SURVEY

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SUFFERING IN WESTERN ART: THREE TRANSFORMATIONS

In both the art of classical antiquity and of the Christian era, suffering has been used in the visual arts to express important religious ideas. However, the nature of these ideas is vastly different. In the classical period, the central image of suffering is a manifestation of transgression, specifically, of going beyond the bounds of divine order; *hubris,* the sin of overweening pride is followed, in the inevitable course of events, by suffering. In the Christian period, a radical transformation of the meaning of suffering takes place. Suffering becomes in the figure of Christ a manifestation of submission to divine will, and thus, a sign not of transgression, but of highest spiritual values, although in other contexts it may continue to represent punishment of sin.

I

CLASSICAL CULTURE

Agōn, the root of the English word, "agony", the idea of contest, of struggle, is a central conception in the thought of ancient Greece, and the visual arts of Greece are filled with scenes of intense and painful battles as well as other kinds of contests. However, depiction of that brand of pain, which through the passivity in the victim can be called suffering, is less common in Greek art, although it is a central theme of Greek literature, particularly of tragic drama. Aeschylus, the tragic playwright of the High Classical period of the fifth century B.C. wrote a play about *Prometheus Bound:* Prometheus was a god who, out of friendship for the race of men, stole fire from the highest god, Zeus, for the benefit of mankind, and for this act of transgressing defiance was punished cruelly. Zeus had him chained to an exposed

rock high in the Caucasus mountains and sent an eagle to eat his liver; every night the immortal liver of Prometheus grew back, subjecting the god to renewed and endless torture. The scene of the eagle devouring the liver of the chained Prometheus has been depicted in the seventeenth century by the Flemish painter Rubens,[1] but this gory scene was not illustrated by the visual artists of classical Greece, any more than was that in which Oedipus the King ripped out his eyes with his wife's brooch when he finally came to see the way he had transgressed divine law: by killing, unknowingly and inadvertently, his father, and marrying his mother.

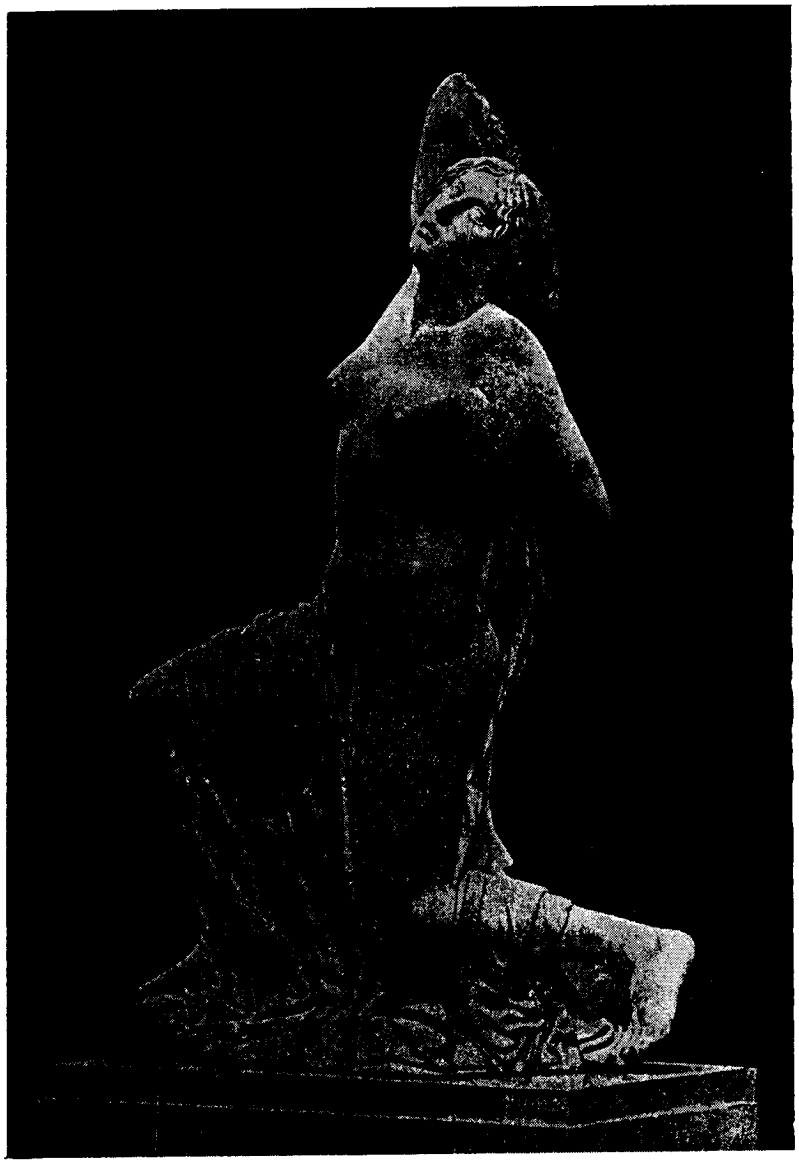
> O thou horror of darkness that enfoldest me, visitant unspeakable, resistless, sped by a wind too fair!
> Ay me! and once again, ay me!
> How is my soul pierced by the stab of these goads, and withal by the memory of sorrows![2]

> *Prometheus Bound* is one long lament:
> I see, O Prometheus, thy body
> In the toils of torture of bondage
> Withering here on this rock;[3]

Yet, these scenes are not represented by the great image-makers of the Greek visual arts, and indeed, the audience of the tragic drama saw neither the moment when Oedipus blinded himself, nor the eagle eating the liver of Prometheus: these mutilations occurred off stage.

However, the suffering resulting from transgression is represented in some important instances by Greek visual artists, and the young girl falling to her knees as she vainly tries to pluck an arrow from her back is an example (Pl. 1). She is a daughter of Niobe, a woman fortunate in the number of her children, having six sons and six daughters. Proud of her flock, she boasted that she was the equal of, or better than, the goddess Leto, who had borne only two children, the gods Apollo and Artemis. One does not put oneself against the gods thus with impunity: Appollo and Artemis took up their bows and arrows and killed all (or in some versions of the story, most) of Niobe's children; and the work of

1 For illustration and discussion of this painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art see Julius Held, "Prometheus Bound", *Philadelphia Museum of Art* Bulletin 59, Autumn 1963, pp. 17-32.
2 Sophocles *Oedipus the King.* 1314-1318. Trans. R.C. Jebb.
3 Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound.* 145-150. Trans. Paul Elmer More.

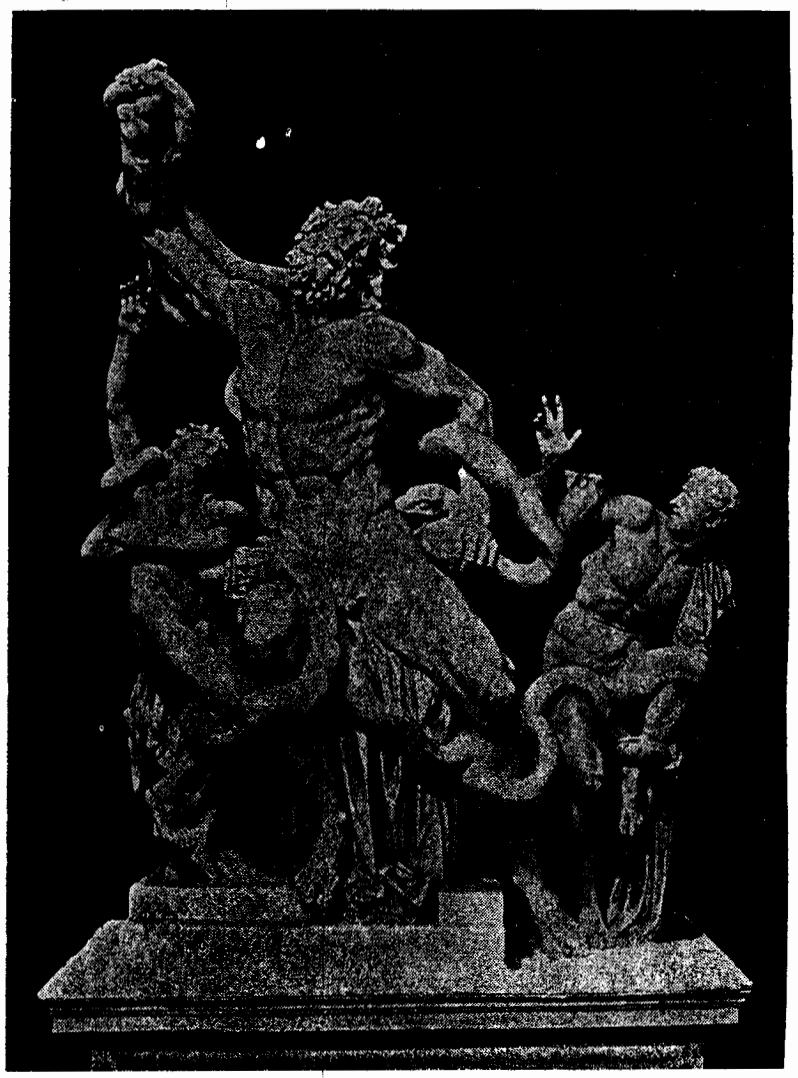


Dying Niobid ca. *450 B.C.*
Marble ht. 4 feet 11 inches
Museo delle terme, Rome
Photo: Hirmer

art illustrated in Pl. 1 is from a sculptural group of the High Classical period, adornment of the pediment of a temple that depicted the slaughter of the Niobids.[4] The girl collapses as she strives to extract the arrow, and the artistic use of her physical loveliness is noteworthy: the beautiful young body, the soft breasts not yet fully developed, the sweet innocence of her face heightening the pathos. While the girl's mouth is slightly open and her eyes look upward, her facial expression does not reflect fully the anguish and struggle implied in the sculpture, and this reluctance to distort the human face by overt extravagant expressions is characteristic of the reserve of art of the High Classical period.

However, in the succeeding Hellenistic period (from the death of Alexander the Great to the reign of Augustus Caesar, 323 B.C.—29 B.C.), classical composure tends to give way to more overt emotionalism. At the same time art tends to become more naturalistic in form and in detail. Within this framework of an art at once more naturalistic and more emotional, representations of suffering become more intense, and there are several important examples of this trend. If we turn to a scene of struggle and death such as the sculpture of *Laocoön,* we see that the emotional restraint of the dying Niobid has given way to abandoned expression of agony (Pl. 2). Laocoön was a Trojan prince and a priest who was punished by the gods for taking a position contrary to divine will, in some accounts because he opposed the taking into Troy of the treacherous Trojan Horse. In punishment for his *hubris,* the gods sent two great seamonsters from the ocean as he was praying on the beach, and these killed him and his two sons. In the sculpture, the monsters are shown as two long snakes with muscular bodies and serpentine heads; they establish a strangling grasp, one biting Laocoön in the hip. Agony is represented by the artists in the dramatic torsion within the body—head, chest, torso and legs all face in different directions, and by the rippling muscular tension—breast, rib cage, thighs, arms and legs are all athletically expanded, veins are dilated. Furthermore, in contrast to the virtual lack of expression on the face of the young daughter of Niobe, in the Hellenistic *Laocoön,* the face, too, is a map of struggle and pain, with the eyes and brows raised and pulled toward the centre, the forehead deeply lined, the mouth an open grimace. The snakes encircle the younger son, thus intensifying the pathos of his struggle for his sons, as well as for himself. Perhaps the artists have represented that version of the myth in

4. For discussion of the group see Reinhard Lullies and Max Hirmer, *Greek Sculpture,* 1957, p. 59.



AGESANDROS, POLYDOROS, AND ATHENODOROS OF ROHODES
Laocoön and his Sons ca. *1st century B.C.*
Marble ht. 8 feet
Vatican Collections, Belvedere, Rome
Photo: Alinari-Scala

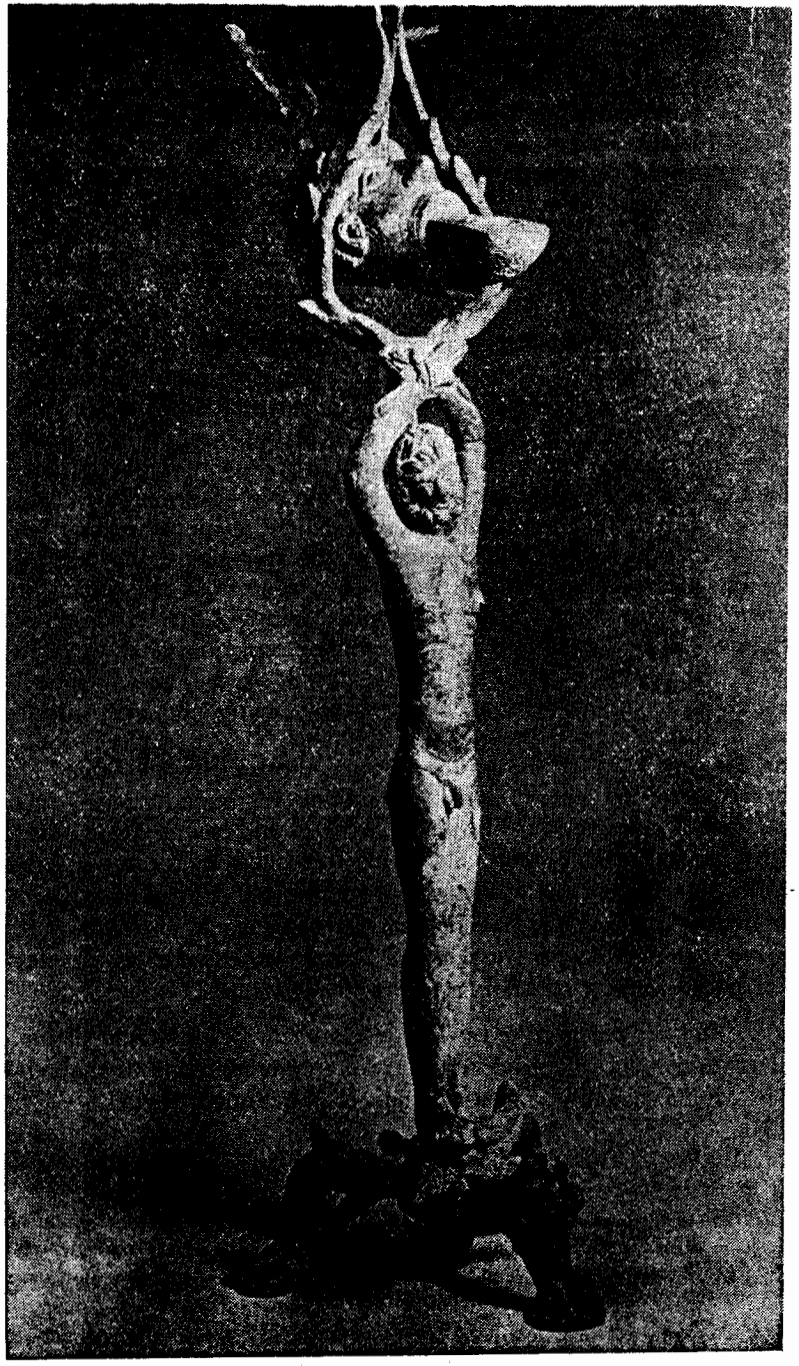
which one son escapes here, the older boy, who is pushing down the coil of the snake from his ankle as if extracting his foot from the tendrils of a man-o'-war on the sandy beach. The artist contrasts this figure—does the gesture of his right hand suggest parting?—with the dying younger boy, and with the still struggling but captive Laocoön, a pathetic contrast characteristic of Hellenistic art.[5]

Perhaps the cruellest subject depicted in the visual arts of antiquity is that of the flaying alive of Marsyas, illustrated on the stand of a bronze oil-lamp from the Roman period (Pl. 3.).[6] Marsyas is a silene, a creature whose physical form, while essentially human, includes some animal characteristics—here reduced to a minimum in the shagginess of the hair on his head and the curly thick hair on his chest. Marsyas, like Niobe, is punished for his direct attempt to vie with divinity: as the inventor of the musical double pipes, he challenged Apollo to a contest to see which of them was the finer musician! Apollo, winning the contest, of course, fulfils the bargain that the winner could do what he liked with the loser by having Marsyas flayed alive. The lampstand shows Marsyas passive and pathetically vulnerable: his hands above his head and bound to a tree, his body extended, open, helpless. A view of the sculpture from the back reveals that the branches of the tree to which his hands are bound encircle his body as if clamping him in place. Signs of his having been flayed may be seen in the deep cuts in his torso and legs, more clearly observable when one views the work in the original than in a photograph. The artist has, however, avoided going all the way to show a figure flayed alive in the literal sense since, except for the cuts, the skin of Marsyas is practically intact.

To gain perspective on the development of this cruel theme, it is interesting to consider two earlier representations of the subject which lead up to this example of the Roman period.

5. The sculpture of the *Gaulish Chieftain Killing His Wife and Himself* in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, is one example of the pathetic contrast between a living and a dead figure in Hellenistic art; see Margarete Biebar, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age*, 1960, Figs. 281-283.

6. The author wishes to express her profound thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ternbach for making available to her the work for examination, for allowing her to illustrate it herein, and for sharing with her observations, thoughts, and scholarly investigations with regard to it.



Lampstand: stem, Flayed Marsyas; *lamp,* Head of a Black
ca. *200 A.D. Roman period*
Bronze ht. 16¼ inches length of lamp 5 5/8 inches
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Ternbach

(1) In the fifth century B.C., contemporary with Aeschylus Sophocles and the *Dying Niobid,* the sculptor Myron depicted a group of Marsyas with the goddess Athena.[7] The artist chose a moment early in the story, in which Athena throws down the musical pipes invented by the silene because she was disgusted with the distortion, caused to her face by blowing them, a mythical reference in harmony with the preference for undistorted facial expression in works of art of the period.[8] In the sculptural group of Marsyas and Athena, although the silene starts back in surprise—perhaps even alarm at the goddess' impetuous gesture —the contest with Apollo and its terrible aftermath are far off in the future and only dimly anticipated.

(2) A closer source for the Marsyas on the lampstand is a sculptural group created in the Hellenistic period, very naturalistically rendered, in which Marsyas is shown tied to a tree but *before* he has been flayed, and his skin is uncut—for the group includes a slave who kneels, whetting his knife in preparation for the flaying.[9] Most poignant in this Hellenistic work is the way the silene turns his face aside, in contrast to the passive hanging frontality of his body. Following this well-known Hellenistic model, Marsyas on the lampstand also has his head turned to the side, but here the meaning of this aversion of the head has been transformed to indicate the exhaustion of physical pain rather than, as in the earlier work, the psychological attempt to avoid it.

Thus, a review of the three works, the Classical, the Hellenistic, and the Roman Marsyas, offers an indication that the interest in the visual arts in scenes of cruel and overtly described physical suffering, which is an important aspect of art of the Christian period, was already underway within the context of later Greek and Roman antiquity.

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7. For the visual evidence concerning this group, see Gisela M.A. Richter, *The Sculpture and Sculptors of* the Greeks, 1965, figs. 584-593. Myron is the sculpture of the well-known classical *Discus-Thrower; ibid.,* figs. 575-582.

8. A similar attitude toward the disfigurement of the face caused by blowing a pipe is attributed to a historical figure of the fifth century B.C., Alcibiades. See Plutarch *Alcibiades* II.

9. For visual evidence regarding the Hellenistic Marsyas group see Bieber, *op. cit.,* Figs. 438-444.

II

THE CHRISTIAN ERA

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.
And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast, thou forsaken me?

Christ Crucified, *appliqué 1150-1200*
Gilded bronze ht. 10¼ inches w. 9 5/8 inches
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan

And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.
And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.
And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.
And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.
And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.[10]

The passion of Christ and his martyrdom on the cross is central theme in the visual arts of the Christian era; an example of the crucified Christ of the Medieval period is a German metal applique of the twelfth century in which the artist has explored the physical effects of torture on the human body (Pl. 4). The mouth is a grimace of pain, frozen by death; the downward curve of the beaked nose, and of the brows, echo this physical expression of suffering. The entire figure appears emaciated and, in particular, the aims are not only skeletally thin but elongated and jointless as if unstrung by the terrible weight they had to bear; holes in the hands, by which the applique was applied to the cross to which it was once attached, represent the holes also by which the living Christ was nailed to the cross. The muscles of the breast sag, the flesh has fallen in upon the rib cage, the bloated belly bulges forward. The sense of exhausted suffering is intensified by the way the head falls not only to the side but also well forward of the body (more clearly seen in the original object than in the photography), adding a dimension of pain to the expressiveness of the work.

It is tantalizing to note the similarities of the image of Marsyas—tortured, tied to the tree; and of Christ—tortured nailed to the cross. The question of whether a continuous tradition in the visual arts links these images, whether representations of the antique silene—from whose wounds, it was sometimes thought, rivers issued forth—influenced representations of the crucified Christ, is suggestive, but has not been fully worked out.

Unlike the artists of antiquity, of the *Dying Niobid,* of the *Laocoön,* or even of the *Marsyas* of the Roman period, the

10. Mark 15. 33-39.

medieval artist has not flinched from representing the physical ugliness of suffering. Anguish makes the beauty of the young daughter of Niobe more poignant, the athletic perfection of the body of Laocoön more impressive; and even the rather thin body of the Marsyas of the Roman period remains essentially fleshy and intact, the mutilation minimized (in the earlier Greek versions of Marsyas, as described, there is pathos and fear, but no physical mutilation, no ugliness). Since Christian suffering is a manifestation of the high Christian values of salvation and eternal life, of spiritual beauty, the loveliness of physical form seems easily sacrificed. Indeed, the physical deformation intensifies the sense of the beauty within.

Within the Medieval period, styles of art, which for one reason or another are strongly influenced by classical antiquity, show, as in classical art itself, a tendency to resist distortion of the human body even in depictions that imply suffering. In this context it is interesting to consider the crucified Christ of the metal applique with a depiction of the Crucifixion on an elaborate gold book cover of the Carolingian period, the *Lindau Gospels*.[11] Charlemagne had himself crowned by the Pope Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 800 A.D.; his desire to re-establish the ancient Roman empire extended beyond politics to the world of letters and of the visual arts (some of the manuscripts painted under the spirit of Charlemagne's classicizing could almost be mistaken for ancient Roman paintings). Although one can see nails in his hands and feet, the Christ on the cover of the Carolingian *Lindau* Gospels shows no sign of the physical ravages of suffering: the body is harmonious, balanced, strong, even lovely; the classical resistance to disfiguring the human form has affected the representation of this classicizing Carolingian work. It is interesting to compare this central image of Christ with the angels represented in the field around the cross: belying the classical restraint in the figure of Christ, the angels are emaciated, agitated, and literally writhing in their grief, with an intensity of expression more truly Medieval than the classicism imposed by imperial fiat —and very short-lasting—of the central figure.

Representations of suffering are not, of course, confined to images of the crucified Christ, and the old theme of suffering as a punishment of sin finds expression in the Medieval period in scenes of the Last Judgement. One of the most profound depictions of this subject is that found above the west portal of the Cathedral of Autun in Burgundy, France, sculptured by an artist proud enough of his work to have signed it underneath the feet of Christ, Gislebertus.[12] In the centre of the composition, Christ is enthroned within an almond-shaped frame of glory, the mandorla, raising his right hand up in judgement, a positive gesture saving the souls of the blessed, while with his left hand he condemns the sinners to eternal torture in Hell. Below, newly awakened souls step from their coffins; on the side of the blessed, three small figures look up with radiant faces, like children toward their mother, toward the angel who will lift them into Heaven; one grasps the angel's gown. In contrast, a chilling vignette on the hellish side shows a soul facing out to the viewer, his body dwarfed, his head huge and slightly tilted, reminding one of the slight tilt in the head of the Hellenistic Marsyas who also had no leeway for escape; the soul's mouth is in a downward grimace; above, two hands, long-fingered and oddly delicate emerge, like the pincers of a mechanical hoist about to grasp this damned soul by the neck. The surprising grace of the clamp-like hands, the fact that the soul is not looking at them yet aware of their presence, suggests spiritual as well as physical torture. Above, like victims shoved into the gas chambers of a concentration camp, the damned are shoved into the bestial furnace-mouth of Hell by skeletal demons. Two legs stick out of the Hell vat, upside down, crammed in, like stalks of celery crammed into a market bag. Heaven, in Medieval scenes of the Last Judgement and in George Bernard Shaw's play *Man and Superman,* seems bland by comparison.

As in the Carolingian period, so also in the Italian Renaissance, but with more profundity,[13] the resurrection of the ideals of classical antiquity was a major phenomenon. The classicizing interpretation characteristic of Italian art of this period, is in striking contrast to contemporary representations of Christ's passion in the art of northern Europe. The panel of the *Crucifixion* of the Isenheim Altarpiece by Mathis Grünewald (Pl. 5), in the intensity

11. For a clear illustration, see H.W. Janson, *History of Art,* 1969, colour-plate 19.

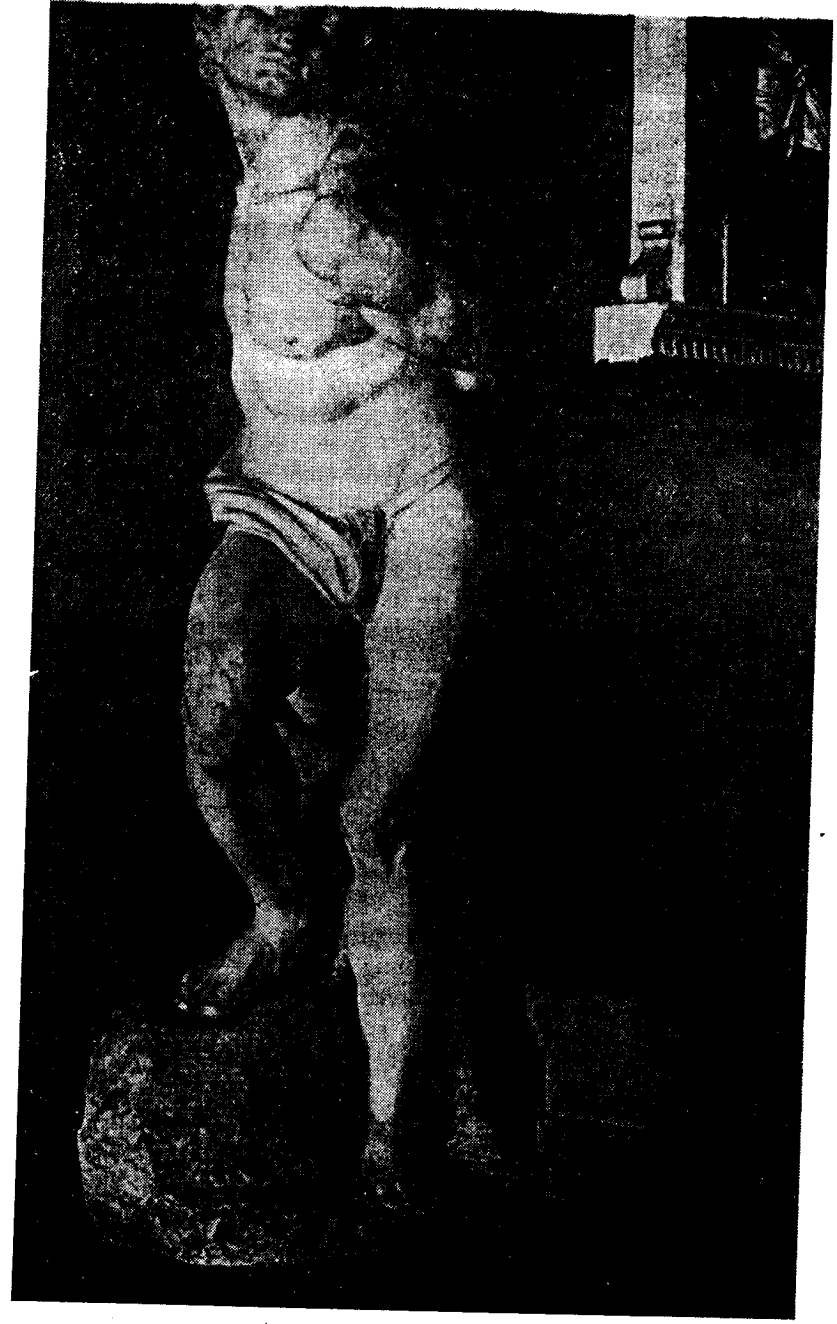
12. For full clear illustration and discussion, see Denis Grivot and George Zarnecki, *Gislebertus, Sculptor of Autun,* 1961.

13. The levels of depth with which western culture took up classical ideas at various times after the end of antiquity is a main theme of Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art,* 1965.

GRUNEWALD, Mathis.
The Crucifixion, *from the* Isenheim Altarpiece *(closed).*
ca. *1510-15.*
Panel 8 feet 10 inches x 10 feet 1 inch
Musée Unterlinden, Colmar
Photo: Scala Florence/New York

of its expression of suffering, and in its distortion of the beauty of the human body to achieve it, is closer in spirit to the Medieval appliqué—also from Germany—and four hundred years older than the classical calm and harmony of the nearly contemporary altarpiece by Perugino; and indeed, this expressionistic emotionalism continues as a living idea of particular force in German art even into the modern period.[14] Every inch of the painting by Grünewald expresses pain. The weight of the body has pulled the shoulders from their sockets and distended the tendons under the armpits; the nails have caused the hands to stiffen in a clutching *rigor mortis;* the feet are, as described by a fourteenth-century visionary who influenced Grünewald, Saint Brigitte, "twisted around the nails as if they were on hinges"; the head hangs, the mouth sags open. In contrast to the sunny beauty of the flesh of Christ by Perugino, Grünewald has painted a rotting image of corrup-

14. See, for example, Peter Selz, *German Expressionist Painting,* 1957.



MICHELANGELO
The Rebellious Slave *1513-16*
Marble ht. 84 inches
The Louvre, Paris
Photo: Scala New York/Florence

tion in the flesh of Christ, speckled with sores. Unlike the contemplative response to the Crucifixion of the Saints in Perugino's painting, the mourners in Grünewald's work, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalen and St. John the Baptist betray their feelings through taut gestures and grieving faces: Mary swoons in the arms of St. John. The pastel colours of Perugino's painting contrast with the acid, clashing reds, and murky blues and greens of Grünewalds conception. The comfortable landscape in Perugino's work is replaced in Grünewalds by an abyss-like darkness.

In 1506, the sculpture of the *Laocoön* buried since antiquity, was dug up from a vineyard near Rome, and the young Michelangelo was present at the excavation. The classical physical idealism of the work, combined with its pathos, impressed him, and the influence of the *Laocoön* is felt continually in his great sculptures of tormented figures, particularly, in the series of slaves which Michelangelo carved in his attempt to complete the tomb of Pope Julius II.[15] The *Rebellious Slave* is one of those in which the influence of the *Laocoön* is most clearly seen (Pl. 6). As in the Greek sculpture, a powerfully muscled man fights to be free, his struggle expressed in the torsion within the body as head, chest, arms, left leg, right leg, move in opposing directions. Having noted the similarities between the works it is important to consider a significant difference. The conflict in the *Laocoön* is clear: the encroaching snakes explain the tremendous tension in his muscles. An examination of the *Rebellious Slave* reveals, however, that this athlete battles against constraints which are surprisingly fragile. Thin ribbons bind his arms. Could such a string contain such a form? By providing an insufficiency of external constraint while retaining the muscular intensity, Michelangelo has made visible an inner conflict which is essentially unseeable: the struggle between spirit and matter, the active yearning of the soul to be free of the body. In Michelangelo's words:

> By what biting file
> Decreases and grows less each hour thy tired coil,
> Infirm soul? Now when shall time be dissolved for thee
> By that tool, and thou return where thou wast, to Heaven;

15. None of the slaves sculptured for the tomb were ever placed on it as it was finally erected in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome. See Frederick Hart, *Michelangelo The Complete Sculpture*, 1968, pp. 116-127.

> White and glad, as at first,
> The perilous and mortal veil laid by?[16]

The Christian artist, building upon an antique image, has transformed the theme of conflict between man and a great external force into a conflict in which the triviality of the opposing force one sees carries awareness of struggle within, to the realm of the invisible force, the soul.

III

RECENT PERIODS

In recent times the positive value placed on suffering, the conception of the equivalence of martyrdom and moral worth, has been retained from Christian thought and art, but has undergone important transformation. The trend has been to represent the new martyr as a secular figure and a common man, in harmony with two revolutionary forces in modern thinking, secularism and democracy. Important effects of secularism in painting have been described:

> As man and man's deeds replaced Christ and sacred acts in the historical and scientific imagination of the eighteenth century, the mortal hero surrounded by his aids emerged and took the centre stage, dying in the same poses, and accompanied by the same gestures of grief formerly given to Christ and the Saints.[17]

At first the new secular martyr was a hero in the conventional sense of the word, and the paintings, are rich in depictions of the deaths of important military and political leaders, recent historical figures such as General Warren who died in the American Revolution at Bunker's Hill or, in a more neo-classical vein, antique generals such as Hector.[18] However, the insurgent democratic spirit introduced a new type of secular martyr, lower in the social hierarchy, but granted through modern perception the virtue of the conventional hero and, indeed, the spiritual value of Christ Himself.

The hero of Goya's painting, *The Third of May*, 1808 (Pl. 7),

16. Quoted in Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

17. Irma B. Jaffe, *John Trumbull Patriot-Artist of the American Revolution*, 1975, pp. 72 f.

18. For discussion of heroic dying in the eighteenth century see *loc. cit.*, Chapter 6, pp. 72-96, "Modern History Painting."
For the effect of secular thinking on death scents of a later date, and the idea of dying without transcendence, see Linda Nochlin, *Realism*, 1971, Chapter 2, pp. 57-101, "Death in the Mid Nineteenth Century".

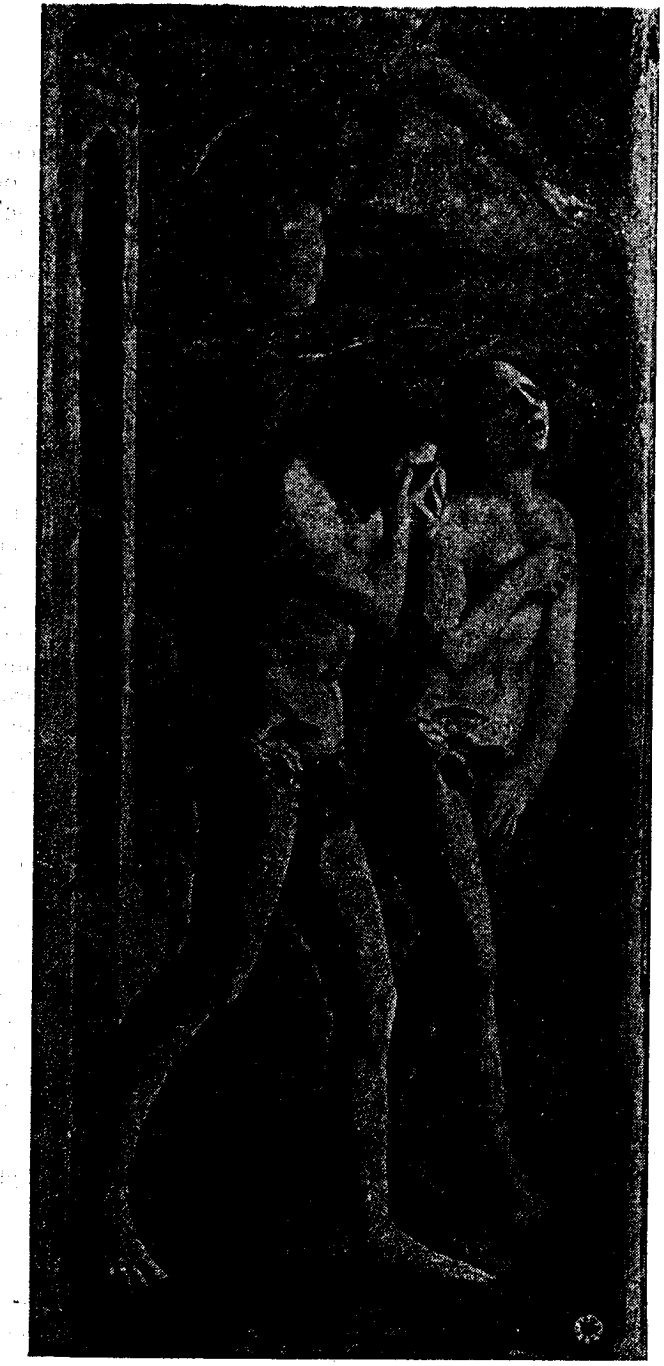
GOYA, *Francisco*
The Third of May, 1808 *1814-15*
Canvas 8 feet 9 inches x 13 feet 4 inches
The Prado, Madrid
Photo: Alinari/Scala

is such a common man, a Spanish peasant guerrilla, lined up with a group of his compatriots before the firing squad of Napoleon's invading army in a depiction of a massacre that took place on the date which is the title of the painting. The French are well dressed in uniform, faceless to the viewer, each as like the other as are the shiny guns and bayonets they hold pointed toward the guerrillas. These , in contrast, are treated specifically in appearance and in reaction, individualization heightening the pathos. Dishevelled, they are as varied in dress as in their expression of terror. One is pop-eyed in fear; another, moving up the little hill toward death, covers his face with his hands in a gesture that recalls Adam thrust out of Eden in a painting by the Renaissance artist Massaccio (Pl. 8); in Goya's painting, however, it is not the Garden of Eden, religious symbol of eternal life, that the Guerrilla is leaving behind but life itself, in the ordinary sense of the word. Like the damned in the Last Judgement at Autun, the dead are treated like worthless objects, piled like so much debris. In the midst of the group, the light shining upon him—here as in many western paintings the light signalling spiritual worth and truth—a guerrilla kneels before the firing squad, his arms spread wide, his posture mirroring that of Christ crucified (see Pls. 4, 5, and 6).[19] Here Goya asserts aggressively the equivalence of the suffering and the moral value of the death of this ordinary peasant, this secular martyr, to that of Christ.

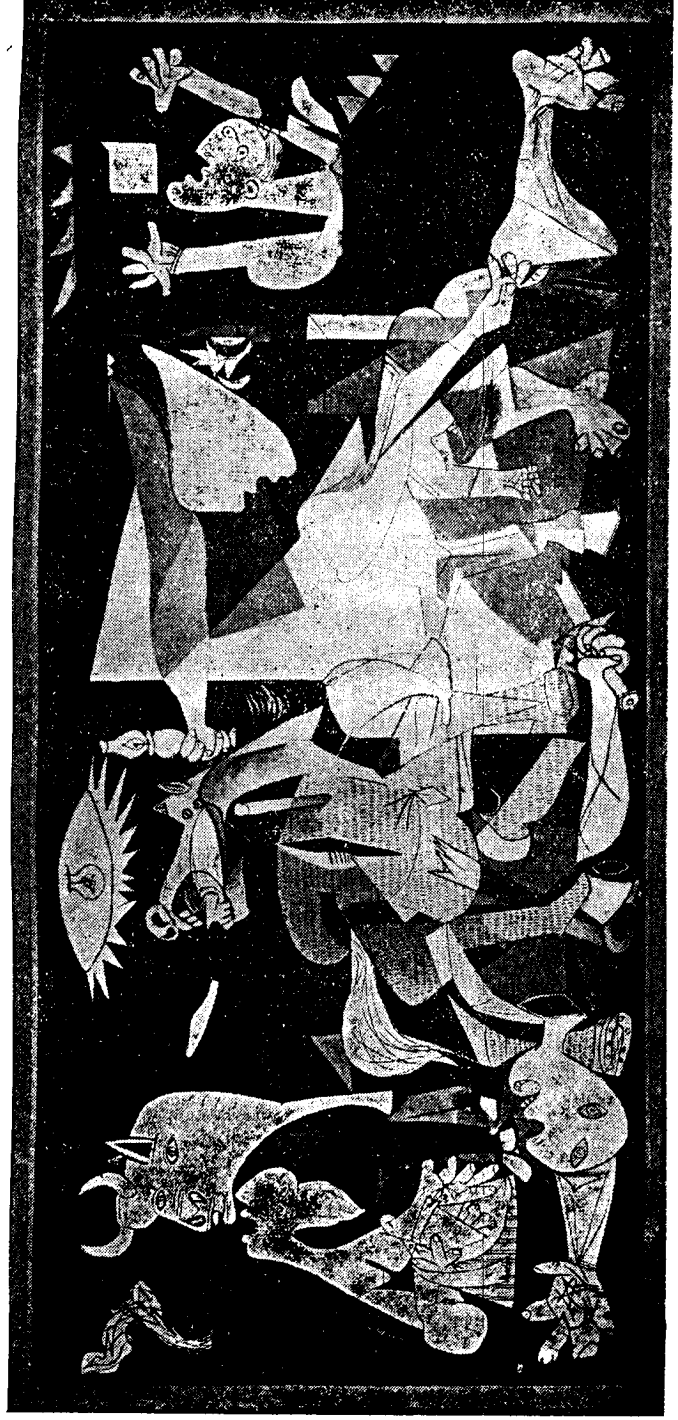
In the twentieth century Picasso, like Goya, reacting to a specific atrocity of war, the fire bombing of a Basque town in the course of the Spanish Civil War, painted Guernica (Pl. 9) to commemorate the event and to force awareness of it into the moral consciousness of the world. The massacre painted by his Spanish compatriot, Goya, was clearly in his mind. The basic conception, as in Goya's painting, is that of the attack of an overpowering, automatic war machine and its rapacious assault on defenceless Spanish peasants. As in Goya's painting, although not only for that reason,[20] Picasso creates a nightsetting for his paintings although the bombing of Guernica actually took place in sunlight.

19. A notable example of spiritual light in a Christian context that may be compared with Goya's painting is Ruben's *Descent from the Cross* in the Cathedral in Antwerp; see John R. Martin (ed.), *Rubens: The Antwerp Altarpieces*, 1969, Pls. I and II and *passim*.

20. For analysis of some of the images in Guernica, see Antony Blunt, Picasso's Guernica', 1969.



MASACCIO
The Expulsion from Eden ca. *1427*
Fresco
Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence



PICASSO, Pablo
Guernica *1937*
Oil on canvas 11 feet 5½ inches x 25 feet 5 3/4 inches
On extended loan to The Museum of Modern Art, New York from the artist's estate

The fracturing of physical form in the cubist style of this painting is used to intensify the expression of fractured human life and rational expectation. Among the many images in the work, one sees on the left, head upraised, mouth open in a scream, neck elongated to express the drive of anguish, a mother holds the limp and broken body of her child on her lap, like a Christian Mary holding the dead Christ, a *Pietà*.[21] Here, however, the image of the *Pietà* expresses the suffering grief not of a saintly figure in the specifically Christian sense, but of a common woman over the death of her infant. In this painting, the cubist style even as it fractures form, shatters also the barriers between separate consciousnesses. No longer can one, as in earlier representations of suffering, look on, watch, empathize and learn. Here the abstract quality of the cubist style generalizes the idea of suffering to include all people and thrusts the image into the hands of the viewers, making them participants both as victims and as perpetrators.

21. Compare Michelangelo's *Pietà* in the Vatican, Hart *op. cit.*, colourplate 4 and pls. 74-81.