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THE METAMORPHOSIS OF FAUSTIAN SENSIBILITY 1630-1800

DAVID B. RICHARDSON

The ideas in serious reflective literature are, of course, in great part philosophical ideas in dilution—to change the figure, growths from seed scattered by great philosophic systems which themselves, perhaps, have ceased to be.¹

It should be noted that when the Romantics used the term “feeling” they meant what psychologists nowadays would call “sensation” or “sensibility,” the distinction between “feeling” (a rational function according to C.G. Jung) and “sensation” or “sensibility” (an irrational one) being unknown at the time.²

The somatic philosophers—from Kant and Kierkegaard’s early insights right up to Merleau-Ponty . . . are our first guides for discovering the richness of our sensual-accommodative drives . . . the techniques developed long ago out of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions have made trails through the same somatic experiences . . .³

The sources of the new Faustian sensibility were not Faustian. The Magian worldview is one source, though, taken as a whole, the Magian world-picture transcends any bodily point of view. The Magian Weltanschauung emerged three thousand years earlier, probably in Moses’ lifetime, and it found eloquent expression in the books of the Bible. Judaism was not the only religion that was written and propagated by citizens of a Magian land; for the Magian Civilization eventually extended from the Straits of Gibraltar to eastern Persia. Later there was the Magian Christianity of the Near Eastern (Greek) Church in Byzantium and the Magian Christianity of the Western (Roman) Church in the Mediterranean Basin (0-1000 A.D.). Then occurred the Faustian I era of Western Civilization, from 1000 to 1800. It was at first an age of Faith, and even in the secular seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the civilization was still known as “Western Christendom.” With some exceptions—e.g., medieval (Magian) Spain, the Jewish diaspora, the peasantry—Europe was Faustian. (And, with fewer exceptions, Europe was Christian.) But for hundreds of years these European Faustians had been exposed to the deeply Magian quality of their religion; it is inconceivable that this massive presence of an alien worldview should not have been influential.

An historically induced change occurred in one aspect of the Faustian
Civilization during the two hundred year interval from 1630 to 1830: the growth of a new sensibility in poetry, prose, and philosophic writings. It can be called a “somatic” sensibility, a bodily consciousness in which the value of aesthetic immediacy, viewed in both its mental and physical aspects, is much enhanced. The synthesis of contrasting elements, the unification of the psychological and the sensory that occurred in this European movement soon evoked in a few gifted philosophers an intense appreciation of the sensuous.

As a matter of fact, the mentality that gives special value to spiritual entities or events, but also emphasizes the organic element of reality, will give particular intensity to sensuous experience. Examples of such a relationship of the sensuous to the organic and the spiritual are to be seen in traditional China and India since before the Christian era, though China and India have been “sensuous” in very different ways. India’s organicism is the correlative of a merely phenomenal world, from which the sage would seek release. China’s organicism is correlative to a cosmo-political universe, in which the enlightened citizen of the Middle Kingdom would seek always to live harmoniously. The respective roles of the two Asian civilizations in Europe’s seventeenth and eighteenth century cult of sensibility, though literary in the case of China and indirect in the case of India, were substantial.

The School of Courtly Love

The Islamic legacy in the new movement of thought is the most vivid. The Medieval Arabian culture is a thoroughly Magian instance of an organic way of seeing things; but the organic quality of early Islamic culture derived partly from such philosophical luminaries of the first Christian centuries as Proclus and Plotinos and their Neoplatonist successors, and it derived partly from Indian influences. Islam as a religion has always been a fairly pure expression of the Magian worldview. But the Magian priority of sensation, that is, of sensational experience, inherited by the people of the Book, was reinforced by the influence on creative Muslims of the sensuous aspect of Indian culture. These are probably the reasons why sensation is a particularly meaningful Islamic experience in contrast to the primacy of emotion in Christianity. Chinese sensuousness was even more influential.

Christianity is not as purely Magian as Islam because several of its founders assimilated transcendental Indian and Greek elements: (1) Jesus seems to have often expressed ideas that he learned from the community
of the Essenes at the Dead Sea. Their worldview was Magian but rendered eccentric by the influence of ideas that probably originated in India. (2) The Apostle Paul and other early Christians, some of them Biblical writers, alloyed the new metal, altered the new religion, with Greek ideas.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the sudden entrance of Muslim philosophical writings into Europe not only brought about the scholasticism of the schools, but from the beginning led to the troubadours’ cult of Courtly Love. Ibn Sina (980-1037), the greatest of Muslim philosophers, had written a mystical Treatise on Love that was intended to assist devotees in reaching high religious experience by way of sensuous beauty. The book inspired Capellanus’ De Amore Libri Tres. This latter provided the Medieval troubadours in the courts of Provence with the sensuous ideology out of which grew their creation the School of Courtly Love. Ibn Sina had lived in central Asia, in Turkestan, at a time when Chinese Indian influences were entering the Muslim world; and by virtue of his being in the city of Bakhara, he probably encountered some Chinese ideas. But he was already indebted indirectly to Indian philosophy through the Neoplatonist tradition of Islamic philosophy. 

His Treatise on Love and, stemming partly from it, the European chivalric tradition, saw in the love of the sexes a positive role in the ascent of the soul to union with God. Christianity always tended to exalt emotional experience, but in the twelfth century, beginning with the translation of Ibn Sina’s treatise into Latin, the sensuous and chivalric ideas of love probably struck a sympathetic fiber in courtiers affected by the already existing cult of the Blessed Virgin. The Faustian culture, in which the travelling singers of Provence participated as Faustians and Christians, gave high value to the expression of emotion; it assimilated and transformed an idea of mystical love which was oriented toward sensation. With the secularism of the Faustian worldview and the emotion of the Christian religion, the School of Courtly Love became more secular and more emotional than the Arabian idea.

Six centuries after the troubadours the cultivation of Courtly Love in the court of English Queen Henrietta Maria (wife of King Charles I) kept alive this erotic cultivation of the feelings, and the tragedies of John Ford (who had been in attendance at Henrietta Maria’s court) portrayed heroes and heroines overcome by a pathological excess of emotion.

This resurgence a generation or two before Shaftesbury may well have influenced his aesthetic philosophy directly. Though the Courtly Love tradition contributed to the seventeenth century development of somatic
consciousness, the paramount development was the eighteenth century invention of Aesthetics. But other sources of the new somatic consciousness were much weightier: the continuous presence: (1) of Christian emotion, (2) of Neoplatonism, with its Indian ideas, and (3) of Chinese notions and values.

The supreme importance of emotion in the Christian religion, had been gradually overcoming the Faustian predominance of Reason, so that by the time of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson (ca. 1700), an enhanced emotionalism was altering the old Faustian Weltanschauung. The centuries-long Scholastic "Hellenization" of Faustian philosophers, and their elevation of Reason above all other human faculties, had been decisively attacked by William of Ockham (?-1399?). The scholastic claim for the primacy of Reason was finally defeated by Ockhamists in the seventeenth century. In fact, during the interval 1000-1700 A.D. the people of Western society, despite the central place of Reason in their civilizational worldview, were participants in the Christian tradition and in this part of their lives gave supremacy to emotional experience. Despite a relatively phlegmatic Faustian Weltgefühl in Medieval Europe, emotional values were paramount because the society was ruled by Christian values. But by the time of the Enlightenment emotional values had become supreme because Western culture was ruled by new philosophies—particularly that of the Moral Sense school, whose founder was Shaftesbury.

Another source of somatic sensibility in the Faustian soul was the Indian worldview, which had been quietly influencing the West ever since Alexander's conquest of India in 331 B.C., particularly through the provocative influence of the spokesman of ideas of Indian origin in Alexandria during the early Christian centuries. But the influence has gone largely unnoticed by historians because, from the very beginning, the ideas were represented as mere variations of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies. Nevertheless, a hidden Indian component was destined to remain permanently in western thought in various Neoplatonic philosophies, right up to Shaftesbury's generation, the Cambridge Platonists, and beyond them to modern times.

A third source was the Chinese worldview, which was powerfully at work in Europe from 1600 onwards through the reports of European travelers to China. Chinese influences played a considerable role in the creation of the somatic sensibility of the Enlightenment; for China's reputation in Western Civilization in the eighteenth century was greater than ever before or since; and beneath the notoriety which the various
chinoiseries were enjoying during the Enlightenment, the Chinese ideological influences were quietly at work.

Leibniz

One of Leibniz' best known philosophical ideas, the distinction between obscure and clear knowledge, and perception and apperception, anticipates his remarks in 1712 on Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, times*: “Taste as distinguished from understanding consists of confused perceptions for which one cannot give an adequate reason. It is something like an instinct.” There seems to be one word which gives meaning to the convergence of philosophical writings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries toward a somatic sensibility: aestheticism. In England and Europe during Leibniz' time, there were two civilizational influences, both of which were aesthetic: the Indian and Chinese worldviews. When Neoplatonism originated, 0-300 A.D., Greeks who had learned Indian lore and also Indians, Buddhist or Jain merchants and seamen, were present in Alexandria. In this way the aesthetic quality of Neoplatonism probably traces back to India.

Leibniz is one of the very few scholars who have recognized that Neoplatonism is alien to Platonism, and who have not been fooled by the pose of early Neoplatonists that they were following in the footsteps of Plato. He wrote: “We cannot judge Plato’s teachings by Plotinus or Marsilio Ficino, for they have perverted his fundamental doctrine in their scurryings after the miraculous and the mystical. . . . For all the neo-Pythagorean and Neoplatonic philosophers were given to superstition and were for ever in pursuit of miracles . . .”

Aestheticism is a philosophical attitude (1) in which the somatic quality of perception is emphasized and (2) in which nature itself becomes an aesthetic object. Neoplatonic ideas were abundant in Europe in the seventeenth century: in German Nature philosophers, in Paracelsus and Boehme, in translations of ancient Neoplatonists, in the Cambridge Platonists, and to some extent in Leibniz’ philosophy. A growing taste for complexity is another factor in the somatization of the Faustian worldview, and it takes an early form in Leibniz’ search after a “General Characteristic.” He sought to discover a logic which approximates to individual essences and events, a theory which naturally gives philosophical importance to the countless intricacies in physical reality, a multitude of details which, even in small things, can be known only in “confused” perception. The word “aesthetic” is appropriate here, where sense.
perception is given parity with understanding. In such a philosophy, one of an extremely intricate universe, composed of monads—extensionless points of force or entelechies—with varying degrees of senselessness or consciousness. There is probably a connection to the point-instant universe of the Indian philosophers. Several sixteenth and and seventeenth century philosophers, whom Leibniz probably read, held to a universe made up of points; and he took over the term monad from his friend F. M. Helmont in 1696.¹⁴ Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, written in the twelfth century, was particularly influential in seventeenth century thought.¹⁵ Leibniz took the trouble to summarize the contents of the seventy-third chapter of *The Guide for the Perplexed*, where Maimonides presents the atomistic theory of the Mutakallimun, for whom time itself is atomic (as with the Indian philosophies).¹⁶ Leibniz' personal copy, with his marginal notations, survives today. In it Maimonides describes the point-instant metaphysic of the Muslim Mutakallamun of eighth century Baghdad, according to which God's creative power keeps a "point-instant" universe in existence. The Baghdad scholars were much influenced by Indian ideas; and the atomic point-instants of the Mutakallamim very likely originated in India. This form of "atomism" was and always has been a universal notion of Indian philosophies.¹⁷

The Indian atomistic doctrine presupposes degrees of senselessness and consciousness; in fact, this is a matter of intense preoccupation in almost all Indian philosophies. We can surmise that the western vestiges of Indian "atomism" which the powerful mind of Leibniz encountered inclined him to formulate a notion of "perceptions" and "apperceptions," which is reminiscent of India's interest in the conscious and the unconscious.

*Shaftesbury*

The reports from China on Sinic ideas, customs, religion, and politics, and particularly the writings of Leibniz, must have conveyed deep Chinese influences to Shaftesbury and the Scottish moralist Hutcheson. Their notion of an "inner sense"¹⁸—a capacity of feeling for goodness and beauty which is social in scope—is probable evidence of the impact on Leibniz, on themselves, and on others, of the Chinese penchant for social order and socioeconomic harmony. The new philosophy of sentiment or moral sense was at once emotional and sensuous, and it became more and more theoretical as it was reformulated by eighteenth century
writers. Hume saw emotion and sentiment as the paths by which beauty comes to human beings.¹⁹ Leibniz' own remarks on the imagery of beauty imply that the source of pleasure in aesthetic experience are the clear but confused (i.e., non-conceptual) perception of a unity in variety.²⁰ Shaftesbury's attachment to a universal "inner sense," which he held to be the same in all humans, was akin to Leibniz's optimism that there is a God-created harmony of all things. These ideas recall the Chinese notion of a cosmic sympathy or harmony, according to which the well disposed mind "resonates" with the harmony of the Tao. The sporadic but cumulative Sinification of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries added a means of expression (the celebration of out-of-doors Nature) to Christian experience of emotion. This new western cultivation of sensibility would lead slowly but inexorably during two centuries to an explosion of emotional expression in the Faustian II arts after 1800.

At present, only sporadic evidence is available for the exact Chinese influences on the seventeenth century men of letters. Leibniz was a Sinophile, and the documentation of influences on his philosophy is available, particularly his writings concerning the harmony of the universe, and also his letters relating to his Chinese studies, including the Book of Changes, the philosophy of Chu Hsi, other Chinese authors, and the reports of missionaries from China.²¹

The cult of feeling (a Magian and Faustian phenomenon) was inaugurated early in the eighteenth century by the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and taken up by Francis Hutcheson (1695-1747), who created a widespread vogue of Shaftesbury's ideas in learned circles with his Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (1726). At that moment, during an era which Toynbee has described as the "Sinification of Europe," the enthusiasm of the Chinese for out-of-doors Nature was being conveyed to the west in writings, reports, Chinese gardens, chinaware, and paintings. Both the Confucian and the Taoist philosophies, and indeed the Chinese civilizational worldview, presupposed this love of Nature. Without attempting to determine the exact indebtedness of Romanticism to the Chinese, we can see two influences on the European Romantic movement: the universal Chinese love of Nature, and the anti-establishment and anti-rational philosophy of the Taoists. As for the infectiousness of these Chinese values throughout Europe and America, at the very least they reinforced the Western Romantic movement. Yet the special emotional intensity of Romanticism has its origins, not in China, but in the West.
But India, at least indirectly, was probably one of the sources of Shaftesbury's and Hutchison's "moral sense" school: for Shaftesbury was powerfully influenced by Neoplatonist thought and, therefore, by some ideas which probably originated in India. I refer particularly to his teachers, the Cambridge Platonists, and also Spinoza's weighty influence, in the moral component of Shaftesbury's "inner sense." Later, absorbing the Neoplatonism of Shaftesbury, organicist writers vigorously expanded Neoplatonic influences in Occidental thought.

The idea of Nature of the seventeenth century Neoplatonists reinstated Plotinos' view of a unified Nature, depicted as a plastic unity and a plastic power, in contrast to the mechanistic viewpoint. (Yet, in Shaftesbury's time the Faustian I worldview was still predominant in Western civilization: inorganic, intensely mechanistic.) Partly influenced by Neoplatonist ways of thought, partly by the preeminence of emotion in a Christian civilization, partly by the success of the new perception-oriented philosophy of British Empiricism, and partly by the Far Eastern love of out-of-doors nature and Chinese religious rationalism, Shaftesbury possessed the right background to hit upon an aesthetic of the beautiful and the sublime. For one thing, he was one of the first Western thinkers to play down any sharp disjunction between rational understanding and sense experience in his concept of aesthetic intuition. He has been described by an expert as "the most profound and fruitful thinker in the field of aesthetics and the real originator and instigator of all future developments in this field." In his feeling of oneness with Nature, he could become rhapsodic. A hundred years before Wordsworth did so he divinized Nature:

O Glorious Nature! supremely Fair, and sovereign Good! All-loving and All-lovely, All-divine! . . . Whose every single Work affords an ampler Scene, and is a nobler Spectacle than all which Art presented!

Aesthetics had been quiescent among philosophers from the third century A.D., when Plotinos gave high value to beauty in his Enneades. Suddenly, in the eighteenth century, this branch of philosophy became important, although the natural organic tendency of the aesthetic viewpoint in the age of Newton was at odds with the triumph of mechanistic thought.

In addition, Christian values contained the organicism of the Magian worldview of Biblical times, though, for seven hundred years, Christian symbols—of which a noteworthy example is the Gothic cathedral—had been expressing Faustian mechanical preoccupations. A seventeenth
century Western Civilization that gave supremacy to emotional experience stopped short of asserting an exclusively mechanistic universe or mechanistic human nature, despite the marvels of mechanics as presented in the scientific philosophies of Descartes and Newton. Biology, the paradigm of organic physical science, came into existence during Leibniz’ and Shaftesbury’s lifetimes.

Internal evidence for an indirect contact with Chinese ideas and values exists in Shaftesbury’s Nature Romanticism and also in his unconcern with the dogmas of revealed religion, and his espousal of a theism, in which (in contrast with contemporary Deists) he asserted the divine to be immanent in Nature. In addition to the originality of a genius in speculating about the divine, an obvious probable source of his theistic notions is not Western, but Chinese.

Ernst Cassirer has stated that Shaftesbury felt no kinship with contemporary philosophy but sought other intellectual and historical models. It is only necessary to open Shaftesbury’s philosophical diary to become aware of this aloofness toward his own time. It looks back to the thought of the Renaissance and of antiquity, e.g., to Neoplatonist aesthetic presuppositions in the writings of Cusanus, Kepler, Bruno, Galileo, and Da Vinci, and to the fountain of Neoplatonism, Plotinos. The senuous aspect of art and beauty has an important role in Plotinos’ mystically inspired Enneades.

In Shaftesbury’s philosophy occurs the beginning of the synthesis of contrasts within the Faustian Culture: of the alien Indian and Chinese Weltanschauungen and the resident (though not dominant) Magian-Christian civilizational worldview. If we compare the philosophies of India, together with the thought of Lao tzu or other Chinese Taoists, with Shaftesbury’s rhapsody of Nature, we will not find in the Indians or the Chinese the European emphasis upon emotion. Shaftesbury was closer to the Chinese than the Faustians who followed the path he established with his inauguration of Nature Romanticism. Romanticism became an adequate outlet for the Magian-Christian and Faustian II celebrations of emotion.

In the creation of a “somatic” quality in cognition, Leibniz and Shaftesbury appear to have been thinking along similar lines: for Leibniz, in 1712, in some remarks on Shaftesbury’s Characteristics of Men, manners, Opinions, Times, holds that “Taste as distinguished from understanding consists of confused perceptions for which one cannot give an adequate reason.” Shaftesbury’s interest in the Cambridge
Platonists is part of the explanation of his aesthetic amalgamation of mind and matter: he probably read Henry More's "Immortality of the Soul," which attributes extension to Spirit and concludes that the absolute space and time within which the universe is contained is the extension of God himself. Though More was a "theist," he has been called both a Deist and a Pantheist. The First Epistle of Alexander Pope's Essay on Man, which was inspired by Shaftesbury's ideas, expresses the organic and near-pantheistic quality:

The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in man,

All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;

Even Shaftesbury's Neoplatonism, with detailed concern for plastic forms and concrete representation, partakes of the Faustian zest for scientific exactness, which was already at work in the philosophy of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and implicit in Faustian technology from the very beginning of the Faustian dispensation. It is in this context of respect for the palpable that Shaftesbury's notion of an internal sense as a root of taste, and as inseparable from morality, may be understood. Chinese culture probably affected him in his avoidance of a separation between the "moral sense" and the physical senses; in any case, the civilizations of Asia were recognized a hundred years earlier, in 1600, as being the equal of contemporary Europe.

**Baumgarten**

Shaftesbury expressed the typical European love of emotion that was current in his time; although a Neoplatonist, he was never close to removing emotion from beauty. His preoccupation with his discovery of the innate ability to make moral distinctions reinforced the tendency of his contemporaries to seek emotional intensity. Joseph Addison (1712),Francis Hutcheson (1725), Smith, the translator of Longinus (1739), and Edmund Burke (On the Sublime and Beautiful (1759) held that agreeable sensations are sometimes produced by objects of terror. Burke (and Kant, after reading Burke,) converted the link between the feelings of sublimity and terror into a system. As to how Faustian, as well as Magian, was their instinct we shall see presently. Both Burke and Kant dissociated the sublime from beauty because they
believed that the "smoothness and polish" and the other qualities of beauty were forms of mere pleasure.

Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762), the student of Christian Wolff (and, through Wolff, a follower of Leibniz and a Sinophile), was the founder of the new science of aesthetics. "The hand of Leibniz is readily felt even in Baumgarten's aesthetics although there is so little that he (Leibniz) said on the subject, or on arts generally." Leibniz and Wolff were China enthusiasts, and through their influence Baumgarten was destined to be influenced by Chinese ideas. Leibniz, without being an aesthete, made a place for taste and imagination in his philosophy and asserted a difference of degree between aesthetic (indistinct) and intellectual (clear) experiences. Leibniz' new way of seeing things pervades Baumgarten's aesthetic theories, especially in the division between obscure and clear poetic representations. Baumgarten defines aesthetics as the doctrine of sensibility, of "sensitive knowledge," and its goal is "the perfection of sensory cognition"; thus his purpose was to lift sensible awareness to the dignity of knowledge. The sensual element in the beauty of music and painting and the other arts naturally has a place in theories about beauty, though it was not his aim to "somaticize" science by way of sensibility. Actually, a somatization of the theory of knowledge was going on from 1630 to 1800. Ernst Cassirer refers to the new development of a "science" of aesthetics as a "humanization" of sensibility," but from the point of view we are taking here, conversely, the process was the "sensualization" of Faustian Humanism, the "somatization" of the Faustian worldview. Kant later put it "...there is a science of sensuousness, namely, aesthetics..." But Baumgarten had stated in his Aesthetica (Frankfort, 1750) that the knowledge of beauty is the recognition of perfection by means of the senses. We can understand, in view of the Neoplatonism of the time, the rational or even spiritual interpretation Baumgarten and Kant layed upon aesthetic experience; for they were not very aware, if at all, of the historical process of somatization and its several sources. Moreover, a strong factor of somatic consciousness is implicit in the deeply Faustian idea of technology, which spurred on Roger Bacon's thirteenth century and Francis Bacon's and John Locke's seventeenth century quest of empirical sciences and philosophies in place of deductive sciences. The destiny of the Faustian civilization was to give priority to the facts, to the phenomena, to direct observation; and thus empiricism in its own way was thoroughly aesthetic and "somatic."
lay the religious conviction that the universe symbolized the perfection of God. It is not merely a beautiful universe; it is sublime. In such manner, the Christian theology of Nature implied metaphysical views that had a Magian quality. Kant was to state that art would be superficialized if its artists and critics attempted to limit aesthetic value to simple beauty alone; aesthetics must treat of the sublime, and even the ugly.53

Chinese notions of harmony and natural beauty were entering Europe, and China was probably the civilization that had carried these ideas the farthest. Chinese influences were being assimilated in a variety of western writings, including treatises on ethics, religion, politics, and philosophy. Certain Faustian and Chinese ideas and values merged so completely as to be invisible to a twentieth century expert, who has denied that Chinese painters should be likened to the Romantics.54 Yet Irving Babbitt, in Rousseau and Romanticism, persuasively argues that the Taoists were thoroughgoing romantics.55

In late eighteenth century Europe, the emotional experience of the sublime (often inspired by awe-inspiring natural phenomena) would appear as violent passions in comparison with the calm, cozy Chinese feelings for beloved woods, mountains, and streams. The Chinese were oblivious to any symbolization of an almighty God, terrible in His wrath, by mountainous wildernesses or precipitous cliffs; they also played down the idea of Nature as a fair object of human conquest, and did not think of man as a spiritual being created in the likeness of an all-powerful God.56 But in Europe, after 1750, emotional experience was magnificently enhanced in the popularization of Nature Romanticism. Nature was invested with awfulness, sublimity, wildness, and mystery.57

The eighteenth century Sinification of Europe probably led to the invention of aesthetics, but only in combination with Europe’s scientific heritage from the Greeks. The Faustian knack for systematic theory can be seen in Baumgarten’s thorough mastery of the logical technique which Wolff taught and which was more thoroughly mastered by Kant.58 And Kant sees this the most clearly: a dynamic equilibrium of sense, feeling, imagination, and understanding. Beauty and mildness of feeling pervaded the imported Chinese paintings and artifacts, and also pervaded the rococo style which had been evoked by Chinese culture.59 Rococo has a gentle beauty, in contrast to the Mannerist and Baroque styles. Late in the eighteenth century, Rococo was in competition with the new art form, Romanticism. Now, there was the need to express the new Weltanschauung as well as the traditional religious heritage of intense Christian emotion. Perhaps the contrast between gentle beauty and the aesthe-
tic effect of strong emotion was the stimulant that provoked Edmund Burke to make his celebrated distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. He went beyond Longinus' well-known third century essay, *On the Sublime*.

Burke is anti-rational in a Western way when he reduces the entire aesthetic process to passion; yet his idea of the beautiful is reminiscent of Chinese aesthetic canons. He considers beauty to be dependent on the social instincts of mankind, a theory which probably arises out of the Chinese influence on European thought: an intense social consciousness which has always been part of the Chinese worldview, and for which "ideal beauty is a social quality..."60

A process of synthesis of several civilizational influences, living vestiges of the past, was quietly and insensibly occurring in eighteenth century aesthetic theories; it was a creative interaction of ideas and values that were Greek, Magian (via Christianity), Faustian, and Chinese; and this ferment of civilizational influences was an anticipation of the future, the artistic innovations in the Faustian II era, which began approximately 1800.61 The Western high evaluation of personality62 and love of intense emotion are evidence of the gulf between traditional Western and (excepting Japan) less emotional Asian worldviews.63 Nevertheless, from the time of Shaftesbury—the age of the remaissance of Neoplatonism—the Faustian world-picture was being altered by an organicism akin to that of China and India. The organic sensualism of Indian sculpture balances the drive to the imageless Absolute that can be seen in the statement: "the swarming, pulsating figures in the gorgeous panels and friezes at Amaravati, Ajanta and Borobodur... do not represent a drunken and fecund plunge into the field of sensation... always the exuberance of Indian art is subordinated to the abstract structure, the metaphysical intention..."64

*Kant and the Modification of the Faustian Worldview*

"*Der grosse Chinese von Koenigsberg*" — Nietzsche65

It is appropriate that volitionism found an expression in Faustian aesthetics. Kant (1724-1804), for whom freedom of the will was more important than anything else, conceived the aesthetic level of experience as the medium in which nature and freedom meet, the means through which the senses and the intellect meet.66
The somatic nature of aesthetic experience is distinctive and central, both in the new aesthetic and in the development of theories of emotion, whether in art, ethics, psychology, or philosophy of nature. Kant’s contemporary J.G. Herder (1744-1803), who was much influenced by Shaftesbury, had a theory of art that might be described as “ecstatic sensualism.” Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), as Kant and Plotinos did, looked on aesthetic experience as a bridge between the physical and the transcendent. “Like Kant, he was opposed both to sensationalism and to conceptualism in art, that is, to the sole determination of the mind either in the direction of pleasure or of abstract truth...” Herbert Marcuse has gone so far as to hold that:

Marcuse exaggerates the new Faustian sensuousness inasmuch as the physical and social sciences, and the abstract ideologies and general values, express higher and higher degrees of abstractness; yet the practitioners of the exact sciences also aim at the Leibnizian goal of putting even the concrete particular—what F.S.C. Northrop calls the “differentiated aesthetic continuum”—under scientific analysis. “Art for art’s sake” arose out of the aesthetic development of emotional experience; the phrase was coined with reference to the views of Kant and Schiller. The phrase implies the high value of the pure experience of aesthetic objects, which are somatic goods. Faustian sensibility has developed to the point that Western man often cherishes an aesthetic experience, from which the abstract ideologies and explicit values have been deliberately excluded. It is an experience that involves a union of sense, sensibility, and intelligence. It presupposes, moreover, an organic quality reminiscent of China and India, in that the creative life-force, image, or plan—rather than any external influence—guides artist and spectator.

Hegel’s assertion of the rationality of (mature) emotional thinking expressed a new Faustian psychology of the will, an identification of knowledge and appetite in one faculty. Feeling (emotion), he said, originates from thinking, and thinking originates from intuition. He endeavored to show this in the following triadic dialectic:
Theoretical mind

intuition
representation
thinking
feeling (emotion)

Practical Mind

impulse and choice
happiness

Free Mind

How typical of modern Western thought is Hegel’s synthesis of the contraries, *Reason* and *Feeling* (in “Free Mind”): “. . . We may affirm absolutely that nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion. Two elements, therefore, enter into the object of our investigation; the first the Idea, the second the complex of passions; the one the warp, the other the woof, of the vast arras-web of Universal history. The concrete mean and union of the two is Liberty . . .”

**Concluding Remarks**

It is doubtful that Alfred Whitehead’s philosophic synthesis in the 1920’s would have been possible without the philosophical exploration of emotional experience that had been going on since Shaftesbury’s time. Whitehead writes: “the disastrous separation of body and mind, characteristic of philosophical systems which are in any important respect derived from Cartesianism, is avoided in the philosophy of organism by the doctrine of hybrid physical feelings and of the transmuted feelings. In this way conceptual feelings pass into the category of physical feelings.”

We have been tracing out the way that Western civilization reacted to the impact of ideas that originated in China and India and which provoked eager responses from 1700 onwards, even at times when their exotic origins were unknown to the Western beneficiaries. We have seen a number of ways in which the eastern and western ideas melded during the interval from 1630 to 1800, producing a new somatic sensibility, a keen aesthetic consciousness, unprecedented in Western Civilization; an enthusiastic taste for the complexities of things in their aesthetic immediacy; a growing intensity of organic thought that became more and more competitive with the prodigious Faustian technology and mechanistic philosophy; and a feeling of closeness and friendly familiarity with cosmic Nature. The most important new element may be the assimilation of the Magian-Christian emphasis upon emotion into the Faustian worldview. But the somatic sensibility is relatively new in Western
Civilization: the acquisition of it is a dramatic occurrence in the Faustian soul.

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**APPENDIX**

What Is New In My Interpretation

A civilizational worldview is a small set of understandable ideas and values, shared by the educated members of a higher culture. In this rational approach I diverge from Spengler’s philosophy of culture. He was convinced that the “Destiny” of a higher culture, the Weltanschauung, is accessible only to intuition. In a way, he is correct, since the power of a worldview over its mother civilization is in the unconscious, i.e., in the intuition, of its citizens. But Spengler stopped short of discerning that these unconscious contents can be inferred and rationally examined. If he had examined the parts of the Faustian worldview rationally or scientifically, he might have realized that the title of his book, the *Decline of the West*, refers to only half of the history of Western Civilization since 1800. There is another, unwritten, half: “The Reinvigoration of the West,” because, when the various strands of ideas and values which made up the Faustian worldview at the turning-point in 1800 are examined in the light of a rational model of civilizational world-styles, the co-existence of the old and the new comes to light. This is what is novel in my interpretation.

The idea of the two phases of the Faustian civilization occurred to me in 1958, in my recollection of having read, somewhere in Toynbee’s *Study of History*, that eighteenth century Europe had undergone a Sinification. At the same time, I recalled the Appendix in Irving Babbitt’s *Rousseau and Romanticism*, which takes up the parallels between Romantic notions and Chinese Taoist ideas. I thus found one of the sources—the Chinese civilization—of the renovation of the Faustian worldview. At the same time I became aware of another source: new ideas and values that had been imported from India prior to 1800.

Thus for me Europe was not changing solely because of its internal requirements, which would have made Asian influences mere appendages. Instead, I saw these influences from the Far East and from South
Asia provoking decisive changes of the Western mind during the Weltanschauung change. This introduced a radical rationalization into my civilizational studies, and many new pursuits and interests in Western civilization of high cultural significance, which had previously seemed to grow solely out of natural human inventiveness, now appeared in their true guise: the response to the centuries-long impact of Asia on the West.

The Faustian I and II distinction is clearer if we examine lists of ideas and values that comprise each worldview. First, those making up the Faustian I worldstyle:

1. A kind of rationalism, derived in part from the Classical tradition but distinctive and original in its great practicality: a practical reason.77
2. Voluntarism: the primacy of the will over reason, associated with the idea of personal freedom and with individualism.
3. Changeful, mechanical, directive, forceful energy, in place of Greek matter and form, underlying the physical world.78
4. Faustian praxis: technology, technological reason.
5. The Faustian I space view: the notion of straight-line bodily force moving indefinitely through empty space.79
6. Faustian historicality, vivid historical awareness.80

Those making up the Faustian II worldview are:

1. Faustian praxis: technology, technological reason.
2. Faustian voluntarism, individualism, and freedom.
3. The new Faustian II concrete, complex reason.81
4. The new Faustian II sociality: the new priority of social values and social consciousness.82
5. The new Faustian II space idea: a family of spaces, among which are: an autogenetic, curvilinear space, with local fields and multiplicity of perspectives (the latter in contrast to the Faustian I propensity for the single perspective).83
6. The new Faustian II relatedness: the high value of the relativities of things, to be seen, for example, in the new historicality, including a bent for the relativities of history.84
7. The Faustian II priority of emotional experience (a Magian heritage, communicated to the Faustian worldview by the Christian religion).85

While I was writing "The Metamorphosis of Faustian Sensibility: 1630-1800," my attention was focussed on the effectiveness of the metamorphosis, that is, on the degree of consummation of the passage of Western society from the old worldview to the new one. I narrowed the
field of study to small portions of the Faustian II worldview: first, the new concrete Reason, its sensuous aspect and its capacity for complexity; and second, the enhanced value which feelings and emotions—apart from religion—have for Western man. Thus, no matter how important the new Faustian sensibility has been, it is but one of several metamorphoses (e.g., the appearance of an intense social consciousness) that took place within the Faustian soul during the transition period, 1600-1800.

NOTE: Since this essay was put in print I have obtained the four latest (through 1984) bound-books of Joseph Needham’s *Science and Civilization in China*, and shall have to revise upward my estimate of China’s influence on the west. In Volume 5, Part 4, Section 33 Continued (1980): *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Part IV, Needham brings much evidence to show strong influences of Chinese ideas on Arabians and Muslims before and after 1000 A.D. (who, in turn, conveyed powerful influences to Medieval Europe).

Needham also reveals, in very considerable detail, the intrinsically somatic quality of human experience at its best, as seen through Chinese, particularly Taoist, eyes. His extremely thorough and well-documented study of the long Chinese quest for material immortality is an astonishing revelation of deep aspects of the Chinese worldview. If he had not been so thorough (with thousands of illustrations and thousands of quotations from Chinese books, and thousands of notes), and had not written at such great length about the Chinese Civilization, his imagination would have seemed as inventive, romantic, and bizarre as Oswald Spengler’s in the latter’s treatment of the Magian Culture and the Faustian Culture. There are amazing aspects of civilizational worldviews. Spengler sought them out intuitively and hastily, as if suddenly lighting up the world stage with floodlights. Needham has slowly unveiled them in his study of China’s ancient sciences and civilization, imperceptibly turning up the lights on the darkened stage to full intensity.

NOTES


6. Neoplatonic philosophy must have reinforced the sensate quality which is characteristic of Ibn Sina’s religion. See Plotinos, *The Enneades*, I, 6, “Beauty.”

7. J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love*, Boston College Candelmas Lectures on Christian Literature (N.Y., 1947), p. 20. “A Treatise on Love by Ibn Sina,” tr. E.L. Fackenheim, *Medieval Studies*, Vol. VII (Toronto, 1945), pp. 208-228. Denomy holds that the “specific source of the troubadour conception of love (was this) mystical philosophy that was heretical . . .” See p. 51: “. . . If it be true that the troubadours and Andreas got their conception of what they called pure love from Avicenna, as I think they did; if it be true that a great number of the formulae and conceits they used were taken over from love lyrics, as it is held . . .” (pp. 33-34).

8. George F. Sensabaugh, *The Tragic Muse of John Ford* (Stanford Univ., Stanford, 1944). On the cult of courtly love in Henrietta Maria’s court, see p. 105 and Index; on Ford’s upholding of the love rights and ideals of Queen Henrietta Maria in the form of pathological emotionalism in his plays, see pp. 151 ff.


10. Space does not permit the assemblage here of the large amount of evidence that is relevant to, or directly or indirectly supports, the hypothesis that Indian ideas had a powerful influence on the West in ancient times, particularly in Alexandria, during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Jean W. Sedlar has assembled from ancient sources a large amount of this evidence. She is a historian rather than a philosopher; her evidence, when it is interpreted with philosophical comparisons in mind, supports the hypothesis of an Indian “presence” in the ancient West; in her treatment of Pyrrho, who had travelled toward India with Alexander’s army, taught a way of life similar to that of Indian wise men. Theoretical scepticism was developed later. Jean W. Sedlar, *India and the Greek World: A Study in the Transmission of Culture* (Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1980).


13. “My ideas of a true proposition is such that every predicate, necessary or contingent, past, present, or future, is included in the (true) idea of the subject,” wrote Leibniz in 1686, designating the tiniest or most insignificant details as part of the complete knowledge of a thing. Wilhelm Leibniz, *Identity in Individuals and True Propositions*, in *Leibniz Selections*, ed. by Philip P. Wiener (Scribner’s, N.Y., 1951), p. 97.

15. "It is my view that Maimonides was very influential in seventeenth century thought. The Guide for the Perplexed existed in Latin and was read by Malebranche, Leibniz and Bayle, among others. Maimonides' account of the Mutakalamun school is given in Bayle in several places. . ." Richard H. Popkin, personal letter dated March 18, 1966.


17. On the connection of Leibniz' Monadology to the eighth century Baghdad school and thence to India, I will limit myself to Max Jammer's remarks in his Concept of Space: The History of Theories of Space in Physics (Harvard Univ., Cambridge, 1954; second ed. rev., 1969), p. 52, where he points out that Leibniz's Monadology shows a striking resemblance to the atomistic theory and occasionalism of the Kalam, that is, the Mutakallimun school of thought, called also the "Loquentes," as mentioned by Saint Thomas Aquinas. On the location of Arab and Muslim medieval scholars in the Chinese area of sovereignty, see Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China, Vol. 5, Part 5, Section 33 continued, "Chemistry and Chemical Technology" (1980), pp. 423-424.

18. "Francis Hutcheson, disciple of Shaftesbury, is emphatic on the appropriateness of the term 'sense' for aesthetic experience. The perception of beauty and harmony, he says, is justly called a sense because it involves no intellectual element, no reflection on principles and causes." Gilbert and Kuhn, History of Aesthetics, p. 241. Hutcheson's Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty was published in 1725, followed, three years later, by An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections. With Illustrations of the Moral Sense.

19. See Gilbert and Kuhn, History of Aesthetics, p. 244.


21. The doctrinal parallels of Leibniz’s contemporary, Spinoza, to the philosophy of Chu Hsi are so close as hardly to allow explaining them without any reference to the Chinese. See O. Graf, "Chu Hsi and Spinoza, Proceedings Xth International Congress of Philosophy, Vol. I, pp. 239, ff. As to the influence of Chu Hsi on Leibniz, Joseph Needham, in Science and Civilization in China (Cambridge Univ., Cambridge), Vol. II (1954), p. 497, suggests "that after the systematisation of the Chinese world-picture by Chu Hsi and the Neo-Confucians, its organic quality was transferred into the stream of Occidental philosophical thought through the intermediation of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. If this is true its importance can hardly be overestimated." On pp. 497-502, Needham presents much internal evidence in Leibniz's writings for the influence of several important Chinese ideas. H. Bernard, "Chu Hsi's Philosophy and its Interpretation by Leibniz," 'Tien Hsia Monthly, V. (Aug. 1937), summarizes Leibniz’s views about Chu Hsi’s philosophy.

22. The Cambridge Platonists directly contributed to Shaftesbury's notion of a
moral sense common to all humans. He highly praises the *Enchiridion Ethicum* of Henry More in one of his *Letters to a Student* (December 30, 1709), cited by John M. Robertson, editor of the *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1963, 2 vols.), Vol. I, p. xxiii. Here, the Magian component in the thought of the Cambridge theologians also found expression (as it did in early Christian centuries) in the morality of the Stoics. "Of the seventeenth century moralists . . . (the doctrine of the Cambridge Platonists) had pointed most clearly towards an exaltation of the natural moral sense of man . . ." It is principally Shaftesbury who saves the Cambridge School from the fate of a learned curiosity and makes it a philosophic force in the centuries to come."


23. Shaftesbury arrived at his moral ideas at the age of eighteen in his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*. "It is morally certain that his main (moral) ideas were given him and as a matter of fact they are nearly all explicitly or implicitly in Spinoza, whose teaching Shaftesbury was sure to hear of in his sojourn in Holland in 1698, if he had not studied it before." J.M. Robertson, editor of the *Characteristics*, Vol. I, introduction, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

24. See Adolphe Reichwein, *China and Europe*, "The Age of Feeling" (18th century), pp. 122, ff.: "It is not uninteresting to observe how, in Germany of course, a philosophy, a special aesthetic, of the new garden style arose. First, Ludwig A. Unzer wrote *On Chinese Gardens*. . . . The English nation . . . has long since convinced itself of the superiority of Chinese taste in the planning of gardens."


28. He was familiar with the Chinese type of garden, which was a romantic expression of Nature. See Robertson, Introduction to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, p. xxxv.

29. Robertson, *Introduction*, pp. xxvi-xxvii. John Herman Randall holds that "the whole argument of Book I of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* is devoted to proving that morality does not follow from and depend upon theism, but rather, a sound theism is the culmination of morality " . . . his 'theism' is the attempt to banish the supernatural while retaining the divine element in religion. And he scorns the resort to future rewards and punishments as the sanction for morality." *The Career of Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 749. This line of thinking was new in the West, and it is reminiscent of the Chinese religion.

30. During the Renaissance the Platonist and Medieval notion of beauty was quietly rejected in favor of aesthetic presuppositions which were sensuous. Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos*, pp. 165 and note, and 170.

32. Romanticism also presented natural objects in a new light for Faustian II technology and Magian (Christian) zeal to conquer. In America, for example, “… we find often in Western literature a constant emphasis upon the malignant aspects of Nature in whom the people of the West seem to be delighted to discover an enemy for the sheer enjoyment of challenging her to fight.” Carlton F. Culmsee, Malign Nature and the (American) Frontier. Monograph Series, Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah, 1959, Vol. VII, No. 2, pp. 12-13.


34. John Hermann Randall, The Career of Philosophy. Vol. I, p. 490, quoting More’s Philosophical Writings. He may well have read the then famous Jacob Boehme, who expressed similar Neoplatonic somatic ideas of spirit and God; e.g., The Epistels of Jacob Bemen (London, 1649)—on God’s imagination, Epistles, 93, No. 79.

35. Randall, The Career of Philosophy. Vol. I, p. 749, Shaftesbury’s so-called Deism and pantheism are reminiscent of Neoplatonism and its predecessor, Indian religious philosophy, which have been criticized for opposite errors: for being too little religious, and for being so spiritual as to deny any reality to the secular world.


42. Smith is quoted by J.W. Goldthwaite, editor of Burke’s Reflections on the Sublime (University of Calif., Berkeley, 1960), p. 11.


47. Letter from Professor Karl Aschenbrenner, September 21, 1966. Aschenbrenner adds: “the effect of Leibniz is like a delayed action weapon, since one can see it better after Kant . . . .”
48. Baumgarten built on the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy; his doctoral dissertation at the University of Halle, the *Reflections on Poetry*, reflects the influence. Wolff was one of his professors and must have influenced Baumgarten with ideas originating from his master, Leibniz, and also with ideas more directly Chinese. His dismissal in 1723 was brought about by religious conservative faculty members for giving a public lecture in praise of Confucian ideas.

49. "The classifications of Leibniz's *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* are repeated by Baumgarten in his *Reflections on Poetry*: "12... poetic representations are either obscure or clear... 15... and since they will be either distinct or confused and since they are not distinct, therefore, they are confused." Baumgarten's *Reflections on Poetry*, translated by Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (University of Calif., Berkeley, 1954), pp. 40-42. See Clifford Brown, "Leibniz and Aesthetics," pp. 76-77. Leibniz distinguished four grades of knowledge: (1) obscure and dark knowledge made up of 'little perceptions,' e.g., the vague congeries of the dream-state or the unrecognized but received sensations of separate waves falling on the beach; (2) clear but confused knowledge, in which phenomena, such as colors, are recognized but are not intellectually defined; (3) distinct knowledge in which a definition or scientific explanation is possible; and (4) adequate or intuitive knowledge in which all the marks of objects are known exhaustively and gathered into a single complete survey. Now aesthetic knowledge is in the main placed on the second level." Gilbert and Kuhn, *History of Aesthetics*, p. 228; Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, p. 41, Sec. 24.


52. See Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 297. F.S.C. Northrop considers the aesthetic character of empirical experience, that is, the aesthetic quality of scientific observations, to be just as significant to understanding science as the aesthetic character of the enjoyment of beauty is for the understanding of art. This is one of the prevalent themes in his *Meeting of East and West: an Inquiry Concerning World Understanding* (Macmillan, N.Y., 1946), pp. 312-496. As to the aesthetic quality of seventeenth century British empiricism, its founder, John Locke (1632-1710), though he had little use for poetry, inspired an intense new aesthetic movement by making the starting point in any scientific investigation not a general truth but a particular psychological event. (Gilbert and Kuhn, *History of Aesthetics*, p. 233). His pupil, Shaftesbury, is the founder of the empirical school of British aesthetics (p. 230).

53. "Along with the Christian religion, as that which teaches men to know evil in the root and overcome it fundamentally, the ugly is finally and in principle introduced into the world of art. For this reason, therefore, in order to depict in its totality, art cannot limit the portrayal of the ugly. Its apprehensions of the idea would be superficial if it tried to limit itself to simple beauty." Rosenkranz, *Aesthetic des Hasslichen* (1851), quoted by Bernard Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetics* (Macmillan, N.Y., 1892), p. 404. Here, the Faustian II worldview excludes the too harmonious cosmology of Leibniz, reminiscent of China's worldview.
57. The Chinese were much more familiar and at ease with cosmic Nature. For Taoists, as well as Confucians, there existed “a universal order of which the two elements, natural order and social order, react constantly, the one on the other. When an equilibrium is maintained between the two, the universe is in good order and enjoys great peace.” Siao-King Fang, *Les conceptions fondamentales du droit public dans la chine antique* (Paris, 1940), p. 20, quoted by Gray L. Dorsey, “The Influence of Philosophy on Law and Politics in Western Civilization,” in Charles A. Moore, editor, *Philosophy and Culture East and West* (Univ. Hawaii, Honolulu, 1962), pp. 533-548.
59. Reichwein (China and Europe) gives an excellent analysis of the Chinese contribution to rococo art.
61. The religious personalism of European man is at the opposite pole from the abstract. Ultimate Reality for a participant in the Arabic and Judaeo-Christian traditions is an absolute Person. The cultural primacy of Indian longing for peace, undisturbed by the flux of the phenomenal world, presupposes either an impersonal Absolute or an infinite human Compassion which is only partially personal.
64. Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Cosmic Art of India: Symbol (Murti), Sentiment (Rasa) and Silence (Yoga)* (Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1965), 93. It would be incorrect to conclude that Indian art, seemingly more concrete than Western art, is the opposite of abstract. “All the arts (of India) whether dance or drama, sculpture or painting, have for their basic aim the elucidation of the abstract, universal or stable rasas and bhavas.” *Ibid.*, p. 113. (Despite their sensuality. D.B.R.).
The Faustian I worldview was more rational, with its “craving for truth;” but emotion, as well as Reason, is central to the Faustian II worldview.


70. Marcuse, *Eros*, p. 76.


75. My analysis of civilizational worldviews is metaphysical; a worldview metaphysically affects all aspects of life. David Hume’s remarks in a letter on his use of metaphysics are a propos to the sociological/historical inquiry that I am making, for my approach to civilizations may be repugnant to some by seeming to “trivialize” great cultural symbols through analyzing their role in the worldview. “There are different ways of examining the Mind as well as the Body. One may consider it either as an anatomist or as a painter; either to discover its most secret springs and principles or to describe the grace and beauty of its actions. I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two views. Where you pull off the skin, and display all the minute parts, there appears something trivial, even in the noblest attitudes and most vigorous actions: nor can you ever render the object graceful or engaging but by clothing the parts again with skin and flesh, and presenting only their bare outside. An anatomist, however, can give very good advice to a painter or statuary: And in like manner, I am persuaded that metaphysician may be very helpful to a moralist; though I cannot easily conceive these two characters united in the same work.” Letter quoted in E.C. Mossner’s *The Life of David Hume* (University of Texas, Austin, 1954), p. 134. Spengler did join the two characters in his work on higher cultures, *The Decline of the West*, though he sacrificed the use of rational explanation in order to do so.


83. David B. Richardson, “Emergent Influences in Space Theory.”
