emphasize a sense of excitement and victory, as well as the sounds of applause by the enthusiastic crowds. Similar to the determined racer named Crupelandt, who had been approaching the finishing line of the Roubaix Velodrome, Metzinger had also been treading upon new territory in regarding to creating a 'new artistic language' in his pursuit of personal victory as an accomplished Fine Artist (Tillieux, 2018).

In regard to having served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Metzinger's *At the Cycle-Race Track* had significantly contributed towards the 'advancement of the Cubism Art Movement.' In accordance with the typical attributes and characteristics of Cubism, which had attempted to deconstruct objects, figures as well as 'positive space' and 'negative space' into geometric forms, this painting had embodied and exemplified these exact visual features as well. Apart from presenting the subject matter in a fragmented manner, Metzinger had incorporated overlapping planes into his artworks, which had reflected the speed, energy, and dynamism of professional race tracks (Kissane, 2013).

Through means of having embraced -and applied painting techniques pertaining to the Cubism Art Movement into his work, Judah (2007) notes that Metzinger had indirectly 'contributed towards causing a wider societal -and cultural appreciation for different forms of Modern Art and Abstract Art.' Consequently, this had greatly impacted the development of other Art Movements such as 'Futurism,' 'Constructivism,' and 'Surrealism,' which had later followed (Judah, 2007).

In agreement, Longworth (2016) further presents the viewpoint that Metzinger's *At the Cycle-Race Track* had advocated for both the 'societal -and cultural adoption and acceptance of new technological advancements,' including the 'speed' of modernization, which the earliest years of the 20th century had been characterized by (Longworth, 2016).

Nevres (2013) further states that the fascination with depicting sporting events had additionally highlighted this time period's particular interest in -and 'admiration of physical movement, physical superiority and new forms of leisurely activities.' Collectively, these unique sets of interests had resonated with the European societal shifts which had been caused by urbanization and industrial advancements (Nevres, 2013).

Weddigen (2012) provides an extended interpretation by presenting the idea that the innovative nature of Metzinger's artwork pertaining to 'time, space and motion' had influenced audiences to perhaps reconsider their limited human understanding and perceptions of 'temporality' and 'space.' For example, the multiple visual angles and fragmented shapes which had formed part of the Cubism Art Movement, as seen in this particular painting, had aligned with both philosophical -and scientific investigations pertaining to 'relativity theories' and the 'fourth dimension.' Therefore, the artistic

process of 'reimagining' the boundaries of 'space and time' had resulted in impacting multiple fields of creativity such as Literature, Cinematography, Photography, and Fine Arts (Weddigen, 2012).

Lastly, Judah (2007) presents the argument that Metzinger's *At the Cycle-Race Track* had served as a catalyst for both 'artistic collaboration' and 'artistic dialogues,' more specifically in context to the 'Parisian Avant-Garde' communities. Along with other Cubism artists, Metzinger had published a number of theoretical discussions, within which they had publicly stipulated the Cubism Art Movement's primary artistic intentions, goals, and foundational key principles. Through means of openly presenting this information to European society in such a public manner, they had provided an opportunity for broader public discourse to take place, while it had also contributed towards an 'intellectual cultural shift.' It is further noted that these theoretical developments and artistic collaborations had fulfilled a pivotal role in circulating and expanding Cubist ideas, while they had also promoted experimentation within various disciplines of Fine Arts (Judah, 2007).

In agreement with Judah (2007), Kissane (2013), Longworth (2016), Nevres (2013), Weddigen (2012), *At the Cycle-Race Track* by Metzinger had served as a noteworthy catalyst for cultural change, since it had influenced multiple art-making processes and practices, which in return had impacted a variety of societal -and cultural perceptions during the early years of the 20th century.

5.3.3.4 Eiffel Tower (1910-11) – by Robert Delaunay

Cramer & Grant (2024) states that Robert Delaunay's painting titled *The Eiffel Tower* (1911) had eloquently conveyed the overpowering, intimidating, breath-taking – yet somewhat disorienting 'statue-like' presence of the emblematic and familiar structural frame of the Eiffel Tower, while having applied Cubism painting techniques to depict the subject matter. Delaunay's painting style and unique approach to illustrating the theme had sought to portray the towering structural frame of the Eiffel Tower from multifaceted angles, viewpoints, and perspectives all at the same time. For example, this artwork had revealed unique visual glimpses from beneath the central parts of the tower, from beneath its arches, and even from below its supporting legs. This multi-angled perspective had resulted in the Eiffel Tower appearing in a manner which had made it seem like certain parts of the structure were disintegrating and disappearing or transforming into additional towers and extended support-structures. All of these components had therefore mirrored various side angles which had been connected to the overall frame of the Eiffel Tower.

Regardless of the fragmentation and deconstruction of shapes seen within the compositional arrangement, the triangular outline and structural frame seen in the centre of the artwork, which had been built upon the uneven-legged base, had remained clearly recognizable. At the same time, the other buildings within the painting had seemed to respond to the unique curvature of the Eiffel Tower's

contours and had been swaying in a paralleled manner while almost forming a visual frame around the central structure. Furthermore, the sky had been portrayed in a manner that had resembled a broken mirror consisting of 'crystalline angles,' along with round shapes which had appeared in 'grouped-



Figure 36: *'Eiffel Tower' (1910-1911)* is currently being preserved in the Kunstmuseum, Basel Switzerland, which had been painted during the Cubism Art Movement (1910-1911) by Robert Delaunay (Reich, 2012).

Note. Reich (2012) referred to **Figure 36** within the journal titled, *'Adrift in Paris: Marc Chagall and the Negotiation of Identity through Painting, 1911-1914'*. All Theses and Dissertations (ETDs). 745. <https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/etd/745>, p.109

clusters.' These unique angles and grouped shapes had indicated a representation of clouds, smoke in the air, as well as trees – which had seemingly filled the tower's surrounding space and had caused a 'visually energetic' interaction of moving plane-fields (Cramer & Grant, 2024).

From Travis's (1987) point of view, Delaunay's modernist approach had deeply reinforced his steadfast devotion to designing a bold and innovative vision of Paris—a city that had incorporated its most striking and transformative monument to modernity. His pioneering ideas had left a lasting imprint on the city's landscape, forever reshaping both its physical appearance and its cultural identity. The transformation was not just architectural; it had altered the very essence of Paris, influencing how it was perceived both locally and internationally. His painting techniques and stylistic approaches to this particular theme had included the synthesizing of multifaceted views which had been observed around the Eiffel Tower. It is noted by this author that Delaunay had collected different views and angles from printed postcards and had strategically reassembled them to highlight the Eiffel Tower's considerable influence upon Paris's landscape—not only in regard to its overpowering structural presence but also pertaining to the societal and cultural atmosphere it had created (Travis, 1987).

In agreement with this understanding, Herbert (1997) had presented the argument within his "Homage to Bleriot" during 1914 that Delaunay had integrated many other symbolic references to modernization within his portrayal of the Eiffel Tower, such as the invention of airplanes, which had connected to innovative progress that had been achieved in the field of engineering during this time period. In order to create a Fine Arts masterpiece as an exemplification of 'Epic Cubism,' Herbert (1997) had suggested that Delaunay's painting of the Eiffel Tower had featured 'swirling disks,' which had contained 'partitioned colour-schemes' as representational characteristics of creational elements like the

sun and the moon. Furthermore, Herbert (1997) had suggested that these unique creational symbols had represented 'vitality,' 'energy,' 'vigour,' and 'dynamism,' which had been associated with man-made machinery.

Delaunay had therefore been intentional in regard to drawing his audiences into accepting new concepts revolving around 'simultaneousness,' 'coexistence,' and 'synchronism.' For example, from a perceptual stance, the painted colour-planes had provoked perceptual ideas related to visual movement, rhythm, and expansion, which had been associated with the prevalent influx of modernization, industrialization, and machinery. However, this opinion-based impression of the existence of 'simultaneity' had stood in stark opposition to the perceptual interpretation of many Italian Futurists, who had elevated ideas related to 'instantaneousness,' as well as active political participation in 'acceleration of modernization' for the betterment of society (Herbert, 1997).

Adding further insights to the interpretative perspectives of Herbert (1997), Isman (2017) mentions that the Eiffel Tower painting created by Delaunay had not only been described by various art historians, critics, and scholars as a 'window' or 'glimpse' into his unique view of Paris, but as an avenue through which he had invited audiences to view their own cultural reflections. These fragmented and deconstructed urban portrayals had been intended to connect to the lived experiences and subconscious memories of the viewers, with the additional purpose of establishing a detailed and extensive understanding of Paris (Isman, 2017).

Hughes (2007) had elaborated upon this perspective by suggesting the idea that the artistic process of associating fragmented images or parts to a 'broader encompassing whole' had only enriched societal perceptions of urbanization and modernization.

In agreement with this understanding, Reich (2012) explains that multiple art scholars had associated the stylistic approaches of Delaunay's artworks in regard to both his interpretations and visual representations to 'internationalism.' In context to Delaunay's style of artistic expression, the Eiffel Tower had been perceived as a symbol of humanity's 'constructive capability' as well as 'universal energy.' Reich (2012) refers to Mark Rosenthal, for example, who had specifically investigated the perceptual impressions made upon French society due to the representations of Delaunay's body of artworks, who had identified the Eiffel Tower as having been a symbolic personification of dream-like patriotism and French technological accomplishments.

Yet Ozerkevich (2016) notes that Rosenthal had failed to consider the more widespread implications of 'artistically constructed coincidences' within Delaunay's artworks (Ozerkevich, 2016).

It is further noted by Reich (2012) that Delaunay's interconnected participation and development of the Orphism Art Movement—a movement somewhat similar to Cubism, which had fought for the

liberation of colour-schemes—had been clearly applied within the vivid colour-planes that had been incorporated into his unique portrayal of the Eiffel Tower. The influences of Delaunay’s artworks had impacted more contemporary Fine Artists, such as Chagall, who had analysed and tested his painting techniques and artistic approaches over an extended time period (Reich, 2012).

From the unique interpretational view of Tasić (2017), while having applied the more liberating ‘mobile perspective’ as introduced by Picasso, Delaunay had been determined to portray the complexities related to the Eiffel Tower’s perspective and depth in a manner which had encapsulated its unique details differently, compared to conventional artistic techniques and practices. For example, the colour-scheme had deviated rather significantly from the recognizable monochromatic palettes of Analytical Cubism. Therefore, viewed as a symbolic representation of the ‘City of Lights,’ Delaunay’s Eiffel Tower had been representational of the technological progress which had been made during this time-period in Europe, as well as the future achievements in ‘space exploration,’ which had later been accomplished in the years that followed (Tasić, 2017).

In regards to having served as a ‘catalyst for cultural change,’ Blessing (2024) states that Delaunay’s artwork titled ‘Eiffel Tower (1910–11)’ had demonstrated a clear acceptance and incorporation of modernized artistic concepts and practices, which not only had included characteristics of abstraction but simultaneously had influenced artistic trends and cultural shifts during the early 20th century. This artwork, as a prime example of Delaunay’s own ‘Orphism Art Movement,’ which had been embedded in Cubism principles, effectively had exemplified the energetic dynamism of urbanization and technological advancements. The manner in which Delaunay had portrayed the Eiffel Tower, while being fragmented and containing faceted geometric planes, had not only contested traditional interpretations regarding ‘form’ and ‘perspective,’ but had demonstrated a profound departure from ‘realism’ (Blessing, 2024).

Secondly, from the perspective of Robertson (1995), the innovative manner in which Delaunay’s artwork had attempted to break ties with ‘classical conventionality’ while experimenting with a variety of different artistic expressions, had concurred with the greater ‘Avant-Garde Movement.’ Through means of aiming to ‘deconstruct’ a universally respected and idolized symbol of modernization and cultural advancement such as the Eiffel Tower, Delaunay had not only sought to re-define the constructs of ‘visual representation,’ but had endeavoured to both critique -and celebrate the industrialized -and technological progressions which had been achieved during this time-period. This clear duplexity had promoted the indecisiveness and uncertainty attributed to modernized societies, more specifically in regards to the awestruck wonder and feelings of disorientation which European society might have experienced during such unparalleled historical changes (Robertson, 1995).

Stephens (2015) supports this understanding by confirming that Delaunay's 'Eiffel Tower' had served as an 'intersectional visual representation' of Fine Arts and modern urbanization. Delaunay's artwork had therefore visually portrayed the unprecedented modernization and transformation which the city of Paris had undergone, as well as the ever-changing alterations of the cultural landscape during the early 20th century. The application of emboldened colour-planes and the energetic compositional arrangement had resembled both vibrancy and vitality, while it also had mirrored the bustling metropolitan lifestyle. As a result, Stephens (2015) argues that Delaunay's 'Eiffel Tower' had served as a 'visual manifesto' of modern society and had echoed sentiments of discussions that had been taking place among literary -philosophical scholars regarding the implications of modernization, urbanization, and industrialism.

Lesso (2023) finally presents the perspective that the cultural impact which Delaunay's 'Eiffel Tower' had, far had surpassed the domain of Fine Arts. This painting's style of abstraction, as well as its unique subject matter, which had focused upon modernization, had not only influenced the perception of artists across multiple disciplines of artistic expression (which had encompassed Music, Literature, & Theatre), but had ascribed significance to the widespread cultural 'zeitgeist' (referring to the cultural 'spirit' and the cultural 'time-period'). Additionally, the emboldened focus which had been placed upon the abstraction of shapes and colour-theory had resounded with the investigations and experimental works of musical composers and literary scholars which had focused upon the relational interplay between achieving a sense of 'harmony,' yet within a certain set of structural and principled confounds. Shattuck (1968) notes that this occurrence had birthed open dialogue of a cross-disciplinary nature among many Arts-fields, which further had enriched cultural interests and perceptions, as well as value-systems during the early 20th century – in an extraordinary manner (Lesso, 2023).

In agreement with Blessing (2024), Robertson (1995), Stephens (2015), and Lesso (2023), Robert Delaunay's 'Eiffel Tower (1910–11)' had served as a 'catalyst for cultural change' through means of having personified the societal fixation and infatuation with modernization and everything it had to offer, while it simultaneously had challenged conventional artistic recommendations and practices. This painting had also reflected the spritely and ever-changing interplay between urbanization and Fine Arts. Furthermore, its most influential features had successfully influenced and had infiltrated the trends throughout multiple cultural domains, while having brought widespread attention to the recreational impact of Abstract Art in regards to both the reaction towards -and playing a role in the formation of the modern world.

5.3.3.5 The City (1919) – by Fernand Léger

According to Blood (2014), Léger's career had been interrupted by The First World War, since he had been called upon to serve in the military during 1914 and had consequently spent twenty-four months on the frontlines. This chapter in his life had come to an end, however, during 1916 when he had been injured in battle. Yet, throughout his return to the city of Paris in 1918, Léger had conveyed an inexplicable desire to return to this beloved place, which later had inspired the majority of his post-war artworks. One of Léger's most noteworthy paintings, titled The City, had resembled the modernized metropolis experience of the early 20th century, which had been greatly affected and impacted by the latest forms of advertising, cinematography, machinery, and architectural advancements.



Figure 37: *'The City' (1919)* is currently being preserved in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, U.S.A., which had been painted during the Cubism Art Movement (1919) by Fernand Léger (Naves, 2013).

Note. Naves (2013) referred to **Figure 37** within the journal titled, *'Léger: Modern Art and the Metropolis at the Philadelphia Museum of Art'*. Too Much Art.
<https://mnaves.wordpress.com/2013/12/01/leger-modern-art-and-the-metropolis-at-the-philadelphia-museum-of-art/>, para. 1

In context to this understanding, Léger had therefore viewed the primary purpose of Fine Arts to be one which had been meant to imitate the experimental, forward-thinking, ambitious, innovative, and artificial characteristics of a modernized city. Needless to mention that this perspective had included the incorporation of small businesses, shopfronts, as well as advertisements in poster-format within this compositional arrangement (Blood, 2014).

Conway-Morris (2022) confirms the contextual information presented by Blood (2014) by further stating that Léger's passionate determination to portray the charming attributes and progressive advancements of 'modern life' and 'civil society' (as goalposts for humanity to strive towards) had exhibited the 'fast-paced' and mechanized nature of urbanization. From this angle of inspiration, Léger had produced and unveiled his well-known La Ville (The City), as a remarkable representation of Cubism Art, to the public. This intriguingly ambitious and modernized painting had later become part of a highly outstanding Fine Art collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In addition, it had also

been displayed at another exhibition which had been known as 'Léger: Modern Art and the Metropolis' (Conway-Morris, 2022).

In regard to Fernand Léger's artistic style, Morris (1935) mentions that his meticulously precise manner of depicting objects had served as a foundational premise for his personalized journey of artistic development. In contrast to his artistic predecessors, who had often drawn upon ideas, new concepts, and inspirations rooted in formerly renowned or traditional Art styles, Léger had produced a new visual style of artistic representation which had consisted of aesthetic attributes that included bold contrasts. Both as it had pertained to the combination of geometric shapes and colour-planes, which had been arranged next to one another within the layout of his compositions. Léger's depiction of *The City* (1919) in particular, had avoided conventional city- and street-corner scenes, while this artwork's composition instead had contained 'dynamic and arbitrary scenery' of urbanized life which had been fragmented and somewhat deconstructed in regard to the specified outlines and shapes of objects. More specifically, Léger's forward-thinking and innovative artistic style, which successfully had combined a strict dedication to 'spatial-control,' as well as 2-dimensional forms and the illusion of 3-dimensional forms, had distinguished him as both an independent-thinking and ground-breaking city-painter (Morris, 1935).

Considering the psychological impacts of the First World War, Henning (1982) suggests that Léger's paintings had resembled and encapsulated the robustness and blatant directness which had originated from his confrontational experiences as a soldier. As a result, Henning (1982) ascribes the impact of these radical personal experiences as the main reason why Léger's paintings, which had been produced between 1910-1914, had been considered as some of his most engaging, captivating, and mature artworks, despite not following the traditional Cubist stages. These paintings had therefore not only been recognized and applauded for their unique 'visual clarity' and 'emboldened sense of strength,' but also due to the fact that they had been influenced by Léger's tangible experiences during the First World War (Henning, 1982).

From the perspective of Lanchner (1998), Léger's body of artworks had navigated the opposing aesthetic qualities, contrasting design principles, and representational tensions which had existed between 'abstraction and realism.' This had been particularly prevalent in his exhibition series known as *Contrastes de formes*, within which the artworks had contained flat plane fields versus blended 'volumetric forms' that consequently had earned him recognition for both achieving 'visual counterbalance' and an illusion of depth. Lanchner (1998) further notes that Léger's unique artistic career-path had demonstrated consistent investigation of and visual experimentation with core dilemmas pertaining to modernization (Lanchner, 1998).

Naves (2013) upheld a slightly different viewpoint by arguing that Léger had been a populist at heart who had been concerned with the 'everyday' challenges and problems faced by humanity. As a

later participant of the Cubism Art Movement, he had developed a strong and powerful character within his unique style of painting. Although some Art historians and critics had commented upon the unique fascination and love of the city which Léger had had, Naves (2013) alternatively viewed his paintings as a reflection of the impersonal, static, and staggering nature of Paris. From his contradicting viewpoint, Naves (2013) interpreted the cluttered, busy, and fragmented nature of Léger's compositional arrangement as being indicative of the 'information overload' typically associated with city life.

Despite this uniquely different viewpoint, Naves (2013) commended the visual arrangement of the various shapes and objects seen within *The City's* composition, which had also demonstrated Léger's gifted skillset in regard to achieving an energetic visual appearance, while still maintaining a strong degree of 'visual coherence' (Naves, 2013).

Additionally, Siegl (1967) points out that the multitude of changes which had been observed within Léger's colour-mixing and composition (in such a uniquely creative manner) had underscored the understanding that his artistic intentions, visions, and end-goals had been evolving (Siegl, 1967).

Yet I find the commentary made by Silver (1982) as very insightful, by arguing that although Léger had been fascinated by all the glamorous new experiences that urbanization and a 'modernized lifestyle' had had to offer, he had attempted to visually conquer and organize the chaos found therein through means of his artistic expressions. Therefore, although Léger's artistic passion and systematic approaches had both been evident within *The City*, it had been simultaneously clear that he had sought to create structures amidst the 'visual chaos' of modern life with all of its contradicting and controversial aspects (Silver, 1982).

In regards to having served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Fernand Léger's *'The City'* (1919) had uniquely influenced French societal and cultural perceptions. Firstly, *'The City'* had served as a 'visual representation' of the 'modernized urban experience' during the earliest years of the 20th century. According to Clapp (2007), *'The City'* by Léger had succeeded in capturing the vibrancy, excitement, busyness, and chaotic nature of a new urbanized lifestyle which had been introduced to French society during the early 20th century. Overall, the deconstruction of intricacies into simplified geometric shapes, fragmentation of the subject matter, and energetic atmosphere which had been simultaneously combined into one composition, had epitomized the energetic 'hustling' and 'bustling' surroundings of modernized city-scenes. Furthermore, Clapp (2007) also suggests that this painting had not only reflected but had advocated for the exciting and energetic pace of a modern city.

Having served as a 'catalyst for cultural change,' Marcus (2014) presents the perspective that *'The City'* by Léger had implied the 'integration of modernized architectural structures, as well as modern technology.' For example, this painting had elevated the impacts which architectural and

technological advancements had had upon daily life for French citizens. Furthermore, his inclusion of visually interesting components such as cinematic screens and posters (as a form of media and advertising), had emphasized the practical results of technological progressions (Marcus, 2014).

Thirdly, Meyer (2024) explains that 'The City' by Léger's work had served as a catalyst for cultural change, in regards to demonstrating 'innovative artistic techniques' considering the time-period during which it had been created. Léger had also juxtaposed contrasting and opposite angles next to one another within the same composition, while it had consequently challenged traditionally accepted forms of representation in a rather confrontational manner. This innovative artistic style had invited French—and broader European—audiences during this time-period in history, to re-evaluate and reconsider their formerly 'familiarized perceptions of reality,' while having advocated for the societal adoption of revised interpretations of the 'modern city' (Meyer, 2024).

Fensom (2013) fourthly commented upon the perspective that 'The City' had served as a catalyst for 'cultural change' in regards to having provided 'socio-political commentary.' Through means of having depicted both the opportunities and cultural isolation that industrialization, urbanization, and modernization had presented French society with, Léger had commented upon the diverse societal consequences and impacts that had been caused by industrial growth and modernization (Fensom, 2013).

As a fifth point of observation, Jones (2007) argues that 'The City' by Léger had served as a catalyst for cultural change, due to its 'populist engagement.' Since he had uniquely focused upon the collective lived experiences of the general public and the 'working man' instead of individualized interpretations and those from noble circles, the theme of 'The City' had resonated with a wide variety of different social classes. This approach had therefore made the theme and original perspective presented by the painting far more accessible and relevant to the daily lives of French citizens (Jones, 2007).

Kramer (1998) comments upon the understanding that 'The City' by Léger had served as a catalyst for cultural change when considering the 'impacts made—and influences it had had upon subsequent Art Movements' that had later followed. The fact that Léger had illustrated how Fine Arts had been able to effectively portray modernized life while having challenged aesthetic boundaries of visual representation at the same time, had more specifically impacted the development of both the 'Futurism Art Movement' and the 'Abstract Expressionism Art Movement' (Kramer, 1998).

As a seventh point of observation, Ward (2013) suggests that 'The City' by Léger had served as a catalyst for cultural change in regards to its 'post-war contextual origins' and 'attempt to construct a new reality.' As noted by Ward (2013), Léger's portrayal of a mechanized, bustling city which had been filled with a wide variety of fast-paced activities, had not only symbolized—but had advocated for—the

'reconstruction of societal norms,' traditions, and practices which had sought to embrace both economic and technological progress in an optimistic manner. Especially following the desolation and devastation which had been caused by the First World War (Ward, 2013).

5.4 Behavioural & Cognitive Theories Which Had Reaffirmed the Understanding Among Scholars That Fine Arts Had Historically Served as a Catalyst for Cultural Change, Which in Return Promoted a Broad Spectrum of Socio-Cultural Values

5.4.1.1 A Brief Introduction Related to the 'Social Learning Theory' - Which Had Been Constructed by Albert Bandura

Bandura (1976) had originally developed the 'Social Learning Theory' (SLT) through means of having examined processes which had been focused upon repetitive self-reinforcements, which had proposed the understanding that behavioural patterns had not only been influenced by external factors and varying visual stimuli but also that individuals – or collective groups of people – had possessed the power of directing their own decision-making processes and behavioural choices. Bandura (1976) had also suggested the insight that individuals who had participated in research studies had exercised control over their actions by imposing intrinsic values and applying personal standards, as well as rewarding themselves once they had successfully achieved their goals. These insights had consequently undermined multiple longstanding psychological – and other behavioural – theories, which had more specifically attributed behavioural changes merely to externally persuasive influences or consequences, while further expanding upon the viewpoint that self-regulation, taking personal responsibility, and agency over oneself had played a crucial role (Bandura, 1976).

In connection with Albert Bandura's theory, Williams (1983) had conducted an in-depth investigation of related principles of reinforcement, which had alluded to the perspective that 'behavioural reinforcement' had not only been dependent on the specific timing of responses and related consequences received, but further on other interpretative models such as 'contingency' and 'correlation-theories'. While Williams (1983) had not specifically or directly interacted with this 'Social Learning Theory', the author had, however, made observations pertaining to both 'predictiveness' and 'reinforcement mechanisms', which had been aligned with Bandura's theoretical claim that had argued that learning processes had occurred through direct reinforcements or observations. These substantive confirmations from Williams (1983) had, moreover, affirmed that substitutional learning had been a remarkable determining factor of behaviour within both social and cultural spheres.

Within his earlier work, Rushton (1982) had contributed towards studies related to the mechanisms of 'moral development', while having stressed the point that observational learning,

observational imitation, and observational modelling—the three key components emphasized within the ‘Social Learning Theory’—had been crucial for the obtainment and attainment of moral norms. Rushton (1982) had also maintained the interpretational perspective that ‘moral cognition’ had been particularly moulded by environmental – or external – factors and forces, as opposed to innate and intrinsic tendencies. Indirectly, Rushton (1982) had presented an alternative viewpoint and contrary model, which had argued that Fine Arts products and related cultural artefacts had shared in the foundational intended purposes of ‘moral learning’ and ‘societal transformation’. One can therefore make a credible argument that, similarly, Art Movements such as the Renaissance time period, Romanticism, and the Cubism Art Movement had articulated and advocated for the shifting of moral frameworks, while in doing so having substantiated Albert Bandura’s views related to observation and imitation as influential and instrumental vehicles for both cultural and moral progress.

Reciprocal determinism had been further demonstrated as it relates to the ‘Social Learning Theory’ by Ebel (1977), with the assumption from this scholar that human behaviour had been governed by both internal personality factors as well as external environmental influences and conditions. Ebel (1977) had also observed that Albert Bandura had combined and interwoven diverse psychological perspectives, which had further resulted in the culmination of a comprehensive framework that had refrained from acknowledging – or engaging with – perspectives related to learning which had been both simplistic and reductive in nature. The research views communicated by Ebel (1977) had also concluded that the gradual formation of human behaviours had not only been developed through direct reinforcement but through means of intentional modelling, careful observation, and the internalization thereof, which had granted a more comprehensive understanding pertaining to the various ways in which people ‘make sense of’ – and ultimately relate to – their social contexts.

On the contrary, Wren (1982) had criticized the ‘Social Learning Theory’ proposed by Bandura, based upon its metaethical shortcomings, and had made the counter-argument that Bandura had, within his analysis of human behavioural trends, failed to address the aspect and role that had been played by ‘self-direction’, ‘personalized responsibility’, as well as potential intrinsic convictions, which had resulted in perceived ‘moral behaviour’. Although Wren (1982) had acknowledged that Bandura had combined the foundational elements pertaining to cognition and had applied them within a ‘collective cognitive psychology framework’, Wren (1982) had promoted the perspective that Bandura's moral theory had only consisted of fragmented components revolving around the mechanisms of cognition but had been limited since the analysis hadn’t included a deep consideration of moral issues – which, in the opinion of Wren (1982), should have formed part of any honest and genuine ethical investigation. Bandura's initial emphasis on the role of ‘human imitation’ without the necessary consideration of internal cognitive processes had later been reversed. The additional fact that Albert Bandura had also

later acknowledged the critical role of attention and retention had subsequently highlighted the critical role of 'internalization' as it pertains to human moral development. Moreover, this acknowledgement had further advanced the 'Social Learning Theory' past mere behavioural observation.

Together, Bandura (1976), Williams (1983), Rushton (1982), Ebel (1977), and Wren (1982) had collectively illustrated that Albert Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory' had brought in-depth clarification and insight regarding the internal mechanisms upon which behavioural learning and moral learning had been primarily built, not only through the observation of others but also through the processing of new information encountered and interaction with environmental factors. Therefore, through the framework of Fine Arts as an instrumental vehicle for conveying cultural values, the 'Social Learning Theory' had uniquely uncovered ways through which historical Arts Movements had governed change. Therefore, the compelling argument can be made that Fine Arts Movements such as the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Cubism had been examples of the very embodiment of Albert Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory' principles, through having engaged viewers in reflective cognitive processes while having introduced – and exposed – them to new values and perspectives. Therefore, these Fine Arts Movements had also granted a voice to cultural expression and had served as demonstrations of how human behaviour, moral development, and cultural virtues had been moulded throughout various time periods in history.

5.4.1.2 Example of How 'The Arnolfini Portrait' (1434) by Jan van Eyck from the Renaissance Art Movement Had Supported Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, within the Context of Fine Arts as Advocate for Cultural Change

Within the context of Fine Arts as an agent of cultural change and transformation, Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait (1434) from the Renaissance Art Movement had been a highly effective artistic personification of the 'Social Learning Theory' as was constructed by Albert Bandura. Bandura (1976) had formulated his 'Social Learning Theory' with the research-based angle that human behaviour had been increasingly regulated through means of external stimuli, including observational learning, processes related to cognition, and self-reinforcement. From this psychological premise, the principles which had been inherent to the Arnolfini Portrait had been indirectly reiterated and applied through its clear visual transmission and advocacy of proposed social norms, values, and behaviours, as had primarily been expressed, viewed, and interpreted through the lens of Renaissance societal structures (Bandura, 1976).

Furthermore, The Arnolfini Portrait from the historical Renaissance time-period had most certainly served as substantiation of the 'Social Learning Theory' in regards to potentially having been

an exemplified model for a particular social stance and social instrument for cultural persuasion. Bandura (1969) had strongly argued that learning had most frequently occurred through means of both observation and the imitation of certain prominent role models within a society—including through the repetitive heralding, teaching, and retelling of cultural stories, legends, and fables which had communicated key cultural values. Within this portrait, a visual representation had been intentionally created of an idealized Renaissance marriage with a distinct focus upon highly esteemed cultural values from this time-period, like marital loyalty, fidelity, societal status, and wealth. Seidel (1989) had moreover commented upon how Jan van Eyck had deliberately added symbolic visual components such as the 'joined hands,' a 'singular burning candle,' and a 'small dog' in order to place visual emphasis upon societal themes pertaining to unity, long-lasting loyalty, honesty, and integrity with public viewership as witness. This portrait had not merely mirrored the social order reflected within the relevant cultural settings and circumstances which had been the norm during the Renaissance time-period, but had also served as a lesson in regards to having repeated behavioural expectations to the audiences who had experienced and viewed this painting during the particular historical time-period (Bandura, 1969; Seidel, 1989).

Furthermore, Bandura (1971) had suggested that 'social learning' had been further strengthened by substitutional life experiences which had allowed individuals to obtain additional interpretational meaning from the behaviours of others, which had been followed by consequences that had been educationally informative in and of itself. The Arnolfini Portrait had therefore been a prime example of such, while having illustrated the exceptionally sought-after wealth and high social status of the Arnolfini familial bloodline in a passive manner which had subtly promoted the upholding of the Christian faith, righteous moral living, and the attainment of a social life through the prism of faith-based principles which had led to wealth and high social status. In support of this stance, Carroll (1993) had maintained that Arnolfini's representation within this portrait had been that of an honest and faithful businessman. Therefore, the intentionality behind this representation had been aimed towards solidifying his own legacy among merchants and financiers from the Renaissance time-period. Therefore, the effective social modelling of desirable character traits had also attempted to alter European cultural perceptions related to success through the demonstration of success through integrity, which had consequently promoted the shifting of cultural perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural decision-making.

Additionally, The Arnolfini Portrait had effectively facilitated the transmission of preferred social standards, practices, and norms through means of multiple symbolic reinforcements, which had further been a key component of the 'Social Learning Theory' presented by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1986). Colenbrander (2005) had moreover pointed out that Jan van Eyck's meticulous attention to detail,

including the inclusion of religious iconography and reflective surfaces, had encouraged deeper contemplation and interpretation related to cultural moral values. For example, the mirror at the centre of the composition, which had contained depictions of the Passion of Christ, had further reinforced moral and religious values. These collective symbolic representations had therefore more effectively and insightfully shaped the public understanding as it related to 'ethical conduct' within both European marital and mercantile contexts. The Arnolfini Portrait's dissemination of moral expectations through suggestive visual representation for the sake of advocacy purposes had further paralleled Bandura's assertion that learning had been enhanced through symbolic interactions and repetitive representational modelling (Bandura, 1986; Colenbrander, 2005).

The Arnolfini Portrait's cultural impacts (through the lens of Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory') had played a part in the development of 'self-efficacy,' a key aspect of the 'Social Learning Theory,' which had referred to an individual's self-perception and convictions regarding his or her own capability in relation to controlling their own personal environment (Bandura, 1977). Taking into consideration its meticulous realism and multi-faceted symbolism, the painting had offered a visual vision of not only intrinsic self-motivation and self-determination but further mastery of one's personal situation. Alongside this viewpoint, Howell (2020) had observed that Arnolfini had intentionally and strategically been depicted in this portrait with his hand lifted in an oath-like gesture, in order to imply his state of authorial agency and of self-control, a position of alleged honour. This interpretation of The Arnolfini Portrait had most evidently reflected Bandura's theoretical analysis, which had strongly argued that people had historically incorporated verbal and social cues from their perceived or designated role models and had, based upon this, transferred imitative cues to their own social contexts, thereby "spreading," promoting, and advocating for the expanded adoption of cultural beliefs through means of observational learning.

Based upon the collective view presented by Bandura (1976), Seidel (1989), Carroll (1993), Colenbrander (2005), and Howell (2020), The Arnolfini Portrait had primarily functioned as an influential visual tool, which had, centuries later, indirectly aligned with Bandura's Social Learning Theory through means of having modelled idealized societal behaviours, reinforced moral values, and thereby shaped cultural perceptions through symbolic communication. The collective consensus had seemed to suggest that this painting had not merely reflected social values from the Renaissance Era but had also actively contributed towards their individual perpetuation, thereby demonstrating the powerful role of Fine Arts as having been an effective instrument for observational learning and revolutionary cultural change.

5.4.2.1 A Brief Introduction Related to the 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' - Which Had Been Constructed by Leon Festinger

Aronson (1997) had placed an exceptional degree of emphasis on the fact that Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory had been fundamentally based upon the psychological discomfort of individuals when having been torn between conflicting intrinsic beliefs or social attitudes, while it had been exactly this key point that had caused them to develop consistency throughout changes as it had related to their belief systems and behavioural attitudes. Aronson (1997) had further attributed to Festinger's work a somewhat reawakening of social psychology through means of having incorporated cognitive and motivational elements while having illustrated how people had actively created meaning based upon their individual lived experiences. Aronson (1997) had additionally drawn a correlation and association between cognitive dissonance and Fine Arts Movements—such as the Renaissance Arts Movements, Romanticism, and the Cubism Art Movement—which had extrapolated from that which had defied broadly accepted social norms and had engendered cultural revolutions.

Later, Wong (2009) had further built on this understanding and interpretation of the 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' by having addressed it from a sociocultural perspective, with the angle of considering interdependent cultures that had focused on separate, personalized validation. Wong (2009) had moreover claimed that these standardized cultural outlines and social norms had dictated the integration and management of 'cognitive dissonance'—especially among Fine Arts Movements, where traditional trends and practice in comparison to innovative initiative had long been at odds. In return, this had led to societal dissonance and articulatory change (Wong, 2009).

In cohesion with Aronson (1997) and Wong (2009), Auster (1965) had previously examined the foundational principles of the 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' in relation to changes that had occurred within an individual's or group's belief systems and had found that many individuals had sought consistency when they had been confronted with conflicting information (for example, in the case of a persuasive and ideological film), which had given rise to belief changes and public opinion. Auster (1965) had pointed out that people had been frequently swayed by these forms of visual stimuli despite their initial oppositional viewpoints, which had served as a portrayal of the extent to which cognitive dissonance had affected attitudes on individual, group, or cultural levels. This had been further in line with the impact of previous artistic movements like Romanticism and Cubism, which had presented strongly persuasive arguments to audiences as it had related to the rethinking of their earlier perceptions of priorities.

From an entirely different angle of investigation, Davis (1967) had previously attempted to apply and incorporate components of 'cognitive dissonance' to the examination of 'medical decision-making,' which had revealed that patients had experienced great discomfort when they had received advice that had conflicted with their original convictions and prior beliefs. The author had contended that compliance with medical guidance had been contingent and reliant upon sociological and psychological factors, which had mirrored more predominant and overpowering societal pressures. Even as demonstrated within the remarkable cultural shifts that had been observed during the Renaissance and the Romanticism time periods, individuals had been strongly urged—and required—to adopt these new Fine Arts trends, which had embedded their status as important cultural driving forces.

Stone (2009) had already examined 'cognitive dissonance' in failed theoretical arguments, which had shown how those intrinsic beliefs that had been disproven had responded by the reassertion of their faith and furthermore by advocating for their beliefs even more forcefully. Stone (2009) had also proposed that the application of 'cognitive dissonance' had been most relevant in relation to artistic movements (within which cultural and ideological conflicts had spurred artistic innovations), as had been observed throughout the Renaissance, the Romantic time period, and the Cubism Art Movement.

The revolutionary implications of Festinger's postulation for social psychology had been commented upon by Gerard (1992), who had maintained that it had represented a departure from models that had been based on reinforcement of a repetitive nature to one that had more specifically concentrated on gaining insight in regard to how people had directly integrated inconsistencies within their belief systems and behaviours. Gerard (1992) had additionally pointed to the interpretative understanding that cognitive dissonance had created pathways for psychologists to view humanity differently compared to before—and had already been expanding this theoretical analysis to its correlating relevance to Fine Arts, especially in context to varying areas within which Fine Arts Movements had been reshaping cultural thought.

Cognitive dissonance had originally been conceptualized and explained by Festinger (1962), who had described the psychological strain that had been created by the presence of conflicting attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours—which had then, as a result thereof, been relieved through means of changing one's thoughts in order to effectively re-establish cognitive congruity. Moreover, Festinger (1962) had meticulously articulated how this dissonance had been a fundamental driving force of behavioural change, as had further been rather evident within Fine Arts, where movements such as the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Cubism had challenged audiences to not only transcend—but to

reconcile—conflicting cultural values. Furthermore, through the reconciliation of conflicting cultural values, individuals or broader cultural groups had expressed those changes through diverse art forms, thereby having contributed towards societal change.

5.4.2.2 Example of How Lady Dai's Funeral Banner from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 220) had Supported Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory, within the Context of Fine Arts as Advocate for Cultural Change

The Funeral Banner of Lady Dai, found in 1972 at Mawangdui, had provided deep insights into the cultural beliefs and values of Ancient China's Han society, which had indirectly corroborated Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance. This theory had put forth the proposed understanding that an individual who had participated within the study had experienced psychological discomfort when they had held two conflicting beliefs or when their behaviour had been inconsistent with their values. In regard to the example of Lady Dai's silk banner from the Chinese Han Dynasty, we could point to the manner in which her life had been experienced in death (where she was to flourish in her afterlife), which had corresponded with – and yet also had contrasted with – the pronounced fashion of her living existence. Therefore, there had been a life lived and a somewhat different cultural experience at the time, which had created dissonance in regard to life and death (Hung, 1992; Liu-Perkins, 2014).

The description which had been written in relation to Lady Dai on this banner had framed her elevated role throughout the afterlife, while having been surrounded by divine imagery. For example, images of dragons and celestial worlds had been illustrated right next to her, which had alluded to her saintly exaltation and celebrated acceptance in the spirit world and afterlife (Hirst, 2012).

It could therefore be argued that, in light of this perspective, the image had helped in regard to visually communicating the undeniable discomfort that people had felt in regard to the concept of 'mortality,' as well as the desire for an everlasting afterlife. The overall upholding of 'ancestral honour' had further been a highly critical aspect of the belief systems of the Han Dynasty, and as a result, rituals had focused distinctly more on ensuring smooth transitions to the afterlife, which had been further evidenced by the environment that had been afforded to Lady Dai through the depiction of objects that had been intended for her use during her next life (Hung, 1992; Mencher, n.d.).

In addition, the specific details on the design of the silk banner had directly visualized the tension which had prevailed between 'the ordinary' and 'the divine.' A life of the material goddess Lady Dai had been filled to the brim with earthly goods, a high societal status, and monetary wealth, while the function of the banner for her consecrated funeral had transcended earthly connections for peace throughout eternity. This symbolic visual approach had, in a way, reflected a cognitive dissonance which

had most likely been inescapable for those who had lived during this time period in Chinese history, who had been forced to reconcile their earthly existence with the religious practices and doctrines pertaining to death and the hereafter (Bush, 2014).

The compositional layout of the funeral banner had moreover articulated visually aesthetic choices which had revealed a cultural impetus for harmonizing these disparate perspectives – in order to create a particular desired cultural narrative. More specifically, a narrative which had praised the highly elevated standing of Lady Dai in both the world of the living and the world of the afterlife, while having concurrently assured onlookers of her divine cultural ranking and position (Bush, 2014; Chaffin, n.d.).

As Hirst (2018) had stated, the richly detailed account of mourning rituals and offerings had implied a collective attempt to alleviate cognitive dissonance related to loss through suggestive symbolism. The mourners featured on a banner directly in front of the coffin had served the purpose of indicating to the general public that, despite death, those who had passed away had deserved to receive the appropriate honour, while at the same time helping them to process their own fears pertaining to loss and 'the unknown'. This cultural representation had demonstrated how those rituals had reconciled personal beliefs related to dying and the eternal life after death with a societal practice which had already been set aside within this Chinese cultural era, that had been consistent with Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Hirst, 2018).

In agreement with the stances of Liu-Perkins (2014) and Trospen (2023), Lady Dai's Funeral Banner, as it relates to the detailed visual interplay of life, death, and afterlife within the context of the societal standards from the Han Dynasty, had been effectively captured within the refined artistic portrayal. This banner had served as a pillar of cognitive dissonance reconciliation—since it had embodied collective aspirations and belief systems regarding heavenly deities, 'God,' and the afterlife. These elements had further been synthesized within this work – in order to offer a clear reflection of 'cognitive dissonance' as had been laid out by Festinger, as well as how cultural artifacts had had the ability to visually capture and resolve the conflicts which had inhabited human belief systems (Liu-Perkins, 2014; Trospen, 2023).

5.4.3.1 A Brief Introduction Related to the 'Operant Conditioning Behavioural Theory' – Which Had Been Constructed by B.F. Skinner

The entire premise of the 'Operant Conditioning Behavioural Theory' by B.F. Skinner had been based on the research-angle and position that those within a variety of different civilizations and societal structures had essentially been the eventual products of their environments, and therefore had largely

been ignorant or unresponsive towards the influences of external stimuli, until the point at which they had been confronted with reinforcers which had continued to alter their perceptions, collective attitudes, and behaviours (Culatta & Kearsley, 2018).

Furthermore, as noted by Praveen (2017), the most central principle of the 'Operant Conditioning Theory' had been that the consequences which had followed certain behaviours had governed the probability of its eventual reoccurrence. Hence, reinforcement had been intended as one of the most critical factors – in regards to the solidification and strengthening of certain reactionary tendencies towards behavioural patterns. Therefore, from the perspective of B.F. Skinner, reoccurrences in behavioural trends had been modified in accordance with related consequences (Praveen, 2017).

Scharff (1982) had, however, meticulously examined the evolution of Skinner's 'Operant' concept, having followed this behavioural theory's unique transformation from a 'reflexive' – to a 'nonreflexive' viewpoint. Scharff (1982) had also noted that Skinner had initially defined 'operants' in 'The Behavior of Organisms' (1938) as having been reflexive to their eliciting stimuli, which had moreover been consistent with a predetermined view regarding behaviour. Yet, around the time that Skinner had completed writing 'Science and Human Behaviour' during 1953, he had reconceptualized the notion of 'operants' as behaviours which had developed through probabilistic interactions with the environment. Scharff (1982) had proposed that Skinner's deterministic investments had originally limited his ability to perceive and observe behavioural variance and, furthermore, that this limitation within the reinterpretations of his earlier work had caused him to only notice and acknowledge this shift until very late in life. As a result, however, this shift in Skinner's perspective had signalled a significant extension of 'operant conditioning,' which had suggested that the effectiveness of reinforcements had had far more relevance to what had happened subsequent to the response, instead of the response itself (Scharff, 1982).

Malone (1975) had additionally presented the compelling argument that the 'role of reinforcement' had been the most impactful aspect of Skinner's 'Operant Conditioning Theory.' While it had encompassed a wide range of human behaviours, including cognitive functions and language, a homogeneous emphasis upon reinforcement had led to an eventual oversimplification of the most complex of psychological insights, analyses, theories, and applied practices. Malone (1972) had further noted that although behavioural modification had succeeded in practice, Skinner's presented framework, while standing on its own, had failed to adequately elucidate and clarify all related areas of the human experience, which had led to the need for considering more expansive and comprehensive psychological theories (Malone, 1975).

Kazepides (1976) had further criticized the inadequacy of 'Operant Conditioning,' particularly as it had related to the reality of educational contexts. Kazepides (1976) had argued that, while the

application of reinforcement had clearly played a pivotal function in regards to learning processes, Skinner's theory had neglected the consideration of intrinsic motivational factors which had led to self-governance and independent thinking within the context of intellectual development. The author had also cautioned that an over-emphasis on reinforcement had risked incorrectly viewing education through the slanted prism of merely being a 'mechanistic process,' whilst completely disregarding the more nuanced cognitive and ethical attributes of learning (Kazepides, 1976).

As commented upon by Williams (1983), mechanized behavioural psychology had gradually begun to uncover the interpretive possibilities and connections which had been associated with the principle of reinforcement, which had, in return, become overly complicated and had exceeded well beyond the basic temporal pairing of stimulus due to its 'non-Pavlovian' response. Williams (1983) had also underscored the critical importance of predictive relations between responses and reinforcers, while having observed that knowledge pertaining to this predictiveness had been entirely essential for the efficacy of reinforcement. Williams (1983) had even gone as far as to address the difference between how his practical application of Skinner's reinforcement system had operated in theory, versus how effective it had been within practical settings. Additionally, similar to the original findings of Skinner, the new system had required a much more comprehensive analysis within the text (Williams, 1983).

5.4.3.2 Example of how 'Liberty Leading the People' (1830) by Eugène Delacroix from the Romanticism Art Movement had supported the 'Operant Conditioning Theory' by B.F. Skinner, Within the Context of Fine Arts as Advocate for Cultural Change

Few had been aware that Eugène Delacroix's masterpiece titled 'Liberty Leading the People' (1830) from the Romantic Art Movement had visually represented nearly the exact same behaviourism principles which had underpinned B.F. Skinner's 'Operant Conditioning Behavioural Theory' as noted by Praveen (2017), with the understanding that Fine Arts had, in essence, fulfilled the principle of the reinforcement of behavioural norms in regard to the manner through which one culture to another had expressed themselves. Through the lens of 'operant conditioning,' therefore, Delacroix's painting had been viewed as having acted as a type of 'cultural stimulus' which had attempted to modify, alter, or re-shape public opinion, perception, and behaviour in accordance with the social and political changes which had been most prevalent at the time (Gao, 2017; Maltz-Leca, 2013).

According to Skinner (1948), the attitudes and behavioural patterns of individuals could have perhaps been different, granted that those actions had been reinforced or punished. From this perspective, the argument had been presented that humanity's actions at large, and more specifically the actions of individual societies, would have most likely manifested differently if this had been the case. These reinforcements had further emphasized positive behaviours through reward, while negative

reinforcements had intentionally removed an aversive stimulus in order to more effectively promote a particular desired behavioural outcome (Praveen, 2017).

In 'Liberty Leading the People' (1830) by Eugène Delacroix, the idealized virtues of freedom and liberty had been represented and portrayed within the subject theme, which had served as a form of motivational inspiration for the oppressed classes who had lived during 19th-century France as a positive reinforcement tool that had propelled them towards taking a revolutionary stance and, ultimately, historical progress on many levels. The painting's central figure, namely Liberty, had been visually elevated with her triumphant pose in the dramatic application of 'light,' which had strongly promoted resilience and resistance as noble and desirable behaviours (Carroll, 2017).

As suggested by Culatta & Kearsley (2018), this abstracted notion of punishment as having been a force which had weakened undesired behavioural patterns had also been further illustrated by the fallen bodies in the foreground of the painting. The dead figures observed within the foreground of the painting, each variously clothed in the attire of different social classes, had clearly signified the dire consequences of passivity and submission to tyrannical and inhumane rulership. In agreement, Malone (1975) had discussed that images of gruesome violence had functioned as an implicit deterrent against inaction, which had further strengthened the imperative for collective revolutionary behaviour through means of applying aversive conditioning.

Thus, as mentioned by Kazepides (1976), scholars had been arguing that 'operant conditioning' had transcended mere isolationist forms of individual learning and had also been responsible for cultural and societal change. 'Liberty Leading the People' by Eugène Delacroix had consequently served as an objectification tool which had created a widespread collective cultural impact, perpetuating the idea of what a revolution would entail in practical terms, in a visually representational manner.

In correlation with the observations made by Kazepides (1976), Williams (1983) had already pointed out that 'operant conditioning' within varying cultural contexts had depended greatly upon artistic publications and representations, which had, in return, led to the adoption and practice of specific behaviours. With the popularization of the image of Liberty as a monumental and somewhat universalized figurehead associated with the visual representation of a 'revolutionary coup' and the overthrowing of governance, Delacroix's masterpiece had assured that the zeal and fever of revolution had at last taken root within the cultural bloodstream of France and other European nations.

Scharff (1982) had furthermore claimed that Fine Arts could have functioned as a form of 'operant conditioning' by having provoked and stimulated certain reactionary behaviours. Eugène Delacroix's noteworthy artistic decisions, such as had been observed within the striking forward pose of Liberty and the animated expressions of figures who had been depicted around her, had served as

visual cues which had cemented the visually symbolic links between 'heroism' and 'insurrection.' The red, white, and blue colours of the French flag, which she had firmly held, had been a further conditioned stimulus which had further connected ideas of 'national identity' with concepts pertaining to the 'revolutionary cause' (Scharff, 1982).

Another essential element of Skinner's theory, as commented upon by Kazepides (1976), had been evident in connection with the influences of 'Liberty Leading the People' in regard to the development of later artistic movements and political iconography. The allegorical figure of Liberty had also been seen copied in many later versions of artistic portrayals that had followed, recalibrating and altering revolutionary idealism. Therefore, in the same manner in which 'operant conditioning' had been gradually refined over time by successively approximating behaviour, 'Liberty Leading the People' had been devoted to establishing a steadfast French consciousness as it had pertained to having been a political nation within Europe.

Therefore, in accordance with the views of Skinner (1948), Praveen (2017), Carroll (2017), Culatta & Kearsley (2018), Malone (1975), Kazepides (1976), and Scharff (1982), 'Liberty Leading the People' had successfully bolstered B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Behavioural Theory through the reinforcement of revolutionary ideals via visual stimulus, symbolic punishment, and cultural reinforcement. It would have taken significant effort to effectively re-evaluate the impact of certain philosophies and visual elements, but Delacroix's painting, with its compelling allegorical content as well as the masterful interplay of a visually impactful compositional layout and contrast of light and shadow referred to as 'chiaroscuro,' would have contributed to the shaping of societal behaviour in such a way that revolution, liberation, and resistance had all been kept relevant within the social contract of a given era. By direct association with both the movement itself and those in opposition thereof, often to the growing rage of their oppressors, Delacroix's interpretations, representations, and utilization of the Fine Arts, as defined by 'operant conditioning,' had given clinical utility to an entire cultural mechanism in which generations had been able to find inspiration in order to counter, resist, and overcome the yoke of oppression for the sake of instead embracing freedom.

5.5 Extended Psychological and Sociological Theories Substantiating the Idea That Fine Arts Had Acted as a Catalyst for Cultural Change

The initial findings within the research by Belfiore (2006) had confirmed that Fine Arts had acted as an important vehicle for cultural change. Viewed through a historical lens, however, the Arts had both been reflective of prevailing currents—or trends—and had simultaneously contributed towards the formative process of collective societal beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives.

As Belfiore (2006) had noted, highly important Art Movements had gradually developed over time as a reactionary response towards certain societal needs, as well as restrictive constraints. Additionally, this investigation had portrayed Fine Arts as both having been 'culturally transformative' in nature—including 'intrinsically interactive.' Thus, Fine Arts, by enabling critical cultural reflection, introspection, and increased open dialogue, had played an essential role related to the expansion of societal consciousness and had ultimately contributed greatly towards the reconfiguration of cultural paradigms, worldviews, belief systems, and related practices (Belfiore, 2006).

Simultaneously, Bourdieu (1968) had provided a broad exploration of how Fine Arts had interacted with social relations. His theorization had highlighted that the cultural capital of the elite had directed their appreciation of artistic work, which, in turn, had affected what tastes, standards, and expectations societies had held. The pleasure of encountering aesthetic beauty, Bourdieu had argued, had not had surface appearance so simple—that the appreciation of art had not simply been for aesthetic enjoyment, but had been an expression of the lodged systems that had captured and defined how social life had functioned. His research had offered an in-depth account of how artists had subversively employed their paintings, sculptures, ceramics or other artefacts in service of a challenge to the cultural norms of their times. This had of course, triggered vital conversations regarding identity, ethics and social justice in varied socio-cultural environments. It had showcased the capacity of Fine Arts to be culturally mobilized – and, through its myriad capabilities, solidified its role as a catalyst of social circumstance (Bourdieu, 1968).

In another deeply insightful work, Bulot and Reber (2013) had highlighted how Fine Arts had historically caused individuals to critically reflect. Within this research study, they had argued that Fine Arts had acted as a conduit for cultural conversations, particularly during times of societal tumult. Over a long duration of time, cultural values had eventually changed and had altered how these artistic movements had emerged in the face of highly difficult—and sometimes even controversial—societal challenges. It had therefore demonstrated how the Arts had fostered a sense of collective belonging and social cohesion, while having captured the hopes and struggles of communities and cultures in times of crisis and throughout the ages. Therefore, the insights of Bulot and Reber's (2013) had fitted well within the broader argument that Fine Arts had significantly shaped social beliefs and practices.

Belfiore and Bennett (2007) had also put forward the idea that the aesthetic experiences which Fine Arts had introduced had greatly mattered in regards to having developed both appropriate and relevant individual—as well as—collective responses toward them. Since the multidisciplinary character of aesthetic experiences had been a prominent aspect of their research, the findings had revealed that 'audience reaction' towards symbolic works of art had been closely intertwined with personal traits and socio-cultural history. Rather, by mapping out the dynamics of the interaction

between personal, production-related, and environmental levels, they had further illustrated how the intricate aspects of Fine Arts had functioned, not only as an interdisciplinary category of the Arts, but had also opened up the pathways to increased public conversations, whilst dismantling the rigidity of collective cultural thinking. Thus, their results had matched the broader conclusion amongst scholars that Fine Arts had been an important part of the 'change-agents' throughout history (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007).

In addition, Bourdieu (1984) had re-examined the mechanisms behind the link between Fine Arts and cultural change. He had suggested that the "art code" had been a historically produced classification system that had lain astride the junction of aesthetic reception and trends of reception in society. The "art code" had established demarcations around aesthetics, defining collective cognitions concerning the valuation of culture or cultural expressions. Bourdieu (1984) had also critically assessed and evaluated ways through which these processes might have impacted, altered, and shaped the world of Fine Arts, particularly in terms of the tension between long-standing practices of the mere 'enjoyment of Art' and new perspectives pertaining to the 'role / purpose of Fine Arts'—especially changes in regards to having mirrored the wider societal ideologies and values of society at large. This conceptualisation had significantly contributed towards reaffirming the notion of Fine Arts as an important agent in the reconceptualization of social formations and collective ideologies (Bourdieu, 1984).

In addition, Bayer and Liman Turan (2023) had considered both methods and avenues through which Visual Arts activities might have affected and forever changed the lived experience of either individuals with special needs or learning barriers. As a result, their investigative research-study had revealed that the application of Creative Arts Therapies had consequently produced a statistically significant reduction in stress levels, while it had simultaneously also promoted the further development of 'social skills' in their participants. This study had demonstrated that Fine Arts had contained healing aspects and had thus acted as an important agent of social change, inspiring participants to reframe their experiences and perceptions of social constructs and values.

In uniformity and support of this viewpoint, Cole (2021) had examined the impact of social norms on people's personal experiences in the Visual Arts. Cole (2021) had found that positive social norms toward Fine Arts had played an important role in influencing how people had engaged with Fine Arts and had ultimately integrated it into their identity. Through means of specified social frameworks and varying artistic practices, Fine Arts had prominently featured in shaping and reshaping cultural standards, as noted by this research study. Furthermore, the artists had been decisive in stating that societal beliefs and value systems pertaining to Fine Arts had been constantly changing, which in return

had indicated that Fine Arts had considerably impacted cultural landscapes from a dynamic point of view (Cole, 2021).

Ewen (1999-2000), who had convincingly expelled the conduct of 'visual persuasion' within the sphere of Fine Arts productivity and Art-making processes, had made it known how Fine Arts, as a representational medium, had influenced public opinions and widespread cultural perspectives—more specifically, in regards to having elaborated upon how prominent cultural leaders and communicators had strategically utilized stimulating visual images to intentionally attract audiences through the provocation of emotionalism, as well as on psychological levels. At the same time, the utilization of persuasive visual rhetoric by powerful societal figures who had enlisted and manipulated the emotions of the masses had ultimately resulted in changes within both social conditions and societal practices. The premise suggested by Ewen (1999-2000) had therefore laid the foundation for later research to expand upon the perspective and understanding that visual representation had been far more than simply a reflection of society. In fact, this research study had proposed that Fine Arts had been an indispensable factor in moulding social ideologies (Ewen, 1999-2000).

Ewen's conclusions had been further substantiated by Dissanayake (1980), who, having considered the effect of Fine Arts on society, had concluded that 'common-sense' knowledge had shared in a collective end-goal. Silva (2021) had moreover corroborated Dissanayake (1980) on every aspect, as the author had referred to many research theories which had complemented this proposed notion, substantiating that artistic expression had reflected socio-political contexts. These socio-political contexts had further reflected Fine Artists within their respective paradigms of transmission, as interpreters of the collective identities of their individual societal contexts, backgrounds, and cultural settings. The research findings by Dissanayake (1980) had therefore positioned Fine Arts as an arena within which contradictions had arisen, as well as challenged dominant ideologies, and where it had been suggested that Fine Arts had become instrumental in the development of contemporary cultural consciousness. According to Dissanayake (1980), Fine Arts had thus become a vehicle for communities to forge their identities, telling larger cultural stories while also challenging dominant modes of social organization.

Joffe (2008) had further developed inferences from these baseline arguments, elaborating upon the emotive power of visual material within social contexts. Joffe had particularly demonstrated how Visual Arts / Fine Arts had created empathetic engagement with audiences, while the author had also presented a strong argument to suggest that Fine Arts had played a catalyst role for cultural change through the visual communication of complex ideas – in order to raise awareness of important social issues. Such involvement had released emotional pathways that had defined public perceptions and had stimulated deep contemplation of social issues. Consequently, Fine Arts objects had become important

agents within the constitution of broader cultural discourses and the generation of social change (Joffe, 2008).

Common Ground Research Networks (2019) had previously illustrated unequivocal essays where Fine Arts had acted as a 'peace-making agent' within a historic milieu, thus corroborating Joffe's viewpoint. The artists had cast themselves as visionaries and agents of change in the wake of momentous events that had included the Warsaw Pact Invasion of 1968 and the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Using their creativity, Fine Artists had therefore encouraged and activated communities to pursue both social justice and reformation within their distinctly individualized contexts. Therefore, with Fine Arts as a key medium, Fine Artists had mobilized public discourse as well as demonstrated what powerful visual imagery had been able to achieve in order to undercut and shift normative values. Fine Arts had therefore played a crucial role in guiding cultural opinions and had the capability of evoking change throughout the fabric of societies (Common Ground Research Networks, 2019).

Additionally, Jhangiani and Tarry (2022) had been pioneers in regards to having presented theories of attitudes and behaviors which had provided further comprehensive insights into how Fine Arts had an impact upon cultural circumstances. They had effectively illustrated how the expressions of artists had affected individual attitudes and had conformed with their individualized social contexts, indicating that the artworks had the power to permanently alter collective societal and cultural behaviors. This conclusive perspective had therefore proposed the understanding that the social connectedness of Fine Arts by proxy had the ability to change thinking processes of the human mind as well as behavioral traits, which had led to the evolution of a human society (Jhangiani and Tarry, 2022).

Likewise, Jin and Ye (2022) had explored the effect that Fine Arts education had had in relation to the psychological well-being of higher education students, having suggested that Art education had stimulated both individual creativity and self-efficacy. According to Jin and Ye (2022), students had been exposed to different cultural points of view through different artistic media / correspondents, which had added to their understanding of, and a respect for, social morals. This had been presumed to have uniquely altered their core beliefs and intrinsic values, as well as had inspired cultural transformation, especially since students had been engaged in the learning of critical thinking and the expression of emotions (Jin and Ye, 2022).

Furthermore, Joo et al. (2014) had brought an interesting perspective regarding the analysis of the social aspects of visual media, while having argued that images related to 'mass media' had permeated the fabric of prevailing social beliefs and ideological norms. Joo et al. (2014) had also claimed that social media had not only contributed towards this particular phenomenon but had also radicalized it due to the mediation of information regarding significant events, such as, for example, during

historical uprisings or political protests. Although this research had not been solely or exclusively focused upon Fine Arts, it had provided valid evidence to suggest that visual representations had, in fact, influenced people's framing of specific events and overall public perception, while it had further shaped societal attitudes over an extended period of time. By breaking down the subtleties of persuasive imagery, therefore, Joo et al. (2014) had profoundly revealed how Visual Arts, even when the relevant frameworks or contexts had not been intentional in nature, could become co-conspirators and agents of systems that have the potential capability of engendering wider cultural shifts (Joo et al., 2014).

Some studies had outlined how the Fine Arts had engendered social change. For example, Lindström et al. (2021) had expressed that artistic-expressions had remarkably assisted in leading necessary critical conversations within communities and had created opportunities that most effectively reflected and discussed some of the most pressing social matters, which had included marginalization and inequality. Their analysis had revealed ways through which Fine Arts-related initiatives had mobilized communities to rethink societal values and strengthen collective identity.

This claim, presented by Lindström et al. (2021), had been reinforced by Gabriel (2021), who had elaborated upon the mimetic function of literature and drama, which had further modelled fundamental moral ideals. The presentation of cultural narratives and related cultural stories in these forms had distinctly helped to encourage and stimulate moral conversation and empathetic sympathy throughout different time periods and across cultures. Consequently, this had enlarged both spheres of cognitive and emotional responses, while it had also enabled communities to successfully grapple with contested values (Lindström et al., 2021; Gabriel, 2021).

Over a decade earlier, Gallant (2014) had presented persuasive evidence suggesting that Fine Arts had encouraged civic engagement and social solidarity. Their papers had therefore demonstrated a positive relationship between Fine Arts literacy and civic involvement. In other words, involvement in the Arts had therefore been linked to civic responsibility. The correlation between community outcomes and Fine Arts participation had demonstrated that artistic expression had not been merely a mirror of social ideologies but had, in fact, been a crucial driving force of those ideologies. This transformative possibility had become a conscious reality when one had begun to see how Fine Arts had contributed heavily towards the changing cultural milieu within educational contexts (Gallant, 2014).

Moreover, the emotional cross-pollination in Fine Arts disciplines had emphasized how the visual form had affected social habits. According to Hussain (2021), the application of colour psychology in Art Therapy, for example, had acted as a mediator, which in return had enabled the effective and convincing persuasion to change the specific cultural beliefs and cultural values related to

a particular society. The intentional application and employment of certain colour or colour schemes, when used by artists, had led audiences to contemplate complex emotional states, potentially creating a place for deeper psychological processing, cross-civilization contemplation, and deep intrinsic self-reflection. This research study had therefore proposed the understanding that this Arts-related interaction had revealed the therapeutic merits of Fine Arts in a provocative manner, whilst elucidating how emotional echoes within artworks had refracted physical expressions of culture and social conventions (Hussain, 2021).

In further support, the research findings of Kang (2010) had highlighted the key behaviours related to cultural consumption and interactive engagements with Fine Arts. It had long been known through their findings that indicators of turning points in audience attitudes had actually predated changes in societal attitudes, suggesting that Fine Arts had been an impactful facilitator of broader cultural consciousness. Drawing on insights pertaining to the complex interplay between Artistic engagement and the consumption of Fine Arts, this study had highlighted how this correlating information had been able to assist cultural organizations in shaping specific messages as a means to successfully promote greater understanding, recognition, and support for the Arts. As suggested, these strategies had been used to advance cultural and social evolution even further (Kang, 2010).

Following this line of thematic exploration, Kim et al. (2020) had explored the influence of Fine Arts upon the behavioural trends of consumers and had discovered that Artistic components had indeed been able to make a significant difference in a consumer's choice process. The information produced by Kim et al. (2020) had revealed that visual cues had triggered emotional responses but had further also transformed both product perceptions and judgments among the broader public. Such manipulation of cognitive and emotional resources in consumer contexts had illuminated the relevance of Fine Arts in recalibrating cultural norms and values regarding and within the context of consumer behaviours and had thereby indirectly proved the notion that it was undeniably possible to humanize public perceptions pertaining to 'material culture' (Kim et al., 2020).

Further, the study by Kozbelt and Seeley (2007) had highlighted the profound role of Fine Arts with regard to improving perceptual and cognitive skills, which had further shaped larger cultural footprints. Their discussions and debates revolving around artistic intentions had provided a revelation regarding the ways such heightened perceptions had altered and changed the ways through which individuals had viewed their surroundings, as well as potentially challenging social dynamics and standards, frameworks, and expectations. It had therefore been concluded that creative engagements had carved lanes of dialogue pertaining to cultural identity, politics, socio-economic and societal structures,

thereby establishing the premise that Fine Arts had not just been about representation, but rather had become indispensable agents of cultural dialogue (Kozbelt and Seeley, 2007).

According to Maxwell (2004), Fine Arts had become a major engine for cultural change, while significantly impacting and altering how audiences had perceived their individual realities and personal identity. The findings produced by Maxwell (2004) had unveiled the insight and understanding that gifted Fine Artists had both special cognitive and perceptual capabilities and advantages, which had exceeded the abilities of the average person. This had allowed Fine Arts to become more immersed in the experimentation of visual stimuli and symbolic representation. Maxwell (2004) had therefore successfully generated discourses with transformative social potential through the extended and comprehensive explorations of creative processes. In other words, artistic manifestations had moved along the philosophical and societal trends and engagements of their respective time periods, which had resulted in the weaving together of Fine Arts and culture in a non-linear manner (Maxwell, 2004).

Following up on this discussion, McCarron (2021) had strongly contended that the 'visual persuasion' of 'visual cues,' symbols, and suggestion found within Fine Arts, had served as a potential encouragement to viewers—as it had related to 're-thinking' and 're-doing' formerly relied-upon traditions. McCarron (2021) had thoroughly examined how different avenues and levels of artistic expression had influenced and redefined cultural beliefs, principles, and practices, while thereby having affected new mental/psychological and social mappings, as well as cultural paradigms in specific communities. From this perspective, Fine Arts had acted as a catalyst for significant changes within collective cultural consciousness, which had united structured sectors of Fine Arts and broader societal frameworks (McCarron, 2021).

Pelowski et al. (2016) had also offered ample evidence that the emotional, cognitive, and contextual elements inherent in viewers' engagements with works of Art, had been determined as essential factors which had been to be taken into account – in order to most effectively and insightfully grasp the multifaceted nature of influences, impacts, and effects of Fine Arts. The research they cited had collectively portrayed a convincing argument that not only had it proposed that 'immediate-aesthetic-experiences' had produced emotional responses – while simultaneously, long-time and consistent engagements had proven to produce shifts within both individuals themselves and the foundational structures of their relevant cultures. Thus, their review had emphasized how cognitive appraisals engendered within several and diverse Artistic encounters, had resonated not merely on individual levels, but had also impacted collective societal levels (Pelowski et al., 2016).

In a similar vein, Preminger (2012) had argued that due to the fact that Fine Artists had been able to successfully manipulate human perception through the application of pre-planned visual stimulus, the outcome and impact for the final 'created experience' had led to neuroplastic changes

within the observer's brain, which ultimately had instilled cognition and behavioural transformation. This research had therefore reaffirmed the significant importance and relevant intense involvement of diverse disciplines of Fine Arts, cinema, and plastic arts – within context to its role in influencing social ideologies and collective values. The historical context from the findings of this research investigation had been considered as a small contributing component which had substantiated the perspective that Fine Arts had played pivotal roles in regards to shaping socio-cultural narratives—while having reiterated Fine Arts as a powerful agent of social change (Preminger, 2012).

Previously, Quemin (2017) had also contextualized such an exploration of Fine Arts with respect to its capability of being a 'catalyst of cultural change'—by having placed the sociological framework within the context of Art-making processes and Fine Arts representation. His research by Quemin (2017) had focused upon how the collective practices around the production, distribution, and consumption of Arts had both reflected and had been transformative in regards to varying ways in which individuals from different societal standings had interacted with each other. Artworks that had defined aesthetic values as well as had engaged in social critiques and criticisms, had thus lent credence to the claim that Fine Arts had historically not only had changed – but also had elevated societal ideologies and values (Quemin, 2017).

Further building upon the expertise of his predecessors, Silva (2021) had investigated this complex relationship that Fine Arts had maintained with social transformation under three significant and compelling theoretical perspectives. This multifaceted framework had underscored the most important and relevant dynamics of 'supply-side drivers' of Artistic productions and 'demand-side drivers' of audience engagements. The empirical research of Silva (2021) had therefore illustrated how collectively constituted Artistic creations and their sensitivity towards particular social environments, had profoundly influenced, impacted, and altered the belief systems, values, and normative behaviour amongst diverse societies. As such, Silva (2021) had positioned Fine Arts as a powerful social vehicle that had played a role in the changing socio-cultural context by providing newly realized symbolic interpretations and meanings – as well as through means of having contested currently held ideologies within specific time periods in history.

Furthermore, by having demonstrated the effects of visual representations, especially positive ones upon the audience's beliefs and values, Seo (2020) had provided additional support for this psychological and sociolegal research-based argument. Through means of having incorporated and having applied the 'dual-coding-theory' as a guiding framework, the findings of Seo (2020) had demonstrated that properly framed visual stimuli had been able to dramatically improve the understanding and recall capabilities of persuasive messages, and had acted as a driving force of cultural change. These findings had turned out to have served as a powerful exploration of the ways in which

Fine Arts, so often grounded in a specific cultural moment of great significance, had historically allowed societies to engage with their cultural paradigms and distil them out as visual representations. Thus, embedded within this realm of context, the transformative power of Fine Arts had been delivered through the lenses that individuals, cultures, and societies had created themselves (Seo, 2020).

Fine Arts had throughout history assisted in the changing of cultural attitudes and long-upheld societal traditions through having been a motivational force for change (Schroeder, 2002). The author had emphasized how the strategic central placement of visual literacy (of which images had been seen as a visual form of communication articulated within representations, namely advertising, both of which had been very much a prop of Fine Arts in terms of assisting with conveying cultural views through Fine Arts and similarly traditional phonics), had been a necessary vocabulary in regards to having enabled an exploration of the multifaceted nature of social phenomena (Schroeder, 2002).

In alignment with this premise, Ragsdale (2020) had concluded that the evolution of museums had moved from being protectors of Fine Arts to advancing human enlightenment and thus influencing social ideologies through the preservation of artistic work. Museums had moved from being viewed with societal scepticism to being known as places for public engagement and education, which had also greatly contributed towards the consistent alteration of public attitudes and societal values (Ragsdale, 2020).

As for Fine Arts studies, Spee et al. (2022) had noted that this niche area of research had remained mostly focused on improving the effects of Fine Arts upon society within its broader entirety – including impacts upon individual personalities. For instance, Spee et al. (2022) had confirmed that artistic expressions had invariably gone beyond mere aesthetic appreciation, while they had further served as both reflections and critiques of dominant – and widely upheld – cultural ideologies. The authors had, in particular, studied and more closely examined Abstract Arts and had consequently determined that there had been a high degree of variability within the evaluation of Abstract artworks, especially within the context of public opinion and their diverse social reputations. The researchers had more specifically revealed how artworks had been both culturally interpreted and received within larger social conversations, critiquing standardized societal perceptions, favourability, and norms – and as a result thereof, had enabled cultural progress (Spee et al., 2022).

Moreover, an earlier study by Stamkou & Keltner (2020) had already provided a thorough framework highlighting the ability of Fine Arts to inspire social reflection and ongoing cultural change. Prior to the previously listed research investigation, Stamkou & Keltner (2020) had produced compelling evidence that had indicated Fine Arts had provoked emotional responses on an individual level. Simultaneously, this research had also supported the perspective that Fine Arts had evoked the formation of collective identities and had generated critically important cultural conversations, which

hadn't always aligned with predominant societal perspectives, standards, and practices. Therefore, Fine Arts had often directly challenged the existing conditions of a particular time period. One of the empirical bases had more convincingly demonstrated that Fine Arts had functioned as an instrumental pathway to the creation of new cultural evolution, which had continually and progressively shifted the collective cultural lenses and collective attention towards the importance of social matters—particularly in regard to having validated the conditional role and purpose of Fine Arts productions as essential agents for socio-cultural change (Stamkou & Keltner, 2020).

Furthermore, Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019) had previously provided appealing and thought-provoking insights pertaining to how live theatrical Fine Arts performance had served as a catalyst for change within cultural contexts. They had discovered throughout the course of their research study that engagement with live musical – or theatrical – performances had been a meaningful catalyst for audience reception, since, more often than not, participants had been left experiencing an accepting sense of shared community, as well as a feeling of solidarity. Mourik Broekman et al. (2019) made a further statement regarding the fact that these communally-shared artistic experiences had significantly assisted in the gradual formation of strengthened emotional bonds among viewers and audiences from different backgrounds, which had ultimately led to the internalization of collective cultural – or societal values and connections. It had also been responsible for the further dissemination of—or the undoing of—previously established core values within different cultures. Hence, the performances had served as meaningful representations of cultural narratives, while further having supported the claim that Fine Arts had been a vital part of sociocultural normative standards and practice throughout different time periods (Van Mourik Broekman et al., 2019).

This narrative had previously been supported by Yilmaz and Yilmaz (2019), who had revealed domains through which 'visual culture'—by means of various Arts disciplines (painting, photography, and digital media)—had impacted the behaviours and attitudes of individuals and larger cultural constructs. Their explorations had revealed how such perceptual encounters had engendered a more meaningful zeal between individuals and their wider socio-cultural environments, shaping and transforming social norms and customs through a popular process of 'visual articulation' (Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2019). Such engagements had focused on the knowledge and practices of Fine Arts inhabiting the more traditional spaces that had defined cultures and transformed intercultural interrelations, thus mediating wider cultural conversations (Yilmaz and Yilmaz, 2019).

Vernazzani (2021) had also emphasized that the appreciation of artworks from the angle of assessing their aesthetic attributes -or qualities, had contributed towards an increasingly growing awareness of the valuable aesthetic properties of artworks amongst Art connoisseurs, collectors and regular 'Art lovers' alike. The findings of Vernazzani (2021) had interestingly disclosed that the

viewing, revision, and evaluation of contemporary artworks had prompted and encouraged audiences to more intently reflect on everyday aesthetic dimensions, which had spurred an appreciation that had been inclined to blur the distinction between 'High Art' and everyday culture. This convergence had further permeated this belief related to the evolving domain (within the context of its relation to the potential and role of Art within society), as well as having strengthened the perception of Fine Arts as a means for cultural exchange and improved cultural dialogue.

In addition to this, Talley (2023) had recorded the potentially powerful capabilities of contemporary Art to serve as a form of protest and advocacy, noting how Fine Arts could be effectively utilized to amplify a series of marginalized voices. By therefore having integrated social concerns of great importance—such as poverty, war, and inequality—into the realm of Fine Arts, Talley (2023) had made it clear how these artworks had managed to foster greater recognition while they had simultaneously shifted public consciousness regarding social beliefs and other taboos. The article underscoring the findings of Talley (2023) had continued to further discuss specific examples like the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which had impactfully galvanized public sentiment and had eventually led to the changing of a health policy. This example and overall findings had thereby cemented the research-based perspective that Fine Arts had often been created as a vehicle for social change (Talley, 2023).

In further corroboration, Specker (2023) had ultimately proved, by means of fluid examination of artistic activations within diverse socio-economic and cultural settings, that Fine Arts had in fact addressed wider cultural concerns. The result had exhibited that individuals had tended to relate to particular underlying symbolisms, themes, and values within artworks, not only through means of applying personalized introspection but also in correlation with their reconfiguration of cultural understandings. At the same time, Specker (2023) had also emphasized both individual and collective needs for interdisciplinary practices in order to completely grasp the more detailed role of Fine Arts within the context of well-being and health with regard to the personal flourishing of individuals, including on a communal scale. The discovery of this investigative account had provided substantiating arguments to suggest that interactions with Fine Arts activities had been remarkably effective in the negotiation of newly accepted values and transformed cultural narratives.

As discussed by Zhao et al. (2023), the perceptive nature of artistic strokes and stylistic patterns—or trends found in paintings—had proven to be an important stimulant for cultural shifts, while it had altered social norms, as well as changed beliefs and values in various cultures. Indeed, their past research had uniquely displayed that deepened knowledge had pertained to historical events which had surrounded—as well as the relevant Art periods which had preceded—the evaluation of artistic styles, bringing more deepened insights and valuable understandings to their categorization process. Through modulation of speculative features of artistic style and considering different levels of information, the

study had revealed how minor subtleties of refined Arts expression had reflected larger-scale cultural dynamics, which in return had shifted collective understandings of the meanings of works of Art and their associated and affiliated social frameworks. Moreover, their analysis, which had been directed by Zhao et al. (2023), had highlighted how the Fine Arts had often served as important vehicles of cultural dialogue and change throughout history (Zhao et al., 2023).

By demonstrating the impact that Fine Arts had had on the belief systems, values, and norms of cultures from a generalized research perspective, Turner (2007) had shone a light on the catalytic role of Fine Arts in cultural change. By studying them, Turner (2007) had explored the nexus between Fine Arts education and students' social consciousness, including considering the relevant historical frames of reference within which differing ideologies had developed over time. By engaging in reflective inquiry and grappling with the multiple cultural paradigms that had informed and shaped attempts to both recognize and protect human rights, students had been guided toward deeper understandings of contemporary human rights issues and how these issues had manifested—or had impacted society. It had been emphasized by Turner (2007) that the inclusion of social issues and concerns within the context of Art Education had developed critical thinking skills and encouraged active responses toward critically important social issues, thus, restoring the transformative position of the Fine Arts in the formation of cultural patterns (Turner, 2007).

Finally, as the literature review by Belfiore (2006), Bourdieu (1968), Bullo and Reber (2013), Belfiore and Bennett (2007), Bourdieu (1984), Bayer and Liman Turan (2023), Cole (2021), Ewen (1999-2000), Dissanayake (1980), Joffe (2008), Common Ground Research Networks (2019), Jhangiani and Tarry (2022), Jin and Ye (2022), Gallant (2014), Lindström et al. (2021), Joo et al. (2014), Gabriel (2021), Hussain (2021), Kang (2010), Kim et al., Kozbelt and Seeley (2007), Maxwell (2004), McCarron (2021), Pelowski et al., Tinta and Tsoia (2013), Trevisan and Panzanelli (2022), Van der Wal (2008), Walin et al., View affiliated articles (2022), Stamkou & Keltner (2020), Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019), Yilmaz & Yilmaz (2019), Vernazzani (2021), Talley (2023), Specker (2023), Zhao et al. (2023), and Turner (2007) — had put forward a convincing case for arguing that Fine Arts had performed a catalyzing-facilitating role in activating cultural change throughout a variety of sociocultural-historical settings. It had therefore been alluded to and convincingly proposed by all of these research studies that the creation of Fine Arts and cultural perceptions had been interdependent in nature, through means of having been moulded by the social fabrics in which they had flourished.

As a result, it had been determined that Fine Arts representations had been significantly influenced by social ideologies, standards, and customs. Therefore, throughout various well-documented research studies, the dialogue between Fine Arts and culture had only affirmed the essential role of Fine Arts as a provocateur of conversation, or otherwise had been strongly considered as a

facilitator of community identity, and consequently a crusader for social advancement. These types of interactions and engagements with Fine Arts production from multiple avenues, had not only guided – but reshaped the cultural landscape of societies. This had therefore demonstrated that the unique role of Fine Arts as an advocate for change, had been ingrained in the cultural fabric of societies throughout historical time-period (Turner, 2007).

CHAPTER 6: FINE ARTS AS CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH THE ROCOCO ART MOVEMENT, JAPAN'S UKIYO-E ART MOVEMENT & FAUVISM

6.1.1. A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Rococo Art Movement (1740-1770)

Trapasso (2013) had provided a detailed analysis of Rococo painting and had determined the historical position of the Rococo Art Movement to be amidst the French cultural and societal transformations of the early 1700s in Paris, where this particular Art Movement had originally evolved as a cultural reaction and retaliation towards Louis XIV's devouringly greedy and grandiloquent Baroque style. The Rococo Art style, with its soft-toned colours, curvilinear forms, as well as its depictions of leisure, patriotic, and loving gestures, had reflected the French aristocracy's shift towards more intimate and modest domestic designs (Trapasso, 2013).

It had further been stated by Trapasso (2013) that Jean Antoine Watteau, who had been recognized by many Art Historians and scholars as the "Father of Rococo," had begun the development of the "fêtes galantes" genre, which had been focused upon illustrative depictions and scenes of "courtship" in the midst of outdoor settings. The Rococo paintings of Jean Antoine Watteau, in particular, had been predominantly influenced by paintings that had originated in both genres of the Dutch and Flemish Art Movements. These inspirational Art Movements had epitomized the unique attributes of the Rococo Art Movement, which had been characteristically focused upon the elegant and carefree interactions that had transpired amongst aristocratic and elite European society. However, as ideals from the Enlightenment era and philosophy had gained increased prevalence throughout European societies, the 'frivolity' and 'sensual innuendos' of the Rococo Art Movement had come under scrutiny and criticism from well-known French philosophers like Diderot and Voltaire, who had originally championed the influences of Fine Arts upon 'French societal and cultural values' with far greater seriousness and moral objectives (Trapasso, 2013).

Trapasso (2013) had further mentioned Jean Honoré Fragonard, who had been viewed by many Art historians and scholars as a transitional Rococo artist who, unlike Jean Antoine Watteau, had notably wrestled to adapt his thematic painting style and techniques to effectively adapt to the increasingly changing artistic tastes of French society during the Rococo Art Period. One of Fragonard's Rococo artworks, namely "La coquette fixée," had unambiguously exemplified the sensual visual attributes and playfulness of the Rococo Art Movement, but had gradually become less sought-after as ideologies pertaining to Neoclassicism had begun to gain distinct cultural prominence. Trapasso (2013) therefore had concluded that although the Rococo Art Movement had initially been acclaimed and admired for its decorative aesthetic attributes and visual characteristics, which had captured a sense of 'light-heartedness,' its eventual decline in cultural popularity across European countries had been inevitable,

especially since the ideological shifts that had emerged during the rise of a notoriously 'intellectual climate' throughout the 1700s had transitioned towards the societal and cultural perspective that Fine Arts were intended for the embodiment and representation of far more noble and serious causes (Trapasso, 2013).

The perspective presented by Bylsma (2022) had supported this understanding by arguing that, although the Rococo Art Movement had often been perceived as a time period during which the indulgence of excess wealth to the point of 'self-aggrandizing greed' and 'fleeting frivolity' among aristocracy and the privileged classes of high society had flourished, this particular Art Movement had simultaneously been characterized by its 'experiential and sensory-orientated visual attributes' that had been embedded in both the political and social contexts of its time period. More specifically, The Rococo Art Movement had evolved as a collective French societal reaction against the stringent control by King Louis XIV (part of French aristocracy), who had ruled French citizens with an 'iron fist' and had kept them strictly confined at Versailles. After the passing of King Louis XIV, the ruling French aristocracy had returned to Paris and had continued in their extravagant self-indulgence, while they had also created luxuriously decadent and sensuous environments, which had reflected their revolutionary new freedom. This time period in French history, as it pertained to the French ruling class, had been characterized by romantic intrigues, the steadfast pursuit of human pleasure, and a disproportionate emphasis upon attaining a leisurely lifestyle, which had often been most effectively portrayed within architectural designs and paintings during the Rococo period.

However, Bylsma (2022) had suggested that the Rococo Art Movement had not been entirely devoid of hidden meanings, symbolic elements, or deeper significance. For example, Rococo paintings like Fragonard's 'The Swing' had illustrated this particular time period in France during which themes of societal immorality and decadence, as well as infidelity and flirtation, had been 'culturally normalized' among the aristocrats and upper echelons of French society. This societal and cultural shift in regards to 'permissive moral laxity' had considerably contributed towards an acceleration of growing discontent among the French public. Consequently, this increasing sense of discontentment had not only caused a cultural revolt and uprising within the borders of France, but had also expanded to other European nations and had ultimately promoted and bolstered the ideological establishment of the Enlightenment era. This ideologically fuelled cultural movement had not only sought to challenge the unashamed decadence of the elite societal classes during the Rococo time period while the middle and lower classes had struggled to live above the breadline, but they had strongly advocated for the adoption of new cultural values, such as 'logical reasoning,' 'rational practicality,' 'personal liberty' of the individual, the implementation of 'natural laws' under the further appointment of a 'constitutional

government,' as well as the official 'separation of churches from state rulership – and interference' (Bylsma, 2022).

It had further been argued by Bylsma (2022) that various aristocratic figures like Madame de Pompadour, who had been considered as the very personification of the excessive greed, self-indulgence, and self-aggrandizement displayed during the Rococo time period – including her support and celebration of intellectualism pertaining to the Enlightenment movement – had played a significant role within the broader financial funding and development of intellectualism across France. As the King of France's mistress, she had not only fulfilled the role as 'patron of The Arts,' but had also provided supervision and protection over projects like the "Encyclopédie." Bylsma (2022) therefore had ascribed the shift from accepting values related to the Rococo Art Movement towards a significant embrace and adoption of cultural values related to Neoclassicism to the fact that French society (along with other European nations) had aspired to re-establish the former ideals of ancient Greece and Rome. Moreover, it had been reasoned by the broader public that the reimplementation of these former ideals would have brought restoration to the moral fabric of French and broader European society (Bylsma, 2022).

In regards to the visual characteristics and foundational principles which had originally led to the formation of the Rococo Art Movement itself, Gilbert (2014) had argued that it could not merely be viewed through the lens of analysing 'decorative-aesthetic motifs' or the transformation of declining societal values and an economic phenomenon. Gilbert (2014) had upheld the perspective that the Rococo Art Movement had also been underpinned by the adoption of philosophical concepts that had admired, respected, and provided validation for 'materialism' as a cultural value of this time period.

Contrary to many Art Historians and scholars, Gilbert (2014) had rejected and opposed the widely accepted categorization of the Rococo Art Movement as being situated between the Baroque Art Movement and the Enlightenment period. This author had further contended that the Rococo Art Movement ought not to be perceived as a mere result of 'transient artistic impulsiveness' or solely as a 'temporal fashion trend,' but had instead been distinctly characterized by its abundant pluralism and resilience, which had continued to influence artistic productivity far beyond its pinnacle during the mid-1700s (Gilbert, 2014).

Apart from the conveyance of complex ideas and symbolic concepts through its qualities of 'ornamentation,' Gilbert (2014) had challenged Art historians and scholars to consider alternative philosophical questions pertaining to 'the nature of reality' and to 'the limitation of human knowledge,' which may have potentially served as foundational concepts during the formative years of the Rococo Art Movement's ideology. Gilbert (2014) therefore had aimed to restore a deeper and all-encompassing understanding of the Rococo's historical place within the broader history of ideas and artistic production (Gilbert, 2014).

As a strong critique of the Rococo Art Movement, Brady (1985) had criticized the Rococo Art Movement as a time-period in predominantly French (and European) history which had deliberately avoided thematic depictions pertaining to the confrontation of human suffering and death. Instead, Brady (1985) had suggested that the Romantic Art Movement had focused upon the 'superficial exterior surface' of physical aesthetic beauty in the pursuit of carnal human pleasures. This avenue of 'tawdry escapism', as interpreted and understood through the perspective of Brady (1985), had been referred to as a historically tragic denial of the deeper existential realities which had been visually represented and portrayed through the Rococo paintings. More specifically, due to the distinct and disproportionate emphasis that had been placed upon the cultural celebration of 'decorative frivolity' rather than substantive thematic subject or political, intellectual, or spiritual exploration. Artworks from the Rococo time-period had been more specifically recognized for their obsession with luxuriously fashionable accessories and extravagantly opulent ornamentations. The significant degree of importance which had been placed upon the relational interplay between 'ephemeral items' and 'substitute relationships' had revealed a decline and impoverishment of social, emotional, and cultural values during this time-period in France and across Europe. Brady (1985) had therefore concluded that the emphasis which had formerly been placed upon the necessity of quality human interactions and relationships had become increasingly replaced with a perpetual focus upon covetousness and inadequate material substitutes (Brady, 1985).

This interpretative analysis of Brady (1985) regarding the Rococo Art Movement, which had originated in France and spread to other European nations, had been strongly supported and substantiated by the views of Crown (1990), who had stated that the British Rococo paintings had likewise notably diverged from more sophisticated, refined, complex, and highly respected Art forms such as 'monumental architecture,' as well as highly esteemed painting techniques and subject matters. Crown (1990) had noted that British Rococo artworks had resulted in decorative sketches, ornamental engravings, and lavishly embellished furniture items. Unlike its French origins, artistic developments pertaining to the British Rococo Art Movement had been characterized by its alignment and support of emerging societal classes which had embraced a new aesthetic and artistically expressive freedom. During this time-period in Britain, there had been a remarkable increase in the consumption and consumerism of Fine Arts across a broad spectrum of societal classes which were not merely limited to those from aristocratic or noble backgrounds but had included support from modest artisans and patrons. Britain's Rococo painting style had been recognized by its pronounced departure from traditional forms of artistic patronage, as well as its new adaptation to definitively changing societal belief-systems, values, practices, and economic circumstances (Crown, 1990).

Collinson (1994) had highlighted the resilient determination and continuity which the representational Rococo portrayals throughout South Germany had achieved, particularly in Augsburg, despite its eventual decline in France. Throughout Germany, Collinson (1994) had noted that the Rococo Movement had relished in the enduring and long-lasting favor of local German patrons and artisans until the late 1760s. However, from this point forward in German history, Neoclassicism had begun to gain widespread intellectual support and traction across Europe. As already confirmed by multiple authors, this significant cross-cultural transformation and shift had been symbolized and distinguished by a revolutionary backlash against the societal and cultural values of 'elitism' which had underpinned the ideology of the Rococo Art Movement. Therefore, the Rococo Art Movement had been increasingly condemned and accused of causing the decline of moral values in European society due to the ideas and views which it had visually promoted. In contrast, the Neoclassical proponents had promoted their ideologically-driven style of artworks as both of a logical and rational nature, as well as 'morally superior.'

Collinson (1994), however, had argued that the Rococo painting within Germany's Augsburg, in particular, had managed to retain its prevalence and highly esteemed reputation for a far longer time period compared to other locations throughout Europe due to the fact that Rococo paintings had been utilized for 'religious decoration' within this region. Within the borders of Augsburg, therefore, this rare trend had served as a reflective representation of a 'cultural resistance' which had transpired against the acceptance of external influences and broader cultural shifts pertaining to the changes in 'societal structures' and 'artistic progress' (Collinson, 1994).

In addition to the views of Collinson (1994), Heller (1977) had suggested that Rococo, which had originated in Austrian and German regions yet remained outside of 'German-speaking territories,' had often been overlooked or disregarded for unknown reasons. However, Heller (1977) had argued that since Rococo paintings had been characterized by their extravagantly opulent and suggestive content, this could perhaps clarify or rationalize the remarkably limited attention that they had received, as well as the overall 'niche scholarly interest' this particular Art Movement had been granted.

The author named Faldi (1971) had reflected within his research upon the impact of the 1970 exhibition, which had been referred to as "Painting in Italy in the Eighteenth Century: Rococo to Romanticism," and had underscored the challenges which this Italian exhibition had faced due to the complex nature of Italian Settecento Art. (For clarification, the term 'Italian Settecento Art' had broadly encompassed all of the Fine Arts Movements and styles of paintings which had flourished in Italy during the 1700s, particularly the Rococo and Neoclassicism Art Movements). Faldi (1971) had observed that this historic exhibition had revealed a high degree of quality Fine Arts expertise and scholarly precision while having showcased a broad spectrum of diversified techniques within Italian painting styles from

this time-period. More specifically, this exhibition had highlighted the regional characteristics and interconnected symbolisms, which included the finer aesthetics of the Rococo Art Movement, while it had simultaneously also demonstrated the vibrant Art collecting, acquisition, and procurement activities within America compared to Europe. This could be ascribed to the fact that the significance and meaning of 'Italian Settecento Art' had been far less understood and appreciated throughout other regions in Europe. As a result, 'Italian Settecento Art' had therefore been undervalued in Europe compared to America during this time-period, while this extraordinary Fine Arts exhibition had provided critical insight into the historical progress, transformative development, and cultural appreciation of Italian Rococo painting themes, techniques, and art-making processes (Faldi, 1971).

Goodman (1995) had commented upon various birding and fishing scenes from paintings which had been created during the Rococo Art Movement, noting that they had significantly shifted from suggestive and sexualized connotations similar to Dutch artworks, to an increasingly refined and polite French interpretation of similar themes. Rococo artisans had often depicted birds as symbolic representations of either romanticized gifts or potential romantic suitors, which encompassed artistic themes of gallantries and courtship, instead of the overtly suggestive portrayals which had been found in Dutch precedents. This visual and representational transformation had been most evident in French prints and portraits, where birds had been referred to as metaphorical or literal tokens of affection. These symbolic illustrative connotations had accentuated the Rococo Art Movement's focus upon delicate intricacies and emotional expressions of romantic gestures rather than explicit visual suggestions. A positive attribute of the Rococo painting style and expressive approaches to these motifs had demonstrated a more tasteful and nuanced adaptation of earlier conventions, which had more effectively aligned with traditional values of French society (Goodman, 1995).

Despite its disproportionate emphasis upon decadence, carnal indulgence, and frivolity as represented throughout the Rococo Art Movement, Halsband (1985) had drawn attention to the noteworthy departure which had occurred during the early to mid-18th century from the grandiose visual portrayals of the Baroque Art Movement towards a comparatively more 'delicate,' 'ornamental,' and considerably more 'moderate visual aesthetic' observed within Rococo artworks. While having been characterized by both its asymmetrical forms and luminous or radiant visual qualities, Rococo painting techniques and thematic symbolisms had frequently incorporated motifs containing seashells and 'rocaille' (referring to 'rock-like decorations'). Halsband (1985) further had stated that the Rococo Art Movement had also been recognized for its vivacious, spritely, and entertainingly engaging qualities, as well as the inclusion of 'S-shaped curves' and 'non-representational elements' reminiscent of water. These visual elements had been unique to the compositional-arrangements characteristic of the Rococo painting style. Yet, the highly intricate and thematically comprehensive nature of the Rococo Art

Movement had allowed it to draw upon both Gothic and Chinoiserie influences best observed within the decorative Art forms and book illustrations. Apart from its contrasting and opposing ideological differences, the Rococo Art Movement's gradual replacement by Neo-Classical painting styles had, from a technical perspective, favored the application of 'straight lines' within compositional arrangements – compared to the incorporation of 'dynamic-shapes' and suggestions of 'movement' seen within Rococo artworks (Halsband, 1985).

In further support and elaboration upon the perspectives of Halsband (1985), Mann (1997) had agreed in unison with many other Art historians and scholars that the Rococo Art Movement had indeed emerged from the ideological and representational approaches of the Baroque Art Movement, yet had developed into a direction of artistic expression which had particularly favoured symbolic elements that favoured 'the refined', 'the sensual', as well as 'decorative visual components' applied with detailed painting techniques. These authentically characteristic approaches to illustrative visual portrayals had been strongly preferred above the 'dramatic emotional intensity' of the Baroque Art Movement as its predecessor. Furthermore, having been distinctly recognized from among former Art movements due to its elegantly smooth compositional layout, pleasing colour schemes, and incorporation of both 'movement' and 'rhythm' as formal 'design principles', Rococo Art had consequently appealed to both its historical advocates and patrons, as well as its modern admirers. In addition, Rococo paintings had often contained gracefully depicted figures and harmonious visual attributes instead of intense subject themes (Mann, 1997).

In defence and favour of the Rococo time-period, Ireland (1975) had presented the perspective that the late 19th-century revival, which had occurred in honour of the Rococo Art Movement, more specifically through Fine Arts paintings inspired by Watteau, had revealed this controversial Art Movement's adaptive nature and enduring appeal throughout the ages. Especially since the widespread fascination with Rococo had been starkly contrasted with the application of realist painting techniques observed within 'Naturalism' and other Art movements, which had been distinctly impacted by the influences of industrial settings. Additionally, the extended 'Neo-Rococo Movement', which had spanned across various Arts fields such as decorative Art forms, literature, and architectural designs, had reflected the Rococo style's 'unequivocal cumulative appeal'. Despite the surmountable criticism which the Rococo Art Movement had received from Art historians, scholars, political figures, and religious figures, the enduring influence of the style's relevance had persisted while this phenomenon in itself had emphasized its significantly refined and charming qualities (Ireland, 1975).

In agreement with Trapasso (2013), Kimball (1941) had explained that the term "Rococo" had broadly encompassed the style which had come into fruition during the reign of Louis XV and had encapsulated various sub-phases, such as the Régence. Paintings from the Rococo Art Movement, which

had slowly transitioned from the extravagant grandeur of the Baroque era, had been marked by their visual elements of intricate ornamentation, detailed painting techniques, refined colour schemes, and delicate shapes. Key contributing factors to the development of the broader Rococo Art Movement had included Pierre Lepautre, whose work had shifted from rigid geometry to fluid, asymmetrical designs. Although influenced by earlier Baroque and Italian motifs, Rococo had represented a distinct, French initiative, characterized by its decorative and refined nature.

The term "Rococo" as interpreted by Newman (2001) had served as a representational embodiment of an ongoing struggle that had persisted as it had related to its own 'meaning' as a European Art movement and its own 'significant relevance' within its historical context. It is further highlighted by Newman (2001) that unlike prior terms which had been attributed to former Art movements, such as the terms "Gothic" or "Baroque", the term "Rococo" had not developed or evolved into a somewhat generalized neutral descriptor, but had consistently remained entangled in its shifting interpretations—or presumed misinterpretations. The capricious nature of the term "Rococo", which had been rooted in a culmination of French and Portuguese words referring to decorative visual components, had served as substantive evidence of the Rococo Art Movement's continuous stylistic fluidity, as well as its interpretational and representational inconsistency.

As a result, Newman (2001) had suggested that the Rococo Art Movement had been of an 'allegorical nature', while it had represented far broader themes related to the cultural acceptance of 'modernism', 'socio-economic progress', as well as 'historical discontinuity'. Since the Rococo Art Movement had, however, failed to establish a coherent and definitive narrative, associations that had been made with Rococo as a concept in itself had become a metaphorical analogy which had symbolized extended challenges pertaining to both defining and naming specific time periods in Art history.

It is further proposed by Newman (2001) that the Rococo Art Movement may have served as a 'foundational genre' in context to the broader timeline in Art history and that it may have reflected the discipline of Fine Arts' continual struggle related to the most suitable articulation and most accurate categorization of diverse artistic movements. It is therefore argued by Newman (2001) that the persistent ambiguity with which the term 'Rococo' had been surrounded significantly highlighted the tension which had existed between historical interpretations of 'new concepts', 'new ideas', and 'new movements', as well as consistently changing Arts-related developments and historical endorsements (Newman, 2001).

Drawing upon Rene Wellek's unique insights, Poe (1993) had further elaborated upon this understanding by emphasizing the essential importance of not analysing and classifying historical Art periods as mere 'sets of abstract patterns' or as 'monolithic styles' which had been birthed as isolated

occurrences, but rather as interactively intertwined 'systems of societal norms' which no singular artwork could truly encapsulate.

Poe (1993) therefore had provided an alternative viewpoint by proposing that the Rococo Art Movement, which had emerged during the early 1700s and had lasted until the decline of the Ancient Régime, should from an academically accurate perspective rather be considered as a 'stylistic current' instead of a 'rigidly stylistic movement'. It is additionally suggested by Poe (1993) that this 'stylistic current' referred to as 'Rococo' had coexisted with other 'culturally -and artistically fashionable currents' such as late-Classicism and pre-Romanticism. Poe had further suggested that the Rococo Art Movement had been predominantly influential between 1735 and 1765, prior to an uprising which had caused a resistance against Neo-Classicism (Poe, 1993).

Additionally, Poe (1993) had presented the argument that the Rococo Art Movement should be understood through its 'core characteristic elements', which had originally been derived from 'Decorative Arts'. Within the ideal context, Poe (1993) proceeded to suggest that literary texts from this time period should also be considered through the symbolic lens of the Rococo Art Movement in order to more effectively identify 'stylistic parallels' which might be present, as well as 'potential cultural-intersections'.

The author named Saisselin (1960) had put forth the unique perspective that the Rococo Art Movement at large might have been more accurately analyzed and interpreted as a 'Neo-Hellenistic Art style', which had primarily drawn upon Classical influences, instead of merely having been considered as either a continuation or extension of the prior Baroque and Gothic Art Movements.

The viewpoint elaborated upon by Saisselin (1960) had presented the understanding that the pictorial depictions from the Rococo time-period had suggested an idyllic vision of Fine Arts through which European life had been imbued with simplicity, tranquillity, and pleasurable leisurely activities. While referring to the ideological perspectives which had formerly been presented by renowned literary figures such as the Goncourt brothers and more contemporary figures like Voltaire, Saisselin (1960) had argued that the Rococo Art Movement had encompassed an idealistic 'dream-like state' within which a sense of 'ethereal happiness' had been contrasted against the 'heroically tragic themes' observed within former Art periods. Ironically, this artistic attempt at envisioning and fulfilling the creation of an 'elitist dream' founded upon an illusionary sense of 'idyllic happiness' had been strongly rejected and opposed by the middle-classes and lower-classes of the French public due to its grandiose ambitions, immoral focus upon carnal pleasures, as well as frivolous societal interactions.

Unlike many other scholarly authors, Saisselin (1960) had noted that the interpretative and representational aspects of the Rococo Art style had not only been distinctly visible within illustrative

Rococo paintings, but also within the delicate intricacies of both decadent and extravagantly decorated interior and architectural designs. More specifically, Saisselin (1960) had highlighted the fact that the Rococo Art Movement had intentionally rejected the arrogant grandeur of Versailles and had preferred thematic portrayals of more comfortable settings and more intimate relational subjects. Compared to the characteristics of the Baroque era, architectural designs from the Rococo time-period had emphasized the aesthetic appearance of elegance and personal comforts over externally boastful flaunting, which had further reflected the Rococo Art Movement's focus upon domestic leisure and social ease.

Saisselin (1960) had continued to mention that acclaimed and prestigious Rococo paintings, like the masterpieces of Watteau, Fragonard, and Boucher, had reflected the French -and broader European societies' fascination with obtaining and attaining the most 'refined' and most 'exquisite' objects or pleasures that life had to offer during this time-period in European history. Most often, this had been visually represented in the form of romantic, sensual, and leisurely illustrations.

The Rococo aesthetic had furthermore celebrated feminine beauty and pleasure, with a focus upon ethereal lightness and gracious mannerisms or behaviours rather than profoundly heroic, life-altering, or tragic themes. The interpretative understanding of many academic scholars is therefore substantiated by Saisselin (1960), who had stated that the gradual societal transition which had transpired from the acceptance of Rococo values and ideals had consequently revealed a more relaxed approach to both aesthetic beauty and formal etiquette compared to the Baroque Art period that had preceded it (Saisselin, 1960).

Sampson (1978) proposes that in order for Art historians and scholars to more effectively interpret and to more deeply understand the significance of the impacts of the Rococo Art Movement within the cultural and societal contexts of England, it had required a thorough consideration and examination of its formal characteristics, (pertaining to the application of Elements of Art and Principles of Design), specifically its structural organization. Sampson (1978) had therefore suggested that this investigative approach towards conducting a formalized examination had been far more meaningful, effective, and accurate in contrast to mere surface-level reflections pertaining to extensive and cross-cultural trends in the adaptation of philosophical ideologies.

The intended end-goal for defining a particular Art style by means of a specified set of 'structural elements' had been to more effectively record and draw correlations between a particular time period's societal and cultural experience and recognizably ordered patterns of reoccurrences, instead of solely basing academic interpretations upon ideological ideas related to 'collective cultural taste' (Sampson, 1978).

In order to illustrate this argument, Sampson (1978) had applied an investigative analysis while applying the Art Elements, Design Principles, and formal structural features as noted in prominent Rococo paintings, like Joseph Addison's ode, which had revealed a developmental focus upon "parentheses" and "continuity." Sampson (1978) proposes that these recognizable visual features are foundational and essential as it concerns both defining and understanding the influences, progress, and impactful effects which the Rococo Art Movement had in England, especially in regards to a shift which had taken place from the Baroque Era's opulent, self-indulging, and self-aggrandizing representational artistic trends — towards a new set of structuring principles which had characterized this time period.

Consequently, Sampson (1978) had explored how various disciplines of Fine Arts during the earlier years of the 1700s in England had shifted towards increased 'structural unity,' the application of certain 'proportional rules and outlines,' and had established a sense of 'continuity,' developing towards adopting contrasting values against the former complexity of the Baroque Art Movement. In regards to highly esteemed literary texts from this time period, works like Byrom's 'Careless Content' and Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock' had demonstrated a cultural and societal emphasis which valued repetition and harmony within compositional designs. Moreover, this had revealed the Rococo Art Movement's distinct preference for orderly theoretic structures and artistic techniques over the excessive attributes of the Baroque Art Movement (Sampson, 1978).

Providing extended historical context and understanding, Sampson (1978) states that within the subject area of music during the Rococo time period, the collectively unified compositions of George Frederick Handel had replaced the dramatic musical style of Henry Purcell, while the English literary drama named 'The Distressed Mother' had gained favourability and durability amongst British society above other dramatized literary texts of a heroic nature. Simultaneously, prose had also become increasingly more simplified and unmistakably clear, as it had been profoundly impacted by the Royal Society's rejection of the Baroque style's elaborative manner. Moreover, the newly adopted application of 'Palladianism' within architectural designs throughout England had emphasized the importance of balance, as was evidently displayed within designs created by Lord Burlington and Colen Campbell (Sampson, 1978).

In the subject area of thematic and technical approaches to painting, Sampson (1978) mentions that Hogarth's unique artwork titled 'Analysis of Beauty' had displayed the characteristics, visual aesthetics, and formal attributes typically associated with the Rococo Art Movement and had emphasized naturally flowing lines which had achieved the formation of 'structural harmony.' The theoretical principles of Shaftesbury had further reinforced the focus which had been placed upon 'visual

unity' and 'visual framing.' These principles had further been reflected across a broad spectrum of literary texts and artworks (Sampson, 1978).

Sampson (1978) had therefore argued that the Rococo Art Movement's stylistic characteristics had been defined by its distinct accentuation upon unity, harmony, balance, and continuity which had reached various areas, disciplines, and forms of expressive Arts, in deliberate separation from Baroque grandeur.

From the examination conducted by Scalbert (1999), it had been determined that the embrace of foreign influences and incorporation of pluralism, (more specifically observed through international trade with China that had expanded during this time period), had served as confirmation that the broader societal structures during the Rococo Art Movement had departed from classical norms and practices. Scalbert (1999) suggests that this intertwined combination of 'exotic elements' had challenged the well-established artistic conventions on multiple fronts, as their culmination had advocated for the enhancement of 'artistic creativity' and 'diversified aesthetic attributes.'

Additionally, Scalbert (1999) notes that the Rococo Art Movement had been profoundly underrated and underappreciated regarding the unique influences this movement had upon the development of architectural designs and the experimental expansion of decorative arts. Scalbert (1999) had also argued that the ornamental and playful nature of the Rococo artworks had served as an impactful precursor to the plurality of ideas and the adoption of eclecticism which had come into fruition during the 1800s and 1900s.

By providing an alternative perspective, Van Rensselaer (n.d.) compares and contrasts characteristic attributes of the Rococo Art Movement with the aesthetic qualities which had been observed within classical and romantic styles of Art production. Distinctly different from the Baroque Art Movement, Van Rensselaer (n.d.) had traced the development of the Rococo Art Movement back to the French Decorative Arts from the 1700s, which had been heralded under the rulership of King Louis XV. The playful, asymmetrical, and ornamental qualities of the Rococo Art style, which had particularly thrived in less popular disciplines of Fine Arts such as the creation of porcelain, as well as porcelain painting techniques, had emerged in response to the excessive visual extravagance of Baroque (Van Rensselaer, n.d.).

In agreement with the perspectives and arguments of Van Rensselaer (n.d.), Elfrink (2016) had associated the increasing popularity of the Rococo Art Movement as a response to the changing cultural perspectives of French aristocracy, who had an unquenchable desire for an indulgence in personal freedoms and pleasures. While industrialization had more rapidly expanded and the 'bourgeoisie'

(French nobility) had gained accelerated power, ideological values from the Enlightenment era had fostered a historical return to both 'cultural morality' and 'puritanical Arts' which in return had critiqued the frivolous decadence of the Rococo Art Movement. This dramatic shift had not only reflected changing societal values, but middle-class society had also rejected 'aristocratic tastes,' which had led to the decline of the Rococo Art Movement. Consequently, the emergence of significantly restrained artistic expressions had more effectively aligned with 'bourgeois virtues' (Elfrink, 2016).

6.1.2. Cultural & Societal Values, Perspectives, and Belief

Systems Which Had Influenced the Rococo Art Period

6.1.2.1 First Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Aristocratic Leisure and Escapism'

In regard to "Aristocratic Leisure and Escapism," Burton (2024) substantiates the information which had been confirmed by many art historians and scholars regarding the fact that the Rococo Art Movement had unmistakably been characterized by a remarkable emphasis upon the enjoyment of leisurely activities and the endless pursuit of all which earthly pleasures had to offer. These characteristics had been more adequately applicable to those among French nobility and aristocracy. Burton (2024) underscores the fact that Rococo paintings from this time period had often depicted idyllic scenes which had served as symbolic representations of 'pastoral life,' 'romantic love,' and 'courtship' as societal and cultural escapism from the harsh realities of life during the 1700s. Rococo painters like Jean-Honoré Fragonard and François Boucher had, in particular, been renowned for creating artworks which had impactfully illustrated romanticized renditions of 'aristocratic lifestyles' that had been brimming over with flirtatious innuendos, a sense of playfulness, as well as the indulgence of 'dream-like' luxurious settings. These depictions had, however, not been intended to capture illustrations of 'realism,' but had instead been intended to amuse the imaginations of the wealthy, who had been seeking artistic reflection which had both mirrored and provided validation for their self-indulging lifestyles of refinement and comfort (Burton, 2024).

6.1.2.2 Second Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Sensuality and Suggestive Themes'

Pertaining to the topic of a disproportionate cultural focus which had been granted to 'sensuality' and 'suggestive undertones,' Junod (2005) mentions that the overall embrace of the elites and those from noble or aristocratic backgrounds regarding more 'relaxed social moral values' had allowed for the exploration of thematic subject matters related to carnal desires and romanticized love in ways which had been both overt and subtle, depending on the contexts of various artworks. Junod (2005), for example, mentions that François Boucher's Rococo paintings had frequently portrayed voluptuous depictions of nude women in suggestively provocative poses, which had reflected French society's fascination with sensual pleasure during this time period. This had been an era and art period

during which Fine Arts had begun to focus more upon the gratification of personal pleasures rather than the attainment of moral values, the preservation of moral virtues, or the obedience toward religious guidelines, marking a significant shift in cultural values.

6.1.2.3 Third Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Wit and Playfulness'

Within the context of capturing a sense of 'wit, humour, and playfulness,' Milam (2000) highlights the fact that these particular key societal and cultural qualities of the Rococo Art Movement had been most effectively encapsulated within the light-hearted and frivolous themes which had been depicted. More specifically, the collective representation of these values had been best reflected through the application of soft-toned colour schemes, curvilinear shapes, and elaborative ornamental visual qualities which had been included within the compositional designs of Rococo paintings. For example, these culturally representational Rococo artworks had often been permeated with a sense of fun, enjoyment, and joy—whether through means of either 'humorous allegories,' 'playful compositions,' or 'coquettish figures.' These artistic illustrations, which had been significantly different from the typical portrayals of former European Art Movements, had evidently demonstrated a distinct 'societal shift towards embracing, accepting, and adopting more 'carefree' and 'light-hearted' approaches to life. This had at least been an accurate analysis of the cultural shift which had occurred amongst the elite, upper classes of French 'high society' (Milam, 2000).

6.1.2.4 Fourth Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Intimacy and Domesticity'

In relation to capturing a visual sense of 'intimacy and domesticity,' Saisselin (1960) states that Rococo paintings had often included portrayals of intimately private moments between lovers, which had reflected a primary cultural transition towards the acceptance and valuing of the individual's 'private desires' and the importance of the individual's 'personal emotions,' while simultaneously retreating from the grandiose 'philosophical,' 'political,' 'religious,' and broader 'public narratives' which had been illustrated during earlier time periods. These artworks had, however, been imbued with an atmosphere of warmth through the application of 'softened colour tones,' which had represented the Rococo era's appreciation for the sentimental aspects of life.

6.1.2.5 Fifth Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Secularization of Art'

In contrast and opposition to most former art movements which had been dominated by religious themes, Williams (2015) makes the observation that the Rococo Art Movement had been founded upon secular worldviews. This secularization, which had included scenes from everyday life and more interpersonal relationships, had reflected widespread societal and cultural changes which had also alluded to the evident decline in the influence of the Church and the rise of Enlightenment ideologies. Therefore, the 'importance of self' and the prominence of valuing 'personal freedoms' had been

recognized at the forefront of newly adopted societal principles and standards during the Rococo era (Williams, 2015).

As evidence of the tensions which had developed between those who had supported secular views and those who had supported religious views, Chua (n.d.) highlights the fact that an 'electoral decree' had been formalized during 1770, which had not only advocated for 'classicism' in the context of church-related architectural designs but had 'officially ended' Rococo architecture. Especially since many religious intellectual figures within France and across other European countries had ascribed the rise of secularization during 1803 as the main reason why the magnificence of former monasteries and abbeys had forever been destroyed (Chua, n.d.).

According to Chua (n.d.), Sedlmayr had interpreted the Rococo Art Movement to be the leading cause of the 'modernization' of Catholicism which had occurred during this time period and had argued that Rococo ideologies and belief systems had served as a trailblazer of secular modernization (Chua, n.d.).

6.1.2.6 Sixth Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Art as a Reflection of Social Status'

Brighidin (2014) explains that within the elite inner circles of French nobility and aristocracy, the ownership of Rococo Fine Arts had not only been regarded as a fashionably decorative lifestyle but had also been a representational display of 'societal status' and 'wealth.' Therefore, the commissioning of elaborately decorative and intricate Rococo works of art—whether paintings, sculptures, or interior designs—had been regularly collected by those from elite 'high society,' 'nobility,' and 'aristocracy,' which had been intended to serve as a visual symbol of their exquisitely refined tastes and privileged societal positions (Brighidin, 2014).

6.1.2.7 Seventh Rococo Societal and Cultural Value: 'Celebration of Feminine Beauty'

As noted by Sotiriou (2018), Rococo paintings, ornaments, sculptures, and architectural designs had often celebrated 'feminine beauty' and 'grace' through means of women who had frequently been symbolized as the central figures within the context of leisurely, peaceful, and flirtatious romantic scenes. This phenomenon had reflected this particular time period's gender dynamics, where women had fulfilled significant roles in the cultural salons of the Rococo era, which had influenced fashionable artistic developments and shifts in taste (Sotiriou, 2018).

Yet, as Sotiriou (2018) points out, these light-hearted and playful themes which had radiated joy, peace, enjoyment, and elegance had not merely served as an escape from reality, but furthermore encapsulated the societal and cultural complexities of 18th-century France.

6.1.2.8 Eighth Rococo Societal –and Cultural Value: 'Influences from the Enlightenment'

The following authors, namely Elfrink (2016), Gilbert (2014), and Poe (1988), in unison and agreement, collectively had confirmed the fact that newly adopted intellectual ideologies pertaining to the 'Enlightenment' had had a somewhat 'paradoxical relationship' with the Rococo Art Movement. While the Rococo movement had, on the one hand, advocated for recognizing the importance of 'pleasure' and 'sensuality,' the intellectualized Enlightenment ideologies had introduced new ideas which often had critiqued these values.

Elfrink (2016), Gilbert (2014), and Poe (1988) state that renowned philosophical thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau had criticized the excessively indulgent, greedy, and self-aggrandizing lifestyles of the aristocracy during the Rococo time period, which not only had possessed a frivolous nature but also solely had served the gratification of their carnal human desires. In other words, the entire era had been viewed as incredibly 'self-serving' in all aspects.

However, conceptual ideas from the Enlightenment had also encouraged the exploration of all facets of 'human nature,' the 'fulfilment and happiness of the individual,' and 'individualized expressiveness,' which had been uniquely revealed within the primary focus upon intimacy and emotional depth that had been witnessed within the creation of Rococo works of Art (Elfrink, 2016; Gilbert, 2014; Poe, 1988).

6.1.2.9 Ninth Rococo Societal –and Cultural Value: 'Role of Salons in Shaping Rococo Art'

As confirmed and substantiated by Linden (2021), Barker (2009), and Plumb-Dhindsa (1998), salons from the Rococo time-period had often been hosted by aristocratic women who had played a pivotal role in regard to the interactive societal dynamics within the 'cultural contexts' of the Rococo time-period. The unique social gatherings, interactions, and exchanges which had transpired within these salons had included various forms of Fine Arts, literary writing, and philosophical discussion, while artists had had the ability to gain both patronage and scholarships.

Salons had therefore greatly assisted in developing and transforming artistic -and fashionable trends which consequently had impacted both the thematic topics and styles which had become popularized within diverse forms of Rococo Art. The prominent roles and contributions of women within the establishment of these salons had also uniquely contributed towards this time-period's emphasis upon femininity, compassion, and romantic love (Barker, 2009; Linden, 2021; Plumb-Dhindsa, 1998).

6.1.2.10 Tenth Rococo Societal –and Cultural Value: 'Global Influence and Colonialism'

The Rococo period, as discussed by Bailey (2017), Smith (2022), and Secomb (2013), had coincided with a unique time-period of 'colonial expansion' throughout Europe. Furthermore, the exorbitant wealth which had been generated and gained through the formation of colonies (more

specifically those that had been established throughout the Caribbean and South-East Asia) had indirectly funded the opulent and extravagant lifestyles of French nobility and aristocracy. As a result, exotic motifs and exquisitely refined materials from these colonies had begun to appear within various forms of Rococo Fine Arts, as seen through both the diverse decorative objects and imported artefacts which had visually symbolized both 'European supremacy' and 'European dominance' over foreign lands, as well as 'cultures.' This phenomenon had therefore represented one of the significant societal - and cultural values which had defined the Rococo Art Movement.

6.1.2.11 Conclusive Thoughts Pertaining to the Societal -and Cultural Values of the Rococo Time-Period

In conclusion, Burton (2024), Sewell (2010), and Van Rensselaer (1879) had concluded that the Rococo time-period, despite the multitude of criticism which it had received, had remained celebrated for its elaborative and extensive contributions that had been made to Fine Arts (paintings, sculptures, ceramics, ornamentations), fashion design, and architectural designs, which had reflected a significant era in history that had appreciated and valued 'aesthetic beauty,' 'luxury,' and 'artistic innovations.' During the twenty-first century, the Rococo Art Movement's exceptional culturally -and artistically inspiring influences can still be seen in the enduring appeal of its intricate and decorative designs.

6.1.3 Five Prominent and Iconic Paintings from The Rococo Art Movement, Which Had Been Emblematic of Cultural Identity

6.1.3.1 Pilgrimage to Cythera (1717) – by Jean-Antoine Watteau

According to Levey (1961), 'Pilgrimage to Cythera' by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1717) had challenged established traditions and protocols in Fine Arts and had, in return, exhibited a far more 'visually refined' interpretation of love, affection, the passage of time, and exodus. The scene-setting of this Rococo painting had been located on Cythera, an island associated with the goddess of love, known as 'Venus.' The various figures, depicted while in the midst of departure, had captured the end of a celebration instead of the beginning of a festive gathering. The pilgrims who had been portrayed

resisting departure were immersed in conversations and interactions with others, emphasizing the fleeting nature of the moment captured (Levey, 1961).



Figure 38: *'Pilgrimage to Cythera'* (1717) is currently being preserved in the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, which had been painted during the Rococo Art Movement (1717) by Jean-Antoine Watteau (Coward, 2001).

Note. Cowart (2001) referred to **Figure 38** within the journal titled, *'Watteau's "Pilgrimage to Cythera" and the Subversive Utopia of the Opera-Ballet'*. The Art Bulletin, 83 (3), 461–478.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3177238>, p.462

Coward (2001) states that the Rococo painting titled 'Pilgrimage to Cythera', created by Jean-Antoine Watteau, had drawn upon inspiration from multiple aesthetic attributes, distinct visual characteristics, and theatrical practices and traditions, interweaving components that had connected it to paintings from earlier periods as well as to more comprehensive and widespread mythological themes. The specific adaptation of 'Pilgrimage to Cythera', preserved and displayed within the Louvre Art Museum, had contained a Venus statue adorned and decorated with a quiver of arrows, with roses, and with passionate couples walking down a hill toward a ship that represented a voyage. The ship, which had been guarded and directed by two 'oarsmen' (ferryman), had also been surrounded by a congregation of 'cupids'—or angelic beings. By contrast, the version of this painting showcased in Berlin had removed the depictions of oarsmen altogether and had noticeably increased the total number of angels within the compositional layout. The portrayal of the ship had also been illustrated in a far more intricate and captivating manner, while the Venus statue had been replaced by an entirely different statue exhibited in Watteau's *"Plaisirs d'amour"*, which had presented Venus conquering and taking away the arrows of Cupid (Coward, 2001).

Coward (2001) also notes that, in both versions of 'Pilgrimage to Cythera', the multiuse costumes that the lovers had been portrayed in emulated a unique combination of inferences from 'aristocratic,' 'noble,' 'bourgeois,' and even 'peasant clothing styles'—alongside visual components resembling typical garments of pilgrims undertaking voyages to religious shrines. In the Berlin variation,

bouquets of roses had embellished and decorated the most central female figure and romantic pursuers at the lower right. Yet the forefront of the ship illustrated within the Louvre version had contained a golden angelic being representing 'victory,' wearing a decorated headdress made from shells, while the ship's stern in the Berlin variation had featured a golden figure (reminiscent of a 'sphinx') reinforced by a decorative shell. Cowart (2001) further notes that these specific visual elements had been firmly embedded within 'Venusian Mythology,' symbolically associating arrows, quivers, shells, and roses with Venus and her son, Cupid.

The 'Pilgrimage to Cythera', as noted by Ennis (1994), had been strongly founded upon both 'theatrical traditions' and 'cultural practices' from the early 1700s, which had drawn upon and incorporated inspirational elements from historical ballets, musical theatre pieces, and operatic performances that collectively illustrated Cythera as a 'mythical destination' for romantic couples. One of the main influential productions often cited by art historians and scholars, 'Three Cousins' produced by Florent Dancourt in 1706, and the pastoral ballet 'The Disguised Loves' produced by Bourgeois and Fuzelier in 1713, had both served as inspiration for this artwork (Ennis, 1994). These theatrical works, including comedic operatic performances within the extravagantly beautified theatres of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Germain, had burlesqued countrified tradition and focused on romance and sensuality themes (Ennis, 1994).

Ennis (1994) argues that Watteau's decision to formally designate Cythera as a 'pilgrimage site' within this Rococo artwork, painted in 1717, would likely have offended the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture's standards and practices. This may explain why the painting was documented merely as a 'valiant celebration' or party. This particular Rococo style had become symbolic and indicative of the 'pre-Romantic Garden' where high-society and aristocratic classes had engaged in playful, loving amusements. Despite initial controversy surrounding this painting, it had become broadly admired and renowned, inspiring numerous Fine Artists to imitate its stylistic characteristics and Cythera-themed focus (Ennis, 1994).

In agreement with Ennis (1994), Hyde (2000) points out that Watteau's submission of this iconic Rococo painting to the Royal Academy in 1717 had marked a significant historical moment within the Rococo Art Movement, challenging and opposing the academic rules, technical regulations, and Fine Arts hierarchies of established painting structures and guidelines. In response to this brave, somewhat rebellious artwork, the Royal Academy created an entirely new category of painting, specifically labelling it as a 'gallant party' for Watteau's artworks only. Instead of reconsidering their 'academic rules' and 'technical regulations,' they had created this category to allow it to 'fit into' their frameworks (Hyde, 2000).

Wile (2014) suggested that 'Pilgrimage to Cythera' had encapsulated a convoluted interplay between romantic pleasures and the cultural aesthetics and characteristic of this time period. Especially, the concept of 'gallantry'—chivalry, bravery, and courageous actions—had become an increasingly central theme within Rococo paintings. Cythera, associated with sensual pleasures and Venus, remained beyond the desire-filled attainment of both the figures in the painting and the audience viewing it. Wile (2014) further highlights Watteau's intentional redirection from traditional Rococo expectations, rejecting visual elements such as 'harmony' and 'illusionism' in favour of a more nonformulaic visual experience that offered audiences scenes of ethereal landscapes void of a clear focal point. This strategic approach had communicated a visual sense of unfulfilled desires and longing (Wile, 2014).

Additionally, Wile (2014) argued that Watteau's ideas of 'chivalry' and 'gallantry' had extended beyond the 'courtly interactions' typical of Rococo paintings, contributing to a broader societal shift that favoured 'refinement,' 'subtlety,' and tenderness in cultural and artistic expectations. These gentler approaches supported by Watteau had rejected extreme expressions of both 'human passions' and 'logical reasoning,' with females fulfilling a significant role in transforming visual characteristics to celebrate 'graciousness' and 'softness' (Wile, 2014).

Despite the delicate nature of Watteau's compositions, Wile (2014) noted that he had not entirely succeeded in capturing the central visual elements and atmospheres he sought to evoke. His Rococo paintings often generated a psychological and emotional state of "dreamlike contemplation" among viewers. Accordingly, the idea of "vain imaginations" or "daydreaming" had become central during the Rococo era, inspiring reflective thinking and subtle pleasures. Watteau's paintings, designed for private enjoyment, reflected a cultural rise in amateur Art appreciation, where personal responses were valued over scholarly analysis (Wile, 2014).

Wunsch (2018) highlighted that although 'Pilgrimage to Cythera' had been well-preserved, it had shown signs of decay and deterioration, including areas of flaking and cracking paint, especially near the celestial sphere, the oarsman's figure, and the intricate features of the dancing lovers. While physical deterioration was often viewed as detracting from historical significance, Wunsch (2018) argues that Watteau's transient techniques proposed reconsidering this perspective. By disregarding the longevity of his paintings, Watteau had challenged the traditional emphasis on preservation, adding new meaning to his artwork through its materiality and fleeting nature (Wunsch, 2018).

In regards to the avenues through which Fine Arts had played a pivotal role in promoting 'cultural identity', Watteau's suggested disposition and stance related to the 'temporal nature of Fine Arts' had served as a demonstration of a widespread societal and cultural shift within France. Here, the

'personal freedoms' of the 'individual' and the 'personal enjoyment' of 'visual experiences', as well as 'individualized interpretations', had taken precedence over both material concerns and understanding accurate academic interpretations (Wunsch, 2018).

Ennis (1994) confirms that this remarkably drastic change, which had occurred in the collective cultural attitude towards '*Pilgrimage to Cythera*' by Jean-Antoine Watteau, had revealed how Cythera had evolved into a symbolic representation of self-indulgent and self-appointed privileges and extravagant decadence. This, in turn, had caused greater societal discrimination and classist structures, as had been instituted by the old regime. The fantastical and mythological association with Cythera, which had originally been a fantasy of the upper and aristocratic classes, had therefore transitioned from an 'Arcadian paradise' to a societal atmosphere that mirrored the complications and perplexities within the social dynamics of Paris during the 1700s.

However, Ennis (1994) notes that societal and cultural perceptions and reactions towards '*Pilgrimage to Cythera*' by Jean-Antoine Watteau had dramatically transformed throughout the time period of the French Revolution. Although this respected and renowned Rococo painting had once symbolized 'aristocratic pleasure', it gradually turned into an emblem of great disdain and a target among the broader public, even to the point of having been vandalized by Fine Arts students loyal to Jacques-Louis David. For context, Jacques-Louis David had been a significantly influential French artist who had played a pivotal role in the transition from the Rococo Art Movement to the Neoclassicism Art Movement (Ennis, 1994).

Additionally, Levey (1961) notes that Watteau's '*Pilgrimage to Cythera*' had frequently been likened to earlier portrayals of love, courtship, and passion, and was often compared to previous artistic depictions, such as Sir Peter Paul Rubens' '*Garden of Love*'. Each of these Rococo artworks had investigated the concept of a rural setting, field, or garden as a location where romantic feelings could flourish as a symbol of 'freedom' from societal constraints and limitations. In the variation of '*Pilgrimage to Cythera*' kept within the Louvre, this aspect of symbolic interpretation had been apparent, as couples enthralled and spellbound by passionate affection and the freeing beauty of nature had been represented by angelic beings bestowing roses upon them as an emblem of their loyalty and commitment towards one another (Levey, 1961).

Therefore, in agreement with the commentary made by Wile (2014), Wunsch (2018), Ennis (1994) and Levey (1961), as the Rococo Art Movement had gradually advanced over time, its foundational role throughout French society as a means of 'expressing personal freedoms', had both critiqued and challenged traditional -and conventional Fine Arts standards. In return, this had not only

influenced and transformed 'artistic ideals' and 'cultural practices', but deeply resonated amongst the broader evolving 'cultural identity' of France society.

6.1.3.2 Madame de Pompadour - by François Boucher (1756)



Figure 39: 'Madame de Pompadour' (1756) is currently being preserved in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, Germany, which had been painted during the Rococo Art Movement (1756) by François Boucher (Lajer-Burcharth, 2009).

Note. Lajer-Burcharth (2009) referred to **Figure 39** within the journal titled, *Image Matters: The Case of Boucher*. Studies in the History of Art, 74, 276–303. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42622729>, p.276

An interesting point of consideration had been proposed by M.R.R. (1938), who had noted that Madame de Pompadour's patronage and financial support of François Boucher had been pivotal to his rise to prominence, which in return had provided him with significant commission assignments that had eventually led him to become the "Director of the Gobelins" during 1755. M.R.R. (1938) had therefore confirmed that Boucher's overall success and rise in popularity had been primarily attributed to the unwavering support received by Madame de Pompadour. Her stature, prominence, and influence through her financial support had granted Boucher the freedom and platform to allow him to develop his own decorative Art style, while simultaneously maintaining his influence in the world of Fine Arts (M.R.R., 1938).

Barker (2009) had investigated and analysed the historical lens through which Hyde had presented the idea that François Boucher had not only dismissed all external criticisms received against his Rococo paintings but had instead both actively resisted and intentionally defied all critiques. As stated by Barker (2009), François Boucher had actively embraced paralleled comparisons of his paintings to make-up and had even perceived this as somewhat of a compliment that would distinguish his artistic style. Through applying softened, subdued, and even somewhat "artificial shades" like "powdery pinks," which had been both ridiculed and disparaged by formal Art critics during the Rococo time-period, Boucher had not been discouraged in his determination to "forge" a unique artistic identity for himself. Barker (2009) notes that Hyde had suggested that "Madame de Pompadour at her Toilette,"

painted by François Boucher, had perhaps been a thematic examination and an avenue for self-discovery within the context of exploring his personal artistic style as a potential “make-up artist.”

According to Barker (2009), Hyde had proposed that the symbolic demonstration of this interpretation had been illustrated by Madame de Pompadour applying rouge to herself, as if she had been painting a representation of her own visual appearance, status, and character. Through having participated in this act of “self-fashioning,” Hyde had presented the interpretational viewpoint that it had obscured the boundary lines between the painter and the subject posing. Whether the “sitter” had been either a masculine or feminine figure, Hyde had theorized that François Boucher had challenged the societal classes and structural hierarchies of his time. Barker (2009) further mentions that Hyde had suggested that the personalized “self-fashioning” of Madame de Pompadour by herself had visually communicated and alluded to the idea that she had indeed been a “self-made woman” who had utilized “make-up” not merely to confirm her financial superiority but to challenge and oppose societal class systems throughout France and the broader European landscape (Barker, 2009).

From an entirely different angle, Goodman-Soellner (1987) had interpreted the painting of “Madame de Pompadour” by François Boucher as a symbolic celebration of her preceding renowned physical beauty, despite the deterioration of her health during this specific time. Even though “Madame de Pompadour” had been suffering from various illnesses and ailments and her physical appearance had visibly declined, François Boucher had still honored her by portraying her as the “perfectly ideal mistress” during the very height of her beauty. This artistic approach demonstrated by François Boucher had recalled a time when she first became the favored and beloved mistress of Louis XV de France (“Louis le Bien-Aimé”). Many critics of King Louis XV had accused François Boucher of illustrating her in a manner that was far too beautiful, sophisticated, and flawlessly young, diverting attention from her genuine physical state by focusing on her accessories in this portrayal. Goodman-Soellner (1987) had therefore proposed that Boucher had attempted to pay homage to her former beauty by incorporating artistic traditions and painting techniques which had praised the importance of female grooming. This celebration and glorification of female beauty had also been associated with preceding literary and artistic cultural sentiments (Goodman-Soellner, 1987).

Hyde (2000) had investigated the uniquely rare compositional arrangements and choices demonstrated in François Boucher’s painting, “Madame de Pompadour,” particularly since he had depicted her as left-handed while holding a rouge brush in the midst of grooming herself. Hyde (2002) had suggested that this specific aspect in Boucher’s portrayal of “Madame de Pompadour” had most likely been an “intentional error” since it had not aligned with the fact that she had typically been depicted as right-handed in other portraits Boucher had previously painted. Hyde (2002) had therefore

interpreted this “inaccuracy” as a deliberate artistic choice that had highlighted Boucher’s view that his Rococo paintings were ultimately a representational manipulation of reality rather than a linear duplication of it. Hyde (2000) notes that this interpretation of Boucher’s work had been reinforced by the non-reversed cameo bracelet in this depiction of “Madame de Pompadour,” which had consequently emphasized the contrived and synthetic qualities of Art. Based on this interpretation of Boucher’s artistic approaches, the idea is therefore proposed that these intentional artistic decisions had highlighted the “artificiality” involved in both the active participation and production of an artwork, similar to the self-presentation displayed in “Madame de Pompadour” (Hyde, 2000).

Lajer-Burcharth (2009) had further elaborated on François Boucher’s “Madame de Pompadour,” arguing that the painting had not merely served as a portrayal of her beauty, stature, prominence, and influence but also as a representation of her as a noteworthy arts collector and orchestrator of luxurious items promoting a refined lifestyle. Lajer-Burcharth (2009) mentions that this specific depiction of “Madame de Pompadour” had exemplified her bodily figure as one of the highly desirable and luxurious objects that had surrounded her. Having presented her as a “precious object,” her value had been equated to her financial support, cultural elevation, and personal accomplishments that defined her identity throughout France. This “commodification” of “Madame de Pompadour” had been underscored by the idealized portrayal of her body, which Lajer-Burcharth (2009) had associated with the figure of Venus, goddess of love. Venus, in this time period in French society, had also been perceived as a “symbol of consumerism” rather than an “individual character.” Lajer-Burcharth (2009) had further noted that the distinct lack of “anatomical specificity” in this portrait had underscored Boucher’s focus on Madame de Pompadour’s role as a “woman of distinct taste” rather than as an iconic personality. This approach had, in turn, reflected Madame de Pompadour’s preference for Boucher as her portrait artist despite his reputed inability to capture the true likeness of prominent figures (Lajer-Burcharth, 2009).

An alternative perspective had been provided by Lewis (2003), who had stated that François Boucher’s portrayals of “Madame de Pompadour” were thoughtfully and attentively planned to capture both her artistic and intellectual interests. As noted by Lewis (2003), “Madame de Pompadour” had also exercised significant influence over the portrayals of her physical appearance, especially in surrounding herself with luxurious objects that had symbolized her education and sophistication. Lewis (2003) states that in earlier portrayals of “Madame de Pompadour,” she had been illustrated with books, architectural drawings, and musical instruments. In later portrayals, she had often been illustrated as an elegant and somewhat “demure lady” skilled in embroidery. It is argued that both these settings and symbolic objects had been meticulously chosen and incorporated into her portraits to reveal her talents and intentionally craft a “public persona” of herself as a cultured and educated lady (Lewis, 2003).

In regards to the avenues through which Fine Arts had played a pivotal role in promoting 'cultural identity,' Prosner (1990) states that Madame de Pompadour's influence on Fine Arts and various forms of craftsmanship throughout France during this time period had strongly indicated that both her financial support and leading role in advocating for the development, recognition, and appreciation of Fine Arts had played a foundational role in the development of the Rococo Art Movement as well as Neoclassical Art styles. In fact, Madame de Pompadour's role as Fine Arts patron and advocate had become almost synonymous with the artistic achievements of the Rococo Art Movement during this time period. Prosner (1990) therefore argued that the powerful influence Madame de Pompadour had in steering the development of Art Movements in a certain direction had fulfilled a significant role in promoting 'French cultural identity,' particularly since she had greatly assisted in establishing the Rococo Art Movement as a visual expression of French societal elegance, sophistication, and class (Prosner, 1990).

In agreement with Prosner (1990), Riggs (2001) also highlighted Madame de Pompadour's role as both an intellectual female leader and artistic cultural patron during her time period, proposing that her distinct level of educational training and proactive, ambitious manner had been profoundly instrumental in her gradual evolution into a leading cultural patron during one of the most prominent time periods in France's history. Beyond being the favorite mistress of King Louis XV, she had been highly effective in her persuasive interactions with the artistic, academic, and philosophical elites of her era. Riggs (2001) had noted, however, that within La Tour's pastel portrait of Madame de Pompadour, she had been depicted as a modern "Amarillis" (beautiful shepherdess) who revealed her 'perception of self' as an equal peer to the intellectual luminaries of the time, as well as a visionary Arts patron. Madame de Pompadour's approach to 'self-presentation' had, as a result, indirectly reinforced and promoted 'French cultural identity' by aligning it with the time period's societal and cultural values related to the Enlightenment and intellectualism.

Stechow (1960) and Zafran (2017) had both focused-on François Boucher's elegant series of portraits for Madame de Pompadour, called 'Seasons', now on view in the prestigious Frick Collection. Stechow (1960) had carefully compared these portraits with contemporary historical generic descriptions and rigorous standards set by the Royal Academy of Paintings and Sculptures. Within this comparison, Stechow (1960) had noted that Boucher's Rococo artworks had departed from the previously embraced 'lofty allegorical subject matters,' favouring more charming and light-hearted scenes that had captured the elegance of the Rococo Art Movement. This series had served as a visual embodiment of the Fine Arts preferences of the time period and had also supported Madame de Pompadour's vision for transforming French culture. From her perspective, French culture had been

destined for the enjoyment of 'refined taste' and 'sophistication,' intentionally portrayed in a light-hearted and playful manner.

Regarding the pivotal role that Boucher's portraits had played in promoting 'cultural identity,' Stechow (1960) and Zafran (2017) both present the perspective that this 'body of artworks' had contributed towards creating a distinct new French lifestyle and visual aesthetic, which had strongly promoted a 'new French cultural identity' based on elegance, sophistication, refinement, and a strong appreciation for Fine Arts (Stechow, 1960; Zafran, 2017).

In agreement with the perspectives and interpretations provided by Barker (2009), Goodman-Soellner (1987), Hyde (2002), Lajer-Burcharth (2009), Lewis (2003), M.R.R. (1938), Prosner (1990), Stechow (1960), and Zafran (2017), Madame de Pompadour's impactful influence had been profoundly recognized and underscored in relation to her pivotal role in establishing the Rococo Art Movement's visual characteristics within the framework of a new French cultural identity. Her deeds had undeniably proved that Madame de Pompadour was indeed a 'Climate force en masse'—a remarkably significant historical figure who had become an indelible part of the Fine Arts and the broader cultural legacy of France.

6.1.3.3 Marie Antoinette in a Court Dress 1778 – Painted by Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun

The plot had thickened; according to the anonymous authors (2022) from 'The Metropolitan Museum of Art', it had been recorded in meticulously kept historic archives that Marie Antoinette's 1778 court portrait had not only been reproduced multiple times, skilfully executed by talented Fine Artists, and sent to ministries of courts in foreign lands, but had also been strategically used as part of diplomatic currency to build goodwill and favour with the French. Yet these replications of Marie Antoinette portraits had served an even more powerful purpose: to act as a symbolic representation of the French monarchy's esteemed authority, grandeur, and unshakable prestige. As a result, the creation of this royal portrait series had led to Vigée Le Brun's fame growing in parallel with the French monarchy's international projection of power and influence.

Ultimately, the widespread success of Marie Antoinette's portrait had demonstrated the effectiveness of strategically implementing royal imagery to establish and expand the influence of the French crown (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2022).



Figure 40: ‘*Marie Antoinette in a Court Dress*’ (1778) is currently being preserved in The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, U.S.A, which had been painted during the Rococo Art Movement (1778) by Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun (Larkin, 2010).

Note. Larkin (2010) referred to **Figure 40** within the journal titled, ‘*A “Gift” Strategically Solicited and Magnanimously Conferred: The American Congress, the French Monarchy, and the State Portraits of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette*’. Winterthur Portfolio, 44 (1), 31–76. <https://doi.org/10.1086/651087>, p.34

The author Brosnan (2016) had presented the argument that the exceptionally large portrait of Marie Antoinette, painted by Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun in 1778, had not only served as a demonstration of the painter’s rising status as a young Fine Artist but had also illustrated Marie Antoinette’s complex and controversial social relation with the broader French public. Interestingly, both the French female painter and Marie Antoinette as queen had both been only twenty-three years old during this period. Furthermore, “Marie Antoinette in a Court Dress (1778)” had notably echoed and emulated the formalized visual restraint of the French court, particularly due to Marie Antoinette’s ornate, embellished, yet restrictive attire.

This particular Rococo painting by Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun had originally been intended as a gift to Marie Antoinette’s mother, Empress Maria Theresa. Therefore, the painting had been created to showcase the queen’s “regal authority” and highly admired family heritage, as well as her family’s legacy. The dress, delicately crafted from the finest silk, had seamlessly merged with the rigid corset, the elegantly woven Austrian rose, and the perfectly styled, high-pinned hair, all of which had powerfully conveyed her elevated status and dominance within the exclusive social spheres of her time. Every separate component of this depiction had contributed to the creation of her ethereal and royal presence while her figure had become affiliated with sheer beauty and political importance. The collective artistic portrayal had not merely entailed refined royal clothing with the highly detailed embellishments, it had represented her royal authority within the highest echelons of society. Furthermore, this representation had given Marie Antoinette an edge which had been both stunning and unparalleled. Moreover, the marble bust sculpture of King Louis XVI, looming above her toward the upper-right corner of the composition, had subtly alluded to the tensions in their marital union, thus hinting at the political anxieties that had quietly simmered beneath the surface (Brosnan, 2016).

The author Brown (2023) had conveyed the perspectives of Stefan Zweig, who had argued that Marie Antoinette had been a prominent leading figure during her time who had been mostly unsuccessful

at navigating political and social complexities with grace, objectivity, rationality, reason, and compassion. According to Brown (2023), Zweig had further noted that, although Marie Antoinette's marriage to Louis XVI had held great political significance, she had remained mostly unable to meet the high expectations her authoritative role required. Most notoriously, however, she had failed to establish meaningful avenues of communication with the majority of the middle and lower classes throughout France, whom she had reigned over. As Stefan Zweig put it, Marie Antoinette had displayed "mediocre personal qualities" that had ailed her in identifying, facing, and addressing the growing dis-ease of the French "people" as a whole. And thus, her lack of diplomatic skill, common sense, and empathy had played an outsized role in establishing the French Revolution. The final reason for these negative communal portrayals within the broader French society, would be the public perception of her being an incurable romantic, since she was often just as far removed from the pleasure of living and from the real world as events such as the Diamond Necklace Affair would confirm when finally reviewed at the time - and both aspects combined would have helped with the resounding disdain felt toward her persona among the French people (Brown, 2023).

Similarly, Marie Antoinette's own denial and underappreciation of the revolutionary tensions rising around her had only served to isolate her from the public, preventing her from being able to embrace and engage with her people in an interactive and meaningful manner (Brown, 2023).

The author Karvouni (2014) had compared Marie Antoinette's formal 1778 portrait to a far more relaxed 1783 portrayal, noticing a remarkable shift from a traditional display of her characteristics and visual attributes toward a distinctly more approachable and warm interpretation of her individualism. Karvouni (2014) notes that in the earlier portrait painted in 1778, Marie Antoinette had been depicted wearing a structured and intricately decorated court dress associated with the visual appearances of the Spanish royal portraits painted by the artist Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez. The distant facial expression and formal style of clothing with which she had been painted in the 1778 portrait communicated a strong sense of her regal and distant detachment from broader French society. In contrast, her 1783 portrait, in which she had been portrayed in a simpler dress with a warmer facial expression, had directly engaged with the audience as she looked forward. Likewise, the bouquet of arranged flowers had made a profound visual difference in portraying a more accessible, approachable, inviting, and modernized royal image (Karvouni, 2014).

From a similar angle, the author Mayer (2021) had reflected upon Marie Antoinette's ever-changing "public image" and "artistic portrayals," particularly regarding the visible shift in her fashionable attire and new incorporation of the "chemise à la reine" in her wardrobe—a simplistic white muslin gown that had distinctly contrasted with her 1778 court dress. This white muslin gown, initially

worn during her second pregnancy in 1781, had signified her departure from the formal limitations, restrictions, and rules of traditional court fashion. As seen in Vigée Le Brun's 1783 portrayal of Marie Antoinette in this comparatively informal gown, Mayer had agreed with Karvouni (2014) that it exuded a more relatable and approachable royal personification, yet it had stirred profound controversy during this period in history (Mayer, 2021).

The author Larkin (2010) had commented on the historical significance of Vigée Le Brun's portrait of Marie Antoinette, particularly emphasizing its importance as U.S.-French relations had been diplomatically strengthened during the French Revolution. This specific portrait—one of multiple royal depictions of Marie Antoinette that had been painted to symbolize the superiority, grandeur, sophistication, and splendor of the French monarchy—had been purposefully created to visually reinforce Bourbon authority amidst global relations. This also had included North America, as the U.S. Congress had made various requests for commissioned royal portraits. Such portraits had successfully captured the diplomatic struggles, tensions, and challenges of this period. However, these historic and iconic royal portraits, which had been destroyed during the War of 1812, had been reflective of shifting political loyalties and commitments between France and the United States (Larkin, 2010).

In regards to the avenues through which Fine Arts had played a pivotal role in promoting 'cultural identity,' Bronsnan (2016) had stated that this particular Rococo portrayal of Marie Antoinette had not only represented 'French cultural identity' due to her status as a renowned French monarch but also because she had been considered an iconic figure who exerted French elegance and courtly tradition. Collectively, her portrayal within this portrait had encompassed the sophistication, powerful influence, and prestigious royal name of the French monarchy (Bronsnan, 2016).

Brown (2023) had presented the argument that 'French cultural identity' had been effectively captured within this portrait by highlighting Marie Antoinette's royal image and presence as a symbol of regal withdrawnness, similar to both the French courts' -and monarchy's disconnection from the middle and lower classes. This disconnect had consequently led to revolutionary uprisings against societal values that were perceived as being disconnected from reality (Brown, 2023).

Alongside the views of Bronsnan (2016) and Brown (2023), Karvouni (2014) had mentioned that the French monarchy's adaptation of Marie Antoinette's original 1778 portrait, as seen within the 1783 version, had visually featured a distinct desire to portray her as a more personable, approachable, kind, and compassionate royal leader. This strategic adjustment made by the French monarchy had indirectly confirmed that broader French society had sought to establish values of fairness, humility, diplomatic approachability, and compassion for one another's needs. This portrait had therefore captured

this particular shift in 'cultural taste' within French societal and cultural values, which had transpired, further establishing a new 'French cultural identity' (Karvouni, 2014).

Larkin (2010) had stated that this portrait's strategic function as a 'diplomatic' and 'political tool,' intended to underscore the French monarchy's cultural influence and global stature, had encapsulated 'French cultural identity' by demonstrating France's perception of itself as both a superior and leading European nation (Larkin, 2010).

From Mayer's (2021) perspective, the unique role fulfilled by Marie Antoinette in 'redefining fashion norms' had encapsulated an evolving 'French cultural identity' during the Rococo period, as her portraits had exemplified ever-changing French cultural tastes and France's influence upon extended European fashion trends and visual aesthetics (Mayer, 2021).

The unknown authors from The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2022) had put forth the viewpoint that Marie Antoinette's portrait had represented and promoted 'French cultural identity' by highlighting the artwork's role in 'visually communicating' the stability of the French monarchy and its extravagant grandeur. Therefore, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2022) presents the perspective that the portrayal of 'Marie Antoinette in a Court Dress (1778)' had exemplified France's international reputation and political aspirations during the Rococo Art Movement's time period (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2022).

6.1.3.4 The Swing (1767) - by Jean-Honoré Fragonard



Figure 41: *'The Swing'* (1767) is currently being preserved at the Wallace Collection in London's Hertford House, England, which had been painted during the Rococo Art Movement (1767) by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, (Aryana, 2014).

Note. Aryana (2014) referred to **Figure 41** within the journal titled, *'Sixth Journal: The Swing.*
Suryaaryana. Wordpress.com.

<https://suryaaryana.wordpress.com/2014/10/16/sixth-journal-the-swing/>, para.1

As noted by Aryana (2014), the Rococo artwork named *The Swing* (1767), which had been painted by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, was originally funded and

commissioned by the libertine Baron de St. Julien. *The Swing* (1767) had been considered by many art historians and scholars as a quintessential example of French Rococo painting, containing enriching symbols, signals, and indications that had encapsulated the revolutionary spirit and playful cultural nature of the Rococo time period. Although this commission assignment requested by Baron de St. Julien had initially been declined by Doyen, a relatively conservative painter, the challenge had been eagerly embraced by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, who had incorporated playful, dreamlike, and engaging visual characteristics.

In regard to the themes of this Rococo painting, Aryana (2014) had emphasized that the compositional arrangement of *The Swing* (1767), as well as its culturally infused subject matter, portrayed the forbidden relationship that had transpired between the Baron and the “apple of his eye.” Fragonard had portrayed the Baron in the foreground of the painting as a womanizer and seducer, positioned explicitly from an angle beneath the swing, observing the physical attributes and features of his lover. Moreover, the position in which the Baron had requested to view his mistress was intended to emphasize the beauty of her legs (Aryana, 2014).

Nevill (1903) further states that since his lover’s shoe had flown off in the midst of the moment’s heated passion, this visual component had been intentionally illustrated as a centralized focal point, emblematic of spontaneity and the trivial and superficial nature of their love affair. The bishop’s ambiguous, shadowy figure depicted within the background of this painting had further underpinned the thematic subject matter related to secrecy, deception, and marital betrayal. Furthermore, the concerned angelic beings, the patchy and multi-coloured light reflections, and the mistress’s flying slipper had additionally elevated the light-hearted, playful, and erotic undertones of *The Swing* (1767). These visual features and thematic attributes had been characteristic of the distinct painting style within the Rococo Art Movement (Nevill, 1903).

Posner (1990), in agreement with the perspectives of Aryana (2014) and Nevill (1903), argues that the meticulously calculated composition of *The Swing* within a densely overgrown garden had been purposefully selected to provoke an emotional sense of “thrilling excitement” and “secrecy.” The additional presence of the angelic Cupid sculpture, which had compelled the audience to silence, had further amplified the hidden character of the romantic love affair. Posner (1990) had also highlighted that although this particular Rococo painting had been predominantly renowned for its joyfully promiscuous theme, Fragonard’s depiction of *The Swing* had ultimately not been intended as a realistic or lifelike portrayal of reality, but rather as a well-thought-through and staged scene that had been carefully designed to visually communicate both the thrill and excitement of “young love.” Furthermore, the intentional removal of identifiable key figures, as well as the bishop’s transformation into a more

indefinite character, had caused this artwork to “transcend its initial context.” As a result, *The Swing* (1767) had been solidified as a timeless Rococo painting that captured “romantic escapism” with great precision.

Michel (2007) mentions that the symbolic portrayal seen within Jean-Honoré Fragonard’s painting of a woman swinging had typically been affiliated with female unreliability, unfaithfulness, and inappropriately erotic behaviour. Yet these unbecoming behaviours and immoral qualities had, however, been emblematic of the values demonstrated among the wealthy and elite circles of the highest societal classes during the Rococo time period. It had been further argued by Michel (2007) that while the painting had provoked fantastical illusions, dreams, and humour, these symbolic attributes were embedded within a culmination of cultural traditions pertaining to the appreciation of nature and the celebration of love, passion, and desire. *The Swing* (1767) had therefore captured a unique interplay of relevant Art Elements and Design Principles from the Rococo time period.

As further elaborated upon by Milam (2000), the extraordinarily creative and innovative artistic approach demonstrated by Jean-Honoré Fragonard’s *The Swing* (1767) had demonstrated a complicated and sophisticated experimentation with visual exaggeration and mischievous suggestiveness. Moreover, his incorporation of public codes and cultural norms related to the leisurely activities of the aristocratic and elitist upper classes, including romantic amusements, had challenged French audiences to engage in subtle cultural and personalized interpretations. Therefore, the artwork’s intended meaning had not been entirely established or confirmed by Fragonard and remained open to individual symbolic associations. Milam (2000) notes that the artist had presented the French public with an open invitation to personally engage with this Rococo painting’s intended meaning and interpretative analysis. The art-making process of *The Swing* (1767) had therefore been considered an “actively engaging” experience rather than a passive statement (Milam, 2000).

In regards to the avenues through which Fine Arts had played a pivotal role in promoting ‘cultural identity,’ Jean-Honoré Fragonard’s *The Swing* (1767), as noted by Sherwood (2021), had served as an energetic and vivid representation of ‘French cultural identity’ during the Rococo Art Movement’s time-period. This painting exemplified the societal aspirations, ideals, aesthetic attributes, and values related to elitist French societal circles and aristocracy.

More specifically, Posner (1990), Sherwood (2021), and Michel (2007) are in agreement regarding the understanding that *The Swing* (1767) had effectively featured French cultural values pertaining to sensuality, playfulness, giddiness, and frivolousness. It is further noted that *The Swing* (1767) had encapsulated a light-hearted approach towards both interpreting and portraying the themes

of seduction and romance, especially as romantic themes had been highly emphasized and valued during the French Rococo time-period. Therefore, through the incorporation of 'intimate figural gestures,' 'intricately decorated clothing,' as well as the lush green landscape scenery, *The Swing* had epitomized both the visual attributes and thematic characteristics of the Rococo time-period.

In addition, Fragonard's successful execution as seen within *The Swing* (1767) had perfectly combined beautiful visual aesthetics with both components of mischief and elements of innocence. These contrasting yet culminating visual attributes had reinforced France's cultural ideals during the Rococo time-period, especially as the boundaries of 'propriety,' 'indulgence,' and 'delight' had often overlapped and intersected. This particular Rococo painting by Jean-Honoré Fragonard had therefore made a significant contribution towards establishing an exceptionally distinctive 'French cultural identity' and historical French legacy, particularly through memorializing and elevating a sense of 'sophisticated playfulness' which had been characteristic during the Rococo time-period of French high-society (Milam, 2000).

Furthermore, *The Swing* had both celebrated and challenged the societal freedoms which had been enjoyed by the upper-elite classes of France during this time period, closely aligned with French cultural values pertaining to 'charm,' 'wittiness,' and refined societal interactions. The specific thematic depiction of *The Swing* (1767), as argued by Aryana (2014) and Michel (2007), had portrayed the act of flirtation within a secluded, lush green garden, symbolizing not only the indulgence of 'individual freedoms' but also the necessity of 'societal performance.' These aspects had been foundational to the lifestyles of French aristocrats, nobility, and those from the elite upper classes.

In agreement with the aforementioned aspect of 'societal performance,' Yass (2024) highlights that the young woman had been illustrated as 'outwardly cheerful' while dressed in her exquisite attire, raising questions among art historians and scholars regarding her degree of personal control and authenticity within this situation. Yass (2024) proposes the idea that the facial expressions and figural gestures of the young lady in this painting may have been 'acts of pretence.' Consequently, the author raises doubts regarding whether she had any personal authority, influence, or participative choice in performing for the male characters admiring her beauty.

Yass (2024) further mentions that *The Swing* (1767) may have served as a personal critique or symbolic representation of Jean-Honoré Fragonard's underlying anger at the situation he had depicted, as well as the 'newly adopted immoral cultural values' by the upper class of French high society, which had not been supported by the broader French public of the middle and lower classes. Yass (2024) ascribes this theoretical argument to the fact that *The Swing* (1767) had contained subtle yet undeniable

visual indications of potential danger and tension through the incorporation of ‘ominous shadows,’ a ‘fraying rope,’ as well as the exaggerated visual attributes and features of the figures. Therefore, Yass (2024) notes that there had been a revolutionary and cultural battle during the Rococo Art Movement’s time period within France, as it related to the establishment of a new ‘French cultural identity.’

6.1.3.5 A Boy Blowing Bubbles (1733-34) – by Jean Siméon Chardin



Figure 42: ‘*A Boy Blowing Bubbles*’ (1733-34) is currently being preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, which had been painted during the Rococo Art Movement (1733-34) by Jean Siméon Chardin, (Rousseau, 1950).

Note. Rousseau, (1950) referred to **Figure 42** within the journal titled, ‘*A Boy Blowing Bubbles by Chardin*’. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, 8 (8), 221–227. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3257493>, p.220

The Rococo painting titled *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* by Jean Siméon Chardin (1733-34) had been extensively examined, analysed, and investigated for the interpretation of its thematic subject matter, associative symbolism, and stylistic components by multiple art historians and scholars. Academic scholars, including Frey (2021) and Rousseau (1950), had underscored evident symbolism resembling themes related to ‘vanitas’ and had associated the bubbles with both the fragile and temporal nature of human life. These ‘vanitas’ subject themes had been most notoriously prominent during the 1600s within various disciplines of fine arts, philosophy, and literary texts.

Frey (2021) had, in particular, traced a variety of historical symbolisms associated with ‘bubbles’ to a Latin proverb known as *homo bulla* (man is a bubble), which had been founded upon ancient Roman literature. Within the cultural context of ancient Rome, soap bubbles had illustrated the fleeting, transient, and temporal nature of life. Simultaneously, Rousseau (1950) had made correlations and comparisons to the artworks of Chardin, who had been greatly influenced by Dutch genre painters and had often created paintings based upon similar thematic subjects of investigation. However, many art historians and academic scholars had presented the perspective that Jean Siméon Chardin had focused significantly on perfecting the technical execution of his painting techniques and effectively achieving realism, rather than engaging in philosophical interpretations and portrayals (Frey, 2021).

Grigely (1994) had commented upon the fact that Jean Siméon Chardin frequently created multiple “autograph replicas,” or variations of the exact same compositional arrangement. Therefore, Grigely (1994) had proposed the idea that these varying replicas were most likely intertwined and connected on some level, despite having been distinctly different from one another. This particular artistic approach of creating a similar-themed series of replications had showcased Chardin’s incredible commitment to intricately detailed portrayals, especially as demonstrated within the high degree of transparency he had achieved in the representation of soap bubbles across multiple variations.

Ly (2018) and Herbert (2001) had further commented upon Jean Siméon Chardin’s exceptional accomplishment of both realism and simplified visual depictions of clothing. The thematic background settings had deviated from the more elaborative features characteristic of the Rococo Art Movement, which had been highly admired during this time period. However, French society had perceived Chardin’s attention to mundane objects and themes as a philosophical expression, which not only revealed a fascination with the material world but also youthful innocence (Ly, 2018).

Thematic interpretations of ‘youthful innocence’ by Ly (2018) and Herbert (2001) had also been associated with Chardin’s artistic interest and preoccupation with the transitional phase from adolescence within the French cultural context of the Rococo period to becoming an adult. Herbert (2001) had more specifically proposed the idea that *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* (1733-34) suggested a visually definite journey from childhood into adulthood, while the transparent and fragile bubble had symbolized the evanescent nature of youthfulness. The younger, somewhat obscured child depicted within this Rococo painting’s background had been intended to illustrate a time shift from childhood innocence to a self-awareness, as well as an awareness of the difficulties, complications, challenges, and responsibilities of ‘growing up’ (Herbert, 2001).

Heffernen (2008) had presented the perspective that the act of blowing bubbles might be compared to a ‘spiritual awakening’ or perhaps a ‘transcendent inner experience’ that had transfigured the participation in a simplistic and childlike action into a deepened metaphysical symbol of the ‘supernatural’ (Heffernen, 2008). This understanding had been expanded upon by Mariano (2023), who had interpreted this Rococo painting as an allegorical analogy of the relational interplay between the ‘temporal’, ‘unattainable’, and ‘eternal’. Additionally, Mariano (2023) had also highlighted the strategic positioning and arrangement of the delicate bubble in the focal point of this artwork, which had been emblematic of the manner in which life’s fleeting moments capture universal truths about life’s continuity and eternity (Mariano, 2023).

It had been mentioned by Ostas (2010) that the impending burst within the bubble of this Rococo painting had served as a metaphor for the fragility, delicacy, and vulnerability of life. The ardently focused gaze of the boy in this Rococo painting had added to the pensive and reflective atmosphere depicted, further bringing attention to the ephemeral nature of life (Ostas, 2010).

According to the viewpoint presented by Ly (2018), Jean Siméon Chardin had most likely been inspired and impacted by the birth of his daughter, capturing through his artwork the essence of both the 'innocence of childhood' and the 'curiosity of adolescence'. Ly (2018) had argued that the 'potential vanitas symbolism' alluded to within *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* was less relevant to themes of mortality and instead more applicable to esteeming and praising youthful joy.

Heffernen (2008) had mentioned that *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* by Jean Siméon Chardin, similar to the mesmerized state of Fried's window washer, had compared and exalted simplistic daily activities to a "spiritual state." Both Herbert (2001) and Mariano (2023) had interpreted *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* as an explorative investigation of 'transience' versus 'permanence'. Furthermore, the soft, transparent, and delicate nature of the soap bubble, in contrast to the sturdy durability of the stone ledge, had visually communicated the equilibrium of 'temporal junctures in time' and 'enduring-realities'. Consequently, this had symbolized the manner through which ephemeral experiences had assisted the formation of a permanent heritage and legacy (Herbert, 2001; Mariano, 2023).

In regard to the avenues through which Fine Arts had played a pivotal role in promoting 'cultural identity,' the Rococo painting by Jean Siméon Chardin titled *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* had reflected 'French societal -and cultural identity' through its examination of thematic subjects pertaining to youthfulness, as well as the 'simplistic' and 'temporal nature' of life. Additionally, as mentioned by Ly (2018) and Herbert (2001), Chardin's distinct focus upon 'realistic visual features' of 'daily-life acts' had effectively coordinated with French societal -and cultural values of childlike innocence and the realities of the material world. Jean Siméon Chardin's artworks had therefore profoundly departed from the self-indulgent decadence and extravagance typically associated with the Rococo Art Movement.

Furthermore, as investigated, analysed, and elaborated upon by Frey (2021) and Rousseau (1950), the associative 'vanitas symbolism' connected to the bubbles had resembled the 'philosophical engagement' of themes pertaining to both 'mortality' and 'impermanence' within French society. As confirmed by Frey (2021) and Rousseau (1950), through the artistic approach of illustrating insignificant and daily activities, acts, and moments with sophisticated intricacies, Jean Siméon Chardin had heralded and elevated 'French cultural appreciation' of the 'simplistic qualities' and 'the small joys of life.' This

particular painting created by Chardin had therefore served as a stark contrast against the opulence of French elitism, aristocratic circles, and high society during the Rococo time period.

The allegorical associations noted upon by Mariano (2023), which had been made by Jean Siméon Chardin to themes of 'temporal, fleeting transience' and 'eternal continuity,' had emphasized the philosophical French value that acknowledged life's temporal nature as foundational -and integral to leaving a long-lasting cultural legacy. These collective visual attributes pertaining to interpretation, execution, and representation as demonstrated within Chardin's *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* had not only served as a testament to his exceptional artistic skilfulness but also as a visual encapsulation of 'French cultural identity' during the Rococo time period (Mariano, 2023).

6.2.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to Japan's Ukiyo-e Prints Which Developed During the Edo Time-Period (1615-1868)

6.2.1.1 Origins of Ukiyo-e Printmaking

Newcombe (2011) & Bickford (1982) explain that the significantly iconic and noteworthy Ukiyo-e Art Form from the Japanese Edo time-period, which had begun around 1615 and had ended approximately in 1868, had revealed an extended and all-inclusive revelation to both Art historians and scholars regarding the specific Japanese cultural, societal, and various Fine Arts advancements during this particular Japanese Era. This Japanese Art Movement's evolutionary developmental emergence had been uniquely impacted by multiple external influences, such as Oriental Chinese woodblock printing methods and techniques, which had been cultivated and uniquely altered by a broad spectrum of Japanese artisans over an extended period of time. Newcombe (2011) furthermore presents the argument that this transformative groundwork had been firmly laid for the recognizable identity and required technical expertise of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement to be firmly established (Bickford, 1982; Newcombe, 2011).

Although the first prints had been originally printed in monochromatic colour schemes, they had gradually developed into multi-tiered colour-printing artworks throughout the middle of the 18th century, which were referred to as 'Nishiki-e.' This new evolutionary genre of Japanese printing had also become the most advanced authenticated trademark of Japanese Fine Arts during the Edo time-period, which had further served as evidentiary progress in the historical context of varying disciplines of Fine Arts and other techniques of craftsmanship. More specifically, this progress had pertained to the artistic application of pigmentation and the incorporation of 'washi' parchment, which had improved the absorption of diverse colour-ink varieties and had consequently assisted in both the physical and aesthetic durability of these Japanese prints (Newcombe, 2011).

In unison and support of the information provided by Newcombe (2011), Fiske (2006) provides extensive understanding regarding methods which had been utilized to ensure additional strength, preservation, and durability of Ukiyo-e prints by creating another type of paper that had been produced from mulberry fibre and referred to as “koko.” Both the “washi” and “koko” parchments, which had been meticulously prepared, had caused these Ukiyo-e woodblock prints to be sustained throughout multiple centuries. Fiske (2006), however, highlights the fact that the safety and long-term preservation of these historical Ukiyo-e prints had been endangered by external environmental influences due to exposure to humidity, acidity in the air, and sunlight. These contributing factors might have unfortunately led to irreversible blemishes and deterioration of the prints should Art Museums fail to implement the necessary preventative measures. These important measures to preserve and protect the Ukiyo-e prints had been particularly important for ensuring that the bright colour schemes of the uniquely detailed designs had remained intact for future generations to both admire and study (Fiske, 2006).

Floyd (1986), however, provides the compelling perspective by suggesting that the Japanese cultural inspirations, origins, and influences of the Ukiyo-e printmaking Art Movement had an impact that had overflowed beyond the borders of Japan and had consequently caused a long-lasting shift in the progress of European and Western Fine Arts during the decades and centuries that had followed this particular time-period in Japanese history.

Floyd (1986) notes that this impact, which had been witnessed within the development of European and Western Fine Arts trends that had followed the Japanese Edo-period, had more specifically revolved around the profoundly unique pictorial and decorative style of Ukiyo-e imagery, which had incorporated overlapping flat colour planes with a distinct emphasis that had been placed upon the use of ‘line’ as an Element of Art and ‘movement’ as a formal ‘Principle of Design.’ In other words, the Art Scene had been interchangeably altered on opposite sides of the world, while an increased advancement related to the expansion of trade routes between European nations and Japan had caused a diverse spectrum of European artists to incorporate and apply certain stylistic characteristics of Japanese aesthetics into their paintings, etches, and own illustrative attempts at woodblock printing. In return, the adoption of Japanese compositional attributes and Japanese visual aesthetics had initiated a new foundational platform for international dialogue to develop in the context of visual communication (Floyd, 1986).

After investigative analysis, Thornton (1989) concludes that European trade fairs, which had been held during the 1860s, had introduced Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock prints with unparalleled graphic techniques of ‘woodblock-carving’ and ‘print-making,’ which had, in return, made a remarkable impact upon Western Fine Artists and designers like Jules Cheret, Edward Penfield, and Maxfield

Parrish. Jules Cheret, for example, had applauded and admired the unique subdued compositional backgrounds typically observed within Ukiyo-e prints, which had been strategically intended to accentuate and emphasize the subject-matter, objects, and figures depicted within the foreground. Cheret had particularly adopted this compositional design technique within his poster designs. The renowned French designer Toulouse-Lautrec had also integrated the application of the Japanese 'monogram' within his illustrative prints and had drawn inspiration from the "Japanese chop" (signature seal), elements of which had been evidently visible within his artworks (Thornton, 1989).

In further elaboration, Thornton (1989) explains that due to the exceptional Japanese cultural isolation from foreign nations during the Edo time-period, the interpretative understanding of 'visual culture,' 'visual communication,' 'cultural expression,' and 'cultural identity' had evolved in an exceptionally unique and exclusive manner that had been extraordinarily different from European or Western styles of artistic expression and visual communication. Comparable to modern-day contemporary graphic designers, Ukiyo-e printmakers and Fine Artists from the Edo time-period in Japan had meticulously administered, planned, and executed the production of multi-layered and multi-coloured woodblock prints. During this time-period in Japan's history, these prints had consisted of varying carving techniques and printmaking processes, which had been predominantly unknown to artists from European and Western countries. These rigorous and intricately carved woodblock prints had additionally incorporated components of Japanese calligraphy and illustrative pictorial elements, which had been deeply rooted in ancient Chinese Fine Arts traditions. Moreover, these uncommonly extraordinary visual attributes, Art elements, and Design principles had become defining features of Ukiyo-e aesthetics (Thornton, 1989).

The commercialization of Ukiyo-e prints during the Edo time-period had been promotional in nature and had been referred to as "bira," while having been exhibited in communal social squares like public paths or intersectional crossroads at popular travel routes. Japanese Fine Artists like Utagawa Kunisada had popularized the promotional "bira" style of Ukiyo-e prints, which had recognizably contained refined and detailed colour schemes. Consequently, these former Ukiyo-e prints, which had served as promotional content and informative visual representations of the societal and cultural values of the Edo time-period, had opened the future pathways for Japan's woodblock prints to transition to the transformative application of 'lithographic techniques' during the Meiji time-period. This artistic transition had marked a significant evolutionary transformation in Japanese print-making processes (Thornton, 1989).

Pertaining to the accessibility of Japanese Ukiyo-e prints in Europe during the Edo time-period, Watanabe (1986) highlights the essential role which the exclusive Art collections and exhibitions conducted by Philipp Franz von Siebold had played in awakening European society to 'Japanese cultural

identity' through the public displays of these unique 'Ukiyo-e visual expressions,' which had featured artworks created by Moronobu and Hiroshige. During 1837, this collection had formally been made available for public viewing and had been exhibited in the National Museum of Ethnography in Leiden. Other Fine Arts Galleries and Fine Arts Museums throughout Europe, like the 'Cabinet des Estampes,' had also begun acquiring Ukiyo-e prints during the mid-1800s, which had remarkably contributed to an increased awareness of Japanese art throughout European countries, especially the Ukiyo-e prints of Utamaro and Toyokuni (Watanabe, 1986).

Newcombe (2011) further elaborates upon the understanding that the Ukiyo-e printing processes during the Japanese Edo Period had required significant collaboration among a number of affiliating Fine Artists, sculptors, chisellers, carvers, print-making experts, and publishers. These collective groups of artisans had been further supported by skilfully trained craftsmen who had granted them both access and specialized assistance pertaining to the most advanced equipment, mediums, apparatuses, and materials which had been developed during this period in Japanese history (Newcombe, 2011).

Bickford (1982) provides interesting commentary by arguing that the collective technical advancements and artistic accomplishments related to the development of these skilful Ukiyo-e printmaking processes and artworks had not merely been ascribed to the achievements of certain prominent and notorious Japanese artists but had instead formed part of a broader cultural phenomenon which had transformed both methods and interpretative perceptions pertaining to visual expression and visual communication in Japanese culture. On a further practical note, Bickford (1982) suggests the perspective that an increase in the production of woodblock-printing had been witnessed during the Japanese Edo time-period since this medium had been readily available to working-class commoners. Due to its accessibility, woodblock printing had therefore granted them a pathway towards both creating and acquiring an affordable form of art which had formerly been exclusively obtainable by aristocratic 'high society.' Despite an increased demand among the Japanese public for the production of detailed multi-layered woodblock prints, the original postponement in regards to the adoption of multi-layered colour-printing had been caused by a scarcity of colour-pigmentation, which had to be extracted from natural resources through various strenuous processes (Bickford, 1982).

These colourful Ukiyo-e prints, which had therefore typically been produced and reproduced in multifaceted layers of ink application (carved in sectional blocks per individual colour-scheme), had evidently mirrored the collaborative and meticulous nature of the Ukiyo-e printing processes. Needless to mention, as confirmed by Newcombe (2011), that the coordinated accuracy involved throughout the Ukiyo-e woodblock printing processes had been essential for achieving intricate and precise end results, while it had also taken months in certain instances for the completion of a singular woodblock layer to be carved. Moreover, these colourful prints, which had exemplified the highest degree of dedicated

craftsmanship and expertise during the Edo-period, had served as a testament to the vibrant cultural identity of Japanese culture. However, these prints had not only been colourful in regards to their stylistic appearance and visual aesthetics but had also been colourful in regards to their diverse range of thematic topics, which had included scenes of everyday Japanese activities, a broad range of landscapes, as well as brothels found in cities such as Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo that had been otherwise known as 'red-light' districts (Newcombe, 2011).

Research conducted by Davis (2008) further supports this understanding by confirming that the Utagawa school, which had been one of the most significantly successful art schools in the historical lineage of Japanese Ukiyo-e production, had led the overarching development of this collaborative print-making movement in leaps and bounds. Especially considering this art school's far superior and unprecedented productive output, as well as the execution of uniquely experimental and innovative print-making methods (Davis, 2008).

Consequently, the Utagawa school, as noted by Davis (2008), had come into fruition amidst an environment of intense market competition, which had been initiated and spearheaded by the school's founder, namely Utagawa Toyoharu. In addition to having incorporated the application of one-point perspective into the compositional layouts of their Ukiyo-e woodblock designs, the Utagawa art school had also begun to include dreamlike and pictorial illustrations of foreign countries such as China and the Netherlands into their colourful woodblock prints. A further noteworthy observation made by Davis (2008) states that the Utagawa art school of the Japanese Edo period had been solely responsible for more than fifty percent of all retrieved and remaining Ukiyo-e woodblock prints during the 21st century. This rare phenomenon had contributed remarkably towards the perception and understanding pertaining to the communicative depths of former Japanese visual culture, which had existed during the Edo-period. Moreover, the collaborative efforts of Ukiyo-e Fine Artists and Printmaking experts, alongside the expressive visual performances of Japanese Kabuki-Theatre actors, had extended their well-established collective artistic role in modifying and transforming both Japanese urbanized culture and popular entertainment practices during the Edo time-period in Japanese history (Davis, 2008).

In support of this understanding, Hickman (1978) presents the perspective that Ukiyo-e printing techniques, which had been perfected during the Japanese Edo-period (based upon a deeper interpretative understanding of the term "ukiyo," which had consisted of two Japanese "kanji" characters), referred to the terms known as "floating" and "world." These cultural phrases had encapsulated the care-free, temporary, and fleeting lifestyle which many local Japanese citizens had consistently sought after, more specifically in regards to the unquenchable quest they had collectively shared in pursuit of 'earthly-pleasures.' This particular cultural component of seeking pleasure through

all human senses which life had to offer during the Japanese Edo-period had particularly defined the 'ukiyo-culture' (Hickman, 1978).

Kazuhiro (2004) provides extended insight and understanding by confirming that the origins and establishment of Ukiyo-e societies had fulfilled a significant role within the context of the development of the Japanese Ukiyo-e Association ("Nihon Ukiyo-e Kyokai"), which had been founded in 1921. Especially in regards to having cultivated a cultural appreciation for the studying of Ukiyo-e printmaking techniques. The main reason for the formation of this association had been caused by rising concerns related to the increased exportation of Japanese Fine Arts to European and Western Art Collectors. These growing concerns among the Japanese public during the Edo time-period had led to the devotion of the extended preservation and research regarding the Ukiyo-e movement among multiple influential and prominent figures within Japan (Kazuhiro, 2004).

Kazuhiro (2004) provides further elaboration by explaining that the Japanese Ukiyo-e Association had initiated and coordinated a number of Japanese Fine Arts Exhibitions, as well as the publication of academic research-based journals. One notorious example hereof had been a journal named "Ukiyoe no kenkyū," which had been focused upon granting enhanced insight pertaining to the application of refined and advanced woodblock-printing, carving, and inking techniques, as well as the historical importance and implications of Ukiyo-e prints, more specifically regarding the fact that this particular Japanese movement had been a unique genre of Japanese Fine Arts (Kazuhiro, 2004).

Additionally, the various activities of the Japanese Ukiyo-e Association ("Nihon Ukiyo-e Kyokai"), which had been predominantly led by both Inoue Kazuo and Mihara Shigekichi, had clearly emphasized the early 20th-century efforts to firmly establish the legacy of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement's Japanese historical and cultural significance. These Japanese exhibitions, which had been orchestrated and arranged within prestigious venues like libraries and showrooms, had played a pivotal role in regards to gaining committed involvement from both academic scholars and the broader public, especially in regards to the groundwork which had been laid for further studies in Ukiyo-e which had followed thereafter. Kazuhiro (2004) had additionally emphasized the impact of the contributions that had been made by influential international figures such as Frederick Gookin and Frank Lloyd Wright, who had underscored the trans-global and cross-cultural dialogues that had been prompted by the graphically illustrative, uniquely stylistic, and visually striking aesthetics of Ukiyo-e woodblock printing. Both the scholarship which had been earned by Gookin, as well as the specific architectural designs created by Wright, had profoundly advanced the higher standards of technical artistic practices in Japan which had consequently been established—along with awarding both local Japanese and international scholarships. In fact, these prestigious exhibitions and concerted efforts made by these societies to publicize academic commentary pertaining to the expansion of Ukiyo-e printmaking had further been viewed as a necessary

avenue for applying 'cultural diplomacy,' with the aim of advancing the prominence of Japan's unique visual culture amidst competitive global relations (Kazuhiro, 2004).

6.2.1.2 International Influences Upon the Development of Ukiyo-E Printmaking & Contributions Made by Prominent Japanese Ukiyo-E Artists:

On the contrary, Little (1996) provides a compellingly different perspective by analysing and considering the origins and implications of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement within the wider international and historical contexts of the development of Japanese Fine Arts. Little (1996) specifically had highlighted the significant influence which detailed Western sketching, painting, etching, carving, and the culmination of multiple Fine Arts techniques had had upon Japanese printmaking processes. It is further noted by Little (1996) that adoptive practices during the mid-1700s, which had been based upon Western approaches towards artistic portrayals and expressions, had signified a substantial alteration in connection with both the technically specialized and stylistic methods that had been applied in Japanese printmaking from this point forward.

As mentioned by Little (1996), Dutch traders had been specifically responsible for the rare conversations, engagements, and exchanges which had occurred with Japanese intellectually inclined craftsmen and artisans. According to Little (1996), these Dutch traders had introduced Japanese culture to varying European Fine Arts Elements and Design Principles, which had included depth-related drawing concepts such as the application of chiaroscuro, one-point perspective, vanishing-point perspective, optical illusions, and the consideration of alternative theories pertaining to the study of anatomical proportions. Furthermore, these unique Art Elements and Design Principles had systematically impacted Japanese approaches to Ukiyo-e printmaking over time. Notorious artworks by Japanese printmakers, like the Large Perspective Picture of an Eleventh-Month Kyogen Performance created in 1740 by Okumura Masanobu, for example, had uniquely incorporated Westernized spatial and compositional techniques to more effectively portray the energetically interactive and expressive scenes of Kabuki Theatre.

As lastly mentioned by Little (1996), the unique collection of Ukiyo-e prints which had gained widespread recognition for their noteworthy application of depth and perspective (consisting of artworks by Ishikawa Toyonobu and Shiba Kokan), demonstrates the exploratory and innovative style and aesthetic traits within the Ukiyo-e Art Movement. Throughout this particular movement, Japanese Fine Artists, artisans, craftsmen, and printmakers had successfully combined traditional woodblock printing techniques with newly crafted methods of visual communication (Little, 1996).

Bell (2016) underscores another two highly renowned and celebrated Japanese Fine Artists and printmakers known as Suzuki Harunobu and Utagawa Hiroshige, whose distinguished artworks had

shed incomparable light upon the uniquely stylistic and thematic evolution of Ukiyo-e printmaking design processes throughout Japan's Edo Period. Suzuki Harunobu had been accredited by many Art Historians and scholars for his individual role in the revolutionization of this art form and his refined skills related to "nishiki-e" or "brocade pictures" (referring to a different style of Japanese multi-colored woodblock printing). Suzuki Harunobu had not only succeeded in encapsulating the 'spirit' and 'cultural identity' of Japanese urban lifestyles during the Edo Period but had achieved the portrayal of playfully sophisticated visual aesthetics in his artworks, which had revealed unique Japanese cultural characteristics. Additionally, Suzuki Harunobu's Ukiyo-e prints had frequently included the illustration of celebratory Japanese festivals, a variety of relaxing and leisurely activities, as well as different forms of intimate reflection, which had unveiled manners in which earthly pleasure and pastimes had been both integrated and foundational to the wealthier and educated middle class who had lived during the Edo time period (Bell, 2016).

In regards to specific attributes related to Suzuki Harunobu's unique artistic capabilities and contributions that had been made during the Edo time period, Bell (2016) states that he had been heralded for his ability to merge and amalgamate symbolic and poetic elements with visually communicative components. Suzuki Harunobu's mitate-e (parody pictures) had most effectively reflected and encapsulated Japanese cultural identity in a manner which had caused the Japanese public to better understand the hidden messages observed in his artworks within the context of visual connections that had been made to both classical Japanese literature and innuendoes in connection with themes pertaining to aesthetic beauty and transience. The Japanese Edo Period's collective cultural consciousness of the fleeting and temporal nature of the earthly lifespan had been visually captured most effectively in Suzuki Harunobu's depictions. His further integration of autumnal motifs, such as falling leaves and cold breezes, had further communicated the depths of Japanese cultural identity, cultural expression, and the level of 'aesthetic refinement' demonstrated in Ukiyo-e printmaking during this time period in history (Bell, 2016).

In direct artistic contrast, Newcombe (2011) noted that Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) had been artistically celebrated for his original and unique compositional landscape scenes. His series, namely the One Hundred Views of Edo, had in particular memorialized renowned locations which had been identified during the Edo time period, as well as significant atmospheric qualities. The artworks created by Utagawa Hiroshige had not only been inspired by his multiple travels to interesting and remote locations but additionally by his skilful craftsmanship and ability to alter perspective within his compositions, to apply bold colours effectively, and to illustrate seasonal allusions through means of visual communication techniques. His exceptional attention to finer intricacies within his timeless Ukiyo-e prints and his ability to achieve both a sense of 'tranquillity' and 'energetic dynamism' found

within a broad spectrum of nature scenery had been considered 'ground-breaking' within Japanese Fine Arts in the Edo period. Consequently, Utagawa Hiroshige's profoundly distinctive and stylistic approaches to illustrative portrayals and visual representations had not merely impacted the future course of the development of Japanese Fine Arts but had attracted great honour and adoration from European and Western nations. Moreover, his Ukiyo-e prints had become highly sought-after and highly collectible among renowned designers and artists from around the world, which had included Frank Lloyd Wright and Claude Monet (Newcombe, 2011).

In regards to the historically profound contributions which had been made by Tōshūsai Sharaku, (considered by many Art Historians and scholars to have been a 'Noh actor' known as Saitō Jūrōbei without definitive confirmation, however), Tanaka (1999) confirms that Tōshūsai Sharaku had been best recognized for his iconic portraits of Japanese actors. Despite this distinctive area of recognition, however, Tanaka (1999) presents the argument that Tōshūsai Sharaku's collective oeuvre shouldn't have been merely honoured for this particular genre.

Although Sharaku's historically acknowledged series of Ukiyo-e artworks had only spanned a ten-month time period, Tanaka (1999) emphasizes the fact that his collection of works had included both themes related to warriors and sumo wrestlers. It is further noted that other Ukiyo-e artists and printmakers, such as Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849), Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861), and Torii Kiyonaga (1752–1815), had also depicted sumo wrestlers.

Tanaka (1999) however underscores the necessity for recognizing these lesser-known prints (more specifically those which had contained depictions of warriors), as they had extraordinarily focused upon historical themes instead of merely glorifying particular individuals. This shifting of thematic alterations seen within the wider range of artistic conventions found in the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had underlined this particular Japanese Art Movement's capacity to embrace diversified subject matters, topics, and themes. Tanaka (1999) additionally notes that Tōshūsai Sharaku is most well-known for the creation of his bold and expressive portraits which had contained kabuki actors that had been primarily produced between 1794 and 1795.

6.2.1.3 Symbolic Imagery Found Within Ukiyo-e Prints During the Edo Time-Period

Hickman (1978) had made the interesting and valuable contribution by revealing that the Japanese term known as 'ukiyo' had first been made mention of within Asai Ryōi's novel, which had both illustrated and advocated for an overtly "hedonistic worldview" that had elevated and rewarded fleeting pleasures. Visually representative symbols of these fleeting desires had included the following: 'cherry blossoms' ("Sakura"), which had bloomed briefly prior to falling; a) 'flowing water' in the form of waves, streams, and rivers, which had indicated the ever-changing qualities of time; b) 'seasonal

imagery,' of which Autumn's maple leaves had, for example, been associated with the impermanence and cyclical characteristics of time; c) the 'moon,' which had often been partially covered by 'clouds,' and had meant to portray the evolving nature of personal emotions, desires, dreams, and goals; d) 'flying birds' like sparrows or cranes, which had been representational of the transformative nature of life's joys; e) 'fans' and 'umbrellas,' which had symbolized refinement and aesthetic beauty, as well as the fact that these items had quickly been set aside and their need therefore had been temporal; f) 'kabuki actors,' who had represented the fleeting theatrical nature of entertainment, which had soon been over; g) 'Bijin-ga' (beautiful women) such as those in elegant attire, 'geishas' (female artists), or courtesans, who had symbolized the impermanence of aesthetic appearances and earthly pleasures; h) and lastly, 'lanterns' and 'fireworks,' which had served as temporal metaphors for nightly pleasure (Hickman, 1978).

It had been further noted by Hickman (1978) that these symbolic imagery and meanings, which had been newly adopted during the Japanese Edo time-period, had in many instances directly contrasted with earlier Buddhist connotations of Ukiyo-e printmaking that had focused upon emphasizing the sacrificial requirements and impermanence of life on earth. Yet, despite these unique differences, both views, which had been opposing in certain aspects thereof, had shared certain commonalities pertaining to the transitory nature of life (Hickman, 1978).

6.2.1.4 Cultural & Societal Values of Japan's Edo Period

In regard to the cultural and societal values which art historians and academic scholars had uncovered pertaining to the Japanese Edo time-period, Kern (2011) had provided an interesting layer of complexity and deeper understanding through means of confronting and disputing certain aspects of 'traditional Ukiyo-e interpretations,' which had solely classified it as an 'anti-intellectual,' 'uncultured,' and 'lowbrow' form of Fine Arts. Kern (2011) had further accentuated the importance of 'elite patronage,' and therefore, the argument presented had suggested that Ukiyo-e prints had not simply been limited to sales amongst the merchant classes but had also been considered as valuable commodities amongst nobility. Moreover, these prints had also been deemed as highly sought-after collectable artworks by "daimyo" (powerful Japanese feudal lords who had controlled large landholdings), as well as local bureaucrats or subordinate officials (Kern, 2011).

Based upon the context of this understanding, Kern (2011) had continued to critique and challenge former research-based academic writings, which had potentially misrepresented Ukiyo-e printmaking as merely a 'popular Art form' in Japanese culture during the Edo time-period, while further emphasizing that the interplay of both elite and popular cultures had fulfilled a significant role in this Art form's historical evolution. For example, since prominent Japanese figures like Matsuura Seizan had collected both sophisticated "highbrow" Ukiyo-e artworks, including mass-produced comic books,

it had directly implied that more flexible and adaptable 'cultural exchanges' had occurred among varying Japanese societal classes. Additionally, the investigative considerations and analyses made by Kern (2011) had revealed substantiated evidence to conclude that the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had encompassed a far more extensive Japanese 'cultural identity' that had evidently exceeded the former 'rigid class distinctions' insinuated by academic scholars. Simultaneously, the author had also criticized and challenged 'elitist tendencies' observed within the most recent and contemporary scholarly interpretations of Ukiyo-e printmaking as a Fine Arts form (Kern, 2011).

In comparison, Goree (2020) had provided an entirely alternative yet insightful evaluation of how the 'societal and cultural values' during the Japanese Edo time-period had influenced and transformed the Ukiyo-e Art Movement, which in return had revealed certain distinct characteristics of Japanese cultural identity. Throughout the Edo time-period, Japan's national procedural rules pertaining to "sakoku" (seclusion) had limited all forms of international and other foreign influences remarkably, which had caused the development of a 'self-sustaining' cultural, educational, and economic market. However, Japan had achieved a high degree of successfully controlled relations and interactions with other nations throughout South-East Asia while effectively preserving their own internal oriental Japanese cultural values and traditions. Their interactions with foreign nations had, as a result thereof, been conducted in a strictly regulated and selective manner (Goree, 2020).

In further elaboration upon this unique perspective, Goree (2020) had stated that the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had been exceptionally impacted by both commercial expansions and extended urbanization, which had notoriously distinguished this era, despite its thriving growth amidst highly restrictive societal structures. It had been further noted by Goree (2020) that the lower-class citizens of Japan, along with craftsmen, artisans, and middle-class tradesmen or merchants, had fulfilled an essential role in the extraordinary cultural transformation which had taken place.

Yet, Goree (2020) had further noted that these varying social classes had increased in status, prominence, and prosperity despite their original lowered societal status. Gradually, they had become significant patrons and promoters of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement, which had predominantly portrayed scenes capturing depictions of laboring activities, leisurely activities, and designated 'pleasure districts' from daily life. The Ukiyo-e Art Movement, in particular, had therefore represented a distinct cultural shift towards more evidently acknowledging and appreciating values from the Japanese 'commoner-classes,' especially the cultural 'way of living' that had been practiced by those who had typically been confuted and disregarded within other forms of Japanese 'high Art' (Goree, 2020).

Another observation made by Goree (2020) emphasizes the fact that various forms of traveling during the Edo time-period had not only been considered a practical means from one location to another, but moreover as both a pursuit of aesthetic and spiritual nature, which had been thoroughly interwoven

with the artistic traditions and philosophical literary contributions of Japan. For example, Japan's most well-recognized and most notorious literary scholars and poets had embarked on journeys and voyages of differing kinds in order to gain external insight, understanding, and inspiration for the fuelling of their intellectual and artistic endeavours. Japanese Fine Artists, creative minds, and literary scholars had frequently focused upon experiential and evidence-based observations of landscapes, as well as refining painting techniques or their ability to construct poetic composition. In other words, the interactive and hands-on engagement with both their natural resources and geographical surroundings had revealed a newly emphasized 'countercultural identity,' which had placed exceptional value upon solitude, wandering reclusively, individual artistic expression, and a sensitivity towards historical context (Goree, 2020).

Hall (2018) provides an alternative perspective by outlining the progress of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement as a reflective and consequential product of the 'evolutionary culture' of the Edo time-period. Prior to the 1600s, Japanese Fine Arts had rarely illustrated Japanese cultural activities, which had truly been a realistic reflection of simplistic 'daily life.' Hall (2018) provides insightful commentary by suggesting that Ukiyo-e printmaking had originated through artistic depictions of 'street life scenery' in Yoshiwara, which had formerly been known as the notorious pleasure district of the Edo time-period (Hall, 2018).

More specifically, the notorious Hishikawa Moronobu's techniques of mass-produced woodblock-engraved printed artworks had made a critically important difference in the formalization of Ukiyo-e printmaking as a popular Japanese Art form. Furthermore, Ukiyo-e's philosophical interconnected relations to "iki" (a Confucian principle which had underscored the importance of simplicity, humility, and pride in oneself without a sense of pompousness) had demonstrated a clear Japanese cultural removal from Buddhist ideals of life having been viewed as sorrowfully fleeting (Hall, 2018).

Hall (2018) also notes that the Japanese traders, shopkeepers, and businessmen, who had been strictly limited in their ability to showcase their flourishing profits publicly, had gradually become financial sponsors and advocates for the promotion of Ukiyo-e printed artworks, more specifically artworks that had captured scenes from the Japanese 'pleasure-chambers.' Due to dire economic and cultural circumstances, which had caused many Japanese women to turn to prostitution in the face of extreme financial hardships during the Edo period, the illustration and artistic portrayal of this particular theme and 'subject matter' had become centralized to Ukiyo-e printmaking. Therefore, these meticulously detailed colour prints had frequently contained illustrations of women from the "floating world," like the "geisha" (performing female artists) and the courtesans. Hall (2018), however, presents the perspective that it had, in fact, been the rare culmination of these multifaceted cultural influences

(such as "sankin-kōtai," referred to in English as 'rotational residency' or 'alternate attendance,' sumptuary laws pertaining to expenditure and consumption restrictions, as well as the unfortunate quality of life within these pleasure quarters), which had led to visually capturing the hardships and cultural complexities of Japanese culture during the Edo period most effectively with illustrative Ukiyo-e woodblock prints (Hall, 2018).

It is therefore concluded by Hall (2018) that themes revolving around Ukiyo-e printmaking had been formed through the repetitive cultural practices that had been upheld during the Japanese Edo time-period, especially as they related to the collective national Japanese culture, which had placed an explicitly disproportionate emphasis upon preoccupation with the indulgence of carnal human desires, a disproportionate focus upon multiple forms of consumerism, as well as the idolization of attractive visual aesthetics that had been evidently reflected through the Ukiyo-e Fine Arts Movement (Hall, 2018).

Providing an alternative viewpoint, Koyama-Richard (2013) emphasizes a number of valid points of consideration pertaining to the 'cultural identity' and 'cultural expression,' which had been embedded in the representational colour-printed Ukiyo-e artworks throughout the Edo time-period. Apart from the unparalleled role which the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had fulfilled in context to the acceleration of progress that had been made in regard to both the expressive and illustrative nature of Japanese Fine Arts, this Art style had also served as a practical method of conveying information through visual communication. Two examples thereof had been the conveyance of selective information through educational resources and various forms of more primitive and outdated advertising techniques. Koyama-Richard (2013) therefore also confirms the understanding that these Ukiyo-e prints had been predominantly funded, purchased, and promoted by shopkeepers, merchants, and tradesmen of the Japanese middle class, which had caused the distribution and circulation thereof to significantly increase alongside the expansion of a thriving monetary economic system (Koyama-Richard, 2013).

Regarding its unique role in advertising, Koyama-Richard (2013) explains that the growing cultural need, which had been expressed among Japanese citizens for the consumption of more affordable products (fostered within localized methods of production), amidst a rising socio-economic backdrop of Japanese markets during this time period, had provided a foundational platform upon which collaborative techniques of Ukiyo-e printmaking had systematically increased. Certain key publishers had additionally also played an essential role in elevating, favouring, and advocating for the promotion of selected Ukiyo-e artists.

Furthermore, Koyama-Richard (2013) notes that popularized Ukiyo-e colour woodblock prints had served as an avenue for advertising new fashionable clothing trends, most notoriously from the Yoshiwara district's pleasure quarters. Through illustrative portrayals of kabuki actors, who had been

perceived as 'fashionable trendsetters,' including depictions of courtesans, the distribution of Ukiyo-e prints had greatly assisted in the firm establishment of identifiable Japanese 'cultural values' and 'cultural identity.' Secondly, the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had also been utilized for educational purposes across Japanese schools during this time period, with the aim of keeping students updated regarding the latest national events, which had included warnings of natural disasters or the passing of renowned Kabuki actors. In return, these efforts, which had been made to keep Japanese children informed regarding selective values, political events, or historic occurrences, had demonstrated intentional and strategic actions which had been taken with the intent to significantly impact Japanese society on multiple levels (Koyama-Richard, 2013).

In the process of more closely investigating 'Journey Along the Tōkaidō: Exploring Japan's National Road,' Stokes (2022) had both deciphered and interpreted an educational curriculum from the Edo time-period, which had been meticulously and thoughtfully designed to educate students during this time period regarding the 'historical significance' of Japan's Tōkaidō Road. This curriculum from the Edo time-period had been successfully applied in context to effectively integrating diversified subject themes, which had included social studies, varying disciplines of Fine Arts, and the Japanese language. The efficacious and practically oriented integration of overlapping thematic subjects had enabled and empowered students to examine both the interpretative meanings and practical applications of 'Japanese cultural expression,' 'Japanese cultural identity,' and 'Japanese societal values,' which had been prevalent throughout the Edo period (1603–1867). Notably, this curriculum had taught and provided students with explorative and experiential opportunities to more accurately and efficiently trace the evolution of the Tōkaidō within various historical contexts (Stokes, 2022).

A centralized and foundational component which had underpinned this educational initiative had been the Utagawa School of Art, from which (Andō) Hiroshige's renowned series of Ukiyo-e woodblock prints had been produced. Simultaneously, this series of internationally recognized and celebrated woodblock prints had been titled as 'The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō' (Stokes, 2022).

As mentioned by Stokes (2022), this historically influential and consequential series of Ukiyo-e woodblock prints had intricately captured the finer details related to the 'cultural essence' of the growing merchant class and the ever-expanding travel culture, which had been developing during Japan's Edo-period (Stokes, 2022). These prints had not only 'visually narrated' both the societal and cultural dynamics of this particular era throughout Japanese history but had also contained impressively comprehensive landscape scenery, portrayals of economic advancements, and storytelling related to the daily activities of those who had resided along the Tōkaidō route. Therefore, these colourfully layered woodblock prints had emphasized the increasing commercialization and growth pertaining to social mobility, which had escalated during the Edo time-period. For example, the highly refined and detailed

representations of bustling travel hubs like Nihonbashi, alongside serene depictions of landscapes like Mount Fuji, had largely facilitated the acquisition of extended insights into the historical cultural values and visual aesthetics of this particular era in Japanese history (Stokes, 2022).

Moreover, the cultural and societal values of the Edo time-period in Japan had been vividly reflected and communicated within both literary texts and varying disciplines of Fine Arts and Dramatic Arts, such as *Tōkaidōchū Hizakurige*, which had been written and choreographed to entertain audiences with humorous tales of Japanese travellers. The narratives and forms of artistic expression, both soft and hard as found within external foreign influences, had clearly pointed to approaches which had aimed to adeptly balance a degree of relaxation with a relentless curiosity and a concerted effort to investigate different angles of interest. This had further been interestingly combined with marketing, bartering, and entrepreneurial foresight which had most likely been rooted in a hyper-aware sense of Japanese cultural identity. The end result had been a unique and distinct expression of creativity which had been unmistakably marked as their own. The characteristics and attributes had further included cultural splendour, as well as an emboldened sense of timeless pride and purpose which had been strongly interwoven and intertwined with their historical background. The continuous and disproportionate emphasis which had been placed upon appreciating "visual aesthetics" during the Edo period had been uniquely demonstrated through the repetitive reproduction of Hiroshige's Ukiyo-e prints in various forms of modernized media techniques (Stokes, 2022).

Through means of analysing contemporary reinterpretations of the *Tōkaidō*, as noted by Stokes (2022), the above-mentioned Japanese curriculum had included the *Tōkaidō Manga Scroll*, which had been created and produced by the Tokyo Manga Association. This meticulously crafted literary document had contained illustrative depictions of simplistic Japanese scenes from daily life, illustrations alluding to economic growth in the form of interactions captured of hawkers, shopkeepers, tradesmen, and other merchants, as well as portrayals of oriental Japanese culture through boldened brushstrokes. The application of these vivid, bold, and thickened brushstrokes had served as a "visual juxtaposition" to Hiroshige's traditional Ukiyo-e prints while having remained rooted in traditional values related to oriental Japanese "artistic expression" and typical "societal representation" from the Edo time-period (Stokes, 2022).

Through this comprehensive approach, Stokes (2022) illustrates how this particular Japanese curriculum had provided an interactive and engaging platform for students to connect with Japan's extensively rich cultural heritage, including the distinctive Japanese societal values which had consequently emerged during the Edo time-period.

6.2.1.5 The Impact of 'Hierarchical Societal Structures,' 'Buddhist Values,' 'Isolationist Cultural Restrictions,' the 'Heian Aristocratic Culture,' and Participation in 'Diplomatic

Ceremonial Interactions' on the Evolution of Ukiyo-e Prints and Japanese Artistic Expression During the Edo Time-Period

Although Lin (2024) had noted that the limitations on class fluidity, given hierarchical constructs, had resulted in more long-lasting directional changes affecting Japanese society, he had remarked that the tempo of personal change had suffered, leading to the slow but steady honing of cultural habits and customs throughout Japan during this period. Lin (2024) too, had maintained that such ways of leading with discipline and firmness had been the means by which the Tokugawa Shogunate had rigidly governed Japan in many systematic forms and, in addition, had later brought about quite an influence on the aspects of future Japanese culture that would have become popular in the years to come.

Ellis (2019) and Lin (2024) suggests that the Tokugawa Shogunate, with the hierarchical placement of the "shōgun" (chief military commanders), "emperor," and "daimyō" (feudal lords) at the highest tiers of Japanese society, followed by the "samurai warriors," businessmen, tradesmen, craftsmen, artisans, low-skilled laborers, and peasants, had, as a result, led to a confining and restricting societal environment. This newfound stability had, in turn, nourished an often-forgotten and remarkably fecund efflorescence of Japanese artistic invention and intellectual adventure—an effluence of creativity that had unfurled under the cover of the taut structure of societal regulation. This cultural effulgence, however, had, over time, sown the seeds of an ingrained perception of ethnic supremacy that had embedded itself in the very sinews of Japanese identity (Ellis, 2019; Lin, 2024).

Ellis (2019) provides extended context to the development of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement, which had focused upon visually representing "the floating world," by stating that the origins of this artistic phenomenon had been rooted in Buddhist philosophical ideologies and belief systems which had placed high religious values upon concepts of "self-sacrifice" and "suffering." However, Lin (2024) argues that these Japanese Buddhist values had instead evolved to the point of focusing far more disproportionately upon the "needs of the individual" and had thus become "internally focused." As a direct result of this ideological shift, which had occurred in the societal perceptions and belief systems of Japanese society during the Edo time-period, cultural values had significantly veered towards fulfilling a carnal and immoral lifestyle focused on continuous "pleasure-seeking" (Lin, 2024).

Pertaining to the Yoshiwara "pleasure quarters," which had consequently become the center of Japanese Edo culture, Lin (2024) states that the "geishas," who had been professionally trained in various disciplines of oriental and traditional Japanese arts, had further substantiated the historical interpretation and understanding related to gender roles and dynamics which had existed during the Edo time-period. More specifically, regarding the fact that these female performers had encapsulated and embodied both the cultural fixation upon "unattainable beauty standards," which had been expected

during this time period in Japanese history, as well as the incredibly high cultural standards and expectations which had been placed upon women in regard to their mastery of "intellectual skilfulness" (Lin, 2024).

Another interesting observation made by Huang (2025) is the substantive commentary regarding the understanding that the former production of Japanese literary texts had flourished and expanded dramatically during the Edo time-period, while the writing of Japanese "haikus" and "Ukiyo-zōshi" Japanese literature had unequivocally revealed the value which had been placed upon daily practices of urban life, as well as intricate depictions of natural scenery. As Lin (2024) had elaborated, the thoroughly researched—and fine-combed—term "haiku," referring to a specific ethical form of Japanese cultural expression, had served in a somewhat subtle and insinuated manner while visual aesthetics, ornamental embellishments, and artistic intricacies had still been conveyed in a highly effective manner within Japanese tradition throughout the Edo period. This poetic form had ascended to prominence largely due to the works of distinguished Japanese poets, among whom Matsuo Bashō had emerged as the most eminent figure (Huang, 2025).

Furthermore, Korenberg (2025) had noted that despite these clear traits witnessed throughout Japanese history, the country had persisted in their continuance of having practiced a more inwardly focused approach – especially as it had related to their typical practices pertaining to visual communication. This cultural self-containment had, in turn, fostered the emergence of Nihonga—an artistic genre of Japanese painting that had preserved its distinctive identity, remaining largely unaltered by external artistic currents.

In return, this had later significantly contributed towards the formation of the "Japonism Movement," which had come into fruition across Europe following the "Meiji Restoration." Korenberg (2025) had therefore substantively highlighted the interconnected interplay and influences those restrictive Japanese hierarchical structures had had upon the artistically vibrant and diverse Japanese cultural expressions which had defined the Edo time-period.

In support of the arguments presented by Lin (2024), Ellis (2019), Huang (2025), Korenberg (2025) and additional research-based information documented within the archives of "The Department of Asian Art" (2003) confirms that despite the remarkably authoritative, rigid, and restrictive Japanese societal structures which had been imposed by the "Tokugawa Shogunate" (referring to a military government that had been led by the notorious Tokugawa family during the Edo time-period), creativity and the production of high-quality Ukiyo-e woodblock prints had consistently progressed and prospered amongst merchants and artisans of various art disciplines, who had formerly been considered as lower classes within the context of the "Confucian hierarchical ideology." Against the odds, however, economic prosperity despite Japan's strict isolation and resistance against any foreign influences had

effectively fostered an "internal cultural development," while the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had emerged as a significant expression of urban identity (Department of Asian Art, 2003).

Further information documented within the archives of "The Department of Asian Art" (2003) revealed that specific influences such as participation in ceremonial tea parties which had been unique to Japanese culture, diplomatic and celebratory interactions with China, and the revival of "Heian Aristocratic Culture," had significantly contributed towards the consistent growth, popularity, and development of the Ukiyo-e Art Movement. For the sake of providing context and clarification, Japan's "Heian Period" (794–1185 CE), during which "Heian Aristocratic Culture" had flourished, had associated exceptional eminence with the in-depth study of Japanese poetry and other literary texts, along with the participation in traditional religious ceremonies, expert fine arts techniques and practices, as well as refined visual aesthetic qualities in individual appearances, ornate artistic objects, and architecture. Simultaneously, the attainment of sophisticated intellectualism and physical appearances, including the attainment of elegance, had been highly valued within the Japanese Imperial Court. Therefore, the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had truly served as the embodiment of Japan's high appreciation which had been placed in refined visual aesthetic attributes and oriental cultural values during Japan's Edo time-period (Department of Asian Art, 2003).

6.2.1.6 The Influence & Impact that the Japanese Artistic Practice Referred to as "Mitate" (and the Incorporation Thereof) Had Upon the Cultural Expression Within Ukiyo-e Prints

A different angle of research which had been presented by Thompson (2002) had investigated which most influential components of the Japanese term "mitate" had fulfilled both humorous and serious purposes within the Ukiyo-e Art form and had most effectively reflected Japan's evolving 'cultural identity' throughout the Edo time-period. The Japanese artistic practice referred to as 'mitate' had applied the symbolic incorporation of either allusion, the use of parodies, or the use of metaphors through which certain Japanese cultural themes, literary texts, or historical events had been reinterpreted. One example hereof had been the manner through which fine artists from the Edo time-period had often parodied subject matters related to classical Chinese themes. Moreover, through the transformative nature of Japanese literary figures such as Bai Juyi, who had applied "mitate" techniques within his literature to draw a distinct contrast between Chinese and Japanese influences (Thompson, 2002).

This 'artistic rivalry,' which had continued and had been most clearly visible within the representational prints produced by Suzuki Harunobu and Okumura Masanobu, had symbolized a deeper cultural dialogue that had been taking place between Japan and China as it pertained to their differences in ideological belief systems, styles of governance, traditional and cultural practices, as well as the cultural values that had underpinned their differences in lifestyles. For instance, the application of artistic "mitate" techniques incorporated within the Japanese 'Noh Play' titled Haku Rakuten by Zeami had

highlighted Japan's emerging cultural self-awareness, while the scriptwriters had utilized humour to criticize, critique, and challenge the former dominance of Chinese influences within Japanese culture (Thompson, 2002).

Thompson (2002) further states that Ukiyo-e prints which had contained components of artistic "mitate" techniques had often juxtaposed Japanese and Chinese elements against each other in a comparative manner, while having blended both modern and classical cultural aspects in order to more effectively and more impactfully engage in broader intellectual debates surrounding "wakan," which had been known as a culmination of a Japanese/Chinese dialectic.

Furthermore, these increasing tensions which had arisen had reflected Japan's intentional shift towards the implementation of "kokugaku" (referred to as national learning), which had evidently underscored and revealed a strong sense of Japanese national pride. Throughout the Ukiyo-e Art Movement, artists from the Edo time-period had subtly criticized the unique relations between ancient China and Japan while having celebrated Japanese cultural traditions. These oriental prints, although entertaining in nature, had carried profound reflections on Japan's cultural identity and Japan's intellectual stance, while underscoring the broader cultural currents of the Edo time-period (Thompson, 2002).

6.2.1.7 Exploration of Secular and Religious Interactions in Ukiyo-e

In regards to both secular and religious symbolisms, as well as interactions found within Ukiyo-e artworks from the Edo time-period, Snow (2012) explains that certain illustrative depictions within "ema" / "votive paintings" had been perceived as traditionally religious objects. For clarification purposes, these "ema" / "votive paintings" had been small wooden plaques that had been used during the Japanese Edo time-period upon which devotees had offered their prayers at Shinto shrines. "Ema" (絵馬), in direct English translation, had referred to the term "picture horse," as horses had been deemed 'sacred animals' who had the ability to transport and convey prayers to worshipped deities. Yet, throughout the Japanese Edo time-period, subject themes observed within these votive paintings had expanded to include scenery of other animals, varying landscapes, and nature scenes, as well as uniquely directional prayers for success, prosperous health, love, and other personalized requests. During this time-period in Japanese history, people had written their desires, hopes, and prayers upon these plaques and had left them at these shrines, where they had been perceived as reaching the ears of their deities. However, the act of creating and leaving an "ema" at a shrine had blended the creation of an art form with a religious practice. And since the votive paintings had typically showcased local art styles as well, they had served as objects of cultural expression (Snow, 2012).

Additionally, Snow (2012) also revealed that the votive paintings had fulfilled a marketing role in regard to the promotion of noteworthy 'kabuki actors' and other artists like Kunisada, since they had been illustrated in Ukiyo-e prints. In other words, the secondary secular role of certain "ema" artworks, which had portrayed actors while performing certain characters in scenes on stage, had ultimately obfuscated the boundary lines between images that had been considered 'sacred' and those which had been interpreted as 'profane.'

As further noted by Snow (2012), 'Danjuro' actors (who had been distinctly different from 'Kabuki' actors) had been comprehended as being spiritual passageways for transmitting the divine power of "Fudo." This cultural belief during the Japanese Edo time-period had significantly emphasized the fact that Ukiyo-e prints had often expressed multiple layers of symbolic meanings. One dilemma which had occurred among Japanese society during the Japanese Edo time-period is that the admirers of the 'Danjuro' actors had often been confused with -or mistaken for- Fudo religious figures, which in return had caused misinterpretations related to duplicities of sacredness. Therefore, the interplay which had occurred between 'elevated figures of religious devotion' and 'esteemed figures found within celebrity culture' had demonstrated the manner through which Ukiyo-e prints had fulfilled both roles of 'cultural expression' and 'cultural identity' within the sphere of sacred and secular realms alike (Snow, 2012).

6.2.3 Five Prominent and Iconic Ukiyo-e Prints from the Edo Time-Period, Which Had Been Emblematic of Cultural Identity



6.2.3.1 Sudden Shower Over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) - by Utagawa Hiroshige

Figure 43: 'Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake' (1857) is currently being preserved at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, Japan, which had been painted during the Japanese Edo time-period amidst the Ukiyo-e Printmaking Art Movement (1857) by Utagawa Hiroshige, (Fernández, n.d.).

Note. Fernández (n.d.) referred to **Figure 43** within the journal titled, 'Sudden Shower Over Atake Bridge'.

TheArtWolf.com. Master Works.

<https://theartwolf.com/masterworks/hiroshige-sudden-shower-bridge-atake/>, para. 1

According to Varshavskaya (2014), Utagawa Hiroshige's Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had served as an example of the utmost highest

quality Ukiyo-e Art, which had been produced during the Edo time-period. This print by Utagawa Hiroshige had demonstrated a combination of technical skilfulness and mastery, exquisite visual consciousness, and an in-depth cultural expression. Since this print had served as a singular section of the “One Hundred Famous Views of Edo Series”, it had portrayed multiple visual attributes related to ‘Japanese cultural identity’ in the context of the detailed beauty found within daily scenery from the Edo time-period. The original artistic representation of the fleeting and transient quality of nature and the resilience of humanity demonstrated by Hiroshige had granted audiences multifaceted insights into Japanese life during the Edo-period, which had introduced cultural concepts such as ‘consciousness of impermanence’ and ‘imperfection’ (Varshavskaya, 2014).

Newcombe (2011) had stated that Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had been meticulously created by the application of challenging and detailed woodblock carving and printing techniques, which had included layered levels of masterful carving and inking. Within this remarkable Ukiyo-e print, Hiroshige’s superior artistic skillsets had been showcased through the successful portrayal of theatrical atmospheric visual effects and intricate aesthetic attributes, more specifically in regard to illustrating weather conditions with detailed precision and accuracy.

Newcombe (2011) further noted that Hiroshige’s rainstorm had been represented through dainty and refined ‘intersecting diagonal lines’ from varying viewpoints. This part of the compositional arrangement had successfully achieved the illusion of movement and a visual sense of urgency, since the heavy rainstorm had entirely cloaked the travellers on the bridge who had sought refuge and shelter. The selected and well-thought-through amalgamation of artistic decisions and masterful techniques, which had been demonstrated by Hiroshige, had added a soulful and empathetic depth to the scenario illustrated, which had connected audiences to the ever-changing and powerful impact of nature (Newcombe, 2011).

As commented upon by multiple authors like Fernández (n.d.) and Smith (2022), Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had contained numerous symbolic associations that had been embedded in various Japanese cultural ideologies. The ‘evening descent,’ which had been used to describe the sudden rain shower (known as “yudaichi” in Japanese), symbolized life’s momentary passing. The crouched and hunkered-over figures which had been depicted underneath the shelter of the umbrellas upon the bridge, alongside the reclusive ferryman steering the boat in the river below, had highlighted both the vulnerability of mankind and the resilience of human survival when faced with temperamental natural forces. Furthermore, the subtle yet distinct tonal gradations seen within Hiroshige’s print (referred to as “bokashi” in Japanese) had increased the level of visual depth, impact, and drastic visual tension within the compositional arrangement. His additional blending of coloured inks to more adequately imitate the darkening skies prior to the heavy rains, as well as the unique

interaction of colour-combination and perspective, had not only resulted in an energetic portrayal but also had effectively conveyed the cyclical attributes of nature and life. Therefore, this theme had truly resembled the Japanese cultural sentiments from the Edo time-period (Fernández, n.d.; Smith, 2022).

Additional to the visual characteristics and attributes, Utagawa Hiroshige's Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had communicated and had resembled both cultural and societal values which had been relevant to Japan's Edo period. Furthermore, the illustration of 'Shogunal storehouses' in the far distance beyond the rain-obscured river had been symbolic of the socio-political frameworks of the Edo period, while the bridge had served as a representation of the interplay between the natural sphere, the human realm, and the sphere of rural life. Pictorial imagery, like the depiction seen within this particular Ukiyo-e print, had celebrated the ordinary moments of life in an honorary manner and had granted them significance. Encompassing the simplistic tasks, activities, and interactions of ordinary life during Japan's Edo period had reinforced 'Japanese cultural identity' in a subtly indirect manner by alluding to the ever-changing and evolving nature of Japanese society (Sotheby's Auctioneers, 2023; Uoya, n.d.).

As confirmed by Varshavskaya (2014) and Sotheby's Auctioneers (2023), Hiroshige's Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had had a remarkable and long-lasting influence upon European and Western Fine Arts on a global scale. This influence had particularly been prevalent within the 'Japonisme Art Movement', since the signing of the 'Convention of Kanagawa' during 1854 had led to historical cultural exchanges between Japan and Western nations. A manifestation of cross-cultural imaginative exchange had been apparent in Van Gogh's Bridge in the Rain, a piece that had drawn direct inspiration from Utagawa Hiroshige's masterful compositions. By having therefore 're-published' this Japanese artists' carefully crafted compositional layouts, Vincent Van Gogh had successfully convinced Europeans and American of the exceptionalism and superior nature of his artistic alterations. In doing so, he had not only exhibited profound admiration for Japanese craftsmanship but had also ignited an artistic dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions—one that had ultimately forged an unprecedented doorway to future cultural interactions.

This transnational and transformative cultural influence upon European Fine Arts had served as a testament to the extent at which Utagawa Hiroshige's artworks had successfully communicated Japanese visual aesthetics and societal values internationally, while having further achieved a global appreciation of—and respect for—Japanese cultural traditions, practices, values, and 'way of life' (Varshavskaya, 2014; Sotheby's Auctioneers, 2023).

Chittenden (2024), however, noted that the presence of rainfall had been a popular and recurring motif across varying Ukiyo-e prints. In addition, Hiroshige, along with many other Japanese printmakers, had developed a broad spectrum of carving and print-making techniques that resemble

multiuse types of rainfall. These multifaceted techniques had been highly effective in the portrayal of rich atmospheric scenery, which had contained both refined seasonal details and rich cultural intricacies. As a result of his profound artistic legacy, Utagawa Hiroshige had earned himself the renowned nickname “Poet of Rain”, especially for his distinctly sensitive illustrations of rainfall seen within Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) as well as Rain Shower at Shono (1834–1835).

The Ukiyo-e prints had evidently conveyed Japanese society’s deep gratitude and appreciation for rain during the Edo time-period, not only as a heavenly blessing but as an emblematic association with Japanese culture itself. More specifically, since the essential rains from Japan’s typhoon and monsoon seasons (referred to in Japanese as “taifu” and “tsuyu”) had been revered as foundational to their societal survival and continued existence, they had also been poetically immortalized within their Japanese language, literary texts, and different Fine Arts disciplines (Chittenden, 2024).

Authors like Anon (2016) and Kuma (2008) had commented upon the observation that rain within Hiroshige’s Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had been portrayed through thin black lines that had been diagonally depicted within the compositional arrangement. This manner of representation had created the illusion of a veil or lens through which audiences had been invited to peer and had contributed towards a sense among viewers of being immersed within the artwork’s scene. The expert layering of woodblock printing techniques and tonal gradients (referred to as “bokashi”) had formed the illusion of visual depth and spatial continuity, which had created the appearance of infinite distance beyond the composition’s frame. These woodblock printing layer techniques had additionally impacted Western and European architectural designs, while Frank Lloyd Wright (an American architect) had admired, applauded, and commended the illusion of spatial depth and linearity that Hiroshige had achieved, including the continued and transparent appearance of space. Therefore, Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) had not only visually captured the cultural perceptions pertaining to nature and spatial awareness that Japanese society had upheld but had effectively shared these interpretations and perceptions with a broader international audience (Anon, 2016; Kuma, 2008).

Therefore, in agreement with the commentary made by Varshavskaya (2014), Newcombe (2011), Fernández (n.d.), Smith (2022), Sotheby’s Auctioneers (2023), Uoya (n.d.), Chittenden (2024), Anon (2016), and Kuma (2008), Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi Bridge and Atake (1857) by Utagawa Hiroshige had demonstrated his artistic expertise and capability to combine skilful artistic techniques, Japanese cultural values, and symbolism in order to effectively portray a powerful visual storyline that had echoed, reflected, and mirrored the belief systems and sentiments of Japanese society during the Edo time-period. With his unparalleled virtuosity and fathomless inventive genius, Hiroshige hadn’t

merely chronicled a fleeting deluge; rather, he had transfigured an otherwise unremarkable Edo tableau into a resplendent emblem of interwoven realms. The intrinsic magnitude of this woodblock print had far transcended the conventional modalities through which it had been employed to articulate an artistic sense of aesthetic, yet it had also, perhaps unwittingly, enshrined the ephemeral cadence of Japanese existence. At the same time, the successful and eye-catching methods of ink-application while having maintain a philosophical undertone, had encompassed Japanese cultural identity. In this way, the artwork had evolved into a timeless vessel through which history had been safeguarded, ensuring that its evocative imagery would continue to resonate across generations.

6.2.3.2 The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829-1833) - by Katsushika Hokusai



Figure 44: *'The Great Wave off Kanagawa'* (1829–1833) is currently being displayed at the Art Institute of Chicago, U.S.A., which had been painted during the Japanese Edo time-period amidst the Ukiyo-e Printmaking Art Movement (1829-1833) by Utagawa Hiroshige, (Ornes, 2014.).

Note. Ornes (2014) referred to **Figure 44** within the journal titled, *'Science and Culture: Dissecting the Great Wave'*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111 (37), 13245–13245. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43043441>, p. 13245

Moris (2016) explains that Katsushika Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1829–1833) had been applauded by art historians and scholars for its energetic compositional layout and powerful artistic illusion of movement, where a large wave of a monumental scale had overpowered the 'positive space' or foreground of the Ukiyo-e print. Simultaneously, this great wave had threateningly towered over the insignificant and vulnerable boats fighting against nature's strong winds and ocean currents. The majestic curling wave, with its clawing foam, had appeared confident, unruffled, and determined to engulf the entirety of Mount Fuji depicted in the distant background of the artwork. The colossal and dramatic contrast of the monumental wave in the foreground against the far smaller appearance of Mount Fuji in the distance had served as a visual representation of the glorious, lofty, and divine power of nature versus the futility and fleeting attribute of human life (Moris, 2016).

It had been further suggested by Morris (2016) that the gigantic apex of the wave, resembling the visual traits of a claw, had compositionally structured the portrayal of Mount Fuji in a manner that

caused it to seem vulnerable due to its placement, emphasizing the juxtaposition amongst the astonishingly powerful oceanic forces and the stoical stance of the historically sacred mountain. At first glance, the apparently insignificant and long-forgotten fishing boats had seemed eerily privy to their own fate, as human fragility had been laid bare against the bold and unyielding forces of nature. The fishermen, clad in striking hues of blue and white, had carried an almost spectral presence for Japanese viewers—their garments melding so seamlessly with the undulating waves that they had appeared indistinguishable from the sea itself. This sensitive interconnectedness had therefore been undone in a subtle manner as it had related to finding the visual balance between the “sacredness of human life” versus humanity’s insignificant role within context to the universe (Moris, 2016).

The observation had been made by Cartwright and Nakamura (2009) that Hokusai’s portrayal of this enormous wave had frequently been viewed by art historians and scholars as an emblematic representation of the tumultuous historical relation between Japan and the ocean, which had simultaneously been a source of tragic natural disaster and a source of provision for survival purposes.

Cartwright and Nakamura (2009) had further explored the aristocratic influences that might have shaped Hokusai’s artistic vision, positing that his fascination with the turbulent sea had likely stemmed from first-hand encounters with nature’s raw and untamed power. These ambitious waves, renowned for their fractal-like formations, had captivated students because of their uncanny resemblance to the fluid and dynamic styles found in natural motion. Although Hokusai’s rendering had not conformed to photorealistic conventions, it had nevertheless captured the intrinsic logic of wave formations. His meticulous study of nature, blended with an extraordinary sensitivity to detail, had resulted in a fantastic artistic synthesis—one that had harmonized scientific observation with boundless creative interpretation, ultimately cementing his mastery over both artistic creativity and technical precision. This artistic balance of varying Art elements and design principles, which Hokusai had successfully achieved with ease, had elevated his Ukiyo-e prints beyond mere illustration to historically significant artistic commentary upon the natural world as he had interpreted and understood it to be (Cartwright and Nakamura, 2009).

While having been well-known pioneers of exceptional technical prowess and creative brilliance, Dudley et al. (2013) had carefully evaluated the required skills which had been applied within *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1829–1833). Hokusai had elevated his craft to an unparalleled level of refinement, employing bold, sweeping brushstrokes and deeply saturated pigments to intensify the wave’s raw, unrelenting energy. Dudley et al. (2013) had moreover seamlessly woven in delicate tonal gradations to create an arresting counterpoint between movement and stillness. Rarely has an Art form so obscure and contingent in its nature been so strongly resounding of artistic prestige, with its mounting visual culture over some centuries that had fortified this, this meticulous methodical, process of making

that had not only reshaped but had put the Japanese medium in the highest realm of Fine Arts where it stood strongly against that of the incoming west while weaving itself into the very culture of Japan, and few would achieve this, and few would duplicate this, and few can say their work would never pass unnoticed (Dudley et al., 2013).

This formidable art technique had provided the illusion of space, dimensionality, depth, and additional perspective to the Ukiyo-e print by having drawn the attention of the audience towards the apex of the wave through means of having subtly guided the eye-line of the viewers towards Mount Fuji in the far distance. Dudley et al. (2013) had in particular focused on the skilful craftsmanship, impressive accuracy and artistic self-discipline which had been foundational to the horizontal positioning of this Ukiyo-e style carved wave. This technique had not only improved the visual impression and weightiness of the print itself but had also increased the tension between the superlatively powerful presence of the wave against the solitary outward appearance of Mount Fuji (Dudley et al., 2013).

As Inaga (2003) had noted, the introduction of a deep blue reflected in "Prussian blues" (a considerably newer product) imported during this period, had further intensified Utagawa Hokusai's innovative-thinking and creativity. The additional application of these deep blue colour schemes within his prints had been profoundly captivating and effective since it had portrayed the dramatically powerful nature of the ocean currents and had provided a provocative visual quality to this particular artwork. The further meticulous alignment of carved woodblocks in order to achieve multifaceted pictorial impressions through multi-use layered printing techniques had moreover provided visual consistency as it pertained to refined details, visual depth, and interesting finer intricacies (Inaga, 2003).

Inaga (2003) had also commented upon the noteworthy influence that linear perspective from Western and European Fine Arts had had upon this iconic Ukiyo-e print by Hokusai. More specifically, the energetic and visually dramatic interaction between the 'great wave' and Mount Fuji had been representational of a cultural culmination of both Western-European and Far Eastern Art techniques.

Instead of having been a potential tsunami, Ornes (2014) had, from a perspective of scientific analysis, suggested that the 'great wave' as depicted by Hokusai had rather been a 'rogue wave.' Through means of providing this alternative contextualization, Ornes (2014) had emphasized Hokusai's artistic license, creativity, and freedom in regard to having captured the dangerous oceanic motion. In return, this unique perspective had highlighted the timeless appeal of 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' as an original and imaginative analysis of nature instead of a literal or realistic portrayal.

The additional understanding had been provided by Guth (2011), who had argued that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' had evolved beyond its original cultural context and had consequently become a Japanese symbol amongst European and Western nations. Since this renowned

Ukiyo-e print had reached the shores of European and Western audiences throughout the late 1800s, its cross-cultural impact upon Fine Arts trends, styles, and techniques had aligned with alterations that had been noticeable in Western and European Fine Arts, as well as in their cultural perspectives (Guth, 2011).

Impressionist painters from France, which had included Claude Monet, had gained their creative and artistic inspirations from the unearthly, celestial, and pictorially simplified nature of Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock prints, while having incorporated similar representational methods within their own depictions of natural and transient moments. This interpretation of cross-cultural influences within the context of Fine Arts, as had been confirmed by Abou-Jaoude (2016), had presented the argument that the "Japanese effect," as had been noticeable within certain paintings by European Impressionist painters, further supported this Art movement's fascination with atmospheric phenomena and light reflections (Abou-Jaoude, 2016).

'The Great Wave's' legacy had been further reflected upon by Screech (2021), who had mentioned that its association with the perspective that it had been a destructive force of nature, as well as a source of refreshment and renewal, had powerfully resonated with both societal and cultural values during the time period after the Second World War. Especially since Japan had actively worked towards the restoration of its national pride and the regaining of its national identity during immensely turbulent times of great hardships and trials (Screech, 2021).

Additionally, Coats (2016) had made the observation that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' by Hokusai had become a dynamic emblem and symbolic visual representation of rapidly transformative historical and cultural times. In return, this artistic aspect had profoundly resonated with both Western and European audiences, since they had wrestled with the life-altering changes that had occurred due to international exploration and industrialization. This particular print by Hokusai had therefore caused cross-cultural impacts that had stretched far beyond its original creation.

'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833),' as noted by Guth (2011), had often been embraced and utilized within the context of 'advertising' and 'popular culture' among both European and Western nations, which had had a significant impact upon the promotion of Japan's culture, nationality, and global status.

Moreover, Coats (2016) had suggested that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' had symbolized 'cultural resilience,' 'strength,' and 'perseverance,' while Guth (2011) had made the compelling argument that this particular artwork had remarkable relevance since the Japanese nation had sought to re-establish its national strength, unity, and identity after the Second World War.

Similarly, Jordan (2019) had confirmed similar interpretational sentiments and had made the compelling argument that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' had been emblematic of the

'tsunami of change' that had consumed Japan and had re-transformed both its societal and cultural identity, including its global stance among other nations.

Jordan (2019) had drawn a comparison between 'The Great Wave' and the overwhelming speed of industrialization and colonization that had occurred throughout Japan, as well as the functions this country had fulfilled in relation to international politics. This comparative analysis had also framed Hokusai's 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' as an emblematic visual portrayal of the adaptability and resilience demonstrated by Japan in the face of incredible challenges. This Ukiyo-e print had therefore not merely captured a natural disaster but had represented Japan's distinctly superior national ability to be victorious despite the uncertainties of modernity. This additional symbolic association had made this artwork even more relatable and relevant within the context of modern 21st-century debates pertaining to new international challenges faced (Jordan, 2019).

In regard to a spiritual analysis, Sarukkai-Chhabria (2003) had noted that the contrast between the dangerously tumultuous wave in the artwork's foreground and the serenely stoic Mount Fuji in the background had been highly effective in regard to illustrating the reciprocation intervening amidst chaos and calm, including impermanence versus eternity.

Sarukkai-Chhabria (2003) had provided the perspective and interpretation that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' had exemplified the philosophical ideology pertaining to the fleeting impermanence of life's transient nature, which had been a foundational cultural viewpoint as it related to Japanese visual aesthetics. Consequently, this associative symbolism had elevated Hokusai's 'Great Wave' beyond a naturalist portrayal of a landscape scene to a profound societal commentary relevant to Japan's societal experiences.

Moreover, Sarukkai-Chhabria (2003) had suggested the understanding that the exceptional difference between both the reality of chaos and the reality of calm had been metaphorical of the 'cyclical nature of life,' which had been a central component of Japanese philosophical ideologies during the Edo time period.

Lastly, Morris (2016) had provided excellent commentary by highlighting that the realistic aspects of the wave's representation on the one hand, alongside its graphically energetic and dynamic visual appearance, had symbolized both the humbling and awe-inspiring attributes of Japan's oceanic and navigational surrounds, which had served as a source of survival and a central aspect of Japanese cultural consciousness.

In agreement with Morris (2006), Cartwright and Nakamura (2009), Dudley et al. (2013), Inaga (2003), Ornes (2014), Guth (2011), Abou-Jaoude (2016), Screech (2021), Coats (2016), Jordan (2019), and Sarukkai-Chhabria (2003), 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829–1833)' by Utagawa Hokusai had

served as a symbolic and metaphorical representation of Japan's culturally intertwined relationship with nature, as well as its ideological worldview. Additionally, Japan's historically enduring traits, such as perseverance, resilience, and unwavering spirit, which had been demonstrated by the Japanese, had forever shaped their national identity. These impressive characteristics had also inspired the further development of their own styles of art.

6.2.3.3 Red Fuji (c. 1830-1832) – Painted by Katsushika Hokusai

These works of art had challenged art historians and scholars alike, including Witkam (2020), Chan (2020), Brown (2007), Mitsuru (2019), as well as Korenberg et al. (2019), Salman (2023), Kobayashi & Kita (2019), and Keyes (2007), who had collectively confirmed that the Ukiyo-e known as Red Fuji (1830–1832), by Katsushika Hokusai – had been one of the most well-known among the series of prints titled as Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji.



Figure 45: 'Red Fuji' (1830–1832) is currently being preserved at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, U.S.A., which had been painted during the Japanese Edo time-period amidst the Ukiyo-e Printmaking Art Movement (1830-1832) by Katsushika Hokusai, (Korenberg, 2019.).

Note. Korenberg (2019) referred to **Figure 45** within the journal titled, 'Developing a Systematic Approach to Determine the Sequence of Impressions of Japanese Woodblock Prints: The Case of Hokusai's 'Red Fuji.' *Heritage Science*, 7 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-019-0250-5>, p. 2

As noted by Brown (2007), this internationally admired printmaking series had encapsulated detailed imagery of diverse and multifaceted angles of Mount Fuji. Not only had Red Fuji (1830–1832) been an exemplification of the highest quality craftsmanship which the Ukiyo-e printmaking genre had to offer, but it had also been a remarkable artistic expression of 'Japanese cultural identity' as it had pertained to capturing central Japanese spiritual values, foundational attributes of Japanese national identity, and the significant beauty of Japanese nature.

Through means of a thorough investigative exploration and analysis of its cultural symbolism, visual aesthetic attributes, as well as Ukiyo-e carving and printmaking techniques, Kobayashi & Kita (2019) had explained that the powerful visual effect of Red Fuji (1830–1832) had been a result of its culmination of colour combinations and starkly simplistic style of portrayal. Kobayashi & Kita (2019) had further noted that Hokusai had impactfully illustrated Mount Fuji within a moment of profoundly perfectionistic clarity while its highest apex had been coated in various reddish shades. This varying colour scheme had indicated the early sunrise of the late summer months. Additionally, Mount Fuji had

interestingly covered three-quarters of the overall compositional layout and had therefore not only consumed this scenic portrayal but had drawn the attention of the audience towards its majestic formation and grand scale. This visual dominance had consequently forced viewers to notice and focus upon the underlying danger of the volcano itself through means of Mount Fuji's triangular mass, which had in return emphasized its immensely enormous scale and towering presence (Kobayashi & Kita, 2019).

As commented upon by Salman (2023), the reddish-brown colour tones and varying shades of Mount Fuji, which had provided this Ukiyo-e print with its renowned title, had served as a remarkable component of its meaningful Japanese cultural connotations and symbolic associations. Even in the context of this specific Ukiyo-e print, the introduction of red hues had not originally stemmed from an individual desire or stylistic vision. It had rather been reflective of sacredness, protectiveness, spiritual life, and ongoing youthfulness. The colour red had more specifically been applicable to the symbolism associated with Mount Fuji since it had been cherished, respected, and nearly worshipped within both Buddhist and Shinto religious practices as not merely a sacred hilltop but as a heavenly gateway as well. Hokusai's application of reddish colour schemes within this artistic representation had therefore exalted Mount Fuji's symbolic status from a memorialized milepost to a spiritual statue, which had further signified the admiration and reverence which Japanese society had upheld for their natural surroundings during the Edo time period (Salman, 2023).

In support of the interpretative insights provided by Chan (2020), the visibility of snow lines upon the highest pinnacle of Mount Fuji had served as an additional cultural reminder of the impermanence, vulnerability, and seasonal aspects of life, as this understanding had been deeply embedded within Japanese cultural identity. The additional visual contrast which Hokusai had so effectively created between the strong, steadfast, unmovable, and stoic presence of the mountain in comparison to the fleeting nature of the delicate snowfall had presented an extended metaphorical comparison to life's cyclical nature, which had recurred through Japanese literary and Fine Arts themes of cultural expression (Chan, 2020).

Korenberg et al. (2019) had confirmed this viewpoint by suggesting that Red Fuji (1830–1832) by Katsushika Hokusai had not only been a composition masterpiece along with the inclusion of diversified and striking red colour schemes, but it had also served as an exemplification of expert woodblock printing techniques from the Edo time period's rapid artistic exploration and advancement.

Korenberg et al. (2019) had explained that Ukiyo-e printmaking production such as Red Fuji (1830–1832) had encompassed complexly collaborative efforts among Fine Artists, like masterful carvers and accomplished printmakers. The production process, such as had been the case in the creation of Red Fuji (1830–1832), had begun with the establishment of a foundational key block, which had been

utilized for the creation of black-and-white print series. This series of carvings had formed part of multiple layers of the exact same image, while each had contained its own unique details, which had then added a different dimension to the final-coloured Ukiyo-e print. Each tonal colour value had also been applied through the application of these separate woodblock carvings, and this intricately advanced printmaking technique had therefore required profound precision, accuracy, and expert skilfulness in order to ensure perfect consistency in regards to the ink application process, as well as perfect pictorial alignment of each woodblock carving which had been added to the final print (Korenberg et al., 2019).

Moreover, Korenberg et al. (2019) had explained that the subtle undertones of reddish colour shades had been blended through the Bengal red pigmentation, which had been meticulously applied in order to create the striking visual effect of Mount Fuji's portrayal against the background. Yet the original colour scheme of the original Red Fuji print had often been a topic of discussion and debate among art historians and scholars.

For example, Keyes (2007) had provided the theoretical argument that the earliest versions of this print by Hokusai, which were referred to as Pink Fuji, had contained a display of a slightly different colour scheme since Mount Fuji had a lighter pinkish visual appearance. The most plausible and logical argument which had been agreed upon among scholars, as noted by Keyes (2007), is the understanding that this variation within colour tones had most likely been caused as a result of light damage due to pigment sensitivity. This had most likely brought about the gradual fading of pigmentation over time (Keyes, 2007).

In regard to Japanese cultural expression and Japanese cultural identity, Salman (2023) had provided the insight that Red Fuji (1830–1832) had served as a visual portrayal and emblematic representation of Japan's beautiful scenic landscapes, national and cultural heritage, and spiritual significance. The revered title "Sovereign of Peaks" had conjured an almost otherworldly tranquillity, paired with a breathtakingly majestic landscape—both of which had been immortalized as defining elements of Japan's elevated visual tradition. The mountain's near-perfect triangular form, crowned with a pristine, snow-laden summit, had captivated poets, enchanted writers, and stirred the imaginations of Fine Artists for centuries, becoming an enduring emblem of Japan's cultural soul (Salman, 2023).

Witkam (2020) had noted that the Mount Fuji illustration within Red Fuji (1830–1832) had also emphasized the spiritual importance of the mountain within broader Japanese beliefs, cultural practices, and traditions. Further underscoring the information which had been confirmed by Salman (2023) regarding Mount Fuji's cultural relevance in context to both Buddhist and Shinto religious practices, Witkam (2020) had commented upon the added interpretative analysis that Mount Fuji had been a pilgrimage site where countless pilgrims had climbed to its highest slopes in order to pay respect to the mountain's associated deities and to seek spiritual enlightenment. Through means of having depicted

Mount Fuji within its most iconic and glorified form, Hokusai had not only honoured and applauded its naturalistic beauty but had also provided recognition and exaltation to the mountain as a holy site. In doing so, Hokusai had reinforced the inseparable connotations between landscapes, natural scenery, and spiritual experiences within Japanese cultural identity.

Most importantly, as it had pertained to Japanese cultural identity, Red Fuji (1830–1832) as confirmed by Chan (2020) and Brown (2007), had been elevated as a metaphorical emblem of Japanese cultural resilience, perseverance, endurance, and survival. Despite the fact that Mount Fuji had been a dangerously active volcano, it had served as an allegorical representation of permanence and steadfast stability in the face of threatening natural disasters. After Japan's civil war, this Ukiyo-e print had specifically resonated with Japanese citizens since the Edo period of Japan had been historically documented as a relatively stable and peaceful time period. Especially since Mount Fuji had been viewed as a timeless visual symbol of an unchanging presence, which had effectively captured Japanese cultural continuity.

6.2.3.4 The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō (1833-1834)

– Carved & Printed by Utagawa Hiroshige



Figure 46: *'The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō'* (1833–1834) is currently being preserved at the Shizuoka City Tokaido Hiroshige Museum of Art, Japan, which had been created during the Japanese Edo time-period amidst the Ukiyo-e Printmaking Art Movement (1833-1834) by Utagawa Hiroshige, (Hiroshige Tokaido, n.d.)

Note. Hiroshige Tokaido (n.d.) referred to **Figure 46** within the journal titled, *'The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido)*, Published by Aritaya, Fifty-Six Sheets, Complete, Bound as an Accordion-Style Album: *Japanese Ukiyo-e Prints: Hara Shobo*'. Hiroshige Tokaido.

https://www.harashobo.com/english/ukiyoe_detail.php?print_id=25331, para. 1

Considered one of the definitive representations of Ukiyo-e woodblock printing, Utagawa Hiroshige's most famous series had been 'The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō' (1833–1834), which had been highly praised and ingrained in explorations of Japanese culture and cultural identity during the Edo period. Art historians and scholars such as Uoya (n.d.), Trede (2015), Augustin and Watanabe

(2014), Bowie (1960), Coombs (1999), Hall (1937), Jansen (1989), McManamon (2016), Mizota (2008), Nicole Fabricand-Person (2011), Thompson (1986), Thomsen (2002), Tinios (1991), and Todomeru (1919) had investigated the diverse qualities of hidden symbolic meanings, visual features, aesthetic characteristics, and advanced woodblock printing techniques.

Within the context of gaining a better interpretative understanding of the relevant visual characteristics and artistic techniques pertaining to Hiroshige's "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834), Mizota (2008) states that this vastly intricate series of Ukiyo-e prints had been heralded for its bright and distinctly clear depictions of landscape scenery and everyday Japanese workers, towns, boats, and activities of multiuse kinds along the Tōkaidō route. This essentially important highway had fulfilled a critical role in regard to travel, trade, and economic growth of Kyoto (currently modernized Tokyo) during the Edo time period (Mizota, 2008).

As commented upon by Trede (2015), Hiroshige's "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) had not only resembled incredibly detailed artistic observation and highly intricate visual portrayals but had also consisted of dynamically energetic compositional arrangements.

Mizota (2008) further notes that the distinctive balance which had been achieved through a culmination of extensively broad and spacious backgrounds in contrast to meticulously refined foreground illustrations—which had included guesthouses, shops, bridges, harbors, and varying seasonal landscapes—had reflected both physical and metaphorical markers of the journey (Mizota, 2008).

As emphasized by Thompson (1986), "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) had revealed Hiroshige's expert mastery of having created the illusion of space, perspective, and depth through an innovative color gradation technique known as "bokashi", which had in return produced visual effects that had enhanced and elevated the atmospheric mood of his portrayals. Consequently, these subtle light and shadow color transitions had remarkably altered the emotional undertones of the prints, which had enabled Hiroshige to more effectively portray the visual serenity of sunsets or the impacts of sudden rainstorms (Thompson, 1986).

In support of Thompson (1986), Nicole Fabricand-Person (2011) had stated that the perfect application of the "bokashi" technique had demonstrated Hiroshige's deep personal relationship to his natural surroundings, as well as his exceptionally masterful ability to convey symbolic, emotional, spiritual, and cultural visual messages through the utilization of woodblock printing.

In regard to the significance of 'hidden meanings' and 'unique cultural symbolism,' Bowie (1960) had stated that the series "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) had resembled symbolic associations related to both the cultural milieu and socio-political circumstances of Japan's

Edo time period. Therefore, each individual Ukiyo-e print had contained depictions of various locations alongside the Tōkaidō road while having alluded to underlying cultural messages through means of different Japanese societal activities, seasonal landscape illustrations, and cultural figures who had fulfilled diverse societal roles. Notably, the inclusion of traveling pilgrims—which had ranged from peasants to samurai—had underscored the strictly rigid societal hierarchy of the Edo time period and had served as a testament to the diversified cultural demographics of Japanese citizens who had utilized this route (Bowie, 1960).

The repetitive recurrence of Mount Fuji throughout "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834), as highlighted by McManamon (2016), had not merely been symbolic of 'Japanese national identity,' 'cultural identity,' and the role of 'spiritual prominence,' but had also drawn a correlation between life's turbulent physical journey and a spiritual one that each Japanese citizen had to undergo during this time period in Japan's history. These symbolic associations had made it evidently clear to audiences from around the world that a cultural introspection had occurred during the Japanese time period (McManamon, 2016).

However, Bowie (1960) had commented upon the understanding among scholars that subtle critiques had been observed regarding contemporary Japanese society throughout this series of Ukiyo-e prints. Bowie (1960) had additionally presented the argument that Hiroshige's portrayals of different Japanese figures and characters from varying societal ranks, with visually exaggerated attributes, had been intended as an extension of 'traditional satirical practices' instead of merely ridiculing these figures. This extended overlay of social commentary, which had been interwoven amidst picturesque landscapes, had provided additional complexity to this series of artworks and, as a result, had challenged viewers to reflect upon both the causes and implications of societal changes that had occurred during Japan's Edo time period.

Coombs (1999) had emphasized the fact that the production of "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) had required meticulous execution of the woodblock printing process, which had resembled the reliance upon 'collaborative craftsmanship' that had been foundational to the Ukiyo-e tradition. Hiroshige's expert Ukiyo-e designs, as noted by Coombs (1999), had first been drafted onto paper and had then been transferred onto woodblocks by skillful draftsmen and carvers. Each color scheme of inks, which had been blended and applied to the final Ukiyo-e print, had required a separately carved woodblock of its own. As a direct consequence therefore of the incorporation of more advanced Art elements, the eloquence of Japanese prints – in regards to having communicated cultural relevance and implicit messaging had survived throughout many centuries (Coombs, 1999).

As noted by Thompson (1986), Fine Artists—who had been highly respected leaders in regard to their printing techniques and had mastered the precise alignment of woodblock layers, including the

perfect application of coloured inks—had further collaborated with highly trained woodcarvers. These woodcarvers had spent years refining their drafting skills and perfecting even the smallest details seen within their carvings. Together, they had achieved the successful communication of widespread Japanese folktales, stories and values across local and international shores (Thompson, 1986).

Furthermore, as mentioned by Thompson (1986), the masterful technical execution and visual aesthetic attributes of these Ukiyo-e woodblock carvings and prints had established their global relevance in the context of their high standard of detailed precision, as well as their preservation over time.

Pertaining to 'cultural expression and identity,' as elaborated upon by McManamon (2016), "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) had been successful in visually impersonating the cultural spirit of the Japanese Edo time period, which had been characterized by increased social interactions, trade, mobility, exploration, and travel. The Tōkaidō road and trading route had therefore been emblematic of the regional interconnectivity, complex interwoven societal structure, and cross-cultural relations during Japan's Edo time period. Through the documentation of a diverse spectrum of travelers and the Tōkaidō's fifty-three stations, Hiroshige had not merely provided a historic visual record of the numerous landscape scenes across Japan but had crafted a visual portrayal of Japan's multifaceted cultural demographic (McManamon, 2016).

In support of the insights provided by McManamon (2016), Hall (1937) further explains that the 'Tokugawa Shogunate's policies' during the Edo period had encouraged movement across various regions of Japan since it had been perceived as cultivating 'Japanese cultural identity' and 'national unity' (Hall, 1937).

Additionally, Nicole Fabricand-Person (2011) further alludes to the perspective that these highly intricate Ukiyo-e details had served as sentimental visual reminders and souvenirs for travelers, which had granted them a means to relive and preserve memories of their often challenging and long journeys. For Japanese citizens who had been unable to travel, these captivatingly beautiful and pictorial Ukiyo-e prints had provided a substitutional second-hand experience, which had visually connected them to the wider cultural narrative of a Japanese nationalist identity (Nicole Fabricand-Person, 2011).

Trede (2015) lastly emphasizes the ideological understanding that the iconic "The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (1833–1834) by Hiroshige had significantly impacted both the societal perceptions of European and Western nations regarding the complexities, advancements, and refinements of Japanese culture and the Japanese 'way of life.' These perceptual alterations had caused great artistic inspiration among the fine artists of foreign countries and had led to the development of the 'Japonisme Art Movement' during the late 1800s.

As Trede (2015) had strongly emphasized, The Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō (1833–1834) had firmly established itself as a significant Japanese icon within the dynamic and evolving exchange between Japan, Europe, and the Western world during this period. This had largely been due to its strikingly original and uniquely structured compositions, which had deeply influenced and even unsettled the works of celebrated European Fine Artists, including Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Vincent van Gogh (Trede, 2015).

Nicole Fabricand-Person (2011) had ended with the conclusion that Hiroshige had relied on aspects of Japanese cultural idiom, harnessing 'mono no aware' through both visual and metaphorical referencing cords pertaining to the passing of time, beauty of nature, and the fleeting nature of existence itself. As a result, the Ukiyo-e prints of Hiroshige had retained their importance as part of the cultural identity of Japan and of cultural expression in Japan (Nicole Fabricand-Person, 2011).

6.2.3.5 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) – Carved & Printed by Toshusai Sharaku



Figure 47: 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) is currently being preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, U.S.A., which had been created during the Japanese Edo time-period amidst the Ukiyo-e Printmaking Art Movement (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku, (Heckmann, 2022.)

Note. Heckmann (2022) referred to **Figure 47** within the journal titled, 'Ukiyo-e Explained - Artists, Characteristics & Best Examples'. Studio Binder.

<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-ukiyo-e-art-paintings/>, p.26

As noted by both the Tokyo National Museum (2006) and Christies (2023), Toshusai Sharaku's 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) had proven itself an imaginatively innovative and influential example of the Ukiyo-e printmaking genre, having effectively encapsulated the relational interplay between exceptional artistic details and aesthetics, theatrical expressiveness, and 'Japanese cultural identity' throughout Japan's Edo time period. According to the authors from these sources, despite his incredibly brief ten-month career from 1794 to 1795, Toshusai Sharaku had left a historically unparalleled impression and long-lasting influence upon Japanese Fine Arts, which had remained undeniable.

'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had been an exemplification of his masterful skillset in regards to having depicted the 'psychological depths' and 'energetically powerful cultural presence' of Japanese kabuki actors (Christies, 2023; Tokyo National Museum, 2006).

In regards to 'Japanese cultural expression' and 'Japanese cultural identity' during the Edo time-period, which had been characterized by an expansive flourishing of Fine Arts, cultural traditions, economic growth, and increased urbanization, cultural hubs and cities such as modern-day Tokyo had become landmarks of trade, consumerism, as well as artistic craftsmanship and artistic production (Heckmann, 2022).

Mainichi (2021) and Kubo (2020) had argued that the Ukiyo-e prints by Toshusai Sharaku had been considerably affordable and accessible Art forms, which had distributed and propagated pictorial images of a 'modernized Japanese lifestyle,' 'popularized and renowned cultural figures,' as well as majestically captivating landscape scenery. As a collective visual series in its entirety, 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had reflected, promoted, and firmly established 'Japanese cultural identity' (Mainichi, 2021; Kubo, 2020).

This iconic series of Ukiyo-e prints had further showcased 'Japanese cultural vibrancy' and 'innovative artistic attributes' pertaining to the Edo time-period. Moreover, kabuki theatre performances, once fervently celebrated and deemed an irreplaceable cornerstone of Japanese cultural and theatrical exuberance during the Edo period, had metamorphosed into an inexhaustible wellspring of artistic ingenuity from which Ukiyo-e Fine Artists, master artisans, deft carvers, and meticulous printmakers had ceaselessly drawn inspiration. These illustrious kabuki performers of Japan had, for instance, not merely been exalted and venerated but had verged on the status of near-divine entities, idolized with an almost sacrosanct reverence. Thus, their artistic portrayals had been highly sought after by audiences from all regions of Japan. Consequently, 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had promoted 'Japanese national pride' and 'Japanese cultural identity' in a clear visual manner, which had documented popularized aspects of Japanese culture in a manner that had protected, maintained, and preserved Japanese theatrical traditions through means of expressive artistic performances and convincing realism (Christies, 2023; Heckmann, 2022).

The archival documents from the Tokyo National Museum (2006) as well as Wilson & Kloberdanz (2018) had confirmed that the highly original stylistic approaches of Toshusai Sharaku, compared to more standardized Japanese forms of artistic representation during the Edo time-period, had revealed a unique psychological level of depth and realism. Sharaku's Ukiyo-e prints had reflected the evolving Japanese cultural tastes, emotional responsiveness, and sentiments of audiences from the Edo time-period. Therefore, his distinct artistic departure from more traditional and standardized

Japanese aesthetics had essentially 'set the stage' and 'led the way' for other Japanese Fine Artists and artistic developments which had followed from this point forward.

Through means of effectively providing a convincing portrayal of both the actors and the characters which they had been playing, Sharaku's Ukiyo-e depictions had represented Japanese cultural values from the Edo time-period, as it pertained to more refined and sophisticated storytelling techniques accompanied by increasingly more expressive dramatic performances (Tokyo National Museum, 2006; Wilson & Kloberdanz, 2018).

In regards to the 'visual characteristics' and 'artistic attributes' of Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, archival documentation from the Met Museum (n.d.) and research conducted by Wilson & Kloberdanz (2018) had revealed the widespread understanding among Art historians and scholars that Sharaku's illustration of 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) specifically had become a broadly recognized and renowned artwork due to both its innovatively intricate stylistic approach and its dramatic visual intensity. While strikingly capturing the actor in a three-quarter view, this portrait had emphasized his intimidatingly glaring expression in a profound manner, with a combination of bristling hair and aggressively outstretched hands. The collective behavioural traits of expression had communicated a tangible visual sense of merciless malevolence. Additionally, the incorporation of strong lines, emboldened colours, and simplified Art Elements had underscored this character's sinister nature through means of having impactfully culminated the personality of the actor with the character's role he had personified (Met Museum, n.d.; Wilson & Kloberdanz, 2018).

As noted by Christies (2023) and Look & Learn (2005), this Ukiyo-e artwork's almost entirely monochromatic colour palette, which had been accentuated by subtle colour application and white highlights, had contributed towards the compositional arrangement's convincing psychological portrayal and somewhat modern aesthetic appeal.

Wilson & Kloberdanz (2018) further had observed that the dramatic contrast between the central main character in the foreground of the composition against the somewhat monochromatic and grey background had provided the focal point of the main figure with elevated prominence. This had caused the character's visual presence to be far more visually powerful, almost having the appearance of a cut-out. In return, this representational approach had amplified the Ukiyo-e print's dramatic visual impact.

In addition to the commentary provided by Wilson & Kloberdanz (2018), both Christies (2023) and Japacul (2022) had stated that the intentional artistic exaggeration demonstrated by Sharaku, especially in regards to his proportional distortions and facial features, had significantly deviated and differed from the continued artistic trends of his contemporary peers, as it pertained to the idealization of the subject matter. The artistic decision to over-exaggerate certain visual features had provided

audiences with unwavering insights into the depths of the kabuki character's 'emotional turbulence' and 'emotional intensity.'

Kubo (2020) further had noted that the family crest seen upon the actor's garment and the overall meticulous attention to refined visual attributes, as had been demonstrated by Sharaku, had granted audiences immediate contextual recognition, insight, interpretation, and understanding.

As commented upon by Japacul (2022) and confirmed by the archival information documented by E-Museum (n.d.), Yakko Edobei, who had been theatrically played by Otani Oniji III, had been portrayed in kabuki theatre performances as a wicked henchman who had been a cooperating accomplice in nefarious deeds. His character had also been associated with themes of 'moral corruption,' betrayal, and the darkest capabilities of the human psyche (E-Museum, n.d.; Japacul, 2022).

The visual features which Sharaku had showcased within his Ukiyo-e artworks, as it had pertained to describing the nature of the character known as Yakko Edobei, had included a predatory postural stance and a menacing facial expression which had warned viewers of imminent violence and had underscored his villainous personality (Met Museum, n.d.; Wilson & Klobardanz, 2018).

Heckmann (2022) and Kubo (2020) had stated that although magnified and overstated facial features, facial expressions, and gestures had been both central to kabuki theatre storytelling techniques and character development, the clearly exaggerated attributes within this particular Ukiyo-e print had uniquely highlighted the dramatic conventions of kabuki theatre as a Japanese Art form and Japanese cultural identity (Heckmann, 2022; Kubo, 2020).

Moreover, 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had commented upon and critiqued the existence of societal hierarchies during Japan's Edo time-period, as well as evident contradictions, tensions, and double standards which had been present as it related to cultural morality and dutiful responsibilities. In regards to having executed the malicious and ill-intended orders of his master, the kabuki theatre character known as Yakko Edobei had served as a practical demonstration and visual embodiment of the internal Japanese cultural conflicts which had existed between upholding ethical moral conduct and having followed orders. This thematic subject matter had both resonated with and been portrayed within multiple storytelling narratives, which had been written and performed during the Japanese Edo time-period (E-Museum, n.d.; Kubo, 2020).

Mainichi (2021) had brought attention to the fact that the masterful execution of 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had truly served as an exemplification of the sophisticated and superior artistry that woodblock drafting, carving, and printing had to offer during the Edo period. Apart from the typical Ukiyo-e prints, the multi-coloured Nishiki-e prints which had also been produced during this time-period had entailed extensive collaborative efforts amongst carvers,

painters, printers, and publishers, while each type of artisan had provided their best specialized skillsets in order to achieve mastery within this particular artistic discipline and medium (Kubo, 2020).

Similarly, Sharaku's initial design for 'Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei' (1794) by Toshusai Sharaku had been meticulously drafted and then carved onto multiple woodblocks which had been assigned to different layers of colour application—and printing, as well as other aspects of the collective printmaking process. These various stages of production had revealed the highly complex nature of its technical methods, which had required both precision and accuracy. For example, this meticulous, tedious, and time-consuming printmaking process had not merely required careful and perfect alignment through the application of "kento" marks to ensure both consistency and accuracy but had also emphasized the high-level craftsmanship entailed throughout the entire operation (Mainichi, 2021).

Carefully selected pigmentation, which had included 'white mica,' had further been incorporated to create a subtle luminous effect, which had achieved a delicate visual balance between the technical skills required, as well as the artistic expressions which had been foundational to Ukiyo-e productions (Look & Learn, 2005; Wilson & Klobardanz, 2018).

As seen within the archival documents of the Tokyo National Museum (2006), Toshusai Sharaku's collaboration with the publisher known as Tsutaya Juzaburo had facilitated the promotion, distribution, and evolutionary popularizing of Ukiyo-e prints as a distinct genre of Japanese Fine Arts during the Edo time period. Their collaborative efforts had also brought profound attention to Art historians and scholars in regard to this integral role which Japanese publishers had played in the continuation and cultural survival of the Ukiyo-e tradition and Arts markets during the Edo era.

Furthermore, this culmination of efforts among a broad range of highly skilled and expert artisans had reflected the rich artisanal culture and unique appreciation of artistic excellence during Japan's Edo period (Tokyo National Museum, 2006).

6.3.1 A Historical Overview Providing Cultural Context to the Fauvism Art Movement (1615-1868)

Birren (1976) had described Fauvism as a revolutionary Fine Arts Movement which had intentionally broken away from the traditional restraints which had been formerly placed upon the application of colour-schemes. Simultaneously, renowned and well-respected Fauvism painters like Henri Matisse (1869–1954), André Derain (1880–1954), and Maurice de Vlaminck (1876–1958) had incorporated intensely vivid and bold colours into their artworks, which had resulted in atmospheric depictions that perfectly encapsulated 'dynamism', 'vigour' and a sense of 'energetic exuberance'. The exceptionally emboldened colour-schemes seen within artworks from the Fauvism Art Movement had

consequently sharply contrasted with other Arts movements, such as Cubism, which had predominantly focused upon the visual impact of 'subdued' and 'monochromatic' colour tones.

Birren (1976) had emphasized both the multifaceted visual impacts which the emotionally and psychologically-driven dimensions of colour applications within Fauvism had made upon audiences during this time period in history, while mentioning that Fine Artists had progressed exceedingly further than the mere consideration of 'scientific colour application'. The Fauvism Art Movement had therefore fulfilled an essential role in regards to establishing the groundwork for the subsequent exploration and experimentation of new colour-combinations, new colour-mixing techniques, and application of new colour-schemes which had followed. These new developments, which had transpired within the perceptual-thinking processes of Artists who had supported the Fauvism Art Movement during this time period, had pronounced an unmistakable new chapter of 'artistic liberation' (Birren, 1976).

From an entirely different viewpoint of investigation, Bois and Sims (1994) had highlighted the significance of Henry Matisse's unique innovative approaches to colour incorporation -and application as a forerunner of the Fauvism Art Movement, where his artistic approaches and techniques had transitioned from rugged and confidently applied brushstrokes to representation through flattened-colour planes. In addition, Henry Matisse had also utilized the intentional incorporation of contrasting and 'complimentary colours', in order to achieve a sense of 'visual harmony' across the surfaces of his paintings (Bois and Sims, 1994).

Henry Matisse had himself perceived the Fauvism Art Movement to have been somewhat of a 'cultural reaction' among European Fine Artists, artisans and craftsmen against former traditional Arts restrictions and regulations. More specifically, the distinctly different visual portrayals of light reflections which had been applied by Fauvism painters with the purpose in mind to visually diffuse unmodified colour hues and realistic colour-shades, (while instead having preferred the intensely emboldened colour-surfaces), had broken away from prior 'socially acceptable Fine Arts norms'. Bois and Sims (1994) had further noted that the Fauvism Art Movement had utilized stylistically refined techniques of colour-balancing which had contrasted across the canvasses of their paintings. This had been predominantly evident within Henry Matisse's Fauvism Painting titled 'The Open Window and Interior at Collioure', where complementary colour schemes and their components of 'visual tension' had played an enormous role in impacting and potentially altering the experiences of the viewers (Bois & Sims, 1994).

Through the examination of Carlson (1967), it had been determined that the painting titled 'Still Life with Statuette' by Henri Matisse had been a crucially important artwork as it pertained to transitional paintings which had influenced the progress of Fauvism. Although Henry Matisse had in later years departed from the specifically characteristic style represented within this painting, Carlson

(1967) had argued that this moving away from former approaches to Fauvism painting had not only influenced international Fauvism, but the early stages of the new Expressionism Art Movement as well, especially in regards to its successful use of colour-schemes and depiction of shapes. It can therefore be concluded that Henry Matisse's experimental approaches to the application of vividly bright and bold colours, as well as his innovative brushwork techniques, had paved the way for the inspiration and 'artistic licence' granted to other Fine Artists, such as Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky and Alexej Georgewitsch von Jawlensky. These significant influences had served as a demonstration of the Fauvism Art Movement's broader impacts upon other forms of Modern Arts (Carlson, 1967).

Cohen (2017) had provided a perspective from an alternative angle which had offered new insights into the Fauvism Art Movement's interactive engagements and inspirations which had been gained from both African and Oceanic Fine Arts. The authors had also noted that the overall Fauvism Art Movement's interest in oriental and non-Western Fine Arts disciplines had begun around 1905, earlier than had previously been thought by Art historians and scholars. The most prominent and distinguished Fauvism Fine Artists, which had included Derain, Vlaminck, and Matisse, had been inspired and persuaded by the uniquely intriguing formal qualities of both African and Oceanic sculptural forms. Their uncommon and investigative admiration of "primitivism" had reflected a broader fascination with internationally recognized beautiful aesthetics which Fauvism Artists had explored through their application of expressive shapes and emboldened colour-contrast, which had been evident in their compositional designs. This rare interaction with representational Art-making processes had consequently played a pivotal role in regards to shaping the Fauvism Art Movement's aesthetic visual attributes and qualities, especially in regards to its emphasis on unrefined and simplified forms (Cohen, 2017).

Furthermore, Coppel (1999) had described and characterized visual trends observed within the Fauvism Art Movement by its bright, undiluted pure colour hues which were mostly unblended, while had additionally been applied to the canvasses with spontaneous and swift brushstrokes. Although it had primarily been considered by Art historians and scholars as an Art Movement related to painting styles -and techniques, the development of Fauvism had expanded and brimmed over into other Arts disciplines, such as woodcarvings and woodblock-printing through which the uncomplicated and more streamlined 'emboldened black-and-white contrasts' had essentially mirrored the bright colour-contrasts and unrefined brushstrokes of Fauvism paintings. Additionally, Coppel (1999) had also mentioned and commented upon the distinct influences which both African -and Oceanic Art forms, (such as sculptures, ornaments, paintings and other decorative crafts) had upon the most well-known and highly respected Fauvism Artists throughout history. More specifically pertaining to their acceptance, admiration and

adoption of “primitive” carving techniques and aesthetic simplicity which had been both adapted and incorporated into their individualized interpretations of ‘visual communication’ (Coppel, 1999).

The research which had been conducted by Dorra (1976) had investigated, highlighted, and analyzed the multiple stylistic developments which had transpired throughout the Fauvism Art Movement. Dorra (1976) had, in particular, emphasized the significance of Elderfield’s identification of two distinctly different phases of full-blown Fauvism. The first phase of the Fauvism Art Movement, according to Elderfield, had begun around 1905 with the paintings of Matisse’s and Derain’s that had been described -and characterized by a “mixed technique”, which had essentially included remnants of Neo-Impressionist brushwork, as well as flattened colour planes reminiscent of Gauguin’s artworks. The second phase of the Fauvism Art Movement, according to Elderfield, had begun with Henry Matisse’s renowned painting titled ‘Green Line (1905)’ which had accentuated strict visual organization, including the perspective that the application of ‘colour-quantity’ had equalled ‘quality’.

Dorra (1976) had additionally discussed the potential and most likely influences which the artworks of Van Gogh and Cézanne had had upon the development and directional progress of the Fauvism Art Movement, especially in regards to their specific utilization of colour-mixing techniques and expressive application of primary, secondary, and tertiary colours. In particular, the intentional approaches to colour-blending and colour-layering disharmonies which Van Gogh had created within his vibrant paintings, had had a distinctly significant impact upon the Fauvism Art Movement at large (Dorra, 1976).

Within the broader context of Modernized -and Contemporary Fine Arts Movements, Francastel & Aiken (1957) had presented the argument that the Fauvism Art Movement had either been misunderstood as the potential ‘culmination of past artistic traditions’ or merely misinterpreted as a ‘culturally reflective expression’ of ‘individualized creativity’ during this historical time period. Francastel & Aiken (1957) had also underscored the necessity for gaining a deeper understanding of the Fauvism Art Movement’s collective motivations and influences upon societal transformations related to ‘modern taste’. At the same time, Francastel & Aiken (1957) had also criticized and challenged the tendency among Art historians and scholars who merely minimized and depreciated the Fauvism Art Movement to such an extent that the visual aesthetic attributes and technical innovations it had introduced, had remained predominantly unrecognized and unacknowledged within historical documentation (Francastel & Aiken, 1957).

In unison and agreement with most views presented by Francastel & Aiken (1957), Gillespie (2019) had similarly connected the Fauvism Art Movement with broader Modernist Art Movements, while having suggested that, alongside other Art Movements such as Impressionism and Expressionism, the Fauvism Art Movement had encapsulated the ever-changing psychological -and sociological studies

which had been conducted during this time period. From this stance, the Fauvism Art Movement had therefore fulfilled a broader role related to the disruption of Fine Arts which had mirrored a multitude of societal changes.

From an alternative angle of investigation, Gottlieb (1959) had drawn specified attention to the connections between Henry Matisse's painting titled 'Joy of Life' (1905–1906) and Pablo Picasso's notorious artwork titled 'Demoiselles d'Avignon' (1907). Gottlieb (1959) argues that while Matisse's painting had represented the synopsis and key-defining attributes of Fauvism with its distinct emphasis upon the momentary happiness of humanity, flowing lines, and bright colour schemes, Picasso had entirely deviated from this interpretive artistic approach by presenting an exceedingly more critical and linear interpretation of similar subject matters. Gottlieb (1959) had further emphasized radically contrasting components, such as the emotional undertones that had been observed within the artworks of Henry Matisse's (referring to his 'joyful Fauvism'), in comparison to the more sombre thematic undertones which had been displayed within the later artworks by Pablo Picasso (Gottlieb, 1959).

In alignment with the angle of research-based investigation by Gottlieb (1959), Hellmanzik (2009) had further extended the discussion revolving around the Fauvism Art Movement by means of having attempted to categorize Fine Artists within the context of Fine Arts Movements. Therefore, Hellmanzik (2009) had noted that some Fine Artists, like Georges Braque, for example, had been associated with multiple Art movements. Although the study conducted by Hellmanzik (2009) had had a primary focus upon accurate methods of 'classification,' the overall research findings had reinforced the significance of Fauvism as an essentially important and dignified artistic style within the broader historical contexts of Modern Arts (Hellmanzik, 2009).

In substantiating support of the research approached by Hellmanzik (2009), Lebensztejn et al. (1978) had attempted to frame the Fauvism Art Movement as the very first modern painting revolution, while having traced its different developmental phases from pre-Fauvism through to its eventual and final dissolution. Lebensztejn et al. (1978) had furthermore highlighted the collective and culminating nature of the Fauvism Art Movement, as well as the overall movement's shared artistic ideals and the noteworthy influences which had been attained from artists like Claude Manet, Vincent Van Gogh, Eugène Henri Paul Gauguin, and Paul Cézanne. In addition, the Fauvism Art Movement's application of pure colour-hues, non-imitative colour schemes, and its distinct focus upon colour as a central structural element had been foundational to the defining characteristic of the Fauvism Art Movement (Lebensztejn et al., 1978).

Elaborating upon the Fauvism Art Movement's comparatively brief years of prominence from 1905 and 1907, Love (1960) had noted that despite this Art Movement's short-lived popularity and prevalence, its influences had continued to prevail within the artworks of Raoul Dufy and Henri Matisse.

More specifically as it had pertained to the ongoing and increasing experimentation with sensuous colour during the years which had followed. Therefore, the Fauvism Art Movement's exceptional emphasis upon the importance of emotional expression through carefully selected colour applications had both resonated with the visual aesthetic attributed and emotional impacts of the Romanticism and Baroque Art Movements. Henry Matisse's joyful and exuberant incorporation of colours had, however, remained foundational to the expansive influences of the Fauvism Art Movement, which had stood in distinct contrast to the tragic emotions that were visually communicated within the Expressionism Art Movement (Love, 1960).

By further strengthening this perspective, Lyon (1992) had also investigated and explored the 'historical context' of the Fauvism Art Movement through the paintings of Henri Matisse. Lyon (1992) had, however, remarked upon the fact that Matisse's contributions to the overall expansion of the Fauvism Art Movement had often been misunderstood. Lyon (1992) noted that critics of the Fauvism Art Movement, such as Levinson, had strongly encouraged a formal analysis of Henry Matisse's body of artworks. From the critical interpretation of Levinson, abstracted Fauvism paintings had been regarded as an artistic trend that was more likely based upon 'intuition' rather than 'rationality.' Another author and critic of the Fauvism Art Movement, namely Bock-Weiss, as cited by Lyon (1992), had in return questioned the definitive characteristic difference between Henry Matisse's 'divisionist phase' and the phase within which he had entered 'Fauvism.' Lyon (1992) refers to Bock-Weiss who had theorized and suggested that Henry Matisse had merely adapted 'divisionist techniques' in order to effectively achieve the typical emphasis upon colour as seen within Fauvism paintings, where colours had served as the primary light source and foundational source of visual harmony (Lyon, 1992).

Martin (1983) had also presented a detailed analysis of Henri Matisse's Fauvism paintings, which had accentuated the fact that his unique abstraction had been based upon an intuitive nature rather than a calculated approach to artistic interpretation and representation. Bock-Weiss, as cited by Martin (1983), had pointed out that theories related to 'divisionism,' particularly the ideological theories of Paul Signac and Henri-Edmond Cross, had fulfilled an essential role in Henry Matisse's extraordinary development of Fauvism. This unique direction of 'artistic development' had caused him to both focus upon and promote schematic colour application as the primary source of light reflections within his artworks. Multiple Art historians and scholars had framed Matisse's collection of Fauvism paintings as a natural continuation of his former Impressionist-oriented depictions of nature scenes, which had stemmed from compositional and colour-based theories (Martin, 1983).

Mashcheck (1982) had also commented upon the fact that the Fauvism Art Movement, which had originated from 1905 onwards, had been profoundly impacted and transformed by the visual influences of African wood sculptures and aesthetics related to 3-dimensional carvings. These specified

visual characteristics had inspired the Fauvism Fine Artists and painters to incorporate more 'primitively simplified' and ornamental applications of colour schemes into their artworks. Mashcheck (1982) notes that Fauvism Fine Artists from France had concentrated more upon the 'aesthetically-driven' approaches to 'primitivism' in comparison to their German counterparts within the Expressionism Art Movement, who had referred to tribal Art forms in order to more effectively explore and express emotional releases through means of 'visual communication.' They had furthermore attempted to emphasize the importance of experiencing 'liberation from societal norms and expectations.' Mashcheck (1982) had therefore discerned a distinct separation between the structural, rational, and intellectualized artistic approaches of the French Fauvism Fine Artists and the relatively more passionate and emotionally-charged application of primitive Art representations portrayed within German Expressionism. These distinct differences had been recognized, despite the fact that both Art movements had drawn from similar influences.

McEvelley (2006) presents the argument that the Fauvism Art Movement had laid the foundational groundwork for consequent Art Movements that had followed, such as Abstract Expressionism, more specifically in regards to its experimentation with and exploration of colour schemes. Therefore, despite the fact that the Fauvism Art Movement had introduced bright, simplified, and joyful colour schemes, McEvelley (2006) argued that it had not entirely fulfilled the captivating sensory experience which later Art movements had achieved, while other Fine Artists, like Rothko, had successfully created visual atmospheric scenes within which the 'emotional depths' of colour schemes into darker colour tones had existential themes. Fauvism, thus, had acted as a precursor to these developments in the post-war abstract art scene (McEvelley, 2006).

Regarding the later phases of the Fauvism Art Movement, Millard (1976) had observed that by the year 1906, the broader Fauvism Art Movement had ventured beyond the limitations of formerly achieved 'coloristic freedoms,' as well as having redefined the limits of 'naturalistic representations' within the context of their utmost extremes. Inspired and impacted by iconic Fine Artists such as Van Gogh and Eugène Henri Paul Gauguin, the Fauvism painters had incorporated their luminous tones and vivid colour hues within dense compositional arrangements, which had often been further accentuated by either unpainted areas or slight value changes within the hues.

Millard (1976) had also elaborated upon the different methodical approaches of Fine Artists from the Fauvism Art Movement, such as André Derain and Raoul Dufy – who had not merely perfected their own distinctly individualized approaches to interpretational painting styles, but had also evolved into broadly recognized exemplifications of their unique Fauvist portrayals. For example, Derain had in fact shown personal progress which had exceeded beyond his initially fearless and unapologetic use of bold, unrestrained colour schemes. This had in particular been a courageous hallmark of his earlier

Fauvism artworks—while Dufy, on the other hand, had steadfastly maintained a more refined and decorative Art style which had set his visionary depictions apart from his peers (Millard, 1976).

Additionally highlighting the uniquely brief lifespan of the Fauvism Art Movement (1898–1908), Paul (1994) supports the understanding that Fauvism had made a historically prolonged impact upon Modern Arts Movements that had followed, despite the limited number of comprehensive reference works. Investigative research conducted by Paul (1994) had focused upon well-known and accomplished French painters within the Fauvism Art Movement, while providing intricately documented bibliographies and chronologies. Paul (1994) had in particular emphasized the roles which well-known artists such as Raoul Dufy had played, as well as less renowned artists like Louis Valtat. The volume of research had, to some degree, prioritized bibliographic resources over visual depictions, which had contrasted with earlier surveys pertaining to prioritized images.

Selz (1950) had attempted to provide more historical context of the Fauvism Art Movement in 1905 as it related to having been a 'revolutionary' time period within the broader development of modernized painting styles. Simultaneously, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism Art Movements had just begun to impact German Fine Arts, while leading Fine Artists such as Munch and Van Gogh had remained relatively unknown during this period in history. Selz (1950) had therefore proposed the idea that the Fauvism Art Movement had not yet reached or influenced German painters, but that the movement's collectively widespread impact had been experienced through parallel cultural movements, such as artistic experimentation and exploration within the Expressionism Art Movement itself. The artworks of Paula Modersohn-Becker had been a perfect example hereof.

In agreement with Selz (1950), Sheon (1966) had investigated the potential correlation between the developmental characteristics of the Fauvism Art Movement, as well as the German Expressionist Art Movement, while highlighting that both movements had concurrently originated and come into fruition. Sheon (1966) had mentioned that although a certain 'primitivism' had been more emphasized and evident within the paintings of German Fine Artists, the selected key paintings by Van Gogh and Matisse, which had been exhibited, consequently facilitated the spread of Fauvism painting techniques across other European regions and countries, which had somewhat caused a merging and blending of Art Movements.

An elaborate historical overview of the Fauvism Art Movement had been provided by Whitfield (2000), while its foundational inceptions related to the courageous experiments of young prospective Fine Artists like Matisse and Derain during the early years of the 1900s. Their artworks, which had been displayed and exhibited in multiple venues like the 'Salon d'Automne' during 1905, had represented a momentous departure from prior 'socially acceptable' Fine Arts traditions. Whitfield (2000) noted that the term 'Fauvism' had been named after the French interpretation for "wild beasts," as a result of the

movement's determined and tenacious application of color schemes and shapes which had successfully flourished within the 'enthusiastic exhibition culture' during this time period.

Whitfield (2000) had furthermore underscored the remarkable influences upon the development of the Fauvism Art Movement made by Fine Artists like Edvard Munch, whose emotionally exhilarating paintings had resonated with the 'Avant-Garde.' While renowned Fauvism painters like Maurice de Vlaminck had shed light upon the visual impacts of 'energetic responses' to depictions of nature, others like George Braque and Achille-Émile Othon Friesz had taken more thoughtfully reflective approaches to visual portrayals, which served as a revolutionary indication within the movement (Whitfield, 2000).

From an internationally influential perspective, Winther-Tamaki (2003) had analyzed the adaptation of the Fauvism Art Movement throughout Japan, more specifically after World War II. During this time period, the Fauvism Art Movement had been embraced and celebrated as a conservative Fine Arts form within Japan, which had focused upon the achievement of visual harmony while simultaneously refraining from engaging in political or religious commentary. For example, Japanese Fine Artists such as Yasui Sōtarō and Umehara Ryūzaburō had adopted Fauvism painting techniques during the early years of the 1900s, while integrating these painting techniques with other Parisian painting styles. Winther-Tamaki (2003) had noted that a perfect example hereof is Hayashi Takeshi (a postwar Japanese painter), who had continued this tradition and valued the importance of 'aestheticism' above themes pertaining to societal issues.

Within the broader context of 'early modernism,' Wohl (2002) had underscored how the Fauvism Art Movement persisted in its traditional interactions related to experimenting with and embracing new Fine Arts painting techniques and methods of visual representation. In contrast to the more zealous and nonconformist Avant-Garde Fine Arts Movements, which had later come into fruition (while referring to the Futurism and Dadaism Art Movements), Fauvism painters had sought to reinterpret traditional perspectives, interpretations, and approaches to Art-making processes, instead of rejecting them. Wohl (2002) had therefore argued that the Fauvism Art Movement had significantly contributed towards the earlier developmental stages of modernized forms of Fine Arts by using colours and shapes to explore subjective experiences and themes, especially in encapsulating the exuberance and spriteliness of urbanized landscapes.

André Derain had been presented by Ball (1980) as a well-versed and comprehensive Fine Artist who had made exceptional contributions towards the development of the broader Fauvism Art Movement, especially from 1905–1910. Despite a strong foundational background and roots firmly established within the Fauvism Art Movement, André Derain had systematically separated his artistic career from his Avant-Garde peers, mostly as a result of his predisposition and natural artistic inclination

towards the incorporation of more traditionally recognized Art techniques and methods of representation. Ball (1980) noted that Derain's earlier Fauvism paintings had gained recognition for their inclusion of vivid color schemes and stylistic simplification of shapes, which served as a testament to his interactions with Henry Matisse, other Fauvist artists, as well as his exposure to the works of Paul Cézanne and the Neo-Impressionism Art Movement. Yet, Art Critics like Guillaume Apollinaire had observed that André Derain's retreat from Modern Arts during 1910 caused a distinct shift towards more conservative and traditional Fine Arts techniques (Ball, 1980).

Additionally, Derain's incorporation of African influences within his artworks had been mostly evident within his attempt to integrate more traditional artistic methods indicative of primitivism within his figural compositions, especially within artworks like 'Toilette.' However, Ball (1980) suggested that Derain's loyalty to traditional painting techniques had ultimately prevented him from achieving his personal Fauvism Art style, more specifically due to the fact that he had refrained from modernist experimentation during the latter years of his life (Ball, 1980).

6.3.2 Societal and Cultural Values Related to the Fauvism Art Movement:

Esaak (2019) notes that the reaction of French society to the development of the Fauvism Art Movement during the 1905 Salon d'Automne, who had broadly nicknamed and referred to Fine Artists from this movement as 'wild beasts' ("fauves"), had historically exhibited the fact that the French public had held strong traditional views pertaining to interpretational and representational approaches towards Fine Arts. Art techniques related to achieving both realism and naturalism had been highly regarded (Esaak, 2019). The initial French 'cultural-shock' towards the brightly emboldened and unconventional application of color schemes had reflected a resistance towards unexpected deviations pertaining to well-established artistic norms. However, the gradual but inevitable recognition of the Fauvism Art Movement within France had displayed a sequential societal acceptance towards artistic experimentation of an innovative nature, as well as new concepts related to personal expression. The collective French societal reactions towards the development of Fauvism had consequently shaped the cultural identity of the movement and indirectly caused the Fauvism Artists to more fervently and more intentionally defy the former heralded 'artistic-standards'. They had therefore focused more upon the incorporation of non-representational color schemes and the simplification of their depictions of form, which had led towards an increased acceptance of both individualism and emotional expression within French Fine Arts (Esaak, 2019).

In regards to changes seen within the societal and cultural values of this time period, Spivey (2021) notes that the revolutionary and distinctly progressive use of color as demonstrated by Fauvism

Artists like Matisse, Derain, and Vlaminck had earned them the label “Les Fauves,” which had highlighted their collective departure from traditional painting techniques and artistic practices. This particular Fine Arts movement had emulated and echoed the apparent societal changes which had transpired in France during the early 1900s, as Paris had undergone significant industrialization and modernization. In return, these manifold changes had led towards the confrontational contesting of previously established norms. Fauvism had therefore rejected academic traditions which had formerly been accepted without being challenged. As a result, the Fauvism Art Movement’s overall celebration of ‘artistic spontaneity’ and ‘emotionally expressive intensity’ had served as evidence of broader societal and cultural changes (Spivey, 2021).

In regards to the formation of a new ‘cultural identity,’ Spivey (2021) presents the perspective that since Fauvism had been influenced by non-Western Art, as observed within Matisse’s ‘Blue Nude’ / ‘Souvenir of Biskra’ (1907), the new cultural acceptance of Primitivism had reflected French society’s complexly controversial relation with its own occupied colonies, which had often romanticized non-Western Art as a “purist Art form.” This perception had stood in direct contrast to superior cultural notions pertaining to European civilization. These French ideological perceptions had profoundly contributed towards the artistic methods through which the ‘new French cultural identity’ had been expressed in Fauvism artworks, founded upon innovative approaches to emotional freedom (Spivey, 2021).

In agreement with Spivey (2021), Deyasie (2015) states that the French imperialism which had been prevalent throughout Southeast Asia in particular had profoundly impacted the cultural values during this time period. Deyasie (2015) had explained how exhibitions held by French Imperialists had psychologically reinforced a ‘sense of cultural superiority’ through means of the proactive steps they had taken to appropriate the cultural practices in Southeast Asia. Deyasie (2015) had presented the compelling argument that these imperialist worldviews, which had perceived non-Western Art as having been exotically controlled resources primarily available to Western and European ‘ownership,’ had most likely influenced the Fauvism painters. Especially since they had pursued freedom from the restrictive European norms in context to the expression of their own artistic ideas, concepts, thematic interpretations, and emotions. The Fauvism Art Movement’s exploration of new interpretations and representations of pure color hues and shapes can therefore be translated as a rebellious reaction towards redefining French societal and cultural identity through both colonial dominance and artistic expressions (Deyasie, 2015).

In further substantive support of the viewpoints presented by Spivey (2021) and Deyasie (2015), Osborne (2005) also confirms that French nationalism, French imperialism, and wider European

imperialism in various regions of the world had upheld and been supported by centralized Parisian bureaucracies foundational to the objectives and aspirations embraced by French Imperialists. For example, ideologies related to the promotion of 'modernity' and 'rationalism' had been taught in the colonies (Osborne, 2005). Therefore, Osborne (2005) had suggested that the Fauvism Artists' direct rejection of formerly academically-rooted Fine Arts traditions and practices had been perceived as oppositional actions against the restrictive structures of French society, including its imperialist mindset. Osborne (2005) further confirms that the Fauvism Art Movement's departure from formerly restrictive and inflexible French values had demonstrated an overall acceptance of 'individualized expression' above the collective ideals pertaining to discrimination. This societal advocacy for the attainment of emotional, interpretive, expressive, and artistic freedom had significantly contributed towards the ever-changing advancement of French cultural identity (Osborne, 2005).

Meyer (2021) supports this understanding by stating the role of Fine Arts during this time period in French history had shifted from 'representational uses' to a more highly valued emphasis upon 'personal artistic and emotional expression.' The incorporation of simplified forms and color schemes had proposed the idea that 'subjectively personal experiences' and the 'individualized interpretation of artworks' had gained societal preference over artistic depictions of 'literal thematic-representations.' Fauvism had further aligned with more expansive societal and cultural values which favored artistic experimentation and individualism from 1904 until 1908. The Fauvism Art Movement had therefore come into fruition as a result of increased French cultural awareness and openness towards Avant-Garde concepts. The broader movement had therefore fulfilled a remarkably important role as it relates to revealing societal and cultural changes within this historical time frame (Meyer, 2021).

Clark (1979) makes the compelling point by stating that the societal classes within France had traditionally been structured around elitist support and recognition of Fine Arts, which had served as an impactful factor pertaining to the development of 20th-century Fine Arts Movements like Fauvism. According to Clark (1979), since French Fine Arts had remained strongly intertwined with governmental and aristocratic elites, these alliances had led to the preservation of high cultural standards and in subordination against mass culture influences. The Fauvism painters had not only rejected and departed from traditional artistic norms but had flourished within societies across Europe which had placed high value and appreciation upon 'artistic innovation,' which had granted them further 'artistic license' to explore unfamiliar territory related to experimentation and expression. These elite-supported artistic traditions had therefore provided the perfect foundation and fertile premise upon which the Fauvism Art Movement had been able to develop and expand. More specifically, this movement is characterized by the exceptional freedoms which had been enjoyed by French painters regarding the experimentation of new artistic concepts (Clark, 1979).

Crouzet (2003) had presented comprehensive economic context for more effectively understanding the French societal and cultural values throughout the era of the Fauvism Art Movement, while underlining the country's predetermined path to industrialization. The French public's 'sense of pride,' which had been rooted in their degree of 'agricultural stability,' had simultaneously been considered an essential determining factor pertaining to their social and democratic stability. These broadly embraced societal values had fostered a 'cultural identity' related to embracing 'non-conformity' and 'independence.' This economically driven societal focus had fueled the flames of the 'artistic non-conformity' demonstrated within the Fauvism Art Movement, where artists had rejected traditional European discipline and practices of Fine Arts in favor of individualistic expression through emboldened colors and unique representations of shapes (Crouzet, 2003).

Dörr (2020) had also alluded to this understanding, but through the lens of viewing 'pronatalism,' which had altered societal values. Especially since 'pronatalism' had underscored the importance of 'national strength' through large families (Dörr, 2020). However, Dörr (2020) notes that these traditional values had begun to weaken within the context of women's liberation and other related shifts in societal views. As a result, Fauvist painters had paralleled these cultural alterations by having been separated from established artistic practices, techniques, theories, and perspectives in exchange for individualized freedoms and emotional expressions. The further alignment which had come into fruition pertaining to societal industrialization, urbanization, modernization, and artistic innovation had only strengthened and solidified the role of the Fauvism Art Movement's ability to encapsulate and represent changes within French cultural identity effectively (Dörr, 2020).

Since there had been a distinctly recognizable separation between the city of Paris and other provinces throughout France during 1904 and 1908, the societal and cultural values of the French public had been greatly impacted. On the one hand, most regions throughout France had been associated with more widespread sentiments related to patriotism and nationalism, traditions, timelessness, and simplistic ways of life, while the city of Paris had been more symbolic of academic and socio-economic sophistication, modernization, progress, financial prosperity, fashion, and new Arts trends amongst high society. As Paris had therefore been associated with progress, enhancement, and multifaceted advancements, the 'hierarchical perspectives' which had prevailed within French society had only strengthened views related to both 'cultural superiority' and 'cultural inferiority' between those who had resided within Paris and those who had resided in other parts of France (Dymond, 2011).

Dymond (2011) argues that these divisive societal perspectives had profoundly impacted the cultural values in France and other parts of Europe during this time period, which had uniquely shaped the directional transformation of the Fauvism Art Movement as well. In agreement with many other

authors, Fauvism painters like Matisse and Derain had therefore served as catalysts for cultural change in regards to their rejection of conventional and controlled expressions of art. Consequently, Fauvism Artists had therefore sought to both communicate and establish a 'new cultural identity' that had been truly representational of society during this era. In addition, the 'Paris-centric' perspectives related to modernity had been critiqued and challenged, and the visual attributes of the Fauvism Art Movement can be interpreted as a rebellion against the unfair and discriminatory 'hierarchical structures' which had been in place. In doing so, they had therefore presented alternative approaches and methods related to 'cultural expression' which had celebrated liberation and freedom of expression (Dymond, 2011).

Furlough (1993) contributes to this understanding by highlighting the disproportionate emphasis within French society in particular, which had increasingly focused upon self-indulgence, the enjoyment of leisurely activities and other carnal pleasures, as well as the attainment of physical beauty. These shifts related to cultural values had been more specifically evident amidst the post-war consumption of fashionable trends and societal patterns (Furlough, 1993). The Fauvism Art Movement had therefore revealed and showcased the increasing societal and cultural desire for emotional intensity, passion, expression, and liberation (Furlough, 1993).

6.3.3 Five Prominent and Iconic Paintings from the Fauvism Art Movement, Which Had Been Emblematic of Cultural Identity

6.3.3.1 Boats in the Port of Collioure (1905) – by André Derain

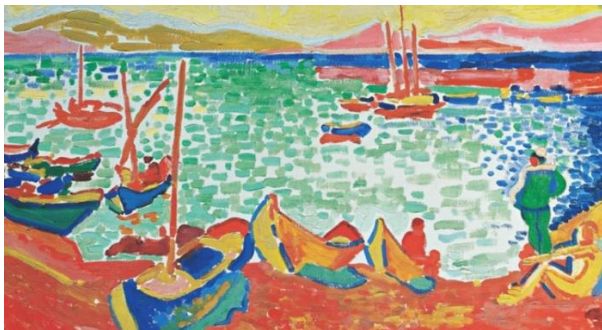


Figure 48: 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' (1905) is currently being preserved as part of the Robert Lehman Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, U.S.A, which had been painted during the Fauvism Art Movement (1905) by André Derain, (Bougault, 2017).

Note. Bougault (2017) referred to **Figure 48** within the journal titled, 'André Derain Triomphe à Beaubourg. *Connaissance des Arts*'. <https://www.connaissancedesarts.com/arts-expositions/andre-derain-triomphe-beaubourg-1177778/>, para. 1

The 'Port of Collioure,' as mentioned by Bindé (2017), had served as a transformative work of Art within the broader Fauvism movement during 1905. Through means of applying a bright colour-scheme and refraining from traditional and realistic portrayals as seen within former Art Movements, André Derain had been responsible for fulfilling a pivotal role in regards to visually establishing an exceedingly more 'expressive French cultural identity' through his visionary Fauvist painting

techniques. The Fauvism Art Movement, which had been characterised by its application of pure colour hues (that were less mixed and therefore brighter in nature), the imitation of shape and form in a distorted manner, as well as a drastic departure from 'Impressionism' and 'Pointillism' painting styles, had pronounced a remarkable shift to both artistic expression of a subjective and emotional nature.

By having applied bright and predominantly unmixed colours, André Derain had not only succeeded in creating vibrant pictorial depictions but also achieved a style of visual expression that had encompassed psychological and moral depths. Moreover, this combination of artistic choices had effectively reflected 'French cultural identity,' while the vivid colour-schemes had symbolized 'new vitality' and a 'new zest for life,' as well as having been a representation of a 'newly revived modern spirit' which had resonated with French society and broader European demographics during this time period in history (Bindé, 2017).

Messinger (1982) states that André Derain had left the city of Paris at the age of twenty-five during 1905, in order to join a partnership with Henry Matisse within the fishing town named Collioure, where both Fauvist painters had explored multiple possibilities pertaining to Fauvist painting techniques. In addition, Derain and Matisse had also contemplated and compared the application of multiple Art theory approaches, as well as potential compositional arrangements which had encompassed a consideration of broken brushwork, light reflections, and vivid colour schemes. Derain and Matisse's collaboration within the fishing town of Collioure had been significantly groundbreaking in regards to the initial formation and eventual transformation of the Fauvism Art Movement. Especially since Messinger (1982) had confirmed the understanding that these two Fauvist Fine Artists had painted side-by-side, while succeeding in maintaining their individualized and distinct painting styles.

Although André Derain's original Fauvist colour-schemes and colour-palette had been highly expressive and contained bright colour hues, the time period during which 'Boats in the Port of Collioure (1905)' had been painted had begun to reveal his increasing dissatisfaction with this particular Art style. This had more specifically foreshadowed the later artistic shift which had taken place in regards to Derain's interpretative and representational approaches to the art-making processes, toward a far more restrictive and calculated Cubist-inspired painting style. In unison with the profound work simultaneously produced by Henry Matisse, André Derain's 'Boats in the Port of Collioure (1905)' including his broader body of artworks, had greatly contributed towards the firm establishment and solidification of 'French cultural identity.' This had specifically been achieved through means of demonstrating innovative and emotionally infused artistic approaches to landscape scenes, while Derain had further succeeded in featuring and representing both intensity and light reflections which had been distinctly unique to the southern coastline of France (Messinger, 1982).

In agreement with Messinger (1982), Graham-Dixon (2002) had also examined and considered potential influences which Henry's Matisse's invitation to the fishing town named "Collioure" may have had upon the development of André Derain's stylistic painting techniques and representational methods. Since Derain had been surrounded and inspired by a Mediterranean landscape, he had been notably influenced in regards to adopting and incorporating non-naturalistic and bright colour hues which visually epitomized the characteristic traits of the Fauvism Art Movements (Graham-Dixon, 2002).

Graham-Dixon (2002) had further noted that the intense and bright light reflections seen within the fishing town of Collioure had drawn Derain's artistic attention towards focusing more upon the distinctive application of "vibrant colour accents," while gradually rejecting colour-contrasts and tonal values. Therefore, André Derain had challenged the boundary lines of historically traditional French landscape painting techniques and stylistic approaches to visual representation. Not only had this time period highlighted an essential phase during the development of his artistic journey and career, but Derain and Matisse had successfully achieved the progress and advancement of a new Art style which had applauded and heralded a 'vibrant French cultural identity.' Furthermore, the advancement of this 'vibrant French cultural identity' had been perfectly communicated and aligned with the 'adventurous spirit' and the growth of Modern Arts in France during this time period (Graham-Dixon, 2002).

Pissarro (1991) had provided the interesting perspective by suggesting that 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' as a thematic subject matter had been profound in regards to declaring a new and modernized 'French cultural identity.' Moreover, the innovative stylistic painting choices, vibrant colour-schemes, and thick, broken brushstrokes had encompassed and fulfilled the Fauvism Art Movement's goal of rejecting formerly recognized 'academic norms' while simultaneously giving preference to an 'emotional artistic response' towards representing 'tangible surroundings.' In therefore doing so, Derain alongside other key-Fauvism Fine Artists had successfully portrayed an evolving 'French cultural identity.' Consequently, this had signified a rejection of 'conservative-Art-approaches' and France's collective embrace of modernized forms of artistic expression. Furthermore, the coastal settings and visual surroundings of Collioure which had been portrayed with an explosively bright colour-palette had become emblematic of the exciting 'Mediterranean spirit' which had resonated with both French and extended European viewers (Pissarro, 1991).

Green (2005) had argued that 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' had made a profound contribution towards transforming traditional French landscapes. The fact that Derain and Matisse alike had engaged in experimental and explorative painting in surroundings like Carrières-Saint-Denis, as well as regions throughout rural France, had caused the contemporary colour-schemes to become interwoven with the nostalgic cultural perspective of France's rural past. André Derain's 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' had therefore served as an embodiment of 'French cultural identity,' while providing a 'contrasting visual

portrayal' between romanticized rural scenes and of innovative modernization, industrialization, and urbanization. This illustrative theme had signified the definitive cultural tension which had transpired between appreciating and upholding French cultural traditions and embracing economic progress in multiple spheres of influence (Green, 2005).

Cortiaus (2024) had investigated the 'unnatural' and extraordinarily bright colour-schemes applied by Derain and Matisse, which had also been debuted during 1905 at the Salon d'Automne. The French public had however strongly disapproved of the initial exhibition of their Fauvism paintings and had collectively labelled them as "les fauves," otherwise translated as "wild beasts." Yet this exhibition had simultaneously caused an unmistakable turning point within the development of French Fine Arts, through means of making a visual statement and presenting the idea that individuality of the artist and personal expression could either be equally or even more important than achieving realism. Their embrace and advocacy of values related to 'individuality,' 'emotionalism,' and 'personal expression' had therefore assisted in the establishment of a 'new French cultural identity' (Cortiaus, 2024).

From a different angle of examination, Labrusse and Munck (2004) had emphasized André Derain's noteworthy incorporation of Neo-Impressionist painting techniques, for the purpose of permeating his paintings of riverside scenery with luminous light reflections that had drawn attention to the significant colour-contrasts and application of pure colour hues. Derain's unique artistic ability to create vivacious and spritely compositional arrangements which had further emphasized distinct shapes and colour differences had resembled the fusion of more traditional and modernized avant-garde approaches to artistic interpretation and representation. Additionally, his 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' had communicated timeless consistency, while he had advocated for the creation of an avant-garde vision that had reflected 'French cultural identity' through both familiar Art elements and innovative stylistic changes (Labrusse & Munck, 2004).

Goodwin (2012) supports this understanding and argues that by having deviated from formal Fine Arts practices, techniques, and conventions, the paintings of André Derain had remarkably participated in the formation of a more expansive cultural movement across France. More specifically, since Fine Arts had increasingly served as a 'societal outlet' for the expression of 'French identity' despite ideological shifts that had been taking place at the time. Fauvist Art approaches had later inspired and impacted the development of 'Abstraction,' and Derain's 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' had created the foundational pathway for French modernism to be further explored and expanded upon (Goodwin, 2012).

In unison with this interpretation, André Derain's artistic influence, as commented upon by Pon et al. (2010), had extended to modern-day contemporary Fine Artists, as seen within the graphic print created by McLean, which had drawn inspiration from Derain. Furthermore, André Derain's

emboldened use of colours, as demonstrated within 'Boats in the Port of Collioure,' had represented 'French avant-garde identity,' including its undeniable effects upon the progress of modernist painting practices (Pon et al., 2010).

Dorra (1976) had lastly referred to André Derain's amalgamation of Japanese influences as seen within 'Boats in the Port of Collioure,' more specifically in regards to the raised viewpoints and calligraphic details, which had coincided with distinctive attributes of Japanese Art techniques. By having celebrated French cultural values and simultaneously incorporating international influences, this Fauvism painting by André Derain had encapsulated French society's embrace of cross-cultural visual aesthetics. Through this artistic approach, a broader 'European identity' had also been heralded since French innovation had been recognized, as well as the inclusion of 'artistic diversity' (Dorra, 1976).

In agreement with Bindé (2017), Messinger (1982), Graham-Dixon (2002), Pissarro (1991), Green (2005), Cortiaus (2024), Labrusse & Munck (2004), Goodwin (2012), Pon et al. (2010), and Dorra (1976) — 'Boats in the Port of Collioure' by André Derain had exemplified ideals of the Fauvism Art Movement, such as 'innovation,' 'individuality,' and 'personal artistic expression.' These collective 'French European cultural values' had further marked a historical turning point within French Fine Arts through means of applying vivid, non-representational forms and pure colour hues, which had encapsulated a clear cultural shift towards experimentation, exploration, modernization, urbanization, and industrialization during the early 20th century.

6.3.3.2 Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905) - by Henri Matisse

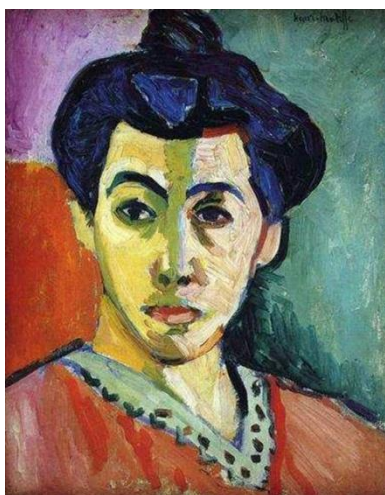


Figure 49: 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe' (1905)

is currently being preserved in the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, Denmark, which had been painted during the Fauvism Art Movement (1905) by André Derain, (Doula, 2016).

Note. Doula (2016) referred to **Figure 49** within the journal titled, 'Fauvism: The Story of Wild Beasts and Colorful Paintings. MFA, Faculty of Fine Arts, UODA., 1–25.

https://www.academia.edu/34909334/Fauvism_The_Story_of_Wild_Beasts_and_Colorful_Painting, p.10

Within one of his most renowned Fauvism artworks, known as 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905)', Henri Matisse had effectively applied the Fauvist Art Elements and Design Principles, as they related to the application of expressive, bright, and bold colour schemes, as well as the simplification of shapes (Sagady, 2016). Sagady (2016) also mentioned that Henri Matisse had gained inspirational ideas from post-Impressionists such as Paul

Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, and Gauguin's expressive utilization of unnatural colours in opposition to former Fine Arts norms throughout Europe. Through the simplification of shapes into flattened colour planes, Henri Matisse had managed to provide harmonious balance in regards to both two- and three-dimensionality, while simultaneously adding visual texture by applying thick and broken impasto brushstrokes. Sagady (2016) also mentions that the prominent green stripe, which had been vertically painted down the face of Madame Matisse, in unison with red and green contrasts throughout this Fauvist painting, had resulted in a visual effect of a dynamic and optical nature. This particular colour selection had also enhanced both the level of emotional intensity and visual exuberance. 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905)' had therefore disconnected association from historical European portraiture techniques and instead had promoted the idea that "Art can be admired, enjoyed and recognized for the sake of being Art." This perspective had also demonstrated a clear displacement towards French Modern Arts appreciation and representation (Sagady, 2016).

The perspective presented by Dabrowski (2004) had recognized that Henri Matisse's 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905)' truly embodied the essence and aesthetics of the Fauvism Art Movement, which had been associated with the description of a 'wild beast,' especially due to the application of thick, rugged, broken, and energetic brush-strokes, as well as unnaturally bright colour schemes. Dabrowski (2004) had upheld the viewpoint that Henri Matisse had persistently investigated and pursued the visual portrayal of the "character of subject matter," which had extended beyond Fauvism. This artistic approach, as argued by Dabrowski (2004), had also strived towards achieving 'visual balance,' 'visual union,' and 'visual serenity' through the innovative utilization of colours, shapes, and forms. These artistic approaches had assisted with the transition from traditional French Fine Arts norms towards the recognition—and eventual adoption—of "Abstraction," which had profoundly advanced 'French cultural expression' (Dabrowski, 2004).

Artist Jr. (1964) had suggested that Henri Matisse withdrew from formerly applauded classical Fine Arts norms, which had been standardized by iconic Fine Arts masters like Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt van Rijn, and instead had prioritized the application of bright, vivid, and emboldened colours. More specifically, bright colour combinations, which had been inspired by exotic Eastern Art forms but were effectuated and achieved through Western Art techniques and artistic intensity. Additionally, Matisse's artistic decision to paint an arbitrary green stripe down the face of his wife had contested European and Western conventions of naturalism and realism in the context of portraiture painting techniques. This artistic approach had served as a testament to the Fauvism Art Movement's nonconformist departure from traditionally stylistic painting techniques. This comparatively more unnatural portrayal of subject themes, particularly in regards to illustrating human figures with

courageous colour combinations, had encapsulated the collective Fauvist vision of advocating for a 'new visual language' pertaining to 'individual artistic expression' through Modern Arts (Artist Jr., 1964).

In addition to this perspective, Bock & Matisse (1986) and Leighten (2013) had interpreted the unique green stripe's sole function upon Madame Matisse's face as a framework that had provided a structural layout yet was void of traditional tonal colour values and shading. These two-dimensional, flattened colour planes had 'visually disrupted' pre-conditioned expectations which audiences may have had of naturalistic representations. Consequently, these flat colour planes had also caused 'dynamic-visual-frictions' within the compositional layout of this portrait, since the alternative placement of the green stripe within the area where shades would usually fall had opposed and challenged previously accepted 'academic Art standards.' This simple choice of artistic visual portrayal had exemplified the Fauvism Art Movement's 'experimental spirit,' particularly in regards to depicting an abstracted and more emotionally relevant, as well as more emotionally resonant, feature of 'French cultural identity' (Bock & Matisse, 1986; Leighten, 2013).

Hobbs (1987) had stated that the green stripe on Madame Matisse's face emphasized the Fauvism Art Movement's main goal, which had been to prioritize 'subjective experience' as being 'emblematic' of the celebration of 'artistic freedoms' instead of following in the footsteps of formerly recognized traditions within French Fine Arts (Hobbs, 1987).

Morgan (2006) had, however, stated that the prominent green stripe painted by Henri Matisse within this portrait had originally shocked the French public during this time period, since it had been perceived as a symbol of decomposition, fragmentation, and a 'breaking-down' of what had been previously established in regards to 'visual interpretation' and 'visual representation.' This thematic angle of investigation had further supported the interests of Modern Fine Artists in challenging conventional portraiture techniques and approaches, more specifically in regards to evoking the 'subject matter's internal state.' This different artistic approach had furthermore reflected French cultural shifts towards becoming more self-aware, engaging in more self-introspection, and supporting more modernized values and ideas (Morgan, 2006).

Similar to the interpretation of exercising a greater sense of self-introspection, Schneider (1982) had argued that 'The Green Stripe' by Henri Matisse was most likely a reflection of his individual spiritual journey and desire to find personal fulfilment, happiness, and engagement within freedom of expression. From the perspective of Schneider (1982), 'The Green Stripe' had served an integral role within the 'sacred inner dialogue' as it pertained to 'light versus shadows'—as an analogy of both the positive and negative stages of life. Likewise, this duality and parallel meaning had symbolized trends within French culture during this time period, exploring complicated, controversial, and challenging subject matter through Fine Arts (Schneider, 1982).

Henri Matisse's unique application of colour had been associated with earlier Art Movements such as Synthetism and Impressionism, as argued by Doula (2016). In addition, Doula (2016) suggests that the incorporation of 'The Green Stripe' had been founded upon these priorly established Art trends and influences, as the Fauvism Art Movement had been propelled into an Art domain where colour had become the singular avenue and vehicle of the conveyance of emotion. This rare approach to artistic interpretation and representation had demonstrated a movement within French society towards accepting, adopting, and engaging more frequently in 'abstracted artistic expression.' As a result of this cultural change, an uncommon and exclusive 'new French artistic identity' had been determined through the symbolism of lively and brightened colours (Doula, 2016).

In regards to the overall impact of 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905),' Artchive (2024) had underscored the fact that this Fauvism painting had served as an emblematic representation of the perplexities, intricacies, and challenges of 'human identity,' especially in regards to the modernist tension that had existed between traditional Fine Arts norms and innovative approaches to more non-naturalistic and abstracted artistic portrayals (Artchive, 2024).

6.3.3.3 Jeu de Massacre (Game of Carnage 1905) - by Georges Rouault



Figure 50: 'Jeu de Massacre / Game of Carnage' (1905) is currently being preserved in the Centre Georges-Pompidou in Paris, France, which had been painted during the Fauvism Art Movement (1905) by Georges Rouault, (WikiArt, 2013).

Note. WikiArt (2013) referred to **Figure 50** within the website post titled, 'Georges Rouault - 22 Artworks – Painting'. [www.wikiart.org](https://www.wikiart.org/en/georges-rouault/all-works#!#filterName:all-paintings-chronologically,resultType:masonry).
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/georges-rouault/all-works#!#filterName:all-paintings-chronologically,resultType:masonry>, p.1

The body of Fauvism paintings created by Georges Rouault, including "Jeu de Massacre" / 'Game of Carnage (1905)' as commented upon by Charensol (1965), had unveiled his sincerely distressed concern for the outcasts, forgotten, poverty-stricken, and marginalized citizens within French society during this time period in history. The Fauvism paintings of Georges Rouault had portrayed characters and figures inspired by the unemployed, oppressed, starving, struggling, and underprivileged in French society, such as both the poor and circus workers who had been treated miserably. Rouault had therefore aimed to accurately depict the harsh truths regarding these societal and cultural realities which had transpired throughout France during this time period. Furthermore, his artistic approaches and techniques pertaining to 'visual communication'

and portrayal had been characterized by an uncultured and unrefined manner that was more closely aligned with a drawing style – compared to painting. This particular artistic decision had reflected his personal and emotional desire to reveal the brutal realities and consequences of the human condition (Charensol, 1965).

It had further been observed and noted by Charensol (1965) that, despite the fact that many art critics, academics, and the broader French public might have perceived Georges Rouault's depictions as disturbing and socially unacceptable, these artistic decisions and methods had made a profound contribution toward the 'emotional intensity' and powerful impact of his artworks. Although the quick and direct brushstrokes along with an emboldened use of forms and brightened pure color hues had typically aligned with the visual attributes of the Fauvism Art Movement, Georges Rouault's "Jeu de Massacre" / 'Game of Carnage (1905)' had diverged from these apparent characteristics. Particularly due to the fact that he had focused more upon the incorporation of darker color schemes and more grotesque subject matters, Rouault had emphasized the societal critique regarding the Fauvism Art Movement's narrowed celebration of euphoria, joyfulness, and vibrancy. Therefore, the focus of this particular painting by George Rouault had deviated from the traditional visual aesthetics and associations; however, it had shared characteristics of the Fauvism Art Movement – such as the degree of 'emotional intensity' and 'bold colour-schemes'. In addition, his work also had contained similarities attributed to 'Expressionism' and 'Symbolism' (Charensol, 1965).

Lehmann and Suarès (1971) had observed that, although Georges Rouault's perspective had been profoundly altered by his renowned mentor Gustave Moreau, he had made an unyielding and deliberate choice during this artistic juncture to vehemently refrain from any participation in – or conformity to the limiting regulations pertaining to abstraction within the realm of Fine Arts during that point in history. Rather than conforming, Rouault had chosen to forge a path of his own, embracing a more instinctive and unrefined artistic approach—one that had drawn heavily from raw, untamed, and spontaneously expressive forms of representation (Lehmann and Suarès, 1971). Georges Rouault's challenges with shape and form in his artworks had been notoriously evident in "Jeu de Massacre" / 'Game of Carnage (1905),' which had contained unsightly caricatured figures intended to symbolize the stark societal suffering of this era. In this manner, Georges Rouault had actively and purposefully attempted to convey and represent 'French cultural identity,' especially in regard to highlighting the marginalized and downtrodden French citizens who had seemed entirely overlooked and forgotten by French leadership. Furthermore, these unhindered and revealing honest Fauvism portrayals had mirrored the noble disillusionments and distressing societal realities present during this time period in France (Suarès, 1971).

Lehmann and Suarès (1971) had supported and confirmed this understanding by further stating that Rouault's "Jeu de Massacre" / 'Game of Carnage (1905)' had reflected the internal 'class-conflicts' and related societal challenges which had existed within France, as well as the 'cultural carnage' pertaining to the moral decay of traditional and formerly respected French societal values.

Presented through a metaphor of a 'funfair' or 'circus,' Centre Pompidou (n.d.) had juxtaposed 'puppet-like bourgeois caricatures' of a puppet-like nature in the background behind a melancholic attendant, while having challenged French audiences to consider who among those within the painting had been genuinely "alive" and whose life had truly mattered. Reminiscent of Daumier and Toulouse-Lautrec's renowned stylistic artworks, Georges Rouault had intentionally depicted these characterized figures to underscore the levels of heart-breaking misery and suffering he had observed. In doing so, Rouault had made a remarkable 'visual statement' regarding revealing the untarnished realities related to all aspects of 'French cultural identity,' especially in 'questioning the liveliness of the French human spirit' while strongly critiquing and condemning societal decay (Centre Pompidou, n.d.).

Boespflug (2022) had investigated the distinct darkened colour tones and shadows of Georges Rouault's earlier paintings and emphasized that Rouault's perception of French culture and society had been deeply impacted and slanted by rampant corruption and overt filth, notoriously referred to as the "Parisian cesspool." Boespflug (2022) had also argued that Rouault's exceptional revulsion toward these depraved aspects within French society profoundly had influenced the development of his personalized art style and approach to both interpreting and representing subject matters. For example, the grotesque depictions of human foolishness, failures, and depravity had been illustrated by the incorporation of 'acrobats,' 'jesters,' the French "bourgeois" (royalty), and corrupt judges. In accordance with the illustrative portrayals of Daumier, Boespflug (2022) had presented the idea that Rouault's success in intertwining 'comic sublimity' with 'grand-scale cultural tragedy' had been artistically unmatched in many regards.

Johnson (2019) had also elaborated upon the fact that Georges Rouault's 'marionette-like figures' had served as 'symbolic metaphors' for moral deterioration during the earliest years of the 20th century within French cultural and societal standards. In agreement with Centre Pompidou (n.d.), the "anti-bourgeois" (anti-royalty) subject themes which had drawn from visual aesthetic attributes related to puppeteering effectively had represented a 'French cultural identity,' expressing both an elitist disconnectedness from reality and disillusionment with the circumstances of the working classes. Johnson (2019) had additionally noted that, while Georges Rouault had shared certain stylistic elements of the Fauvism Art Movement, such as thick brushstrokes and emotional intensity, his work had mostly deviated from the typical Fauvist attributes by focusing more on 'realistic meaningfulness' rather than 'externally superficial harmony.'

Tillier (2009) had stated that art critics and scholars during the Fauvism time period had not been as perplexed, troubled, and perturbed by the violently dark subject themes of Rouault in comparison to his 'caricatured painting style,' which had been perceived as a disrespectful deformation of French classicism. Tillier (2009) had further mentioned that Georges Rouault's artistic decision to exaggerate human suffering and misery through visual depictions of a grotesque nature had encapsulated 'French cultural identity' by revealing French society's inner wrestling with the "others" in their communities. In addition, the jagged lines and contrasting colours which Rouault had included within this painting had reflected artistic influences from German Expressionism instead of the conventional characteristics of the Fauvism Art Movement. Since French art critics and scholars during this time period had associated these visual traits with the Latin "classic" order, the incorporation of these characteristics had caused them to interpret (or misinterpret) Rouault's work as a denigration and potential insult to French cultural value (Tillier, 2009).

In agreement with Charenzol (1965), Suarès (1971), Centre Pompidou (n.d.), Boespflug (2022), Johnson (2019), and Tillier (2009), Georges Rouault's "Jeu de Massacre" / 'Game of Carnage (1905)' had portrayed 'French cultural identity' by highlighting the realities of human alienation, poverty, and suffering which had existed among the middle and lower classes of French society during the earlier years of the 20th century. Rouault's painting techniques, which had included emboldened brushstrokes, caricatured style figures, and darkened colour tones (while deviating from the bright Fauvist colour schemes), had not only effectively captured the societal and moral decay that had been ignored during the early 20th century in France but also had reflected both the societal divides and anxieties which had existed.

6.3.3.4 The River Seine at Chatou (1906) - by Maurice de Vlaminck

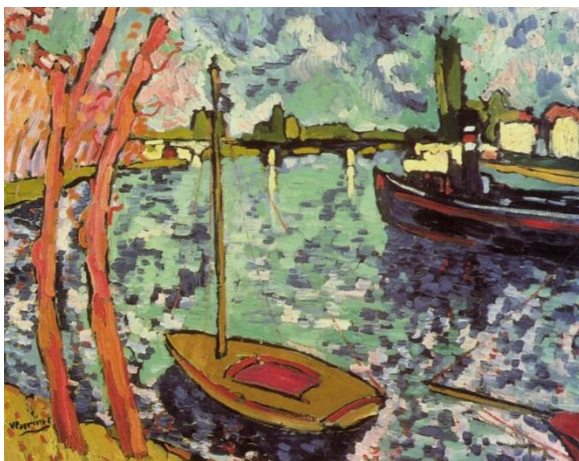


Figure 51: 'The River Seine at Chatou' (1906) is currently being preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, U.S.A., which had been painted during the Fauvism Art Movement (1905) by Maurice de Vlaminck, (Pissarro, 1991).

Note. Pissarro (1991) referred to **Figure 51** within the journal titled, 'The Fauve Landscape'. New York, MoMA. The Burlington Magazine, 133 (1055), 144–146.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/884606>, p.145

The essence and core traits of 'French cultural identity' had been distinctly captured within Maurice de Vlaminck's 'The River Seine at Chatou (1906)', through his uniquely stylistic Fauvist depiction of the natural surroundings and landscape

scenery around the region of Seine, Chatou. Maurice de Vlaminck's artistic decision to paint the region of Chatou, which had held significant historical importance with its bustling river culture, as noted by Christie (2002), had revealed his personal connection and heritage to the rural life of France. This Fauvism painting had therefore not only contained a portrayal of the physical Chatou landscape, but had also embodied the sentimental connections and emotional transformation which rural suburban communities throughout France had undergone during this time-period. Through painting techniques that had been characteristic of the Fauvism Art Movement, Vlaminck had permeated 'The River Seine at Chatou (1906)' with a visual atmosphere of nostalgia related to this region's rural French cultural heritage, which had aligned this painting with the more widespread 'French cultural identity' during the earliest years of the 20th century (Christie, 2002).

Christie (2002) and Benjamin (1993) further note that Vlaminck's unfinished and instinctive application of bright, vivid, and bold colour schemes—as well as thick, broken, and expressive brushstrokes—had been integral to his personalized Fauvism Art style and method of visual representation. Through the application of thick layers of paint consisting of bright red tones, golden yellows, and deep blues, Maurice de Vlaminck had successfully produced an impassioned, emotional, and sentimental landscape which evidently had elevated 'the provocation of feelings' above appealing to realistic portrayal. This particular artistic approach had epitomized the focal point of the Fauvism Art Movement's focus on both 'personal French identity' and 'French cultural identity'. By painting the rural French region of Chatou with such an apparent level of 'visual intensity' and 'emotional directness,' Maurice de Vlaminck had visually illustrated both his personal interconnectedness with traditional French culture, as well as a collective broader attachment and pride in 'French cultural identity' (Benjamin, 1993; Christie, 2002).

In addition, Benjamin (1993) had made the observation that Maurice de Vlaminck's persistent artistic devotion to the portrayal of familiar local Chatou surroundings had profoundly set himself apart from other renowned Fine Artists within the Fauvism Art Movement. Although other Fauvism painters like André Derain had participated in extensive travel and exploration of foreign cultures and international artistic influences, Maurice de Vlaminck had, in contrast, continued in steadfast loyalty to his own French cultural roots while each diverse landscape he painted had been exhibited through the artistic lens of Chatou's familiar shapes and bright colour-schemes. Vlaminck's evident dedication to continue depicting portrayals of his 'local French identity' had provided audiences with an internal cultural perspective that had differentiated his Fauvism paintings from more cosmopolitan Fine Artists who formed part of the broader Fauvism Art Movement, like Henry Matisse, who had been more accepting and adoptive of both foreign and abstracted influences (Benjamin, 1993).

According to Cohen (2017), Maurice de Vlaminck's discovery of the exotic aesthetic attributes of African Arts during his time traveling to and working in Argenteuil had entirely transformed his utilization of unblended pure colour hues and primary colours, which had contributed another dimension of cultural significance to his overall representation of 'The River Seine at Chatou (1906)'. This cross-cultural exposure had led to the artistic development of a unique 'intensity' seen within his selection of colour schemes, which had further supported the Fauvism Art Movement's celebration of 'emotional expression' and simplification of shapes, forms, and colours. Both of these artistic preferences and characteristics had further aligned with the visions of the Avant-Garde Art Movements throughout Europe during the earliest years of the 1900s (Cohen, 2017).

Aspects of 'French cultural identity' and more specifically 'French cultural life', as commented upon by Fogagnoli (2022), had been captured quite remarkably within 'The River Seine at Chatou', especially due to the depiction of riverbanks that had run from Chatou to Bougival. Fogagnoli (2022) had mentioned that these more traditional and rural French scenes portrayed by Vlaminck were originally inspired by the local festivities, markets, and communal gatherings that had taken place along the Seine River. In return, this had effectively captured the spirited nature and vibrancy of social scenes throughout France, which had encompassed traditional visits to open-air cafés (otherwise referred to as "guinguettes"), as well as celebratory activities that had been hosted at La Grenouillère. Furthermore, the engaging and active vibrancy of 'French cultural identity' had been visually communicated and expressed by Maurice de Vlaminck through the use of applying unrefined, thick, and broken brushstrokes throughout this painting, as well as bright and bold colours that had been characteristic of the Fauvism Art Movement. In doing so, Vlaminck had succeeded in visually translating local French culture, life, practice, traditions, and identity into an impactful art form (Fogagnoli, 2022).

In addition, Fraisse (1999) had noted that alongside the expressive brushwork, Maurice de Vlaminck had contrasted intensely bright shades of blue with warmer colour tones. His simplification of landscape scenery had not only formed a distinctly recognizable visual portrayal of the physical attributes of Chatou, but had also captured its poignant, sentimental, and impassioned atmosphere.

The stained-glass-like compositional arrangements and audacious ultramarine blues, as highlighted by Fraisse (1999), had created an illusive portrayal of depth, while the smoke and machines illustrated within his later Fauvism paintings like 'Barges on the Seine at Chatou (1907)' had communicated the humanitarian aspects of the French countryside in a comparatively more subtle manner. Therefore, Vlaminck's later artworks had commented more on the intersectional impacts that human labour and the working class had upon 'French cultural identity' (Fraisse, 1999).

Pissarro (1991) had shed light upon the particular Fauvist attributes which Maurice de Vlaminck had incorporated within his paintings, such as the non-traditional application of colours like lemon-yellow, rose-pink, bright reds, and various shades of blue. More specifically, the vivid contrasting colour combinations that he had incorporated in the composition of 'The River Seine at Chatou (1906)' had pronounced a clear departure from the formerly upheld French academic standards of painting and revealed the revolutionary artistic approach of the Fauvism Art Movement, especially in regard to the fact that 'chromatic intensity' and 'emotionalism' had been prioritized and valued over the achievement of 'realism'. Pissarro (1991) argues that this unique 'colour liberation' from traditional painting standards associated with naturalism and realism had represented the profound transformation that had occurred within French society and in 'French cultural identity'. This significant change in artistic representation had been further illustrated by the acceleration of an evolving French society during the beginning of the 20th century.

Maurice de Vlaminck's over-exaggerated and expressive colour schemes and energetic brushwork, as referred to by Melikian (2008), had been emblematic of the Fauvism Art Movement's critique and challenge posed to formerly upheld perceptions and standards of European Fine Arts. Melikian (2008) had further alluded to the fact that Vlaminck had intentionally incorporated distorted forms within his Fauvism paintings with the purpose of refraining from upholding 'representational accuracy' and drawing more attention to the 'emotional impact' that his artworks had provoked from viewers.

In agreement with Pissarro (1991), Melikian (2008) further notes this stylistic revolution pertaining to 'The River Seine at Chatou (1906)' had not merely declined the traditional and academic Fine Arts standards, practices, and techniques but had also echoed the more widespread cultural shifts throughout French society, which had begun to embrace self-expression as part of their new 'French cultural identity' (Melikian, 2008; Pissarro, 1991).

6.3.3.5 Woman with a Hat (1905) - by Henri Matisse



Figure 52: 'Woman with a Hat' (1905) is currently being preserved in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, U.S.A, which had been painted during the Fauvism Art Movement (1905) by Henri Matisse, (Doula, 2016).

Note. Doula (2016) referred to **Figure 52** within the journal titled, *'Fauvism: The Story of Wild Beasts and Colorful Paintings.* MFA, Faculty of Fine Arts, UODA., 1–25.
https://www.academia.edu/34909334/Fauvism_The_Story_of_Wild_Beasts_and_Colorful_Painting, p.10

Morgan (2006) had stated that Henri Matisse's emboldened artistic approach to 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' as it had pertained to the figure's anatomy and selected colour use, had highlighted a distinct departure from traditional portraiture standards. Matisse's unique style of artistic representation had been so radically different from the formerly accepted standards within society that it had equally captivated, stunned, and even shocked the public, especially within the inner circles of the 'Parisian Avant-Garde Movements.' As noted by Morgan (2006), a sister and brother known as Gertrude Stein and Leo Stein had purchased this Fauvism artwork as a result of its unusual and controversial visual qualities. Especially the unmistakable green stripe running down Amelie's nose, which had 'disrupted classical anatomical standards' and amplified the degree of 'visual distortion -and instability.' Furthermore, the rhythmic brushstrokes and unnatural bright colour schemes had created the visual illusion that the pictorial image remained in a fluctuating state (Morgan, 2006).

This visual impression had served as an embodiment of Henry Matisse's Fauvism painting techniques while at the same time having positioned this particular artwork as a symbolic representation of 'self-realization' and 'change' in Fine Arts. Henry Matisse had therefore granted audiences a vivid and emotionally charged expression rather than a direct, literal, and realistic depiction. Through means of this uniquely distinct and historically rare portrayal, Matisse had established 'Woman with a Hat' as a milestone in the context of the development of 'French cultural identity' (Morgan, 2006).

In unison and agreement with Morgan (2006), Stockwell (2019) had argued that the fluid compositional arrangements and bright, boldened colour combinations which had blurred the boundary-lines between the foreground figure and the 'negative space' in the background not merely encapsulated the ideological values of the Fauvism Art Movement – but had inaugurated new freedoms of artistic expression within France's Fine Arts scene. However, during Henry Matisse's exhibition at the Salon d'Automne in 1905, the 'avant-garde style' of 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' had received ruthless criticism

from art critics and the broader French public alike, which had earned the collective artists associated with the Fauvism Art Movement the title, "wild beasts" (referred to as "Les Fauves" in French). Despite the reprimanding disparagement it had received, the fact that this widely discussed painting had been purchased by the renowned Stein family had emphasized its profound significance in the context of societal progress made within 'French cultural history' (Stockwell, 2019).

In support of this perspective, Saarinen (1958) had documented that although Gertrude Stein had perceived Matisse's work to be naturally striking, her brother Leo had initially dismissed and discarded it as too arbitrary. Yet over time, Leo had developed an appreciation and recognition of this painting's originality and brilliance. Furthermore, the energetic and proactive advocacy that the Stein family had demonstrated pertaining to their promotion of the Fauvism Art Movement had reflected a more extensive and far-reaching cultural impact that Matisse's painting had within French cultural identity. This occurrence had solidified Henry Matisse's deep personal relations with the Arts community, which had comprised of renowned artists like Pablo Picasso, as well as other highly respected Avant-Garde artists who had resided in Paris during this time (Saarinen, 1958).

Steinberg (2011) had elaborated on the evergreen thesis that Sarah Stein's close personal relationship with 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' had enlarged and exalted this painting's cultural significance. Given the fact that the Steins had been a widely esteemed, undeniably affluent, and prominent family, and considering that Sarah's slant had interpreted the intensity of Matisse's colour palettes as transformative and humanistic in nature, it had served as proof positive of Matisse's artistic capacity to translate the spirit of humanity into colour in a manner that had inspired and moved the viewer in an impactful way.

Moreover, her loyal patronage of his entire body of artworks had fulfilled a crucial responsibility in regard to promoting Matisse's Fauvism paintings within Modern Arts circles throughout France, which had indirectly caused a cultural association of his unique painting style with the new cultural values that had formed part of a 'new French cultural identity.' His paintings had also been distinctly associated with ground-breaking trends which had transpired within the Modern Arts community, which had aligned his artworks with 'modern artistic expressions' (Steinberg, 2011).

From a contrasting angle, Du Plessis (2022) had attempted to contextualize 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' amidst its socio-historical background while explaining how this Fauvism painting's flattened colour surfaces, broken-down pictorial elements, and unrefined representation had illustrated the Fauvism Art Movement's preference for 'emotional expression' above 'realistic portrayals.' Through the brightened, vivid, spritely, and emotionalized colour schemes observed within the depiction of

Henry Matisse's wife Amelie Matisse, he had showcased a visual transmission of 'artistic intent' rather than realism, which in return, had resembled the Fauvism Art Movement's core ideals as they had pertained to changing and transforming both French and extended European cultures (Du Plessis, 2022).

The historical artistic importance of Henry Matisse's stylistic deviation and ultimate rejection of the Impressionist Art Movement, as commented upon by Tracy (2015) and Sibley (2022), had revealed that 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' had signified that the predominance of Fauvism had come into fruition as a predecessor for subsequent Abstract and Modern Art Movements that had followed. Tracy (2015) had made the interesting observation that Amelie's attire, with her gloves and hat as a symbolic representation of "bourgeois culture," had provided this portrait with an additional layer of 'upper-class sensibility.' Simultaneously, the unrefined, rough brushwork and the unblended, bright colour schemes had entirely fragmented all formerly respected Fine Arts academic standards, rules, and guidelines. This had regrettably and unfortunately led to the insulting and sneering labelling of Fauvism partings as "Art of the wild beasts," which over a long period of time had redirected the course of modernizes style of Fine Arts (Tracy, 2015).

Sibley (2022) had also observed that Henry Matisse's private belief that 'colour' itself had the power to conjure the illusion of 'light reflections,' had distinguished 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' as an emblematic celebration of the intrinsic nature of 'colour' as part of Art. In doing so, they had also represented a decisive departure from life-high and realistic representation in painting, which had constituted a fundamental element of the Fauvism Art Movement (Sibley, 2022).

As Keates (2000) had aptly noted at the time, such financial patronage and public support demonstrated by the Stein family had entrenched Henry Matisse within the historical sphere of Avant-Garde Art movements, whilst 'Woman with a Hat (1905)' had been reserved as a personal artistic landmark but also a 'cultural landmark' within French society (Keates, 2000).

Furthermore, Andipa (2023) had also presented the argument that Henry Matisse's bright, unblended, and non-naturalistic colour application had not only characterized a shift within his artistic style but had continually inspired, influenced, and impacted Art movements that had followed, such as 'Expressionism' and 'Abstract Expressionism' (Andipa, 2023).

6.4 Behavioural, Cognitive – and Theories related to Semiotics Substantiating the Idea That Fine Arts Had Served an Instrument of Reaffirmation to Establish Cultural Identity

6.4.1.1 A Brief Introduction to the ‘Cognitive Development Theory’ – Which had Been Constructed by Jean Piaget

As elaborated upon by Cerovac and Keane (2024), Piaget’s Cognitive Development Theory had significantly impacted the study of cognition and the cognitive processes revolving around learning, outside of the standardized trends and more classical forms of education, notably within Fine Arts and how this form of individual expression had contributed towards the gradual establishment of more widespread identities. Further noted by Cerovac and Keane (2024), the varying ‘cognitive stages’ of learning which had been constructed by Piaget had been contrasted with engineering tasks, which had in return revealed and demonstrated that people who had still been in the ‘formal operations stage’ had been shown to be engaged in ‘higher-order problem-solving.’ Therefore, these researchers had proposed that the processes affecting ‘cognitive evolution’ and progress had similarly affected the area of responses towards ‘aesthetic engagement,’ which had alluded to the understanding that Visual Art had been an effective tool for the reacquaintance of cultural identity (Cerovac and Keane, 2024).

In support of the views presented by Cerovac and Keane (2024), Saravanan and Murphy (2023) had further built on these insights by having argued that ‘cognitive development’ had in and of itself been a fairly linear process, which had run parallel to artistic movements such as the Rococo Art Movement, the Fauvism Art Movement, and the Japanese Ukiyo-e Art Movement, during which visual representations and portrayals had served as a reflection of both cognitive progress and cultural advancement (Cerovac and Keane, 2024; Saravanan and Murphy, 2023).

Likewise, Scott (2023) had also echoed the stance that Piaget’s stages of cognition had emphasized the interconnected inner mechanisms related to ‘interactive learning,’ having explained that coherent, more refined, and well-structured cognitive development had permitted different facets of cultural expression in Fine Arts. In a similar vein of investigation, Lefa (2014) had highlighted the fact that personalized engagements related to ‘experiential learning’ had particular relevance to both the development of cognitive processes as well as the cultivation of artistic development. Lefa (2014) had thus alluded to the interpretation and assumption that one could make—that collective Fine Arts Movements like the Rococo Art Movement, the Fauvism Art Movement, and the Ukiyo-e Art phenomenon in Japan had all, to some degree, reflected varying degrees and stages of both cognition and cultural characteristics (Lefa, 2014; Scott, 2023).

Pakpahan and Saragih (2022) had further extended upon Piaget's proposed theoretical processes of assimilation and accommodation by having revealed that diverse interpretations related to artistic expressions had evolved through means of gradual changes in relation to 'cognitive structuring,' which one could argue had indirectly resembled certain traits pertaining to 'cultural identity.'

By having analyzed the varying depths and contours of Piaget's suggested theory related to cognitive mechanisms, Ikyegh (2023) had succeeded in mapping out various trends, attributes, and traits which had been formed through economic, political, or other lived experiences that had somehow influenced intellectual development related to 'guided moral -or religious experiences' that may have altered an individual's perspective regarding morality and intrinsic religious belief systems, similar to the manner in which artistic movements had mapped cognition in line with cultural guidelines (Ikyegh, 2023).

Dasen (2022) had, on the other hand, offered a cross-cultural perspective, which maintained that, while cognitive development had been universal among various cultures, dialects, and societies, it had still been affected and altered in accordance with the contexts within which children had been raised. This particular stance from this author had indirectly illustrated how Fine Arts Movements such as Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e had most presumably mirrored cognitive styles related to perception, critical thinking, and reasoning, which had been defined by diverse cultural identities (Dasen, 2022).

As a whole, these perspectives proposed by Cerovac and Keane (2024), Scott (2023), Saravanan and Murphy (2023), Lefa (2014), Pakpahan and Saragih (2022), Ikyegh (2023), and Dasen (2022) had confirmed Piaget's theory as vital in regard to more thoroughly grasping and comprehending how the evolution of cognitive processes had potentially altered and shaped both forms of artistic expression and cultural identity in different settings, while indirectly, from a theoretical basis, having showcased Fine Arts as both a reflection and reinforcement of cognitive growth.

6.4.1.2 A Boy Blowing Bubbles (1733-34) – by Jean Siméon Chardin (from the Rococo Art Movement) had supported Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, Within the Context of Fine Arts as Reaffirmation & Establishment of Cultural Identity

In comparison to Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory as outlined by Piaget (1950), Rococo artist Jean Siméon Chardin's A Boy Blowing Bubbles (1733-34) can arguably be recognized as an exemplary representation thereof, (despite the fact that this theory had been constructed centuries later by Piaget), as part of the larger theoretical idea that Fine Arts had served as a lens through which cultural identity had been more effectively perceived, understood, and formed. In regard to theories related to the internal mechanisms of 'cognition,' none had more effectively articulated how the

representation of cognitive narratives and associated dimensionality thereof had influenced the premises of cognitive theories than Piaget himself, especially as it had related to understanding the relevant changes from the 'concrete operational' stages to 'formal operational contexts' (Piaget, 1950).

Piaget (1950) had also systematically mapped specific stages of cognitive development that children had achieved, which had seemingly moved from 'sensorimotor' and 'preoperational stages' to somewhat more 'abstracted cognitive operations,' as well as formalized levels of 'abstract reasoning.' The example discussed in correlation to this cognitive theory, known as Jean Siméon Chardin's *A Boy Blowing Bubbles* (1733-34), had, in its unique representational manner, visually captured or embodied this shift observed in relation to the various forms and stages of cognition, within its depiction of the boy's fixation and dedicated interaction with the impermanent soap bubble. One can make the credibly theoretical argument that this type of focused interaction had signified a deepened cognitive curiosity, including the possibility of expanded abstracted thinking. In regard to the symbolism of the painting itself, Herbert (2001) had claimed that the young boy's creation of a soap bubble by blowing air into it had demonstrated some knowledge of cause and effect, which had been predominantly consistent with Piaget's 'concrete operational stage,' in which children had begun to master a sense of 'logical reasoning,' as well as gained increased 'spatial orientation' (Herbert, 2001; Piaget, 1950).

Ly (2018) and Herbert (2001) had also commented upon the interesting details observed within the background of the painting, including its depiction of a secondary, much younger-aged child, which had insinuated symbolism pertaining to the movement from 'childlike innocence' towards an 'increased sense of awareness' and 'maturity,' which had been an automatic result of cognitive growth. This thematic articulation had paralleled the theoretical argument suggested by Piaget (1950), that the developmental progress which had been achieved between each degree or level of cognition had proceeded with greater levels of metacognitive awareness and self-reflection (Ly, 2018; Piaget, 1950).

Furthermore, the obfuscated positioning of the younger child, as seen within the compositional layout, had served to visually signify the distinct cognitive disparity between 'pre-operational thought' (distinguished by 'egocentrism') in comparison to mature and reoccurring logical structures—in relation to 'concrete operational reasoning,' which had gradually begun its formational processes (Saravanan & Murphy, 2023).

Moreover, Chardin's highly characteristic painting technique had uniquely emphasized cognitive developmental principles, especially within the context of problem-solving, critical thinking, and abstracted thought patterns. For example, as Frey (2021) had pointed out, Chardin's painstakingly rendered transparency of the soap bubble had not only served as an exemplification of artistic mastery,

but it had further revealed the artist's capacity for grasping, depicting, and visually communicating complex perceptual and cognitive processes to his viewers during this time period in history. Furthermore, as the ages of the children had already increased, this observational aspect had more closely aligned with Piaget's 'formal operational stage,' while the painting had suggested that they had already acquired skills for assuming variables in a hypothetical manner and had therefore been able to interact with abstract concepts (Cerovac & Keane, 2024). Through means of having convincingly captured a rare moment of intense focus over an impermanent object, Jean Siméon Chardin's 'A Boy Blowing Bubbles' (1733-34) had perhaps unknowingly, at the time, seized upon a milestone of visually portraying the development of 'cognitive maturity'—pertaining to the understanding of an 'ephemeral experience' within an 'ordered,' 'structured,' and 'logical' reality (Frey, 2021; Cerovac & Keane, 2024).

If further evidence had been required, the philosophical implications of Chardin's work had appeared to have increasingly clarified that cognitive engagement had further facilitated the process of artistic representation and creativity. In this regard, Mariano (2023) had interpreted the fragile nature of the bubble as having been a metaphorical portrayal of the interwoven contrasts between temporality and permanence, which had been in alignment with Piaget's proposition that 'cognitive schemas' had been repeatedly adapted and continually altered as a result of experiential living. Such interpretation had also been confirmed by Heffernen (2008), who had compared the creational act of 'making bubbles' to a somewhat 'metaphysical awakening.' This comparison and correlation had ultimately been supported by Piaget's assertion that cognitive development had been primarily accompanied by a growing capability to engage in both abstracted and symbolic methods of thinking (Heffernen, 2008; Mariano, 2023).

From the perspective of having visually captured 'cultural identity' in an effective manner, as noted by Frey (2021), Chardin's depiction of an ordinary yet thoughtful activity, such as concentrating on blowing a perfect soap bubble, had interestingly mirrored wider French cultural ideals, which had been valued by French society during the Rococo time period. Masterpieces from the Rococo genre had been profoundly characterized by details pertaining to the taste in expensive, ostentatious, and all sorts of 'unnecessarily luxurious objects,' which the highly detailed paintings from the Rococo Art Movement had been known for. Chardin had, however, as mentioned by Rousseau (1950), taken a more subdued and self-focused artistic representational approach, which had not only echoed sentiments of French philosophical discourse but had also broadly shared values from the Enlightenment. Additionally, Chardin's intentional incorporation of 'vanitas symbolism' had further resonated with the French intellectual tradition of constantly questioning the 'transience of life' (Frey, 2021; Rousseau, 1950).

In close correlation and connection with the observations which had been made by Frey (2021) and Rousseau (1950), the strong argument could be made that this philosophical background, which had been provided by these scholars, had perfectly aligned with Piaget’s theoretical premise that cognitive development had, in fact, been deeply interwoven into both cultural and environmental influences, which had further made a remarkable impact upon ‘situational perception’ (Piaget, 1950).

Thus, considering all the various corroborating insights, investigation angles, and research-based perspectives presented by Piaget (1950), Herbet (2001), Ly (2018), Saravanan & Murphy (2023), Frey (2021), Cerovac & Keane (2024), Heffernen (2008), Mariano (2023), and Rousseau (1950), the compelling theoretical argument can be made that the renowned Rococo painting titled ‘A Boy Blowing Bubbles’ (1733–34) by Jean Siméon Chardin had indirectly and unknowingly, many years prior to the development of this future cognitive theory, demonstrated visual support of Jean Piaget’s ‘Cognitive Development Theory.’ Furthermore, this painting had also proven to signify some critically important ‘key ideas’ related to a deepened understanding of each of the cognitive stages outlined within Piaget’s theory, as it related to the intersectionality between cerebral maturity and cultural expression through artistry.

Indeed, ‘A Boy Blowing Bubbles’ (1733–34) had therefore not only served as indirect evidence that cognitive engagement with one’s surroundings had been a foundational—and elementary—component of artistic practice, but had also reaffirmed the more widespread purposes of Fine Arts as an influential instrument, which had not merely shaped cultural identity through the incorporation of ‘thematic symbolism,’ but, through Chardin’s exceptionally meticulous execution, had also drawn clear visual correlations with French cultural identity (Herbert, 2001).

6.4.2.1 A Brief Introduction of the ‘Sociocultural Theory’

– Which had Been Constructed by Lev Vygotsky

The significant relevance of language-related tools and cultural vehicles as it had pertained to shaping thought-patterns and behavioural repetitions for the purposes of honouring either self-identity, social-identity, or cultural identities had previously been revealed by Mahn and John-Steiner (2012), since the findings of their studies had elaborated upon methods through which Artistic movements had enriched and served as a foundational premise for the defining character-traits of diversified cultural identities (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2012).

Shabani et al. (2010) had elaborated upon Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory while having referenced his “Zone of Proximal Development,” with the principled understanding that cultural artifacts (as in this case, works of Art) and social mediatorship had been highly important components of

developmental stages, which had greatly assisted the internalization, adoption, and adaptability towards newly gained knowledge—especially in regard to key similarities which had been aligned more closely with the ways in which Fine Arts had been a prominent facet of the structurization process of ‘collective group-related identities.’

In agreement with both Mahn and John-Steiner (2012) and Shabani et al. (2010), Jeong et al. (2022) had further provided substantiative information which had strongly suggested that ‘cognition’ had been formed and further developed during multiple forms of social interactions, which had notably coordinated with the manner in which Fine Artists from different Artistic Movements had developed their unique styles of cultural expressions through the influences of those who had formed part of their respective groups as well.

Rahmatirad (2020) had particularly stressed the fact that educational engagements, various forms of learning experiences, and artistic expressions couldn’t by any means have been dissociated from sociocultural contexts, while having further reiterated Lev Vygotsky’s theoretical claim which had implied that ‘cognition’ had emerged and primarily stemmed from communal interactions. Sarmiento-Campos et al. (2022) had also commented upon Vygotsky’s notion of “scaffolding” as a concept which could have been applied to mentorship within the context of Fine Arts, whereby cultural transmittal and conveyance had fulfilled a crucial part of developing artistic practices and customs, whether simplistic or more advanced (Rahmatirad, 2020; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022).

According to the viewpoint of Hariana (2021), Arts movements, despite their vastly diversified traits, elements, and attributes, had further reflected the philosophy of hard work and dedication, which had been embedded within social and cultural interactions, and had indirectly advocated that the principles of the “Zone of Proximal Development” and scaffolding were reflected in their related artworks (Hariana, 2021).

From a different stance, Wherland (2012) had investigated different aspects of human-imagination and creativity as integral components of cognitive development, as well as the avenues through which Arts education had created a wider connectivity for children in relation to their cultural heritage, as well as the gradual formation of their sense of personalized identity.

Altogether, the scholars mentioned, such as Mahn and John-Steiner (2012), Shabani et al. (2010), Jeong et al. (2022), Rahmatirad (2020), Sarmiento-Campos et al. (2022), Hariana (2021), and Wherland (2012), had collectively provided unique and varying insights which had alluded to the determination that Vygotsky’s ‘Sociocultural Theory’ had provided the lens through which Fine Arts had been explored and had acted as a vehicle through which both individual and group identities had not

only been reaffirmed through social interactions, but through cultural artifacts such as paintings, murals, sculptures or statues which had been accessible to the public.

6.4.2.2 Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) – by Toshusai Sharaku (from the Ukiyo-e Art Movement During Japan's Edo Time-Period) – had Supported Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Within the Context of Fine Arts as Reaffirmation & Establishment of Cultural Identity

Toshusai Sharaku's Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) as commented upon by Wilson & Klobberdanz (2018), had quite interestingly coordinated rather well with the outlined characteristics and description that Fine Arts had appeared to serve as not only a medium of cultural expression, but as a vehicle of the reinforcement and firm establishment of Japanese cultural identity throughout the Edo time-period. The argument can therefore be made that this interpretational analysis of the Ukiyo-e artwork can be argued had, although centuries prior to the theoretical constructions of Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), unknowingly fulfilled the premise of Vygotsky's theory—especially from the viewpoint that humanity's cognition and learning processes had been deeply grounded within social and cultural contexts, from the foundational stance that artistic and performative traditions had served as methods and mediums to impress cultural knowledge, values, and group ethos (Egan, 1997).

In his artful Ukiyo-e print known as Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) as mentioned by Heckmann (2022), Sharaku had rendered a symbolically transparent visual portrayal which had been associated with cultural semiotics referred to by Haryana (2021), theatrical conventions, and the collective sociohistorical experience of the Edo time-period in Japan. In so doing, the artist had entirely unknowingly and unaware at the time, demonstrated the central tenets of the Vygotskian theory.

Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) had, however, since proven to be a seminal artwork that had not only depicted the exaggerated emotions displayed and expressed within Japanese Kabuki Theatre but had also been an illustration of the much broader sociocultural consequences of theatrical performance as a mode of transmitting cultural heritage across generations, which had, in return, further altered cultural perceptions and interpretations (Christie's, 2023; Tokyo National Museum, 2006).

Additionally, Vygotsky (1978) had also mentioned that cultural artifacts (including works of art) had fulfilled the role of mediation in regard to having functioned as tools through which perceptual thoughts and opinions could be challenged while having provided more insightful comprehension within the context of broader historical and cultural scenarios. For example, the very notable visual features seen in Sharaku's print, such as the exaggerated facial features, theatrical and emotional gestures, as well as the emboldened stylistic choices, had served as a cognitive and cultural tool that had enabled

audiences to process and interpret emotional narrative and background contexts through informal, simplistic, and expressive Kabuki performances (Met Museum, n.d.; Wilson & Klobardanz, 2018).

In addition, Vygotsky's (1978) notion and understanding of the Zone of Proximal Development had underlined the importance of cultural artifacts and their essential role in relation to learning and understanding. Within this context, Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794) had enabled audiences from Japan's Edo time-period to more easily interact with metaphorical Kabuki theatre storylines, as well as gain a firmer grasp of insinuated messages through expressive storytelling techniques. In other words, by having intentionally exaggerated the character's menacing expression, predatory posture, and sharp hand gestures, these markers had made it possible for audience members—both literate and illiterate—to obtain a clearer understanding of the character's sense of dignity, morality, and functionality within the broader scene of the story, without the necessity for significantly long textual explanations (Japacul, 2022; Kubo, 2020).

In agreement with the views shared by Japacul (2022) and Kubo (2020), the valid argument could therefore be made that by having closed the perceptual—or cognitive—chasm that had existed between dramatized theatrical performances and their visual interpretation on page, Sharaku's print had both indirectly and unknowingly, centuries prior, formed as an illustrative semblance of Vygotsky's claim that learning and the internalization of social perspectives and perceptions had been made possible through cultural tools.

The collectively shared creation processes of the Ukiyo-e printmaking had also reflected and underpinned the important key role of social interactions within the context of having been a growth-driving dimension of cognitive development, as had been emphasized by Vygotsky during 1978. According to Mainichi (2021) and Kubo (2020), the production of this detailed Ukiyo-e print had required the collective efforts, masterful skills, and exceptional craftsmanship of designers, carvers, printers, and publishers, while every person involved had made tremendous contributions from their own field of expertise in correlation to the completion of the final artwork. This unified and interdependent form of artistic practice had reaffirmed the highly valued participation in cooperative knowledge-sharing across communities and had served as an avenue of inscribing Japanese cultural identity. Therefore, in support of the interpretational perspective provided by Mainichi (2021) and Kubo (2020), the credible theoretical argument could be made that the modeling of artistic apprenticeship and mentorship had been directly in line with Vygotsky's future theory that knowledge had been socially constructed through guided participation.

Furthermore, Otani Oniji III as Yakko Edobei (1794), as a Ukiyo-e print, had served as a mirror of the societal structures and values from Japan's Edo time-period, which had, unaware and unknowingly at the time, reinforced Vygotsky's future theoretical determination that had been formed during 1978 in regard to the perspective that cultural development had been determined by historical and social conditions. The rigid hierarchical structures found within the Edo period of Japan had, however, been softened within the context of viewing Kabuki theatre since both members of the highly esteemed Japanese Samurai Classes and everyday commoners had been unified and joined together whilst having enjoyed entertainment through the witnessing of dramatized cultural narratives that had often addressed the contradicting moral dilemmas that people had faced, as well as the oppressive dynamics of power and the flawed human condition (Heckmann, 2022; E-Museum, n.d.).

The character known as Yakko Edobei—the portrayal of a morally rotten henchman who had been bound by duty but had been led astray by his inward-focused blinding greed—had visually encapsulated the internal conflict and turmoil within Japan's society during the Edo time-period, especially between social duty and responsibilities toward moral self-governance and individual agency (Kubo, 2020). In agreement with this observation by Kubo (2020), a convincing argument can be made that this Ukiyo-e print had indirectly supported Vygotsky's theoretical stance, which had claimed that facets pertaining to cognitive and cultural development had not been separable from each other.

Moreover, Wilson & Klobardanz (2018) had also highlighted the compelling point that the atypical style and intended pursuits of Sharaku's Ukiyo-e print had notably moved away from the more general inclination to have idealized more standardized depictions, in exchange for having favored psychological depth and realism. This distinctly remarkable artistic and stylistic choice had engaged viewers and audiences in higher-order critical thinking as it had pertained to the interpretation of any form of action that had been visually portrayed. Therefore, in support of the viewpoints presented by Wilson & Klobardanz (2018), a strong rationalization can be drawn in relation to Vygotsky's proposed contention from 1978 that cognitive advancement had been achieved through enriched cultural interactions and involvement with metaphorically and symbolically intricate objects. By drawing upon an enhanced emotional construct that had transcended even its visual representation, Sharaku's print had undeniably served as an advanced cultural instrument, which had consequently resulted in greater cognitive and emotional investment.

6.4.3.1 A Brief Introduction of 'Peircean Semiotics Triadic Model' (Icon, Index, Symbol) – Which had Been Constructed by Charles Sanders Peirce

In the agreement with the various scholarly participants as mentioned by Camargo & Gudwin (2022), it would have been 'common sense' related to the subject theme, to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of Peirce's 'Triadic Model of Semiotics', as well as the need of such a revision from the very outset when contributing research-candidates had provided different insights related to the diverse aspects of how Peirce's semiotic-theory had revolutionized how we had understood the manner in which humans had communicated with each other through a series of signs, symbols, gestures, sounds, behaviours, and so forth. Moreover, while further having analyzed the internal mode of communication and what societies had done with it in terms of cognition and processing the growing amount of information (Camargo & Gudwin, 2022).

Furthermore, Peirce's 'Triadic Model of Semiotics' had led many scholars within this particular field of study to the constructive formation of in-depth understanding and insight in correlation with the internal mechanisms of 'communication' and cognition, at varying collective degrees and levels of abstraction. This model, which had been formulated on the premise of three integral parts—'Representamen' (sign), the 'Object,' and the 'Interpretant'—had proved that 'meaning' had been mediated through interpretation or perception instead of a direct representation of reality (Kilstrup, 2015). In agreement and support of the observational comments which had been made by Kilstrup (2015), the convincing argument can be made that this model can also be applied to the symbolic interpretation of Fine Arts, which had demonstrated how specific and diverse cultural Art Movements, such as the Rococo Art Movement, the Fauvism Art Movement, and Japan's Ukiyo-e Art Movement, had consolidated their cultural identity through the mapping of their respective stylistic artworks (in association with 'Representamen') to cultural motifs or subject themes (in association with 'Objects') and their eventual significance through the perspectives and perceptual viewpoints of the audiences (in association with 'Interpretants').

As noted, and reminded by West (1977), the construction of 'meaning' had emerged through ongoing interaction(s) instead of isolated instances and scenarios, while the contributing factors related to 'interpretants' had distinctly differed across a range of emotional reactions, as well as reflexes, which had been based in logical foundational understanding and habitual patterns.

This variability, as highlighted by West (1977), had outlined the conspicuous and critically important nature of Fine Arts Movements, which had engaged in building and communicating preferred cultural narratives while, in the process of doing so, had adopted 'semiotic signs,' of which the interpretational and perceptual meanings had been altered over time. In further alliance with West (1997), Svanter (2014) had built upon this premise by having pointed out that the final interpretant—related to what a metaphorical or symbolically representational sign means to different cultural groups—had been

important, since Fine Arts Movements had not only reflected but had also produced and reinterpreted cultural identity (Svanter, 2014; West, 1977).

Brunning and Foster (1998) had further shared in—and had elaborated upon—this viewpoint by having argued that Artistic expressions had served as elaborative communicative acts that had been imbued and enriched with distinct ‘cultural significance.’ The investigative research-based work of Brunning and Foster (1998) had associated varying disciplines and forms of Fine Arts as ‘semiotic systems,’ which had been shaped through historical and cultural debates over extended periods of time throughout history.

This understanding by Brunning and Foster (1998) had been taken one step further by Camargo and Gudwin (2022), who had proposed the argument that ‘cognitive processes’ had been a ‘semiotic process’ itself, which had revealed how the inner mechanism of human perception and interpretation had become intertwined with ‘compounded cultural intelligence.’ Therefore, the application and integration of Peirce’s ‘Triadic Model of Semiotics’ had uncovered and revealed how Fine Arts Movements had actively constructed ‘communal understandings’ of cultural identity, which had extended much further than merely reflecting or portraying cultural themes.

Additionally, Rochberg-Halton and McMurtrey (1983) had also expanded upon this particular research-based dialogue, since these scholars had positioned Peirce’s ‘Triadic Model of Semiotics’ amidst a much more widespread and comprehensive epistemological context, while having proposed that ‘semiosis’ (referred to as the interaction between signs, objects, and interpretants) had been the foundational presupposition of both cognition and meaning-making. These authors had therefore claimed that, through means of activation and engagement with semiotic concepts, Fine Arts practices had exceeded one’s narrowed reference to culture while having stimulated and immortalized cultural identity through signification instead of mere reflection.

Therefore, through means of the collective integration of the perspectives shared by Kilstrup (2015), Svanter (2014), West (1977), Camargo and Gudwin (2022), Rochberg-Halton and McMurtrey (1983), and Brunning and Foster (1998), it had become evidently clear that Peirce’s ‘Triadic Model of Semiotics’ had played a significant theoretical role in order to more effectively understand how Fine Arts had reaffirmed and constructed cultural identity. The credible assumption can therefore be made that Artistic Movements had acted as vehicles of cultural expression while having endlessly reshaped and redefined collective identity within the bounds of their respective historical contexts through the interconnectedness and interdependency of signs, symbols, objects, and interpretants.

6.4.3.2 The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829-1833) – by Katsushika Hokusai (from the Ukiyo-e Art Movement During Japan's Edo Time-Period) – had supported Charles Sanders Peirce's Peircean Semiotics Triadic Model, within the context of Fine Arts as Reaffirmation & Establishment of Cultural Identity

The application of Charles Sanders Peirce's 'Peircean Semiotics Triadic Model' therefore, in context to Katsushika Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (1829–1833) from the Japanese Ukiyo-e Arts Movement, had therefore served as evidence that the purposes and functionality of Fine Arts had fulfilled a means of reaffirming and establishing cultural identity domestically within Japan during the Edo time-period. This theoretical argument, which had been guided by Peirce's Triadic relationship as noted by Atkin (2013), in which three components had worked to present the full and comprehensive relationship between the 'Representamen' (referring to the sign), the 'Interpretant' (the communicated understanding of the sign through the perspective of audiences), and 'The Object' (the referent identified by the sign) (Atkin, 2013).

Hokusai's representation of the gigantic wave, in association with—and in comparison, to—Peirce's 'Peircean Semiotics Triadic Model,' had operated as the first 'Representamen,' which had served as a 'kinetic visual signifier' that had further expressed both 'dynamic action,' 'turbulence,' and the overarching 'force of nature.' In correlation to this theoretical argument made, Moris (2016) had presented the perspective that the wave's overwhelming curvature—complete with its clawed foam—had encapsulated the traditional Japanese visually aesthetic conception referred to as *mono no aware*, which had referred to an appreciation of the ephemeral nature of life that had also enshrined the insignificance of humanity against the far more powerful natural elements (Moris, 2016).

The predominant presence of the wave, as commented upon by Cartwright & Nakamura (2009), as it had distinctly overpowered everything else within the compositional layout, had greatly contributed towards its symbolic weight and importance, while also having reinforced perceptions pertaining to the duality of nature as a provider of life and a means of death. In return, these perceptual belief systems had historically characterized Edo-period Japan (Cartwright & Nakamura, 2009).

Therefore, through the lens of Peirce's semiotic framework, as commented upon by Ornes (2014), the visual structure of the wave had not only been an iconic and symbolic sign, but, on the basis of its physical likeness to a rogue wave, the observer had instantly and directly identified its forceful nature (Ornes, 2014).

The 'Interpretant' (the communicated understanding of the sign through the perspective of audiences) had been contingent based upon cultural and historical conditions. Within the context of

Japan's Edo time-period, the 'Great Wave' had been interpreted as a symbol of the country's inherent, interwoven, and co-dependent relationship with the ocean, which had long served as both a barrier in respect to foreign influences, as well as having been a form of 'economic lifeline' as it had pertained to trade and fishing (Cartwright & Nakamura, 2009).

Those who had been entirely overpowered by – and entirely diminished in contrast to – the 'Great Wave,' such as the fishermen, had in return symbolized the frailty, vulnerability, and fragility of human existence, which had been subservient to the Buddhist philosophical concept of impermanence and transience (Moris, 2016).

In agreement with the views of Cartwright & Nakamura (2009) and Moris (2016), Jordan (2019) had mentioned that despite the fact that Mount Fuji had been hailed as a Japanese cultural icon, it had been reduced within this Ukiyo-e depiction through the sheer enormity of the wave in the background, which had consequently resulted in the creation of a visual paradox in which even the most sacredly pious national symbols had been forced into subservience due to the formidable might of nature itself. This had further highlighted Japan's long-term cultural perseverance and tenacity in regards to enduring natural and historic disruptions (Jordan, 2019).

The 'Object,' or referent – in relation to the 'Peircean Semiotics Triadic Model' – had been significantly imbued and enriched with historical and cross-cultural influences, which had permeated Hokusai's unique Ukiyo-e prints. In unison with this theoretical comparison and observation, Inaga (2003) had noted that the compositional layout, in relation to the stylistic visual attributes of Japanese Art, had already resembled the incorporation of 'Western linear perspective techniques,' which had evidently included the diminishing scale of Mount Fuji, as opposed to the flattened perspective which had been typically utilized in more traditional forms of Japanese Fine Arts. In agreement with Inaga (2003), one could therefore make the credible argument that this had in return denoted a 'semiotic crossbreeding' of Artistic-Methodologies in the particular context of Japan's evolving cultural identity side-by-side with imported foreign Artistic Methodologies.

However, Guth (2011) had countered this view, suggesting that 'The Great Wave' had become a global icon for all spheres of Japanese Fine Arts and its long-term persistence on the world stage, while having shown the way in which its 'semiotic significance' had well extended beyond the confines of Japan (Guth, 2011).

As further noted by Abou-Jaoude (2016), this iconic Japanese Ukiyo-e print had already affirmed its reinterpretation within new cultural contexts, since the image of this historical print had been adopted amongst European Impressionist movements – as had been seen within the subsequent

modernized reinterpretation and engagement by Monet as it had pertained to the aesthetic attributes of Ukiyo-e print-making (Abou-Jaoude, 2016).

One could therefore make the credibly theoretical argument from a Peircean perspective that 'The Great Wave off Kanagawa' had unknowingly, at the time, indirectly operated as an 'indexical sign,' which had signified and had resembled both broader historical and environmental truths. This particular Ukiyo-e print's exceptionally turbulent waters had also furthermore coincided with Japan's socio-political transformation in Japan's late Edo time-period, whereby the continually changing economic structures and growing maritime interactions had provoked reconsiderations of nationalistic identity (Coats, 2016).

In addition to the perspectives given by Coats (2016), Screech (2021) had proposed that the latter part of the wave's affiliated symbolisms had been tied to contemporary natural disasters, of which this particular resonance had only deepened the artwork's 'semiotic implication' as a cultural symbol of destruction and renewal. In this perceived manner, the artwork had served to cement its powerful role as both a 'cultural zeitgeist' and a longstanding artefact, which had strengthened Japanese identity through means of visual representation (Screech, 2021).

6.4.4.1 A Brief Introduction to 'Barthesian Semiotics' – Which had Been Constructed by Roland Barthe

Roland Barthes's 'Barthesian Semiotic Theory' had played a profound role in the interpretation of signs and the understanding of metaphorical and symbolic meanings within varying cultural contexts (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021).

Jadou and Ghabra (2021) had explained that Roland Barthes had developed a framework for understanding the multi-dimensionality of signification in which 'denotation' had represented the literal content, while 'connotation' had served as a signifier of deeper social and cultural associations. By placing a preferential emphasis on the analysis of mythology, Barthes had demonstrated how cultural narratives had influenced the interpretational meaning of signs, which had granted facilitation of a more 'phased approach' to effectively evaluate texts and visuals from a more nuanced research angle. Such a framework had therefore underlined the interconnected nature of cultural identity and artistic expression, while having provided an illumination upon the methods within which Fine Arts movements such as the Rococo, Fauvism, or Ukiyo-e Art Movements had drawn from cultural mythologies in order to more impactfully deliver messages which produced emotional responses (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021).

Previous work conducted by Arzhang (2024) had revealed how Barthes's semiotic approach focused on the fluidity of meaning with expanding on this idea by stating how this fluidity had allowed for multiple interpretations. The authors had stated that Barthes had regarded the text as an "open realm

with a plurality of meanings,” in which understanding had been a fluid process determined by the audience’s interaction with a work. Roland Barthes had previously proposed that signifiers in a text came to have meaning through across social and cultural contexts as opposed to any innate signified meaning. This perspective had reinforced the idea that Roland Barthes's ‘Barthesian Semiotic Theory’ had been closely associated with the method in which Art Movements such as Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e had reconsolidated culture identity through means of having utilized symbolic representations which had corresponded with the experiences of the public, as well as their respective cultural backgrounds. In this manner, Roland Barthes's ‘Barthesian Semiotic Theory’ had developed the comprehension of the formation of meaning, while it had simultaneously strengthened the criticality of creative work in regards to expression, including the construction of cultural identities (Arzhang, 2024).

Tohar et al. (2007) had unveiled that Barthes's analytic method provided a framework for asserting meaning from personal narratives within sociocultural contexts, while the authors’ viewpoint had added great insight to this diverse conversation. This group of researchers had further described how the use of Barthes’s five codes had granted them access to subtext within the arc of narrative, revealing collective cultural conversation below the individual statement. This method had taken on particular relevance in the analysis of Fine Arts movements like Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e, where artistic elements had encapsulated cultural narratives and identities. Using Barthes’s semiotic analysis, one can therefore make the reasonable argument in unison with the views of Tohar et al. (2007), that these Art Movements had not merely been about aesthetic innovation, but instead were also narrative constructs that had assisted in the firm formative establishment of different cultural identities.

Zekin (2019) had also contributed to the more nuanced analysis of Barthes’s semiotic critique by drawing attention to the culture-specific duality of visual images. This scholar had differentiated the visible from the more complex “invisible” factors which had led to the formation of specified imaginary. In the process of wrestling with the most effective manner in which to display even in small measures, the “third meaning” of images pertaining to Barthes’s analysis, had illustrated how Fine Arts could take up space as a site of contestation against the way established norms, like those as found in advertising and propaganda, were deployed. This critique had cast images as central to understanding power relations and cultural identity. Zenkin (2019) proposed alternative movements like Rococo and Fauvism could be analysed in this way as imagery was utilized so frequently to subvert social conventions and to affirm cultural narratives which were utilized to reinforce and create cultural identities through artistic expressions.

Putri et al. (2022) had already moved away from textual matters, applying Barthes’s semiotic theory to cultural texts (e.g., films). They had singled out Barthes’s three stages — denotation, connotation, and myth — as crucial for exposing not just surface meanings but deeper cultural values.

Their analysis of the film Aladdin had demonstrated how different signs conveyed messages about gender roles, social hierarchies, and cultural narratives. Within Fine Arts, Barthes's tenets of semiotics had likewise described how movements like Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e had crystallized social commentaries and identities of each epoch. In this way, an understanding of Barthesian semiotics had given an important account on the ways our cultural identity had been constructed, recognised, reaffirmed, and reflected in the artistic narratives (Putri et al. 2022).

Coupling these notions with Barthesian semiotics applied to visual media, primarily advertisements, as established by Sathvika and Venkatraman (2022) solidified previously discussed perspectives. They were, after all, the ones who had pointed out that Barthes had provided a road map for reading connotative and denotative meanings in visual signs, which could make it easier to think you were engaged with cultural narratives. They had also argued that meaning had been a dynamic process dependent upon the activation of the viewer. This dialogic relationship has been reflective of how Fine Arts movements reaffirmed, and through the lens of the visual, have been used by artists, since the 1950s, to further establish cultural ideologies through symbolism. Thus, the learnings from Barthesian semiotics had given a perspective of how cultural identities were represented through signs and symbols by artistic movements and how that was embedded in their historical context (Sathvika & Venkatraman, 2022).

These perspectives presented by Jadou and Ghabra (2021), Arzhang (2024), Tohar et al. (2007), Tohar et al. (2007), Zekin (2019), Putri et al. (2022), and Sathvika and Venkatraman (2022) had been synthesized through the lens of Barthesian semiotics, which had revealed its deep resonance in the analysis of Fine Arts movements such as Rococo, Fauvism, and Ukiyo-e. Using denotation and connotation, as well as mythology, Barthes's framework had provided a way to unpack how these artistic traditions had constructed and cemented cultural identities. Through this manner Fine Arts had evoked not only aesthetic considerations, but had also been engaged with symbolic representations, power dynamics, and audience interpretations. Therefore, Fine Arts had not merely served as a form of 'background noise' in relation to contextual factors, but had rather been an active participant and critical component in correlation with contemporary discourse, while having established the broader understand that Fine Arts had great mattered and was furthermore at the core of cultural preservation in a myriad of different ways, throughout history.

6.4.4.2 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe (1905)' – by Henri Matisse from the Fauvism Art Movement – had supported Roland Barthes's Barthesian Semiotics, within the context of Fine Arts as Reaffirmation & Establishment of Cultural Identity

Timeless artworks such as Henri Matisse's Fauvist masterpiece known as 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe' (1905), had come to exemplify Roland Barthes's semiotic theory, particularly in its application to Fine Arts as a reaffirmation and establishment of cultural identity. In the Barthesian terms of semiotics, this portrait had operated as a semiotic text in which denotation and connotation had fused in richly layered meanings.

Matisse had employed the principles of Fauvism by simplifying shapes and using bold, unnatural colour schemes that had been so removed from the influences of classical Western portraiture, according to Sagady (2016). It was particularly the green stripe that had dissolved the face of Madame Matisse visually, creating an arbitrary but conscious signifier that had renounced conventional shading and tonal values (Sagady, 2016). Within Barthes's framework, this choice had been written as a symbolic disruption — a challenge to the classical European portraiture's insistence on naturalism and realism.

As Barthes would have put it, signs had no meaning in themselves, but had gained meaning when read culturally (Arzhangi, 2024). Thus, in accordance with this understanding presented by Arzhangi (2024), the 'Green Stripe' had not simply been a stylistic approach but had acted as a semiotic rupture that had signaled a break from classical aesthetic norms onto a signifying, emergent modernist French cultural identity.

And Dabrowski (2004) had similarly confirmed this attitude, contending that Matisse's portrait had encoded the ethos of Fauvism as emotional intensity and artistic freedom. The portrait's dependency on bright, clashing colors had established a visual language that had favored artistic expression over mimesis. This shift had aligned, through Barthesian semiotics, with Barthes's notion of myth, in which the interpretation of signs had been shaped by cultural narratives (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). In rejecting chiaroscuro from Renaissance history, and using the green stripe as a formalist compositional device, Matisse had played into the myth-making of modern French artistry, further solidifying cultural movements that had leaned towards abstraction and individualism (Dabrowski, 2004).

Artist Jr. (1964) had expanded upon the radical use of colour in the portrait, stressing that Matisse had relied on Eastern artistic conventions but had miniaturized them with Western fervour in the making of the piece.

This synthesis had shown that visual representation had been able to function as a cultural text, paralleling Barthes's claim that meaning had been constructed rather than given (Arzhangi, 2024). In Barthesian terms, the portrait had therefore performed as a signifier of its artistic and national identity — an anti-traditional leap that had adopted a peculiarly French modernist aesthetic.

Moreover, Bock & Matisse (1986) and Leighten (2013) had argued that the green stripe had subverted expectations rooted in habit about naturalistic portraiture. From Barthes's perspective of the semiotic, the figure of this disruption had constituted a process of deconstruction whereby the cultural sign had been re-evaluated in terms of a newly created meaning (Tohar et al., 2007). The green stripe had served as a visual reorganization of facial symmetry counter to conventional Western standards of harmonized portraiture, furthering Fauvism's appropriation to challenge the perception of art (Bock & Matisse, 1986; Leighten, 2013).

Fauvism, Hobbs (1987) had suggested, had prioritized subjective experience to the detriment of rigid artistic codes. This point of view had been closely in line with Barthes's idea that texts, including visual art, should have been open to various interpretations (Arzhang, 2024). Thus, the green stripe had been less a definitive statement/runway piece and closer in this case to a signifier potent with ambiguity, available for different interpretations by different groups of spectators, a move that had only strengthened its Barthesian semiotic rocatchers element (Arzhang, 2024; Hobbs, 1987).

However, Morgan (2006) had argued that the French people had perceived the green stripe as a symbol of dereliction and decay, a growing concern among the French that their cultural values had been in a state of fluctuation. Indeed, viewed through a Barthesian lens, this reaction had exemplified how signs could have denoted scientific meanings that had been culturally constructed, whereas the signifier had extended far beyond its literal, visual showing (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). In agreement with Morgan (2006) and Jadou & Ghabra (2021), 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe' (1905) had therefore not only provided an aesthetic rebellion but had also reflected France's changing relationship with artistic modernity.

This interpretation had been elaborated upon by Schneider in 1982, who had suggested that 'The Green Stripe' had expressed a dichotomy between light and shadow, mirroring broader existential and cultural conflicts within the landscape of early 20th-century France (Schneider, 1982). This had paralleled Barthes's claim that dominant ideologies and historical contexts had produced cultural myths (Arzhang, 2024).

Likewise, Doula (2016) had connected Matisse's employment of colour to prior artistic movements like Synthetism and Impressionism, positing that Fauvism had distilled those influences into a fresh means of seeing. By doing so, however, 'The Green Stripe' had consolidated French cultural identity as it had embraced abstraction as a notable signifier of modernity (Doula, 2016).

Lastly, Artchive (2024) had claimed that 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe' (1905) had represented the struggle between traditional artistic norms and avant-garde experimentation. In

Barthesian semiotics, all of this had exemplified Fine Arts' transition from mere (literal) representation to a more complex interplay of signifiers that had enabled audiences to engage in cultural discourses (Tohar et al., 2007). In agreement with Artchive (2024) and Tohar et al. (2007), the compelling argument can therefore be made that through subverting conventions which had long preceded him, Matisse had consequently changed the way portraiture had been understood, and as such had affirmed Fauvism's place in the construction and reaffirmation of modern French cultural identity.

Hence, viewed through the Barthesian lens of semiotics, as had been elaborated upon by Sagady (2016), Arzhang (2024), Dabrowski (2004), Jadou & Ghabra (2021), Artist Jr. (1964), Bock & Matisse (1986), Leighton (2013), Hobbs (1987), Doula (2016), Artchive (2024), and Tohar et al. (2007), 'Portrait of Madame Matisse: The Green Stripe' (1905) had acted as a radical avant-garde aesthetic expression but also as a semiotic text that had reaffirmed and reconstituted French cultural identity. It had been a striking image, the portrait emerging as the vertex of creative redraw in Vasarely with this new movement of colour and shape, reflecting the very theory of Barthes, as signifiers of text and abstraction had become liberated, their meaning having become fluid over time. Consequently, the work had both railed against the conventions of Fine Arts but had also established its role as a foundation of Modern French cultural expression.

6.5 Psychological and Sociological Theories Substantiating the Idea That Fine Arts Had Reaffirm, Confirmed and Established Cultural Identity

The research investigation of Aguila (2022) had extensively discussed and covered how certain Art-making techniques—or processes—and Art movements had come into fruition, as well as how they had assisted in influencing and shaping cultural identities. Especially in regard to having examined how these Arts movements had successfully developed a sense of belonging between groups of people.

This investigative angle had therefore underscored the premise that creative works of Art had been informed by their cultural frameworks. Through the study conducted by Aguila (2022), it had been observed that as students had been engaged artistically, they had verbally reflected and spoken of their own identities while having shaped the artworks in a manner to negotiate their cultural backgrounds. It had really highlighted the deeper artistic symbolisms and nuanced metaphors, more specifically as it had pertained to reinforcing community and cultural identity.

This cyclical, interconnected relationship between the art-making processes and the formation of identity, as products of interpersonal and intrapersonal vehicles of engagement, had revealed how Fine Arts had become one of the key vehicles through which these students had managed to express and share their culture (Aguila, 2022).

Likewise, Fine Arts as an instrumental agency for cultural representation had been observed by Al-Zadjali (2024), who had argued that Fine Arts had been a channel that had equipped and had enabled individuals from diverse backgrounds to navigate the application and expression of their respective cultural realities.

The results discovered by Al-Zadjali (2024) had showcased that Fine Arts (including theatrical and musical creations) had served as a means of social commentary and eventual change, by having inspired, encouraged, and fostered empathetic understanding towards dissimilar—and even somewhat contrasting—backgrounds. This development had embraced conscientization, in order to become a method of Art Pedagogy which had promoted and had cultivated a ‘critical consciousness’ of places in society that had consequently led to the celebration of a range of cultures, as well as the preservation of culturally significant traditions. This had furthermore exhibited both the reflective and transformative nature and capabilities of Fine Arts, while having highlighted its instrumental role in regards to creating transformative cultural narratives (Al-Zadjali, 2024).

For Beke (2018), the focus of the research-angle had been on the methods through which sociological frameworks, especially Bourdieu’s, had helped to thoroughly and accurately examine the intersection found between Fine Arts and cultural identity. The research presented by Beke (2018) had clearly and plainly demonstrated how Fine Arts had essentially imitated the image of social classes—or hierarchies—as well as acceptable cultural standards, to both reaffirm and confirm existing identities and social structures.

Through this particular lens of examination, Fine Arts had both served as a means to intricately document—and critique—cultural practices and, in so doing, had successfully achieved the creation of a more multi-layered understanding of identity formation throughout historical timeframes. Through the creation of Fine Arts, individuals had therefore documented, preserved, upheld, and expressed their particular cultures’ histories and had highlighted the need for artistic representation, by actively supporting cultural continuity (Beke, 2018).

Greer and Han (2015) had granted more plausibility and credibility to the importance of Fine Arts educational strategies as an interventional pathway for children, more specifically those on the autism spectrum. Their research had especially illustrated how Visual Arts had been a crucial mechanism and instrument for children to expressively communicate their individualistic identities and how they had both perceived, interpreted, and experienced the world. This integration had ultimately served as the basis of inherited cultural values, which had resulted in cognitive and behavioural changes to fortify—and build upon—the reaffirmation of cultural stories. The Arts (and Fine Arts in particular) had therefore revolutionised expressive educational experiences. Moreover, as education had become more focused upon the construction and reflection of cultural identity amongst children, it had been argued

that whoever had controlled the Arts had also exercised the greatest control over the educational experience (Greer and Han, 2015).

In accordance with this perspective, the unique insight that Visual Arts—or Fine Arts—had served the predominant key-purpose of accelerating both the articulation and expansion of traits typically associated with cultural identity, had been persuasively argued by Felisberti and Cropper (2023). Their specified area of research had emphasized the indisputable impacts of beholding visually aesthetic works of craftsmanship as mirrored within the emotional responses of certain individuals, including the patterns of cognition (related to critical thinking, perception, and interpretation) which had aligned with most convincingly with an individual's cultural background. It had been further argued that Fine Arts, as an interactive practice, had not been a mere individualistic journey, but instead a communally shared social experience, which had continually built upon the establishment of broader group-related identities, which had further cultivated the expansion of shared narratives related to religion, philosophy, and politics.

As societies had therefore experienced Fine Arts (whether positive—or negative) in a joint manner, they had both acknowledged, rewarded, and celebrated remarkable achievements and milestones within this area of expression. In return, this had underscored the interdependent relationship found between Fine Arts and the gradual progress as it had related to accepting a certain cultural identity (Felisberti and Cropper, 2023).

In further examinations which had been conducted by Gabriel (2021) and Chayka & Averkieva (2016), it had been uncovered that certain prominent-artworks had more specifically celebrated female cultural identities.

For example, Gabriel (2021) had explained that the myriad disciplines as forms of Arts, especially as observed within literary texts, drama, and cinematography, had built foundational avenues to express and strengthen cultural identities, while simultaneously also making empathic engagements a possibility and reality. This artistic impersonation or mimicry had enabled an acknowledgment of resonating values and experiences across cultural intersections and confidences, and had embraced it as a way to more openly and intentionally appreciate each other through aesthetic encounters.

By the same token, Chayka & Averkieva (2016) had echoed this same sentiment, stating that this “visual turn” had changed the way societies had viewed cultural practices, unique cultural lifestyles, and traditions. They had argued that Modern Art had had a world-historical impact upon both individual identities as well as collective cultural identities, and that Fine Arts itself had served as a powerful instrument of cultural continuity and of the recognition, appreciation, and celebration of diversity.

As Benartzy (2020) had further stated, Fine Arts had served as crucial communicative mediums which had paved the way for both the preservation and transmission of historical narratives over the duration of multiple generations. These research findings had also supported the viewpoints that multifaceted forms of artistic expression had gradually forged improved cultural dialogues, while having built what was often referred to as 'inter-cultural awareness' and Fine Arts appreciation within differing socio-cultural contexts. Fine Arts had therefore equipped people not only to engage in the celebration of their respective individualistic cultural practices and traditions, but also to view themselves within broader societal frameworks as a collective whole. This had, in and of itself, quite successfully reinforced the ethical, moral, and religious systems which had been at work behind the scenes within varying—yet coexisting—cultures (Benartzy, 2020).

Fancourt and Steptoe (2019) had also explored the relationship between participation in the Arts as it had related to evaluating its correlations with—and impacts on—mental health issues, albeit without an explicit consideration for connection with cultural identity. Regardless of not having assessed potential connectivity with cultural identity, the results produced by Fancourt and Steptoe (2019) had indicated that collective cultural identities had developed over time through the sharing of artistic experiences, which had implied that engagement in Fine Arts had enhanced the strength of the community bonds, as well as extended social ties (Fancourt and Steptoe, 2019).

Previously, Kirpichenko (2024) had analysed and considered the potentially diverse influences of Fine Arts in regard to influencing and shaping individual identities—as well as attributes pertaining to collective cultural identities—while having thoroughly delineated and laid out the pathways through which Fine Arts had served as a lens through which different ideological perspectives and internal belief systems from varying societies could have been better interpreted and understood. This study had therefore argued that artistic expressions had historically defined and reflected the identities of diverse societies, thereby having both cultivated and facilitated the narrative of communities and the additional passing down of authentic cultural legacies. Similarly, Lee et al. (2021) had also provided a descriptive layout of the intricately complex links between Fine Arts creation, appreciation, and cultural participation, stating that Fine Arts had always been fundamental in celebrating the societal values and norms of different cultures throughout multiple time periods in history. Their results had previously shown that the application of Fine Arts and the interactive engagements with the Arts had not only enriched the development of 'spiritual life' but had also promoted the recognition of an individual's own culture and had established a sense of belonging, strengthening the cultural identity of people involved in artistic practices (Kirpichenko, 2024; Lee et al., 2021).

Langer (1966) had also effectively articulated the primary role of Fine Arts within context to 'cultural identity formation' and had postulated that all cultures, regardless of their respective degrees

of individual sophistication, had developed some uniquely characteristic form of artistic expression. Langer (1966) had moreover insisted that the rise of Fine Arts creation and appreciation had not been a mere side effect of advancements which had occurred within cultural hierarchy; it had rather been proposed to have been a foundational component of society itself. This had been further supported by the results of Ksander et al. (2018), who had illustrated that cultural specializations within the visual cortex had reflected fixed social conventions maintained by artistic practice. Their prior work, Ksander et al. (2018), had revealed that viewing culturally relevant objects—or works of Art—had seemingly activated cognitive schemas, suggesting that Fine Arts had been a central key player in regard to confirming cultural beliefs within diverse societal settings (Ksander et al., 2018; Langer, 1966).

The case for the significant role of Fine Arts had, however, not been limited to reflective purpose only, but had presumably also served as an acknowledgment of diversity and plurality as well. Considering that Kirpichenko (2024) had already pointed out that, within some cases, Fine Arts had celebrated these unique cultural features in affiliation with concepts symbolic of ‘continuity,’ it had assisted in increasing the cultural awareness pertaining to cultural plurality through the deepened appreciation and understanding of different identities—more specifically through means of the visual expression of Fine Arts. This highlighted dynamic, which had been observed between Fine Arts and cultural identity, had continued to converge with assertions of Kitayama and Park (2010), who had previously suggested that Fine Arts had served as a tangible instrument through which cultural values had been expressed, documented, and handed down through generations. They had further demonstrated evidence of conjoined tales regarding culturally influenced identities within various societies, and how certain oppressed cultural groups had strategically applied Fine Arts in order to verify their identities (Kirpichenko, 2024; Kitayama and Park, 2010).

Furthermore, the ever-changing evolutionary progress related to alterations observed within ‘visual perception’ and its profound connections to ‘cultural identity’ through means of insinuated symbolisms and metaphors, had already been investigated and discussed in the research produced by Köster et al. (2023), who had determined that cultural frameworks had been primarily responsible for the gradual development of early perceptual capabilities. Their research, which had mostly concentrated upon the deeper understanding of ‘human cognition,’ had further offered in-depth insights into how individually formed cultural constructs had altered the visual perceptions of viewing and interpreting Fine Arts. Indirectly, their results had also provided greater credibility to the relevance of Fine Arts in connection with the affirmation and acknowledgment of cultural values, which had, in return, alluded to supporting the case of Fine Arts as a relevant and instrumental device for the process of cultural identity formation (Köster et al., 2023).

The important research-based contributions of Kastanakis and Voyer (2014) had also been consistent with prior theories pertaining to the manner in which cultural identity had impacted mental processes, more specifically the mental process associated with diversified preferences of appreciation and emotional tones found within artistic presentations. Thereby having meticulously examined how collectivist cultures had appreciated artistic expressions, which had consequently reaffirmed core societal values or similar underlying beliefs of members from a particular society or community, Fine Arts had now been identified as a suitable domain through which to reverentially amplify such beliefs that had been shared among members within a community. They had determined that different cultural groups had pursued creative Art-making processes and varying areas of craftsmanship as a means of visually communicating their shared experiences publicly, with the extended aim of strengthening their different cultures through these artistic pursuits (Kastanakis and Voyer, 2014).

Hunnewell (2019) had noted the centralized role which EAT and CAT had played in the affirmation and recognition of cultural identities. This explorative investigation of the artistic modalities had also uncovered that, through socio-cultural categories in relation to ethnicity—or race, gender, class, and capabilities on an individual level—Fine Arts had strongly challenged the socio-political constructs and oppressive narratives which had formerly been upheld in multiple sophisticated societies throughout history. By applying channels of artistic expression as a psychological outlet, people had effectively succeeded in the conveyance of their diversified cultural identities, thus having celebrated a variety of intrinsic beliefs, highly preserved values, and the attainment of intently sought-after societal standards which had once been far less recognized as essential to collective progress (Hunnewell, 2019).

Ke (2024) had also evaluated the exceptional transformative power of Fine Arts in relation to cultural identity in underprivileged communities. The author had highlighted how artistic practices had equipped and enabled people to connect more deeply with their personal backgrounds and heritage while visually narrating their own diverse cultural stories. The lessons learned through investigative observation had strongly proposed the understanding that artistic community-based initiatives had ultimately succeeded at strengthening cultural pride while nurturing a sense of relational connectivity to historical contexts, as well as having better understood who they had been. Ke (2024) had further argued that marginalized people had been able to articulate their experiences and reclaim their identity in a larger society through both the viewing, interpretation, association with—and eventual making of—Fine Arts themselves (Ke, 2024).

Magon and Cupchik (2023) had explored a similar correlation pertaining to the process of ‘Art-making,’ ‘communal identity,’ and relevant procedures through which their participation in Fine Arts had enabled a deep-rooted affiliation to their personal cultural heritage. They had discovered and concluded that collaborative Arts projects had fortified and cemented interpersonal connections, which

had, in turn, exerted a rather spectacular influence on the social bonding prevalent within socio-cultural clusters. They had been doing so through collective artistry, affirming and confirming their respective cultural, and current, identities for years in the lead-up to that moment. Finally, Magon and Cupchik (2023) had settled upon the shared understanding that not only had the communal experience of Art-making validated the experiences of identity and belonging of those who had participated in their research experiments, but that Art-making processes and practices had expressed the degree of significance that had been inherent within meaningful cultural expression.

Mastandrea et al. (2018), who had stated that Fine Arts had continually reaffirmed and celebrated the internal beliefs and values of more than one culture, had also concluded that Fine Arts, as a deepened psychological mode of individual expression, had played a highly essential role in creating a sense of belonging within cultural contexts. This sense of personalized belonging that had gradually developed and transpired through the testimonials of commonly lived stories had greatly assisted in the placement of historical narratives into the visual portrayal of artistic endeavors that had further assisted communities in forming and supporting their joint identities (Mastandrea et al., 2019).'

Moreover, Mastandrea et al. (2018) had expanded upon this argument by stating that artistic reconnections with cultural roots had been facilitated by the therapeutic role of Fine Arts in regards to its promotion of psychological well-being. This group of researchers had suggested that visually pleasing aesthetic experiences related to cultural heritage, particularly within the context of museum exhibitions, had enhanced, improved, and accelerated the collective internalization of cultural identity in a highly positive manner. Thus, engagement with Fine Arts had seemingly not merely reinforced social constructs and traditions, but had also played a foundational role in the long-term preservation of cultural identity, while it had also served as a means for individuals to navigate their psychological terrains in the context of history (Mastandrea et al., 2019).

In a similar vein of research, Nettleford (1989) had mentioned the importance of Fine Arts in cultural formulation, especially as it pertained to the unique Caribbean context. Based upon his personal residence in the Caribbean for 30 years, he had strongly upheld the viewpoint that traditional artistic expressions — including folklore and contemporary practices — had only been part of a continuum through which communities expressed their ideas regarding themselves in reaction to the forces of colonialism. For Nettleford (1989), the interaction between the “Little Tradition” and “Great Tradition” had been highly instructive, as he elucidated, uncovered, and systematically laid out how local artistic movements had served as a powerful vessel for previously marginalized voices and stories. Caribbean artistic expressions, therefore, had contributed to preserving distinctive cultural identities in the face of insularity that colonial legacies had created.

Rusnak et al. (2024) had provided comprehensive revisionary information related to the interconnected nature of Fine Arts, especially between the correlations which had existed between architectural structures and cultural identity throughout history. Their research had more specifically undertaken to unveil and showcase ways through which architectural practices had reaffirmed and celebrated the internal and sometimes unspoken -or underlying perception, views, beliefs, and social guidelines of differing cultures. The authors had argued that selected admired public monuments had broadly represented important segments of cultural heritage, which had further evoked feelings of connection and others' recognition with observers. Rusnak et al. (2024) had also pragmatically demonstrated through a carefully crafted and methodological framework, examining both local and foreign observers' perceptions of these revered and acclaimed structures. Once more, their in-depth analysis had reasserted the active role played by Fine Arts (and more specifically, architecture) in such construction of cultural identity and narrative, in facilitating a concrete sense of belonging grounded in historical narratives and contexts (Rusnak et al., 2024).

Echoing this, Redies (2015) had also presented the argument that the interpretations, perceptions, and cognitive processing related to understanding artworks had most importantly needed to be accurately placed within relevant cultural, socio-economic -and historical contexts. The author had further proposed the viewpoint that Fine Arts had invited audiences to contemplate their cultural histories and had thus sustained social conditions and conventions. With the social and historical contexts catered for as it pertained to various disciplines of Fine Arts, Redies (2015) had demonstrated how Fine Arts throughout the years had promoted cultural narratives and consequently had fulfilled their respective roles in the endurance of traditions necessary for the continuity of cultural identity spanning across many generations in history.

In corroboration with these determinations, Reyner (2024) had previously shed light on the critical role of Fine Arts as it related to both upholding -and maintaining the values within the typical attributes of certain cultural identities. It had also been stated that the artistic expressions had successfully captured the most closely associated characteristics of diversified communities, while the expressions had also conveyed refined and detailed cultural qualities and narratives, while having ensured avenues through which their cultural identities would be preserved and perceived during future generations. According to Reyner (2024), publicly exhibited Fine Arts installations had become local landmarks which eventually had given extended credence and rise to a 'sense of togetherness,' which appealed to a 'sense of belonging' for members within the community. This research had been particularly important to me because, considering its relevant historical background, it evidently displayed how Fine Arts had been indispensable and should have been viewed as such, as a medium of commentary upon societies in the past and within present times (Reyner, 2024).

Similarly, Saad (2017) had sought to uncover the profound historical significance of Fine Arts and had concluded that such artistic expressions had consistently reiterated the deeply ingrained religious beliefs and structured social frameworks of those earlier civilizations through sculptures, portraits, paintings, and other artistic mediums. Surveying a diverse range of artists, he had found that art had provided a continuous and dynamic expression of cultural values and societal norms, which had significantly contributed to the endurance and continuity of cultural identity. Writing this article, I had realized that Saad had also given me a comprehensive framework for how art should be critically approached during periods of political and social revolutions: as a pivotal medium for cultural expression, preservation, collective memory, and historical narrative. Such an observation had been prominently demonstrated during the Nasser period in Egypt, when art that had been created under state sponsorship had echoed powerful nationalistic sentiments, illuminating the essence of cultural identity amid a period of intense social crisis (Saad, 2017).

Masuda (2009) had emphasized the crucial role of cultural influences on visual perception, pointing to the fundamental differences between the underlying psychological frameworks of various cultures. His research had previously explained how attention and perception had become deeply internalized in different ways by East Asian and Western cultures due to their distinct and disparate cultural environments. Masuda had not explicitly discussed the role of Fine Arts in the construction of cultural identity, but he had implied that the environmental and visual context could index where representations had entered into cognitive processing, thus assigning different levels of relevance to artistic constructs within individual perception. His study had therefore provided foundational theoretical insights into how cultural artifacts, perhaps including Fine Arts, had actively shaped cultural identity in terms of perceptual lenses and cognitive structures (Masuda, 2009).

Munro (1963) had thoroughly investigated the multifaceted dimensions of aesthetic experiences and their implications in relation to human behaviour and cultural identity. He had further elaborated and explained how creativity had, throughout history, reaffirmed and acknowledged the beliefs and values of diverse cultures, acting as crucial tools in sustaining societal norms. Munro (1963) had suggested that art's plurality had permitted different cultures to exalt their distinctive identities while re-assessing their shared history. This complex interaction had influenced the rich fabric of cultural history. Moreover, Munro (1963) had also noted that responses to the arts had been highly contextual and had been dependent on personal circumstances when it had come to socioeconomics and access—realms in which different cultural frameworks had excelled and had fallen short. He had established the fact that Fine Arts had far-reaching impact not only in aesthetic enjoyment but had also been correlated to values and cultural identity (Munro, 1963).

Wilson (1984) had confirmed that Fine Arts had been an important medium for personal expression and cultural connections. Not only in regards its historical role as a form of amusement or enjoyment, but also as an avenue for having visually showcased sentiments, perspectives and emotions which were founded on cultural values. In art, borrowing language had been, at least in part, an avenue to articulation—a mechanism of reifying cultural narratives that had constructed a feeling of collective identity that had superseded individual experience. Art had been employed by communities as a means of retaining and relaying their heritage, providing a sense of persistence and wholeness, however lurking the social context had been (Wilson, 1984).

Furthermore, Wilson (1984) had pointed out that Fine Arts had been essential to cultural discourse as they had enabled societies to negotiate complex cultural identities in the context of globalization. Thus, Fine Arts had served as a vibrant medium through which cultural identities had transformed and responded as communities had engaged with both longstanding and emergent practices. Artistic expressions had provided a way for cultures to reassert their identities against the backdrop of external forces by responding to globalization while telling the stories of their uniqueness.

Ye (2024) had expounded on this theme further, suggesting that Fine Arts had served as a mirror and warehouse of cultural identity. But he had argued that cultural narratives, mirrored in their literary, visual, and musical forms, had elucidated cultural identities that had originally been formed as responses to these transformations, and they had served as tools for both continuity and change as cultures had responded to globalization. This multicultural exchange had been obvious in artistic practices, feeding cultural dialogue and developing a sense of belonging between community members. Fine Arts had served as a vessel for cultural memory, a record of events in the past, creating narratives that had contributed to legitimizing common cultural identity, according to the findings of Ye (2024).

The Fine Arts had been, in the opinion of Ye (2024), seemingly key to legitimizing and celebrating diverse cultural heritages as well as adjusting to the complexities of a globalized world. For communities, the act of practicing artistic forms in due heritage had not only allowed them to manifest their unique identities through the forms but had also, through this practice, enabled them to encounter others with these practices, thereby putting in place an intercultural dialogue.

Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019) had previously shown how Fine Arts, especially Theatrical / Dramatized Arts had functioned as a powerful medium for articulating cultural identity. Their findings had shown that artistic performances had been experienced by audiences as deeply engaging and reaffirming for shared beliefs and values that had helped tie communities together. This multicultural exchange had been obvious in artistic practices, feeding cultural dialogue and developing a sense of belonging between community members. Fine Arts had served as a vessel for cultural memory, a record

of events in the past, creating narratives that had contributed to legitimizing common cultural identity, according to the findings of Ye (2024).

Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019) had also methodically laid out example of how Fine Arts had offered a venue for the appreciation of different cultural expressions. Based on their prior work, which had manipulated perceived solidarity and personal value in the context of performance, this research had suggested multiple ways in which the Arts could both celebrate cultural uniqueness and create collective experiences that had transcended individual difference. It had grown evidently clearer that Fine Arts had been an important force that had contributed to the development of cultural identities in several communities over the years (Van Mourik Broekman et al., 2019).

In contrast, Smith (2024) had concentrated on the therapeutic components and aspects of artistic expression, while having uncovered and underscored the critical emotional, social, and personalized dimensions of self-empowerment affiliated with Fine Arts. However, while this research had not explicitly identified the specific interdependent roles which Fine Arts had played in the evolutionary processes of cultural identity, it had, however, shed light on the instrumental part that Fine Arts had played in correlation to both creating belonging and commonality within individuals, their environmental circumstances, and their communities. Because people had been interacting with the Art, they had been able to voice their emotions regarding a cultural moment, reach collective experiences, and indirectly promote shared values and norms (Smith, 2024).

Although Smith's (2021) analysis had focused on the therapeutic aspects, it had still resonated with the larger arguments of Wilson (1984), Ye (2024), and Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019), in that it had highlighted how Fine Arts engagement (in particular) had been conducive to realizing an affirmation of cultural identity and collective memory. This had forced an emotional connection from which it had become impossible not to respect the influence of one's cultural heritage, enriching the discourse on cultural identity formation.

Based on multiple research studies which had referred to the dichotomous processes of interconnecting associations between Fine Arts and cultural identity, it had become more unquestionable that Fine Arts had made the most long-term contributions towards the eventual assertion, validation, preservation, respect for individualized belief-systems, values, and acceptable norms of specific cultures across differing time-periods. In further connection with the practical findings which had been disclosed by Aguila (2022), Al-Zadjali (2024), Beke (2018), Greer and Han (2015), Felisberti and Cropper (2023), Gabriel (2021), Chayka & Averkieva (2016), Benartzy (2020), Fancourt and Steptoe (2019), Kirpichenko (2024), Lee et al. (2021), Langer (1966), Ksander et al. (2018), Kirpichenko (2024), Köster et al., Kastanakis and Voyer (2014), Hunnewell (2019), Ke (2024), Magon and Cupchik (2023), Mastandrea et al. (1989), Rusnak et al. (2018), Nettleford (1989, 2024), Redies (2015), Reyner (2024),

Saad (2017), Masuda (2009), Munro (1963), Wilson (1984), Ye (2024), Van Mourik Broekman et al. (2019), Murillo (2019), and Smith (2024), it had become rather undeniable that Fine Arts had not only acted as a prism through which cultural identities had been visually portrayed, but had also carried some degree of responsibility in regards to social change which occurred over time.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The research within this thesis had been conducted under the title ‘The Influences of Fine Arts on Cultural Perception and Human Behaviour in Different Periods – and Movements of Art Throughout History and Within Varied Cultural Contexts’, while the main purpose of this investigation had primarily been focused upon determining the most noteworthy key-influences that different Fine Arts Movements may have imprinted upon the cultural-psyche of civilizations and societies throughout varying cultural movements and periods in Art History. More specifically, as it relates to the impact which Fine Arts (within different historical – and cultural contexts), may have had upon the interpretations, perceptions and related practices, customs, attitudes and behaviours which may have stemmed from these newly formed symbolic associations and perceptions. Therefore, through having thoroughly examined, investigated, and analysed multiple Art Movements across diversified cultural settings and different time periods—such as the Classical Greek Era (206 BC – 220 AD), the Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), the Early Byzantine Era (c. 330–750c), the Renaissance (c. 1300–1600/1650), Romanticism (1770–1870), the Cubism Art Movement (1907–1914), the Rococo Art Movement (1740–1770), the Ukiyo-e Art Movement (1615–1868), and the Fauvism Art Movement (1905–1908)—the three main research-angles, (‘Fine Arts as Reflections of Culture’, ‘Fine Arts as Catalysts for Cultural Change’ – and ‘Fine Arts as Cultural Identity’), had therefore aimed at determining which artistic methods, communicative-techniques and symbolic representational approaches had resulted in effectively causing cultural – or broader societal changes, as well as the specific manner in which these approaches had reflected, embodied, and portrayed different expressions of cultural identity (Pelowski et al., 2016).

From the outset, the foundational research of this thesis had been firmly established upon widely comprehensive and detailed theoretical structures, which had entailed a combination of historical – and cultural analyses, as well as distinct psychological, behavioural, sociological and cognitive theories, with the further inclusion of semiotics (Bourdieu, 1984; Eco, 1976; Piaget, 1970; Skinner, 1953; Zajonc, 1968). Through the investigation and thorough consideration of each of these respective contextual lenses, prisms and frameworks, not only had more intricate and accurate insights been gained – but they had essentially served as effective mechanisms through which Fine Arts had interacted with viewers and audience from diverse cultural-settings and time-periods. These theoretical frameworks had also revealed – and confirmed the viewpoint that Fine Arts, as a form of ‘historical media’ or ‘visual communication’, had undeniably impacted the gradual development and long-term formation of ‘collective-perceptions’, which had consequently led to the reaffirmation of collective ‘cultural-identities’. The theoretical approaches to the three main research angles of this thesis, had therefore not merely resulted in a multi-faceted examination of visual characteristics, aesthetic attributes, Art

elements and formal design principles, but an extensive uncovering of the socio-political values which had underpinned these Art Movements and historical time-periods behind the surface (Bourdieu, 1984; Eco, 1976; Piaget, 1970; Skinner, 1953; Zajonc, 1968).

It's interesting to note that the Ancient Chinese Han Dynasty in particular, had provided a detailed foundational premise which had most effectively demonstrated and illustrated the manner in which Fine Arts had, for example, facilitated and encouraged the increasing acceptance – and collective cultural adoption of 'Confucian values', the 'veneration' of ancient Chinese ancestry, as well as a firm and nearly sacred cultural core-belief – that harmony with the broader cosmos had to be sought. In uniformity and correlation with these ancient Chinese values, funerary carvings of an elaborate and decorative nature, jade burial suits, highly detailed and decorative burial chambers – as well as intricately painted – or funerary-silk-banners (which contained embellishments or embroidery) had evoked and strengthened spiritual beliefs from this ancient time-period. Furthermore, these historical artistic artefacts had also served as instruments of a socio-political nature which had provided credence to the underlying 'Chinese dynastic structures' – as well as collective Chinese identity from this time-period. In addition, these archaeological Fine Arts artefacts had indirectly substantiated the theoretical hypothesis arguing that Fine Arts had portrayed and showcased intrinsic cultural-beliefs through means of diversified symbolic representations. These perspectives had more accurately aligned with the finding of Deuel (2013), who had persistently put forth the argument that there had been historically an inseparable foundational relationship between Fine Arts and the societal values found within the cultural contexts of the specific time-period within which these Art Movements had been established (Deuel, 2013).

In contrast, the Byzantine Era had more thoroughly and convincingly demonstrated the long-term social – and cultural impacts as it had pertained to repeated exposure to various symbolisms (related to semiotic theories), especially within the context of both 'imperial' – and 'religious' Fine Arts. The related development of hierarchal and authoritarian structures within varying cultural – or societal contexts, as had been analysed through the lens of the 'Mere Exposure Effect' which had been theorized and formulated by Zajonc (1968), had been well illustrated through long-lasting, timeless and historically enduring Byzantine mosaics like the 'Procession of Empress Theodora'. As had been moreover confirmed by Shedlock (1968), Wainwright (2018), and Zajonc (1968), repeated visual exposure towards both 'imperialistic' and 'emasculating' pictorial depictions, for example, had not only encouraged but had actively facilitated the 'intrinsic internalization' of strategically and intentionally transferred cultural views and beliefs, which had in return served as continuous reinforcement of state-endorsed and almost 'sacred' personifications (Shedlock, 1968; Wainwright, 2018; Zajonc, 1968).

Another convincing and compelling example had been the 'Discobolus by Myron' (a Classical Greek Sculpture) which had served as a persuasive embodiment of the 'Bartlett's Schema Theory'—especially in regards to the sculpture's distinct portrayal and showcasing of 'Classical Greek' ideals such as symmetry, athleticism, strength, triumph, and excellent civic performance. These highly esteemed, idealized and sought-after concepts had been firmly embedded and intertwined into the symbolic associations of selected 3-dimensional visual forms, while the cultural associations had consequently been passed on through 'collective cultural memory' (Garro, 2000; Steffensen, 1979). This particularly identifiable 'schema' had succeeded in bridging the creative cognitive realms of Fine Arts and philosophy, and had as a result effectively succeeded in influencing 'individual cognitive thinking-patterns', as well as broader 'collective cognition'—in particular as it had pertained to 'identity', 'moral virtues', and perceptions related to 'gender'.

Within context to the Renaissance Art Movement, the research perspectives presented within this thesis had revealed the manner in which the 'revival of classical antiquity' had become interconnected to – and inseparable from – 'humanist philosophy', whilst it had also succeeded in the revived perceptual portrayals of 'human figures', as well as more modernized, liberal – and secular subject-themes. Additionally, a renewed attention to focus had been placed upon the limitless potential of 'humanity', as well as 'rationalized reasoning', 'debate', and sound 'critical-thinking'. These cultural shifts, which had been achieved, had moreover been visually expressed through 'perspective', 'compositional depth', 'anatomical precision', as well as 'allegorical content'. And these strategic approaches towards artistic expression had over time been adopted within Renaissance Fine Arts (Heft, 2021). For example, historically renowned Renaissance 'Master Fine Artists' like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci had not merely transformed the technical standards, including the refined painting – and sculpting techniques of Fine Arts in an utmost remarkably superior manner, but through their exceeding degree of skilful excellence they had positioned themselves as 'historical forerunners', 'profound artistic intellectuals' and 'spiritual thinkers' who had successfully reordered the traditional 'place of mankind' in the universe. As Frascaroli (2022) had further argued, Fine Arts disciplines and artworks of historical significance had also served as instruments which had transferred 'cultural memory' from one generation to another, as well as symbolic avenues of 'cognitive reflection' (Frascaroli, 2022; Heft, 2021).

On the other hand, 'The Romantic Movement' had gradually progressed, developed, and finally emerged as both an 'emotion-filled' and 'patriotically nationalistic' artistic reaction towards the Enlightenment Era's well-perceived and somewhat indoctrinating overemphasis upon 'logical reasoning' and 'rational-world-views'. In a correlating manner, Fine Arts from the Romanticism Era had contained sublimely captivating compositional landscape scenery, exaggerated and dramatized

emotionalism, as well as individualism which had alluded to a heroic attribute. These combined visual characteristics and underlying symbolisms had consequently fostered – and reaffirmed a certain culturally desirable ‘group identity’ related to high-society, upper-classes and elitism, which had been founded upon visual association to beautifully refined nature-scenes, mythology, mysticism, and the ongoing challenges which had been faced by French-European patriots. In this regard, Fine Arts from the Romantic Art Movement, like Eugène Delacroix and Francisco Goya, had more specifically engaged in artistic investigations and evaluations of subject-themes primarily related to ‘human suffering’, as well as ‘human idealism – and aspiration’. In return, they had utilized representational Fine Arts expressions and captivating Romantic paintings as interconnected visual pathways for reaffirmation of ‘cultural identity’—more specifically during historical moments of upheaval, uprising, rebellion, and revival (Chatterjee, 1970).

Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque had been the visionary and pioneering Fine Arts forerunners of the Cubism Art Movement, while the movement itself had demonstrated an exceptionally clear and contrasting departure from traditional styles of visual portrayal – and representation. In particular, through the decisive and intentional ‘fragmentation’ of forms, objects, subject-themes and multiple perspectives, which had led to abstract visual forms and special colour-plains, Cubism paintings and mixed-media artworks had sought to deconstruct familiar visual realities, with the sole purpose and intention of reflecting the intricate complexities of ‘modern consciousness’ and increasingly fast-paced ‘advanced-societies’. The Cubism Art Movement had required and compelled European audiences during the early 1990s to essentially rebuild and reconstruct their own ‘sense of meaning’ amidst the fragmented forms. In doing so, the distinct artistic uniqueness of the Cubism Art Movement had activated ‘cognitive engagement’ amongst the public during this period in time, as well as newly discovered ‘ideological introspection’. This had confirmed the research-based perspective that both ‘schema’ and ‘social memory’, which had been gradually established over time, had enabled and facilitated the development of interpretative frames pertaining to preceding interpretational views (Wertsch, 2008).

From an entirely different approach of artistic investigation, portrayal, representation and expression, the Romantic Art Movement had signified a dramatic turn—more specifically in regards to its visually communicative articulation of aristocratic identity and highly sought-after lifestyle of leisure and self-indulgence. Characterized by ‘playfulness’, ‘provocation’, ‘lavish adornments’ and ‘pale colour-hues’, the Rococo Art Movement had served as an embodiment of the wealth and decadence typically associated with French high-society, nobility, aristocracy and royalty. The highly desirable and lustrous depictions in Rococo portrayals by painters like Jean-Honoré Fragonard and François Boucher had greatly contributed towards the perpetuated visual insinuations and notions of ‘self-indulgent

escapism' of multiuse kinds. In other words, the expressly clear 'visual ideals' of the Rococo Art Movement had evidently reflected an unquestionably detachment from the reality of the commoners – as well as socio-political unrest and uprising, which had later advocated for a garnishing of increased revolutionary sentiment (Bruder & Ucok, 2000).

The Ukiyo-e Art Movement from Japan's Edo time-period had offered European, Western and other foreign audiences highly authentic and unique glimpses into 'urban cultural identity', as well as the relevant customs and practices during this time-period in Japan. Ukiyo-e master carvers and printmakers such as Hokusai and Hiroshige had, specifically through woodblock-prints, captured temporally fleeting moments in time which had reflected rare nature scenes, sheer beauty and activities related to the human experience. The thematic reoccurrence pertaining to the concept of 'transient impermanence', as well as 'mono no aware', had significantly resembled key cultural values from the Edo time-period in Japan during which the Ukiyo-e Art Movement had gained its prominence. The symbolisms, visual associations and visual narratives related to 'transient impermanence' had, in return, further reinforced and reaffirmed specific attributes pertaining to 'Japanese identity' during the Edo time-period – while this pictorial imagery had also been extensively distributed. This method of repetitive redistribution had, many centuries later, been substantiated by Bartlett's 'Cognitive Theory of Schema Construction', which had been further supported and elaborated upon by Garro (2000). This cognitive theory had therefore further strengthened the understanding that 'collective cultural memory' had been further embedded – or encoded – through the visual stimulation of Fine Arts within the psyche of different cultural groups – or societies – throughout history (Garro, 2000).

Although the duration and length of the Fauvism Art Movement had been very brief in comparison to other historical Art Movements and Periods in Art History, Fauvism had succeeded in leaving a long-lasting impression and mark in regards to the 'expressive explosion of colours', 'artistic intuition' and 'liberation of emotionalism'. Within context to the Fauvism Art Movement, prominent and leading Fauvism painters like Henri Matisse and André Derain had intentionally incorporated 'non-naturalistic palettes' and 'simplified forms' in order to most effectively articulate and visually communicate 'subjective responses' towards the world as it had been newly interpreted, visualized and portrayed. Consequently, their Fauvism paintings had not merely illustrated realities based upon external observations and influences, but had revealed underlying and intrinsic emotional truths of French-European society's collective psyche, state of well-being and perceptual consciousness – which had further connected 'visual forms' to 'affective life-experiences'. These 'affective life-experiences' had specifically referred to 'emotionally-charged personal experiences' which had further influenced both the 'memory', 'identity', and 'behaviour' of either an individual or group of individuals. The compelling argument can therefore be made that Fauvism had served as an 'embodiment' of French-European

identity during this time-period in history – through a distinctly modernized form of visual articulation, portrayal and representation, as well as subjective and experiential authenticity (Christensen et al., 2023).

The particular contributions which had been made by the renowned and distinctive artworks of Georges Rouault—especially through his 1905 painting titled “Jeu de Massacre”—had visually captured and represented the moral and spiritual dissatisfaction and frustration which had been visibly tangible and had underpinned cultural expression during the early 1900s of French-European society. The fusion demonstrated by Georges Rouault as it had related to incorporating and portraying ‘religious iconography’ with added creative ‘Expressionist distortion’, had visually communicated much deeper ‘cultural criticism – and critique’ which had indirectly not only commented upon, but had rebelled against ‘societal hypocrisy’ and unnecessarily cruel ‘human suffering’ due to societal unfairness and injustices, perpetuated by the ‘ruling-classes’. In this manner, the paintings of Georges Rouault had not only served as a personal testament to his personal grievances and beliefs, but as a more far-reaching ‘cultural-mirror’ which had intentionally showcased the ‘internal fractures’ which had occurred throughout a rapidly changing, modernising and advancing world (Baumberger, 2013).

As noted by Cheung et al. (2019), each of these historically recognized Periods in Art History and notorious Art Movements had not merely been selected for further investigation and discussion within the context of this thesis due to their significant display of ‘artistic ingenuity – and innovation’, but for their strong and unquestionable ‘cultural resonance’. Collectively, these nine selected Art Movements and time-periods in history had, in a coordinating manner, visually demonstrated how Fine Arts had within varying historical, cultural and societal contexts primarily functioned as both ‘reflections’ and ‘transformative moulders’ of ‘societal-identities’. More specifically, as it had pertained to the altering, shifting and changing of perceptual interpretations, perspectives, moral – and religious values, philosophical – and ideological beliefs, as well as cultural attitudes and related cultural behaviours. These nine Art Movements from different cultures, societies, and historical contexts had facilitated and enabled the visual presentation of cultural beliefs, practice and lifestyles, as well as ‘collective cultural – or societal memory’ and the related ‘codification’ of specified social values which had interrogated, challenged and in some instances had even rebelled against previously existing norms (Cheung et al., 2019).

Furthermore, as noted by Eco (1976) and Heinz (2018), research pertaining to this thesis had revealed the unique interrelation and correlation between Fine Arts and cultural perceptions which had not been linear but objectively multi-layered and multifaceted. Fine Artists had historically therefore both responded to their familiar environments and had attempted to alter – or shape – their cultural – or social environments in unique ways which had rather frequently defied broadly accepted, unquestioned

and dominant narratives. Through symbolically-driven visual portrayals – accompanied by strategic Fine Arts elements, aesthetic choices and creative conceptual innovations, Fine Arts within their respective cultural contexts had intentionally incorporated a variety of complex suggested insinuations and messages which had touched upon a broad spectrum of moral, religious, societal, philosophical, ideological and political issues, many of which had far transcended both temporal limitations and linguistic barriers. To a significant extent, Fine Arts had therefore fulfilled the role of ‘cultural semiotics’—more specifically referring to a ‘language of signs’ through which cultural familiarity – and related visual associations within particular contexts had been drawn upon to determine ‘meaning’, ‘identity’ and ‘ideology’ which had not only been communicated, but in many cases had been contested (Eco, 1976; Heinz, 2018).

In other words, by having anchored and supported the investigative analysis with theoretical frameworks such as semiotics as had been elaborated upon by Barthes (1977) and Eco (1976), behavioural theory as had been referenced and discussed by Skinner (1953), cognitive theory in unison with the view of Bartlett (1932) and Brewer (2000), and sociological theory as had been further referenced by Bourdieu (1984) and Gago & de Almeida (2013), the various historical and theoretical frameworks contained within the research of this thesis had not only strengthened the presented arguments, but had provided insights pertaining to interdisciplinary concepts and themes. Collectively, these diverse research-lenses and angles of investigation had revealed different artistic techniques, strategies and applied methods through which ‘visual stimuli’ – referring to multiuse visual portrayals – had influenced and in many instances had successfully changed interpretations, perceptions, perspectives, attitudes, related behaviours, and ultimately ‘socially acceptable standards, norms and practices’ across different historical contexts and throughout multiple time-periods.

The cumulative evidence presented within this thesis had affirmed and strongly suggested that Fine Arts had not merely been reflective of cultural – and societal settings, environments and historical contexts, but had most certainly fulfilled a pivotal role in the shaping and transformation thereof. Through the examination of nine diverse Art Movements and time-periods in history, it had become evidently clear that Fine Arts had in fact acted or had served as a ‘symbolic visual language’ for both the expression, articulation and communication of human experiences, a catalyst and instrument for the continual promotion of ‘cultural change’, as well as a re-affirming and substantiative repository of ‘cultural – or societal-identities’. It is therefore the conclusive perspective of this thesis that the influences and consequent impacts achieved through the visual and psychological ‘power of Fine Arts’ had specifically resided within the ability to transcend beyond mere decoration, pictorial depiction, illustration, portrayal and representation – and to instead become a transformative force amongst diverse societal frameworks—which had in return not merely informed, but had challenged and had assisted in

the evolution of multiple 'cultural consciousnesses' (referring to moral, religious, ideological, philosophical, interpretational, perceptual and behavioural practices), throughout different historic time-periods (Gombrich, 1960; Hagtvedt et al., 2008; Herwig et al., 2012).

Furthermore, these revelations which had been thoroughly investigated, examined, analysed and discussed within this doctoral thesis had not only enriched the academic fields of Art History, Cultural Studies, Psychology and Art Therapy, but had also reaffirmed the steadfast and continual value of Fine Arts as it pertains to navigation, historical recording and the better understanding of the continuous transformation of the human experience (Chamberlain, 2022; Cheung et al., 2019; Frascaroli, 2022).

While the research presented within this doctoral thesis had primarily aimed at focusing upon the various influences of Fine Arts in relation to the development of cultural interpretation, perception and human behaviours, the potential broader applicability of these research-findings across related academic fields, further interdisciplinary implications, as well as potential limitations of this research-study, will be addressed in far greater depth within the accompanying defence presentation.

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