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A Study on the Concept and the Painting of Trees in Art

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A STUDY ON THE CONCEPT AND THE PAINTING OF TREES IN ART

(TITLE)

BY

CHARLES F. LINDERMAN

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history trees became so interwoven with man's daily life that they developed into symbols for his expressions, his fears and passions, his religious beliefs, and his superstitions. Trees became heraldic emblems of kings and empires, symbolic recognition for heroes and saints; decorations for feasts and religious ceremonies; symbols for the expressions of love and desire, and tokens of friendship. Throughout the evolution of man, wherever he lived, he was surrounded by trees appealing to all his senses: to his sight, touch, taste, smell, and even to his hearing, warning him by the rustling of leaves and twigs of any approaching danger of man and beast alike. The behavior of the trees around man was always peaceful, and man found that there was no such thing as a menacing or angry tree. Man became attached to trees, which lent themselves to his needs, and as a means of survival. They provided him with pleasing experiences for all his

senses, and gave him a means of acquiring food and shelter, and a means of protecting himself when in the face of danger. In Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Nordic mythology, in Christianity and Biblical legends, in Oriental beliefs and folklore man's mind assigned particular importance to the medicinal and nutricious properties of trees, the beauty of their form and leaves, the blossoms as decorative symbols to gods and kings, and signs for seasons and months of the year. The symbolic, legendary, and religious meaning attached to trees in the past has been handed down to us throughout the ages. Many of these meanings are still valid today, such as the use of many special trees as symbols to celebrate Easter, Christmas, many other holidays and special occasions.

CHAPTER I

Trees were the largest, living and growing things in man's environment. They were always there, season after season, growing higher and stronger. Man saw them throughout his lifetime, and they became the symbols of strength, life, death, and everlasting life. The trees surrounding man changed with the seasons. They moved from barren, fruitless trees, to fruit-bearing things, providing man with food. Early man considered the trees as sacred things and attached supernatural powers to them. Trees were thought to be the children of some unseen higher spirits that bestowed good and bad on mankind. Some of the sacred meanings given to trees were handed down from generation to generation, from belief to belief, and from religion to religion.

The tree has played an important part in Christian symbolism. In general, the tree is a symbol of either life or death, depending upon whether it is healthy and strong, or poorly nourished and withered.[1]

> The Vatican Pieta has been discussed at length in the countless scholarly, and not so scholarly, works on Michelangelo.

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[1] George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

> And yet one curious detail has hardly been noticed by all these authors: the truncated tree at the feet of Christ. Perhaps they thought its purpose was purely practical and hence self-explanatory—a marble bridge to protect Christ's left foot against breakage by linking it with the base. But would not a stone have done as well? Why this single piece of vegetation on an otherwise barren rock? Did the tree possible hold a message? That there was a problem here became apparent only recently, when the possibility of an answer was provided. Some years ago an art historian began to investigate tree symbolism and discovered, by matching religious and philosophical texts with works of art, that in the Renaissance the idea of rebirth or resurgence was often thought of in terms of regrowth and be represented by a bare tree (which will "come to life" when it grows new leaves in the spring) or a truncated tree sprouting new shoots. Thus a bare tree in the background of a picture showing the dead Christ, mourned by his mother, becomes an effective symbol of death and resurrection, and the tree stump in Michelangelo's Pieta very probably conveys the same meaning—or perhaps we had better say that it conveyed this meaning to the well-educated beholder of the artist's own time, who must have been familiar with the symbolism of trees.[2]

The acacia tree symbolized the immortality of the soul, and was also a symbol of the Virgin Mary.[3] The tree was called the shittah-tree by the Israelites, who supposedly brought the wood of this tree from Egypt to build their Tabernacle and the Arc of the Covenant.

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[2]H. W. Janson, "The Mirrors of History", Time-Life Library of Art, New York, 1966, p. 8.

[3]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbolism in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

According to legends, Christ was crowned by the Romans with the thorny twigs of the acacia to mock it's sacredness, and also because it's leaves resembled the ivy with which kings were crowned. However, other countries recognize other trees used as the thorny crown: in England the buckthorn, in France the hawthorn.

The Biblical story of Aaron tells that he threw his staff on the Tabernacle to determine which tribe should be the one to provide the future high priests for Israel. It was Aaron's staff which, "budded and brought forth buds and blossomed and yielded almonds."[4] The tribe of Levy was therefore entitled to the right of future priesthood. The almond tree symbolized devine approval or favor.[5]

The cross which Christ was crucified on was supposedly made from the aspen tree. One of the legends tells that when the tree realized it was being cut for a cross it's leaves began to tremble and have never ceased.[6] The other story is that all the trees in the grove bowed in

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[4]The Bible, Old Testament, Numbers XVII/8.

[5]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

[6]Ibid., p. 39.

so row when Christ died on the cross, all except the aspe tree. Because of it's pride and sinful arrogance the leaves of the aspen were doomed to continual trembling.[7]

The ilex or holly oak is also said to be the tree from which the cross was made. It is an evergreen which, because of it's thorny leaves, is regarded as a symbol of Christ's crow of thorns. It symbolizes the passion of Christ.[8]

The apple is considered to be a symbol of sin or evil. The Apple of Sodom was a fruit that grew near the Biblical towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed by God with fire becauss of the sinfulness of the people who lived there. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven."[9] Legend tells that because of its luscious appearance, the apple of Sodom tempted weary travellers to eat of it. However, as soon as it was touched it turned into ashes, as a warning of the sinfulness and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The apple is also suppcsed to be the forbidden fruit of the Biblical Garden of Eden, according

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[7]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

[8]Ibid., p. 39.

[9]The Bible, Old Testament, Genesis XIX/24.

to popular belief. However, the Bible doesn't say what kind of fruit tree stood in the Garden of Eden. It is referred to as "The fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden."[10] Other than being a symbol for sin and evil, the apple is also a symbol of perpetual concord, and is considered by many to be a gift of good luck.

The Cedar of Lebanon is a symbol of Christ, the concept of beauty, majesty and nobility.[11] The twelve oldest trees in the groves of Lebanon are symbolic to many religions. The Isrealites call these trees the "Twelve Friends of Solomon", because the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was said to have been built from the cedar tree. The Christians refer to these twelve trees as the Twelve Apostles. According to legend, anyone who injures one of these trees will be doomed to an evil fate.

An old and beautiful legend has it that, at the time of the Crucifixion, the dogwood tree was comparable in size to the oak tree and other large trees in the forest. Because of its firmness and strength it was selected as

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[10]The Bible, Old Testament, Genesis III/3.

[11]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols In Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

the timber for the cross, but to be put to such a cruel use greatly distressed the tree. Sensing this, the Crucified Jesus, in his gentle pity for the sorrow and suffering of all, said to it: "Because of your sorrow and pity for my sufferings never again will the dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a cross. Henceforth, it will be slender, bent and twisted and its blossoms will be in the form of a cross--two long and two short petals. In the center of the outer edge of each petal there will be nailprints--brown with rust and stained with red--and in the center of the flower will be a crown of thorns, and all who see this will remember."

The cherry tree and the cherry was used in early Christianity to symbolize sweetness of character derived from good works.[12]

The chestnut tree was a symbol of chastity. The chestnut in its husk is surrounded by thorns, but is unharmed by them. The virute of chastity is a triumph over the temptations of the flesh symbolized by the thorns.[13]

The cypress tree symbolized death, because once cut, it will never grow again.[14]

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[12]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

[13]Ibid., p. 39.

[14]Ibid., p. 39.

The elm tree alludes to the dignity of life, the strength which is derived by the devout from their faith in the scriptures.[15]

The fig tree was sometimes used instead of the apple tree to symbolize the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. It was a symbol of lust, also a symbol of fertility because of its many seeds.[16] It was a sacred tree to the early Christians because Jesus desired to eat figs on the way to Bethany. Among the Hebrews, the fig tree was a symbol of peace and abundance.

The fir tree symbolized the elect in heaven who despise lowly desires. It also symbolized people who excel in the virtue of patience.[17]

The willow tree was a symbol of the gospel of Christ, because no matter how many of the branches are cut, it continues to flourish and remain whole.[18]

In the centuries before the coming of Christ men were aware of their utter helplessness in the face of the great unknown we call destiny; the polytheism of the

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[15]George Ferguson, "Signs and Symbols in Christian Art", A Galaxy Book, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.

[16]Ibid., p. 39.

[17]Ibid., p. 39.

[18]Ibid., p. 39.

common man conceived of human life and nature as a continual series of interferences on the part of all kinds of gods and demons with the courses of human events. These deities assisted or killed his wife in childbrith, they looked benevolently or hatefully at the growth of his crop, they made his cow healthy or they bewitched her. Man saved himself from the fear of these supernatural forces through a sort of bargain which is more or less immanent in all primitive religious sacrifices; the gods received so many parts of a sacrifical animal, and in compensation for these services they were required to protect mans home and community.

Eventually the Greek philosophers and their friends grew out of this ancient folklore into a highly man-centered circle of thought. There developed a moral wisdom, and out of it spread a philosophy which saw the salvation of man, if there was any, only in his gradual self-realization with the divine laws.

In the midst of this course of development, there appears, among the poor villagers of Palestine, Jesus, whose people had overcome the magical polytheism of the ancient world, and by the virtue of the teaching of great prophets, had developed a monotheistic tradition.

From the beginning of Christianity there lurked the danger of a common means of communication between the prophets and the common man. The Latin language became a common means of communication within the realm of the learned, but the language reserved for scholars and theologians, prevented the natural emotions of men from finding genuine expression in the arts. Many of the lower clergy in the early Middle Ages understood Latin very imperfectly and the people understood it not at all. The religious symbols and services insofar as they were of verbal character, concealed their meaning rather than revealed it. The consequence was ritualism, magical tabooism, and symbolism instead of spiritual enrichment. In most instances the early Christian could understand the symbols and legends, handed down from generation to generation, better than the teachings of the clergy. So it was that symbols played an important part in the early church, and the symbolic meaning of trees was handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation in such a manner.

The Chinese way of life is bound together with an immense network of superstitions and symbols. To the peasant and nobleman alike, symbolism was an integral part of his faith and religion. All of nature was the manifestation of signs and symbols of an unseen power

which resided in a holy place. The Chinese people do not make a motion or take a step without being subservient to some of the superstitions which apply to all ages and conditions. There are those for the various seasons of the year, for the phases of the moon, births, marriages, and deaths.

The prevailing mood in early China was especially congenial to the individualism, naturalism, mysticism, and symbolism which stimulated creative efforts in the realm of art. Of the several forms of painting, landscape painting has been considered as the crowning art of China. The harmony of the spirit and the spirit of nature became the ultimate goal of Chinese art. The tree was often used as a symbol to embellish pottery, jewelry, religious artifacts, temples, homes and documents.

The tree plays an important role in the legendary birth of the founder of the Chinese dynasties.

> "The only expounders of its worship and masters of its dance, the owners of Sang-lin (the mulberry forest) are descended from a woman who conceived after swallowing the gee (tsih) of a swallow. She had gained it in a tournament the very day of the spring equinox. Some say that she conceived after having sung in a place called the Plain of the Mullberry-trees. If the hero born of her was given for patronymic the name of Tsih (egg) it was mulberry-trees, grown by a miracle which announced to his descendants a renewal or a decline of the virtue proper totheir race. Thus the emblematic name and the actual emblem are both

> attached to an analogous m th: that of birth obtained in a holy place in the course of a seasonal festival.[19]

The sandalwood tree was considered a sacred wood by the Chinese. The wood was used in religious ceremonies, in the construction of temples, and the oil was used for embalming.

The cassia tree is considered the Chinese sacred tree of life. C inese legend tells that the Cassia tree is growing to an incredible height in a garden of paradise in the mountains of Chi a. Whoever enters Paradise and eats of the fruit will gain immortality.[20]

The three blessed fruits of the Chinese are the buddha's hand, symbol of happiness; the peach, s mbol of longevity; the pomegranate, symbol of fecundity and hopeful future.[21]

> Legend has it that Buddha was sitting beneath the buddha's hand tree and picked one of its fruit to eat, but was very dissatisfied because the fruit was so bitter. Instead of destroying the tree he said it might live if it would make its fruit pleasing to man. The tree obeyed and changed its fruit to the shape of Buddha's outstretched hand.[22]

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[19] Marcel Grovet, Chinese Civilization, Meridian Books, Inc., New York, 1958, p. 180.

[20] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 25.

[21] Ibid., p. 30-31.

[22] Ibid., p. 30-31.

The peach tree is called the "Tree of the Fairy Fruit" by the Chinese. It is the sacred fruit of the eight Tacist immortals. It is said to have bloomed only once in three thousand years, and yielded three thousand years later the ripened peach.[23]

> The bausor tree was called the "Tree of Poison" by the Chinese. It grew on the isles around Cathay (China) and the natives called this tree the "Bohun Upas". It was considered a symbol of death because it was believed that it exhaled narcotic fumes, which not only destroyed all vegetation within a radius of many yards, but also killed any animal or person that rested and fell asleep under it.[24]

In India, the religion of the Hindus in the fi st or Vedic epoch was the worship of na ure. The power of the gods and goddesses were manifested in sky, mountains, water, and trees. The most common object of worship was the "Mother Goddess", whose cult was spread over Asia Minor. One variety of the "Mother Goddess" appears on numerous pottery figurines, seals and amulets. She is represented as horned, and in association with a sacred pipal tree.[25]

> "Once we see a horned deity with long hair and arm-rings, standing between two branches of a tree, before which is a half-kneeling woman. We evidently have to do with a tree

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[23] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 30-31.

[24] Ibid., p. 85.

[25] Aguilar-Chavarria, O.L., "Traditional India", Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964, p. 19.

> deity, apparently residing in a Pipal (Ficus religiosa), a tree which is viewed with reverence in India. It was under a Pipal that Buddha had his revelation."[26]

Another version of this particular legend has it that,

> "The Pipal or bo tree (Ficus religiosa), native to Hindustan and Ceylon is sacred to Buddha and worshipped by the Buddhists of India. According to tradition it was under a bo tree at Uruvela (today's Bodh-Gaya), Bengal that Buddha sat for seven weeks on a couch of grass facing the East until he obtained the perfect knowledge and enlightenment of Nirvana. Today a bo tree grows in every Indian village near the Buddhist temple, surrounded by a mud-platform, on which the meetings and meditations of the villagers are held. Bo trees are exceptionally long lived. The oldest of these trees stands at Amiradapura, Ceylon, and is believed to have been planted in 288 B. C.[27]

The Bo tree or Pipal tree became the symbol of meditation and perfection for the Buddhist. It was considered the "Tree of Nirvana", and also dedicated to Gautama Buddha.

The symbol of the tree played an important role in the religion of the Egyptians. They had numerous gods and to these gods were attached many superstitions and symbols. Various animals were sacrificed on their behalf and trees were consecrated to them. The ancient Egyptians consecrated the evergreen myrtle tree (Myrtus Communic) to Hathor, goddess of love, mirth and joy.[28] Among

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[26] O.L. Aguilar-Chavarria, "Traditional India", Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964, p. 26.

[27] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants, and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 24.

[28]

the Egyptians the date palm (Phoenix dactylifera) was the symbolic Tree of the Year, because it produced a new branch every month.[29] The wood of the cypress tree (Cupressus sempervireus) was used for Egyptian mummy cases because of its proverbial durability.[30]

> The sycamore (Ficus sycamorus) was revered in ancient Egypt as the Tree of Life, dedicated to Hathor, the goddess of fertility, live, mirth and joy, and to Nut, the goddess of the underworld, who provided the souls of the dead with drink and nourishment. Every sycamore was an alter to Hathor and Nut; offerings of fruit, grain vegetables, flowers and water jars were placed at their roots to secure fertility and abundance.[31]

The persea tree (Balanites aegyptica) also called the bito tree, native to the Near East and Africa is a wild laurel tree growing in the dry regions of Persia and Egypt.

> The persea tree was sacred to the ancient Egyptians, and revered as a symbol of everlasting fame. Thoth, the scribe of the Egyptian gods, of deeds and measurer of time, and Sofekh, the goddess of writing, learning and knowledge, inscribed the names and deeds of kings, heroes and high-priests on its leaves, thus securing to them and their names eternal life; a striking equivalent to our Father Time, writing on the symbolic pages of the Book of History.[32]

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[29] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 26.

[30] Ibid., p. 57.

[31] Ibid., p. 49.

[32] Ibid., p. 45.

In ancient Egypt the tree was connected with royalty and many trees were used as an art motif to embellish the walls of palaces, as designs on clothes and other fabrics, on pottery and jewelry, and on temples and other religious artifacts.

The Peruvian pepper or mastic tree (Schinus molle), growing on the plains and hillsides of ancient Peru, was sacred to the Incas and their predecessors. It as revered as their most important medicinal tree.

> The natives used every part of the mastic tree in one form or another as potent medicines. A decoction of its bark was used as a remedy for flatulence, stomach ache, and pain in the groin. An alcholic, sweet-acid tasting beverage was made from its berries, mixed with honey and vinegar, as a nerve-soothing tonic; an infusion of its crushed leaves, which smelled like fennel, was used as a medicinal tea for relieving pain of any kind. Its manna-like, white resin was of special importance because it was not only used externally in a poultice against inflamed swelling and abscesses, but also cooked in fruit juice and taken internally as a favorite preventive against mistiness of the eyes. It was furthermore believed that the fumes of mastic resin, arising as an incense from hot coals, could drive away torpid tumors. The Spanish conquistadores called this tree "Lentisco del Peru."[33]

The night-blooming tree of sorrow (Arbor tristis) was believed to be a native South American tree, whose trunk grew in shape of a female body.

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[33]Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 46.

> An ancient Amerindian fable tells that the young and beautiful daughter of the mighty chief and warrior, Parizataco, fell in love with the sun. But when the sun rejected her love and scorned her, she withdrew from all human companionship into the wilderness. In her grief she slew herself. When her body was found by her people, it was brought back to her native village and put on a funeral pyre according to the custom of her tribe and cremated. From the ashes of her body sprang the tree of sorrow whose beautiful blossoms never opened in daytime in the sun. Its flowers unfolded their petals only at night under the cool light of the moon and the stars, filling the night air with a fragrant, sweet-heavy perfume. And when the sun rose in the morning the blossoms of this tree closed, its leaves withered and the tree looked dead and barren, only to rejuvenate and unfold again under the rays of the moon. Whenever a human hand touched the blooming tree the blossoms of this sensitive plant closed up and their sweet scent vanished.[34]

The mistletoe was sacred and received the greatest veneration by the ancient Teutonic and Celtic tribes.

> "The Druid priests, after the ceremony of sacrificing a white bull to the good spirits, distributed mistletoe branches among the worshippers. These branches were taken by the people to their dwellings and suspended from the ceiling to ward off evil spirits".[35]

Of all the trees in pre-historic times the oak was the most widely venerated of all sacred plants because in the mythological belief of many ancient tribes it was the first tree created and man sprang from it.

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[34] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees", Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 92.

[35] Ibid., p. 41.

> To the Teutonic tribes the oak tree was considered the tree of life, sacred to Thor. It was the celestial tree of the Celtic Druids, and druidic ceremony or rite took palce without the aid of the oak tree and its satellite, the mistletoe. The oak tree was also the sacred tree of the pagan Dagda, the Good God and Creator of the ancient Irish Gaels. The fruit of the oak, the lifegiving acorn, main food of the Nordic tribes, became the symbol of fecundity and immortality.[36]

The Druids, which were Celts living in the huge oak forests, related the sacred bull to the sky, the thunderstorm, and to the oak tree. To them these were symbols of regeneration. The fertility of the bull was tied in with the phallic oak with its thousands of fertile acorns, and with the rainstorm wherin the golden mistletoe was a symbol of lightning and the bull was the thunderer. "Ritual ceremonies designed to fructify the land and animals were performed by white-robed Druid priests deep within the sacred oak forests. At these occasions, bulls were probably sacrificed, and mistletoe was cut from the oaks with a sacred golden sickle."[37]

In Nordic and Teutonic mythology the hazel tree was dedicated to Thor, or Donar, the god of thunder, was and strength. In Celtic and old Irish legend it was the tree of wisdom; it represented all human knowledge of the arts and sciences, and was carried by heralds-in-arms on their missions as their official badge of honor.

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[36] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees," Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 42.

[37] Jack R. Conrod, The Horn and the Sword, New York, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1957, p. 157.

In Greek and Roman mythology the principal deities were personifications of the powers of nature. The tree played an important part in the legendary tales of these deities. The Greeks, whose imagination was lively, peopled all nature with invisible beings and supposed that every object, from the sun and sea to the smallest and largest tree, was under the care of some particular divinity. In this pantheistic sense, nature was the divine element which permeated and renewed the universe, and infiltrated it with immutable laws which all must obey, in order to avoid punishment. The early Greek was fascinated by the unusual occurances of trees, and invented scores of tales to explain the inexplainable, so that his searching mind could rest at ease. Many of these legendary tales, sprung from the fertile imagination of these people and were handed down from generation to generation and believed throughout the centuries. Plato, when being philosophical, denounced mythology for its degrading fiction, but when being artistic, incorporated fiction beautifully in his own thought. The religious myths of ancient Greece and Rome are extinct. The divinities have not a single worshipper among men today. They belong now to the departments of literature and art. In these humanities they will continue to hold their place because they are too closely connected with the finest works of poetry and art, both ancient and modern, to pass unnoticed by man.

Venus (Aphrodite) was the goddess of love and beauty, and the tree sacred to her was the myrtle. The myrtle was considered the symbol of love and marriage, and ever since Roman times brides often wear wreaths of myrtle-blossoms and bridegrooms sprigs of myrtle on the wedding day.[38]

Minerva, the goddess of wisdom was the offspring of Jupiter, without a mother. She sprang from his head, completely armed. The tree most sacred to her was the olive tree. Legend has it that Neptuen and Minerva contended for the possession of the city of Athens. The gods decreed that it should be awarded to the one who produced the gift most useful of the two, and awarded the city to Minerva; and it was named after her, Athens, her name in Greek being Athens. The Gods decided on Minerva's gift because the olive was a symbol of peace, and therefore better for humanity than Neptune's horse, a symbol of war. The olive is also an emblem of achievement because of the victors in the olympian games were crowned with an olive wreath.

The Greeks dedicated the oak tree to Zeus because his oracle in Dodona, an ancient town in Epirus was located in a grove of oaks. To the Romans the oak was the tree of Jupiter.[39]

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[38] Ernst and Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees," Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 41.

[39] Ibid., p. 42.

> The Greek poet Ovid (34 B.C. -17 A.D.) tells a mythological legend about the youth Cyparissus, son of Telephus of Cea, a special friend of Apollo; one day Cyparissus killed by accident a mighty stag, a favorite of Apollo, held sacred by the Dictean nymphs. The youth suffered such agony of remorse for what he had done, that he begged the gods to let him grief endure forever. In answer to his prayers the gods turned him into the Cypress tree. The tree became the symbol of the immortal soul and eternal death. In greek and Roman mythology, the cypress was the emblem of the gods of the netherworld, the Fates and the Furies.[40]

According to Greek mythological belief, the golden apple presented by Gaea, the ancient goddess of the earth and fertility as a wedding-gift to Hera on the day she married Zeus, was an orange. The "Golden Apples of the Hesperides," grown from the seeds of that fruit, were the orange trees. Hercules was compelled to perform all the commands of Eurysthesus. These commands were a series of desperate adventures, which are called the "Twelve Labors of Hercules." The last and most difficult of these labors was betting the "Golden Apples of the Hesperides," for Hercules did not know where to find them. Milton in his "Comus" alludes to the orange tree--"Amidst the gardens fair of Hesperus and his daughters three that sing about the golden tree."

> The black poplar tree was consecrated to Hercules, who according to mythological legend, wore a crown of its foliage when he descended to the Gates of Hades to bring Cerberus up to earth in his 12th labor. The fable has it

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[40]Ernst & Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees," Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 57.

> that the black poplar leaf is a different shade on each side for this reason: When Hercules donned his crown of poplar leaves the sweat of his brow moistened one side of the leaves and the retained their natural color. But the other side, exposed to the smoke and vapor of the infernal regions he visited were tinged by the dark shade which they still retain today.[41]

Since antiquity the hawthorn tree has been considered the emblem of hope, because the Athenian brides used its blossoms to decorate their companions on their nuptial day, while they themselves carried larger boughs of it to the alter. The alter of Hymen, the ancient Greek god of marriage was lighted by torches made from the wood of this tree; and it also formed the flambeaux which illuminated the nuptial chamber.[42] In ancient Rome the hawthorn was used as a charm against witchcraft and sorcery, and its leaves were put into the cradles of newborn babies.

The plane tree was the symbol of genius in ancient Athens because the Greek philosophers held their studies and discourses under its wide-spreading shade.[43]

In the Pythian games a wreath of beech leaves adorned the head of the victor in feats of strength, swiftness of foot, or in the chariot race. Apollo instituted the games as a commemorative event of the slaying of the dragon python. Eventually Apollo adopted the laurel tree as his

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[41] Ernst & Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees," Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 76.

[42] Ibid., p. 59.

[43] Ibid., p. 76.

own instead of the beech. The reason for the change is alluded to in the legend of Apollo and Daphne. Cupid, the son of Venus, shot an arrow to excite love into the heart of Apollo. With another arrow to repel love, he struck the nymph Daphne, the daughter of the river-god Peneus. Apollo loved her but each time he approached her she fled. Apollo, desperate to have the maiden, chased her. Daphne called upon her father to "open the earth to enclose me, or change my form, which has brought me into this danger!"[44] A stiffness seized her limbs; her bosom began to be enclosed in a tender bark; her hair became leaves; her arms became branches; her foot stuck fast in the ground, as a root; her face became a tree-top, retaining nothing of its former self but its beauty.[45] Apollo was amazed. "Since you cannot by my wife," he said, "you shall assuredly be my tree. I will wear you for my crown."[46] The nymph, now changed into a laurel tree, bowed its head in grateful acknowledgement.

The mulberry tree plays an important role in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. They were two lovers who were forbidden by their parents to see one another. They agreed to slip away from their homes in the night and meet outside the city at the foot of a white mulberry tree. Thisbe arrived first, a veil covering her face. While she waited

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[44]Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable, New York; A Mentor Classic, 1962, p. 52.

[45]Ibid., p. 52.

[46]Ibid., p. 52.

she heard a lioness cry, her jaws dripping blood from a recent kill. Thisbe fled and hid behind a nearby rock. Meanwhile Pyramus approached the meeting place. Seeing the lion's footsteps in the sand and Thisbe's bloody veil, Pyramus thought he had caused her death, he plunged his sword into his heart. The blood spurted from the wound and turned the white mulberries red. Thisbe returned to find her dead lover and joined him in death by plunging the sword into her heart as Pyramus had done. They were buried in the same tomb, and the tree ever after brought forth red berries as it does to this day.[47]

Diana, the huntress queen, lived in a valley enclosed with cypresses and pines which she held sacred.[48] The story of Dryope tells that she was changed into a lotus tree.[49] Pomona was a wood-nymph who loved the country and the apple trees, and her right hand bore for its weapon not a javelin, but a pruning knife.[50]

> In Greek mythology, the two sons of Jupiter, Apollo, the god of harmony, and Mercury, the god of eloquence exchanged gifts with which they would be impowered to provide a better life for humanity. Apollo received a lyre made of tortoise-shell, whose tone would free the artistic spirit of mankind.

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[47]Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable, New York; A Mentor Classic, 1962, p. 53-56.

[48]Ibid., p. 65.

[49]Ibid., p. 97.

[50]Ibid., p. 109.

> Mercury got a winged wand made of hazel; its touch would enable men to express their thoughts by words. The winged hazel rod, entwined with two serpents, became and still is today the symbol of communication, reconciliation and commerce. Among the ancient Romans the hazel was intimately connected with marriage, and it was their custom to burn hazel torches during the wedding night to insure a peaceful and happy reunion of the newly-wed couple.[51]

The Greek legend of Baucis and Philemon is the story of two people who were blessed by the gods Jupiter and his son, Mercury. Baucis, a pious old dame, and her husband, Philemon, united when young, had grown old together. Not ashamed of their poverty, they made it endurable by moderate desires and kind despositions. At one time, Jupiter and Mercury were travelling and came upon the house of Baucis and Phile on. The two gods were weary and in need of rest and shelter. The old couple accomodated their guests and gave generously what little they had to eat and drink. Because of the old peoples generosity, Jupiter said, "Excellent old man, and woman worthy of such a husband, speak, tell us your wishes; what favor have you to ask of us?"[52] To the gods the old people declared their wish. "We ask to be priests and guardians of this your temple; and since here we have passed our lived in love and concord, we wish that one and the same hour may take us both from life, that I may not live to see her grave, nor be laid in my own by her."[53] Their prayer was granted, and they became the

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[51]Ernst & Johanna Lehner, "Folklore of Flowers, Plants and Trees, Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1960, p. 61-62.

[52]Thomas Bulfinch, The Age of Fable, New York; A Mentor Classic, 1962, p. 82

the keepers of the sacred edifice so long as they lived. They died at the same moment when they were very old, and their bodies were metamorphased into trees: Philemon into an oak, the symbol of hospitality, and Baucis into a linden, ever since the symbol of conjugal love.

CHAPTER II

In early times man used the concept of the tree as a symbol to embellish the surfaces of religious or mythological artifacts. Prehistoric man used the tree symbol with the animal form to depict the hunt. The tree forms of early man was simple and childlike. In some instances many trees or leaf shapes were used a decorative pattern. Some trees were actually painted on the bark of a tree. An example is, "A Spirit Man Spearing Kangaroos."[54]

In Egyptian art, leaves and tree forms were used to tell a story be being incorporated into hieroglyphic signs. The tree form was used as a decorative devise to decorate the walls of tombs, palaces, clothing, pottery and other artifacts. Beautiful tree and leaf patterns were carved into relief sculpture and painted. Trees were incorporated into pictorial representations of battles, but symbolic as well as historic. The artist used the concept of the tree as a symbol in pictorial storytelling.

The association of trees with animal dieties is evident in the Sumarian "Billy Goat and Tree", which shows a billy goat rearing up against a flowering tree. The animal,

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[54]H.W. Janson, "History of Art", Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey, 1969, p. 22.

marvelously alive and energetic, has an almost demonic power of expression as it gazes at us from between the branches of the symbolic tree.[55]

The naturalistic murals that covered the walls of Minoan palaces were colorful scenes, and symbolic patterns of animals, birds, trees and other luxuriant vegetation. In painted pottery, the abstract patterns of trees was a primary decorative motif. The fresh and intricate tree forms on Greek pottery surpassed were pictorial scenes from mythology, legend, and everyday life, in which the concept of the tree played an important part of the decorative motif.

The etruscan and Roman artist used the concept of the tree in his wall paintings in quite the same manner as the Greek artist did. They placed man in an effective natural setting of tree forms and other decorative vegetation. In some instances man was not included in the scheme of the painting. For instance, the "View of a Garden" is a landscape of a delightful garden of flowers, birds and fruit trees.[56]

In Medieval painting the concept of the tree was primarily used as a decorative device to embellish manuscript illumination. However, the tree was often used in connection

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[55]H. W. Janson, "History of Art", Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1969, p. 53.

[56]Ibid., p. 154.

with other symbols of the church. "Spring Landscape" is an excellent example of how free flowing tree forms depict the coming of spring.[57]

The Oriental concept of the tree was far different than that of Western man. The Oriental artist viewed nature rather than man as the center of things. The Chinese artist Ni Tson illustrated very delicate landscape scrolls as early as the 1300's. There were void of the human element, and represented a complete embrace of nature. H. W. Janson says " the Chinese had developed a landscape art of great atmospheric depth, a poetic vision of untamed nature three centuries before 1300 under the Sung Dynasty."[58] Chinese art became an influence on Islamic art. The Persians landscape painting was very similar to that of the Chinese. They used the tree concept in scrolls and illuminated manuscripts. The paintings were very graceful, delicate and reflect a Far Eastern source. The Islamic people used the tree form to illustrate the pages of religious books. These were miniature paintings that would illustrate Mohammad's ascension into paradise for instance. The concept of the tree in this case was used as a decorative motif.

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[57]H. W. Janson, "History of Art", Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1969, p. 228.

[58]Ibid., p. 193.

During the early Renaissance nature was subordinate to man. The concept of the tree was still used as a Christian symbol, as a decorative motif to embellish frescoes and other artifacts. Eventually the Renaissance in the North began to produce paintings that were void of human activity. As an example, Albrecht Dürers' "Italian Mountains" was a landscape where nature was the dominant theme. The specific location was of little importance to him, only the soft rounded slopes of nature.[59] More and more before the coming of the Baroque in Flanders, Holland and Spain, Renaissance man began to emphasize the importance of nature. Of Pieter Bruegels', "The Return of the Hunters" H. W. Janson says, "Now, however, nature is more than a setting for human activities; it is the main subject of the painter. Men in their seasonal occupations are incidental to the majectic annual cycle of death and rebirth that is the breathing rhythm of the cosmos."[60]

Landscape painting gained prominence in France during the 1600's when Nicolas Poussin began painting ideal landscapes following the tradition of Annibale Carracci. However, Poussin's landscapes always included the human element and nature served as a setting for some account of

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[59]H. W. Janson, "History of Art", Prentice-Hall, Inc., New Jersey, 1969, p. 389.

[60]Ibid., p. 400.

human activity. The French landscapist Claude Lorraine produced many wash drawings of nature that were dynamic, fresh and void of the human element. This was important, in that nature itself was the inspiration to produce many on the spot wash drawings that carried the effect of being a free and modern approach to landscape painting. They had a certain atmospheric quality and poetic essence that had not appeared before in the realm of landscape art. However, the dynamic quality of these washes did not carry over into Lorraine's paintings, and as a consequence his work carried strong connotations of the landscape art of antiquity.

Landscape painting reached its height when Paul Cezanne began to paint trees as large spaces of strong color and a certain simplicity of tone. In a letter to Pissaro in 1866, Cezanne said, "You are right in what you say about grey; it is the dominant colour in natural landscape, but it is terribly hard to capture it."[61] The paintings of Cezanne were similar to the earlier wash drawings of Claude Lorraine. Cezanne abandoned the studio to paint nature in the open air. He said, "No picture painted indoors, in a studio, can compare with the things you can do in the open air."[62] The concept of landscape painting had changed from

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[61] John Rewald, "Cezanne Landscapes," Tudor Publishing Co., Ne. York, p. 3.

[62] Ibid., p. 2.

a setting for human activity, to that of the artist expressing his emotions about nature only in terms of color and form. In this approach to landscape painting, the dominant forms of trees are so massive that the details are reduced to insignificance.

Albert Marquet painted men and nature from a height and distance, so that man was reduced to a tiny silhouette, (subordinate to nature) whose insect busyness sometimes had the suggestion of being almost ludicrous.

Claude Monet began to paint nature in the open air as Cezanne had done. Monet began to use cold colors, Blues and greens; in doing this he began to see in nature an interplay of colors independent of the shape of objects. All of nature and the concept of the tree began to be an abstraction of the artists environment. The artist become less interested in subject matter, and became more concerned with the effect they produced in their paintings. Paul Gauguin said, "Do not paint too closely from nature, art is an abstration. Draw it out of nature, dream about it, and think more of the resulting creation."[63]

In England, Thomas Cole made careful sketches of anthropomorphic trees, and evolved a whole philosophy of

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[63]Joseph-Emile Muller, "Modern Painting," Tudor Publishing Co., New York, 1965, p. 45.

trees, seeing "an expression of affection in intertwining branches,—of despondency in the drooping willow."[64] But in the presence of trees growing on mountaintops he seemed almost frightened. "They grope the crags with their gnarled roots," he wrote "and struggle with the elements with wild contortions."[65]

John Constable was more concerned with the intangible qualities--conditions of sky, light, and atmosphere—than with the concrete deatils of nature. His excitement was in the ever-changing conditions of wind, sunlight and clouds. His objective in landscape painting was to attain a natural effect.

William Turner was also fascinated about the effects of light and atmospheric conditions when painting trees. To him nature was a miracle of light and dramatic illumination. He painted the hills of England as sunlit mountain, and transformed streams into reivers of light.

Abstract traditions in landscape painting probably had their origin in Cezanne. The Cezanne influence eventually led to a geometric style illustrated in Cubism. In his "Summer Landscape" Stuart Davis used suggestions from Cubism, so that the concept of the natural landscape was transformed into flat colors and sharply outlined shapes.

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[64]Tracy Atkinson, "The Beauty of America In Great American Art," Country Beautiful Foundation, Inc., Wisconsin, 1965, p. 10.

[65]Ibid., p. 11.

The total impression of this landscape is cheerful, the natural and the abstract enhancing each other. The height of contemporary landscape was probably Jackson Pollock's "Autumn Rhythms". It suggests the intangible qualities of the season, the emotional, and infinite variety in the essence of nature.

CHAPTER III

As a tree gets old the angles of the branches appear to be more rounded, and the branches have a greater variety that seems to belong to a living thing, as well as a general change in appearance. Some trees in their old age take on a totally different form than when they were younger. The oak trees in their old age acquire a pictorial interest unrelated to them as merely trees. They become records of time, and resemble the stress of life, great fantastic skeletons who have survived the test of time. As trees get old the spaces of the sky showing through is widened by the loss of branches, gaps of light appear in place of boughs and a more grotesque form is apparent.

A tree standing by itself chiefly attracts attention to the pattern formed throughout its parts. If the foliage is slight, the line of the trunk can be traced from the ground to its dispersal in the haze of twigs at the apex. The balance, the curves, the straight lines that mark its course become a chief concern, and the sparse foliage, with its uncompetitive and indefinite forms, acts as a foil to display the lines of the trunk and ins ramifications; the result is the essential charm that belongs to the winter period with the exquisite tracery of foliage added to it. If the foliage is more compact, attention turns to the branch system, and a combined pattern of leafage and boughs must be sought for. The flat field of dainty foliage is

changed to one capable of receiving strong light and shade; fullness and weight take the place of delicacy. Any object by its isolation attracts attention, a little bush on a bare hill top is a landmark for half the country. There is a tendency to focus it more exactly than with larger masses or groups, and generally expect a greater exactness and finesse of representation. Single trees may be the motif of a painting; they may serve to carry on a mass into other parts of a scene by connecting their outlines; or they may serve to duplicate a solitary light or dark. Often their graceful poise is used as a line to give contrast to heavy forms or form a link between them; or the single tree is placed in front of a group with the intention of breaking up an over-massive shape--a purpose served so often by a bare sunlit branch in the work of John Constable.

In order to attain the effect of a great storm when painting trees it is necessary to consider the effect of wind. The effect of wind on different kinds of trees is very different. The slender trees, like the birch, bend very easily in the wind. The stiff branches of the great oak defy the wind and refuse to bend at all. The boughs of some trees sway, and others such as the aspen or the willow flap up and down. Trees indicate the wind by the bending of the trunks and boughs from the windy side. Small trees and saplings caught in a strong breeze bend till they resemble a bow.

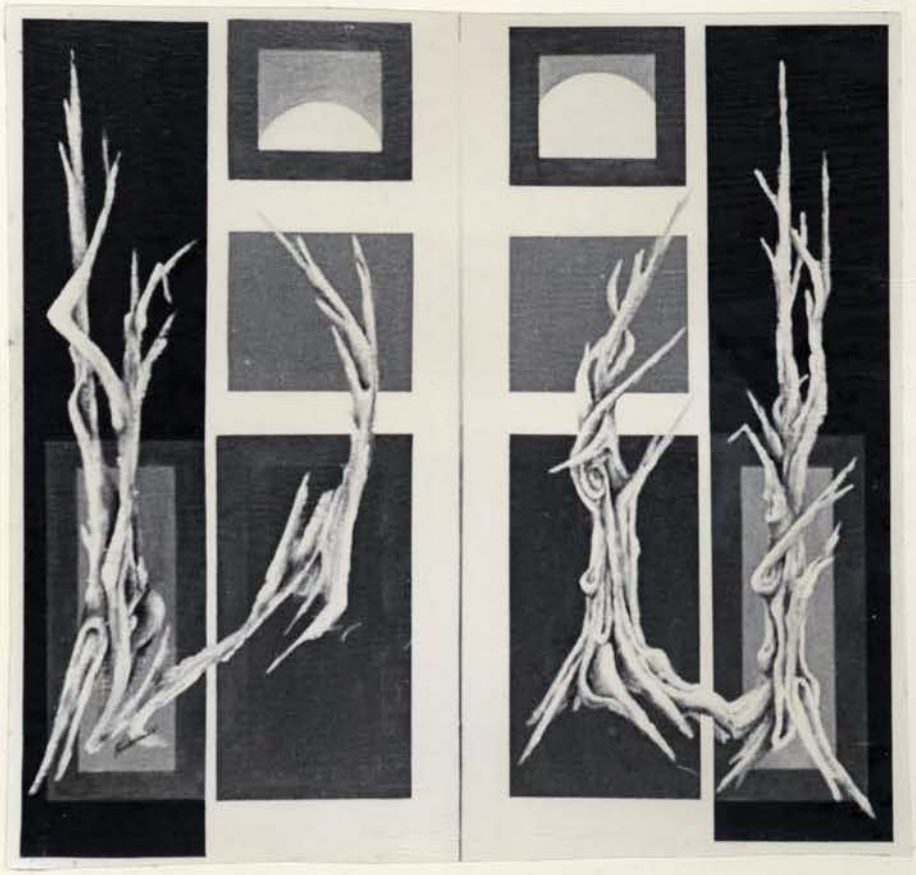
Massed trees afford an opportunity for strength of color and simplicity of tone. A large space covered with one depth of color is impressive, and need not be changed into bits of light and dark or areas of color. That would be to substitute prettiness for the dignity of a large space. Massed trees at times look spotty and detached, especially when viewed from a height or from far off. It is best to paint them at another time when they throw long shadows over other trees, or when the light is behind them, or a cloud shadow passes and their details are lost in the flat space of tone, or when shafts or light stream across the foliage, making a new spacing of light and shade. The weight of masses and delicacy is of considerable importance in the painting of trees. One of the principal considerations in the painting of trees is the balance of large forms with small, and the balance of dark forms with half-tones and lights. It is also important to compare decided masses with indefinite forms. Solid masses are seen in the bulk of tree foliage bordering sky openings. An example of this is when a tree of massed foliage and one with thin foliage stands in front of the other. In this case, the outline of the masses may either be used to contrast sharply with the delicate forms of the other, or the delicate forms may be a means of lessening the boldness of the masses form by blurring it into the sky.

The effect of snow offers the artist an opportunity for a sort of fairy land atmosphere when painting trees. Many of the branches become outlined white with frost. The small branches and twigs take on a cobwebbed effect that is only common to the delicate tracery of the winter period. The smallest twigs take on a delicate form and their appearance is somewhat like that of powdered snow. At other times, it is more interesting to paint trees when the snow is heaped thickly on the twigs, and the uncovered part looks dark making the white branches appear to be heavy carrying the burden of the snow. An atmosphere of rough weather can be attained by painting the drifts of snow that hide the roots of trees, and accumulated on the leeward side of the trunks take on a powdered effect as the snow sifts over the surfaces, and the uncovered parts look unusually dark and strongly colored.

When painting trees one should consider the importance of trees seen near and far off. A distant tree, rendered flat in tone by the atmosphere, is recognized by the pattern it makes against the sky or the background. The main shape, unconfused by any detail of foliage, stands out clearly as an oblong, a semicircle, a cone, or whatever form of coutline may distinguish the tree. Distinctive differences in the outline is apparent. The elm tree with a contour of straight lines can be distinguished at a distance from a beech with indefinite edges. A poplar tree acts as a

guard among the short forms of the oaks, and can be as valuable in a picture as a church steeple would be. Sometimes there is a contour line at a distance--just a haze; against it the upright lines of the trunks show as streaks of grey here and there. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish each tree at a distance, it may not be necessary to, but the variety caused by the density or thinness of the foliage, the sharpness or lack of definition in the outline, and the different shapes should be looked for, and used to make the painting interesting. It is not enough to represent trees at a distance by a number of monotonous dots which serve no purpose in the painting. Some groups of trees on the sky-line are architectural in design and can be very useful in a painting. When painting trees one should look for straight lines or curved ones, in the woods that line a hill, with spots of light here and there. The sky above the tops of the trees might appear fuzzy, and the ground line might appear with a sharp edge in the gaps between the trunks, or it may be that some young trees stand in a row on a hill-top, or act as a division line between flat fields; the small trees contrasted to the larger forms tend to show the scale of the entire countryside.

When painting trees at night it is interesting to notice that there is no definite contours of the various forms. The trees and the ground become one immense dark with luminous shadows surrounding them. Intervals of broken



light appear just sufficient enough in places to explain the shape of the trees, and in other instances there is just enought light to enhance the mystery of night. Trees seen against the moon lose their detail, but they can be distinguished in most cases by the loss of sharpness of the outlines. The leaves of foliage which are close often seem sharp against the ones behind, which take on a pale greyness, and the entire shape assumes a rather subdued quality. Young trees make an uneven blur against the sky, others become a haze but suggest an outline, and others seem to be blank spaces of dark with sharp edges. At interesting intervals lighter spaces appear between the trunks, just enough to make their existence known. The roots and the bottoms of the trees are lost in the shadows on the ground.

When painting trees it is necessary to see nature as areas of light and dark, not as a number of separate objects independent of their surroundings. A tree might appear to be one particular shape, but if there is a shadow under it, it becomes an entirely different shape, and it is as important to see the shadow as it is to see the tree in forming a unified dark area in the painting. A couple of trees might be distinct in lighting, or because of similarity of tone may be used as one form. Under uniform lighting a number of trees can be used as a single design patter, but it is important to consider the areas between the forms

because these areas attract attention. Light and dark areas are provided by nature in the form of cloud-shadows, reflections, dark and pale colored objects. Nature has provided a great variety of interesting spaces, but they are very seldom ready for use, or are seen only for an instant under a passing effect of light. Many of these spaces have to be balanced to become an acceptable part of the picture. Some spaces in nature appear to be more or less arranged, but when transferred to a convas these light and dark spaces should be on an appropriate scale or they lose their dynamic qualities. A balance in equal proportions between light and dark areas is usually too formal to be pleasing; but busyness and lack of balance is even less pleasing so a happy medium should be sought. When the principal objects of a painting form a dark pattern against the background, efforts should be directed mainly to arranging them well; then placing the smaller forms such as detached peices of foliage, and to elaborating the interest of their outline. If objects in the picture carry a strong high-light, more attention should be given to the individual parts of the design. The general shapes of masses of foliage should be selected keeping in mind to work for a good design, the character of this design being determined by the growth of the tree. When painting trees it is necessary to make a compromise between the appearance of things in nature and art. It is important to select only those forms

that will enhance the total design of the picutre, and to disregard those literal statements of appearances that are only trivial happenings. The value of interesting areas of dark and light is most noticeable in those paintings where a number of tree trunks play an important part in the painting. When lit by the sun parallel lines of the trunks become spaced by light and shade; some are caught by high-light, others recede into a uniform greyness, and the dark spaces contrast between. With these intervals of light, half-tones, and darks, the objective should be to choose each tone, not for its value independently, but for its influence over other tones throughout the total design. It is not always necessary that a painting be divided into large masses of light and dark areas. A sparkling effect of color can be obtained by patches of alternating lights and darks, a technique employed by Monet and his followers and various modern painters.

The smoothness of bark on some trees is as interesting at times as that of the rough bark of the oak. The textures of bark offer the artist many design possibilities. The bark cracks in places and other pieces become separated by deep grooves. Some of the cracks take on a checker-board pattern, others run vertically along the trunk, and others move around the trunk in a horizontal direction. Younger trees generally have a smooth surface, while the older ones develop a rougher skin, depending of course on the particular specie. As the branches get older the color is usually less

noticeable. The soft changes in the color of twigs contrast sharply with the greys of older branches and adds beauty to the woods in winter.

It is difficult at times to paint tree forms seen against the sky and to maintain the atmospheric qualities that are necessary to the total effect of the picture. At times it is better to keep the tree form lit by the light of the sky. Another approach is to paint the sky in as a flat area, and then convert the tree forms into a decorative flat design contrasted to the sky area. In this approach it is important to maintain a dynamic quality throughout all the individual parts of the composition and keep it effective as a whole.

There is a great variety in the characteristic leaves that make the boughs of trees. The majority of leaves are usually in a horizontal position, some hang, others turn upward or are tilted; single ones are noticeable, others are clustered; and the sky shows through at various places in the foliage. The tips of leaves seen on the far side cause the contour of the foliage to become flurred. Where the sky breaks through the foliage, the patch of light is bordered by many leaves, some overlap the mass, some are in shadows, some are in light and this is what makes the uneven blurred space of the light. The blurred edges usually blend into the sky color or are greyed and rather indistinct. The upper or lower groups of leaves will be sharply defined or indistinct

depending upon which of them projects in front of the surrounding masses. On leafless trees the effects of openings are similar. The outline of the tree is bordered with little twigs which are massed together to obstruct the light and to make those areas blurred and hazy. More attention should be paid to the larger limbs when painting trees without leaves. Some trees show slight curves in the limb system, others full curves, and in some the boughs form elbows.

The textures in driftwood and old stumps afford the artist many possibilities for design as well as interesting line variations. Upon close observation of these forms, a variety of textures is evident. In a piece of deteriorating wood, the bark that remains stands away from the trunk. At other times, the old bark hangs unretrained by being attached to the wood underneath. The bark is cracked in some places and completely gone in others, setting up interesting patterns of lights, half-tones and darks. The elements of nature play upon the surface of wood in a mysterious and beautiful way. The wind and water smooth a piece of driftwood to a glossy luster, and the sun bleaches the surface in a variety of earth colors. As worms and other insects eat their way through a piece of old wood, they leave a variety of interesting and complex patterns that provide the artist with many design possibilities. The roots of an old tree, groping and clinging to the bank of a river or stream, fight the elements of nature to maintain their equilibrium.

When painting the wood grain of driftwood, the artist should be aware of the high degree of relief in certain areas of the wood. When approaching the painting of an old stump in a relief method, the hard edges of the grain will take on the polished look of carved marble. The more relief the painting shows, the more it seems to approach and assume a lifelike quality.

When painting trees the artist only has to refer to nature herself to satisfy his desire for pattern, it is everywhere. Trees, sky, earth and water teem with it; but the difficulty lies in selecting and making the whole composition a decoration, and at the same time giving each part interesting pattern and the proper amount of emphasis. A feeling for the proper amount of decorative design distinguishes the work of an artist from the mechanical imitator of nature. The decision of whether much or little detail should be included in the painting of trees, or whether it should be highly realistic or not is up to the descretion of the artist. If the painting is to be art at all, it must be moulded on and regulated by design.

Selection and arrangement are the life-blood of any painting. When painting nature, the individual parts must be interesting, each in its place, and help to build up the beauty of the whole. A tree painting can be a decoration, its colors arranged on a harmonious scheme and applied to surfaces of pleasing qualities, its pattern of light and dark a grand one. Above all, the sentiment and feelings of

the artist should be strongly stamped upon it.

Throughout history the concept of the tree has been an important aspect of man's expression. The tree has been a symbol of immortality, divine approval, sin, passion, luck, chastity, fertility and strength.

In my concept of the painting of trees, I have found the tree to be an extremely versatile and intriguing form. The tree can be a very delicate subject capable of expressing beauty, and at other times a mysterious and powerful form with connotations of strength, usliness and weakness.

It is the mysterious aspect of the tree that presents a challenge to the painter. The challenge is not to reproduce the image of the tree, but to project through the image, the sentiment and feelings of the artist. It is possible for the painter to express not only the feelings and sentiments of the tree form, but to use the strength and dynamic quality of the form to dramatize it.

The versatility of expression through the tree form is basically a matter of creative design. Through design the artist is allowed freedom of expression. The fact that the tree symbol has varied in its meaning to man from the earliest of times to the present, illustrates its versatility.

The Twentieth Century painter has added his innermost feelings to the ancient tree concept. To the modern man the tree concept might represent anything from the wildest

fantasy to the most objective realism--anything from serenity to chaos. The tree concept might represent a supreme force or it might represent a single feeling of the modern painter. The Twentieth Century painter might represent the tree differently as his thoughts turn from one subject to another. He might also change his representation to remorse. To him, there is no single concept, the conept of the tree might represent anything.

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