This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

The Other Side of Kenneth Clark's
Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as
an Artist; An Analysis of His Approach to Art History

presented by

Katherine Sydney Dutton

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Master of Arts degree in History of Art

Webster Smith

Major professor

Date 8/11/89

THE OTHER SIDE OF KENNETH CLARK'S LEONARDO DA VINCI: AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DEVELOPMENT AS AN ARTIST: AN ANALYSIS OF HIS APPROACH TO ART HISTORY

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Art

1989

ABSTRACT

THE OTHER SIDE OF KENNETH CLARK'S LEONARDO DA VINCI: AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DEVELOPMENT AS AN ARTIST: AN ANALYSIS OF HIS APPROACH TO ART HISTORY

By

Katherine Sydney Dutton

In this analysis of Kenneth Clark's practice of the history of art as found in his 1939 edition of *Leonardo da Vinci: An Analysis of His Development as an Artist*, the issue of Clark's undogmatic approach to the subject of Leonardo will be investigated.

My discussion of this issue will progress through a description in Chapter I of his *Leonardo da Vinci*. Chapter II is an account of the state of Leonardo studies as of 1939. Chapter III is a narrative of Clark's growth in the field of art history, his taking up the subject of Leonardo, and the influences on his practice of the history of art, and, specifically, his study on Leonardo. In Chapter IV I will conclude with a discussion regarding the impact of the work and the place it has in the field of art history.

Cynthia L. Henthorn
Matthew R. Gillett
Susan P. Madigan
Webster Smith
Linda O. Stanford
My Parents

Teachers are not rewarded enough to keep them teaching.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

My investigation of Kenneth Clark's approach to Leonardo da Vinci was inspired by the recent, vigorous growth of studies made concerning methodologies in art history. This efflorescence of historiographical studies began in the mid-twentieth century and came to a full flowering by around 1965. It has resulted in an ever increasing number of books and professional journal articles. The subject has also been a focus of panel discussions at the College Art Association conventions and many art departments now require students to take a course in historiography. It was in one such course that I became involved with Kenneth Clark's approach to the history of art.

I became intrigued with what might motivate an analysis of the development of an artist such as the highly revered Leonardo. Why would Clark choose to study such a written-about artist? And what were the different kinds of art historical approaches available to him at the time? Why did Clark use a number of different approaches at once instead of only one, which his eminent predecessors in the field, such as Bernard Berenson, Roger Fry, John Ruskin, Jacob Burckhart, and Aby Warburg had tended to do? Why did he use this particular mixture of methodologies in his study on Leonardo?

As my work on the subject progressed, I also became engaged in a study of contemporary "postmodern" artists. During this directed study, I was introduced to a book called *The New Art History*, edited by A. L. Rees and F. Borzello, and published in 1988.[1] The book is a compilation primarily of contemporary and, mostly, English critics, art historians, and artists who have written about developments in England in the history of art. The book's authors caused me to question why certain art historians have a place in the art history "hall of fame" while others do not. I asked myself in particular, why Kenneth Clark's methods are not seen in this book as exemplary. Kenneth Clark has not been noted as having the solutions to the problems of present day of art history; rather, he tends to be conspicuously ignored, despite being mentioned in passing while other English art historians' approaches are seriously being considered.

> "Many writers have traced Pater's influence and have argued for his importance and relevance, particularly in the area of poetry - including T.S. Eliot, Graham Hough, Frank Kermode, Ian Fletcher, Richard Wollheim, Harold Bloom and Kenneth Clark."[2]

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[1]A.L. Rees and F. Borzello, editors, The New Art History, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988.

[2]Michael O'Pray, "Pater, Stokes and Art History: The Aesthetic Sensibility", The New Art History, A.L. Rees and F. Borzello, editors, (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988):126. O'Pray's siting Clark is his chapter on Walter Pater in:
Kenneth Clark, Moments of Vision, (London, 1981):130-142.

> "Twenty years ago, anyone making a case for history of art within the university curriculum would have based their argument in all likelihood on the coherence of the humanities and the need for a visual and aesthetic education in a civilised society. Sir Kenneth Clark's television series 'Civilisation' epitomized this approach and was itself probably the major factor in the increase in application to read history of art in the late sixties."[3]

> "The problem is that, given the predominantly monographic nature of the literature of art history, there is a gigantic gap to be bridged between the theoretical structure of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* and a study of the nude in painting that escapes from the essentially aesthetic trajectory of, for example, Kenneth Clark."[4]

Yet, throughout his career, Clark himself developed a keen awareness of historiography: of individual scholars and the variety in their approaches to the history of art. Clark put into practice these various approaches, learned from his exceptionally wide reading, and he was in fact an expert in discerning among them.

I have also a sentimental reason for choosing to study Kenneth Clark. When he died on 21 May 1983, I was just then embarking on my own discovery of art and art history: I graduated from high school on 23 May 1983 and began my college career the next day, as an art major, just as Kenneth Clark's undergraduate work had led him to the history of art. In

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[3]Marcia Pointon, "History of Art and the Undergraduate Syllabus. Is It a Discipline and How Should We Teach It?", The New Art History, A.L. Rees and F. Borzello, (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1988):146.

[4]Ibid. p. 153.

this way I feel akin to Clark, and he, for his part, I believe, felt akin especially to Leonardo. His analysis of this artist is one which looks at the psychology involved in making art and viewing art, and he felt that this particular research into the past would shed understanding onto the present. Clark wrote, "... all great art must be re-interpreted for each generation,"[5] I agree with this statement, and would respond to it with this thesis.

This idea of reinterpretation is present in The New Art History, which looks for methods and approaches through which one may best interpret the art and artists for this generation. My interpretation is a supplement to that found in The New Art History: an interpretation for my generation.

The study of art history and how it has developed through the years, how it has gone in different directions, is a curiosity that no one book could encompass fully. It is an interesting fact that most of the famous art historians have followed one particular process or approach or another: that of psycho-history, or connoisseurship, iconography, biography, social history, the history of ideas, formalism, and stylistic chronology. But in facing such a complex subject as Leonardo, Kenneth Clark realized that he could not simply follow one established way or another, but would have to allow the subject to be the determiner of the approaches taken.

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[5]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1939):1.

In this analysis of Kenneth Clark's practice of the history of art as found in his 1939 edition of *Leonardo da Vinci; An Analysis of his Development as an Artist,* the issue of Clark's undogmatic approach to the subject of Leonardo will be investigated. I use the word 'undogmatic' to say that Clark did not use just one kind of approach to his subject, such as that of stylistic analysis, or that which would consider only the influence of the artist's personality in his art. He used them all, changing from one to another according to the unique and changing qualities of the subject at hand.

My discussion of this issue will progress through a description in Chapter I of his *Leonardo da Vinci*. Chapter II is an account of the state of Leonardo studies as of 1939. Chapter III is a narrative of Clark's growth in the field of art history, his taking up the subject of Leonardo, and the influences on his practice of the history of art, and, specifically, his study on Leonardo. In Chapter IV I will conclude with a discussion regarding the impact of the work and the place it has in the field of art history.

The text itself will be described in full in Chapter I, in order to familiarize the reader with the work, the subject, and to notice how Clark changed in his way of dealing with the material as the subject grew in his mind. With a focus on the contemporary demands on Leonardo scholars described in Chapter II, there will be provided the basis for determining the challenges Clark accepted and knew about. The narrative of

Clark's intellectual journey in Chapter III is related to the discussion of the state of Leonardo studies in that it investigates the approaches with which Clark could work, focusing on his exploration into his own understanding of his field. This narrative of his personal discovery of art history and its processes is to make the point that just as art is not created in a vacuum, so art historical scholarship is not created in a vacuum either: Clark's Leonardo is of a time, of a generation, of a place, and of an individual.

The types of approaches which were and are available to the art historian are of particular interest to this study. They are the variables with which Kenneth Clark dealt in making his Leonardo monograph. As the reader will notice, each of the approaches defined below, whether added or deleted by Clark, effect the content of the monograph. His main interest could not focus only on style analysis or only on the artistic personality (two approaches which I mentioned as examples above), or on any other single concern, because of the complex nature of the subject: Leonardo. Considering this subject, then, from a variety of angles, and always flexible, Clark's work treats the life of Leonardo and his development as an artist more effectively than had ever been done before. Clark will identify Leonardo in a more 'many sided' fashion than any other Leonardo monograph before 1939.

The history of art history has been written again and again by many authors: Luigi Salerno, for example, in his

article on historiography in the *Encylopedia of World Art*, and Kenneth Clark himself in *Universities Quarterly* (for further reading and reference please see Bibliography B: Methods and Approaches to the History of Art.) The account that follows here will be limited to art historians who specifically have a place in influencing Clark or who have been written about by Clark in the context of the study of the history of art.

The field dates back to ancient Greece. Passages of art historical writing are found especially in Pliny's encyclopedia and Pausanius's *Guide*. From these documents we glean some sense of the types of writing about art in ancient times: instructional treatises on technique, books concerning the development of technical problems and solutions, and indicating a sense of artistic progress. Some attention was also given to problems of authenticity and relations between different schools of artists. The Middle Ages was an epoch that would not write art history because the art of the past was pagan and therefore its history was not worthy of repetition. Writings touching on art were in the form of the chronicle, and also, occasionally, the technical handbook. Art was for the glorification of God; in and of itself it would not be held in any regard. Writing about anyone but a

man of the church or royalty, would be unheard of.[6] The artist himself is only rarely mentioned by name.

But the middle ages did introduce the notion of a succession of ages, or epochs: the era "under grace" succeeding that "under the Law", the Old Order giving way to the New, Christianity succeeding paganism.[7] We can view the art historical writing of the Renaissance as continuing this idea of one age succeeding another, but taking it in a new direction and a step further.

Vasari would derive his notion of artistic progress in *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, mainly from Pliny; his biographical approach was modelled after that of Plutarch, and of the notices of famous men composed in the Renaissance. During the previous century both Ghiberti and Alberti mentioned artists contemporary with themselves, or of immediately preceding generations, with particular consideration for general principles in the making of art. Being artists themselves, they would naturally be drawn to this. There were notebooks or manuals on art, which had been circulating since the middle ages, that described

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[6]Though there were some art works signed by the artist in the middle ages, a large number were not. This was due to the nature of the role that the artist had from the 10th to the 12th centuries, which held that the craft or art that one did was for the glorification of God: the art was intended for God's `eyes', and God knows who each artist is.

[7]Luigi Salerno, "Historiography," Encyclopedia of World Art, vol. 7, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959-1968):510.

techniques and materials: Alberti, Ghiberti, and the others, culminating in Vasari, went on to deal with the general principles and the artists who exemplified them.

It was a nostalgia for classical forms of art history which caused a rebirth of art historical writing.

> "The new historiography, developing in a period of general enthusiasm for classicism, was naturally modelled on that of antiquity. The humanistic concept of history that evolved in the Quattrocento was that history itself was an art, having as its aims commemoration...possessed of an unconquerable desire to perpetuate human achievements for posterity..."[8]

The biography would discover the artist through studying the events of that person's life, which can be found partly in written documents by the artist himself or by his contemporaries. Secondary documents are those written well after the artist's life is over, or at second hand: documents that are at least once removed from the individual. Vasari's view was that of the contemporary critic and his approach was that of biography , utilizing both primary and secondary sources. Vasari not only placed the artist's life in a chronology, but also placed the biographies themselves in chronology leading up to the most famous artist of Vasari's age: Michelangelo.

Writing the history of art became the work of learned men and connoisseurs in the seventeenth century, rather than of the artists themselves, as had happened during the Renai-

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[8]Ibid.

ssance. Among seventeenth century art historians, Guilio Mancini introduced the approach of the connoisseur: he became interested in distinguishing originals from copies and forgeries and locating works of art accurately according to school and period. Mancini's was the first in a series of waves of this kind of writing: he was addressing himself to the collectors of art in his era. Mancini's manuscript, never published in his time, still maintained, in part, the chronological progression of artists' biographies in the tradition of Vasari. He most likely wrote his *Considerazioni sulla Pittura* (1620), as a supplement to Vasari's Lives, extending the biographies from where Vasari left off and continuing into his own era, of Caracci and Caravaggio, with a contemporary, connoisseur's view of the art.

The 18th century saw the beginning of a new art history, introduced by J.J. Winckelmann (1717-1768). What distinguished his work from others before him was that he viewed art and artists as a continuum of human progress as revealed in a comparison of styles. The *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, published in 1768, is a history of ideal form as found in works of art, not the history of particular artists or groups of artists. Beautiful form itself now becomes the focus. It wasn't the technique with which a particular artist's style surfaced in the finished work of art that mattered most to Winckelmann, but the artist's idea as manifest in this work. Winckelmann, in fact, divorced art

from all else but idea and form. It was this set of notions that created a reaction later, in the next generation of art historians.

Luigi Lanzi's *Storia Pittorica d'Italia...* (1792) is a group of biographies of artists with emphasis on their styles. Though Lanzi was a contemporary of Winckelmann, he had a love for systematic knowledge of all other fields that may be included within history such as philosophy and paleography, and this broad knowledge, leads to a more complete understanding of the art forms.[9] Lanzi's writing based itself on facts, which he considered to be of two kinds: documentary, or external, evidence; and formal, or internal, evidence. He used both of these kinds of fact to determine dating and authorship of works. He saw both as essential to understanding the formation and evolution of an artist's style. He disparaged anecdotes.

The 18th century thus planted the seeds for the recognition of genius, imagination, sentiment, taste, and philosophy as essential to artistic creation. During the nineteenth century this recognition was confirmed by "idealistic and romantic historiography", and by the appearance on the scene of such extraordinary and diverse spirits as Moreau, Delacroix, Goya, and Constable. And yet it was at this time that historiography lost touch with contemporary artists.

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[9]Ibid. p. 520.

Contrary to all previous historiographical tradition, historians now occupied themselves only with the art of the past. It is logically easier to study someone or something of the past, because this distance permits an attitude of critical detachment, and the primary sources of documentation are complete.

In 1827 William von Rumhor wrote Italienische Forschungen, which is a reaction against Winckelmann's idealism. Von Rumohr thought that the personality of the artist must be in the work of art itself, whereas Winklemann had idealized the work of art as a thing apart from the artist and was thus "pure". Von Rumhor's approach was not in terms of style alone, but would include study of all facets of history which surround the work of art: the social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects. Von Rumhor also differed from Winckelmann in that he had a love for the original document and saw in the work of art the personality of the artist. Winklemann, for the most part, had no access to genuine examples of Greek art and could only use second-hand visual information, and secondary sources in literature, but then he thought, anyway, that the work of art should be kept apart from the artist's history. With regard to von Rumhor's attitude towards documents, Clark notes, "He loved original documents because they were particular and revealed the individual."[10]

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[10]Kenneth Clark, "The Study of Art History", Universities Quarterly (May 1956):5.

Much of the growth in the approaches to the history of art was due to the expansion and increasing specialization of knowledge. As the knowledge grew, many facets of each type of knowledge became more developed.

In the nineteenth century idealistic vein, Georg W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) and his philosophy of aesthetics, was the initial flowering of what would in the twentieth century become an art history based on social analysis; this grew from the interest in the evolution of the spirit, and a focusing on the cultural atmosphere which surrounds the work of art being created. This idea was later extended to the specific study of the social and economic environment by the Marxist art historians.

The aesthetics of past art and the question of why art is created throughout history engaged Walter Pater (1839-1894), an aesthetician of Romantic and Idealist persuasions. His work, The Renaissance (1873-1888), remains a classic. Pater's approach to the history of art took a particular look at the mind of the artist and what things surrounding the artist would cause his art to be produced in a particular way. The distinction of Pater"s work is in his style, inspired, it seems, by poets and by the great authors of fiction.

The interest in the individual qualities of the artist was taken eventually to the point of utilizing a new form of science in order to uncover the undocumented: a result of the continuing hunger through the nineteenth century for new

information. The study of the artist's psyche was initiated by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), in his essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Published in 1910, this work deals with the childhood recollections noted by Leonardo in his notebooks, with the purpose of shedding light on the genius and peculiarities of Leonardo and his art.

Jacob Burckhardt aspired to an understanding of works of art through seeing their individual characteristics as manifestations general tendencies in art and society. He was probably better prepared thean anyone else at the time to write a concise survey of the history of art. But however well equipped and ambitious he was for such a study, which would have involved his expertise in visual art united with his knowledge of concurrent social, political, and cultural developments, he did not succeed in his objective. His writings on art, such as the Cicerone, were intuitive and based on the enjoyment of the individual work of art.

John Ruskin added a concern for the impact a work of art might have on the viewer, and how any particular society might motivate artistic style. Ruskin used the style of the work of art as a gauge of social vitality. Because of his individualized social concern, however, he hated systems and formulas used for investigation. Thus, through time, Ruskin's attitudes changed and his array of works with regard to art contain rather unexplainable inconsistencies which scholars since the time of his death continually endeavor to unravel.

Despite these difficulties, Ruskin maintains an authority over today's Marxist art historians.

Another, concurrent, development in art-historiography led towards a consideration of stylistic change in and of itself. A need began to be felt to consider the formal aspects of a work of art apart from its mere resemblance to the natural world. During the late 19th and early 20th century, there arose a propensity to analyze the formal elements of a work of art so as to grasp their value as symbols of the artist's feelings, and mentality.[11] The cause for this emphasis was due in part to changes occuring in art itself by the late nineteenth century: a new emphasis on the formal qualities of paint on the canvas in contemporary art: Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.

In keeping with this new interest, Alois Riegl rejected the idea that art progressed and declined. He studied the arts from classical Greece to medieval Europe and came to the conclusion that it wasn't that the medieval artists couldn't make art in the classical style, as Wincklemann would hypothesize, but that they didn't want to. In other words, the change in art was not a decadence in skill, but a matter of artistic intention or will.

Heinrich Wölfflin integrated cultural history, psychology, and formal analysis into a historiographic system, but,

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[11]Luigi Salerno, "Historiography", The Encyclopedia of World Art, vol. 7, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959-1968):526.

on the other hand, didn't attempt to relate works of art to political or social history. Wölfflin defined an evolution of art in stages, in which style evolves according to its own internal laws. In his *Renaissance und Barock* (1888), *Die Klassische Kunst* (1899), and especially *Kunstgeshichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1915), Wölfflin Attempted to demonstrate laws or principles, of stylistic change.

To that of Wölfflin, Max Dvorák (1874-1921) held an opposite approach. He studied art as a manifestation of ideas or spirit (Geistesgeschichte). The formal study of how intellectual interests and tendencies are present in the work of art, and how the artist came to have interest in them, was the focus of Dvorák's approach to his subject.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries also saw the development of connoisseurship towards a quasi-scientific approach. Giovanni Cavalcaselle (1820-1897) and J.A. Crowe wrote the first great monument of connoisseurship. Their prime focus was the reconstruction of the body of works of the individual artist, weeding out falsely attributed examples. The restricted group of examples which resulted could then serve as a useful tool thereafter in the connoisseurs' work. Wilhelm von Bode thus utilized Crowe and Cavalcaselle later in the nineteenth century, and they are still consulted.

Giovanni Morelli(1816-1891) was the first connoisseur to make use of the camera for his work. His connoisseurship was based on the idea that those parts of the body which an

artist tends to draw according to formula are the parts of his work in which he is most likely to reveal his identity. Through the use of the camera he was able to compare a large number of works side by side, thus strengthening his attributions.

For Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), the artist's treatment of formal elements in painting and scupture were primary resources for attributing a work. Berenson, like Wölfflin, thought that there was a progression and a decadence in the history of art,[12] and used this theory as an aid in his attribution of art works.[13] Berenson seems to be the last in a long line of connoisseurs; the method ceased to be the primary approach to art history.

Aby Warburg was against the idea of artist as superman, and rejected the idea of art for art's sake because both ideas suggest that art is created in isolation. Through his championing of the notion that the artist's aesthetic and formal ideas reflect conditions of society, religion, economics, and politics, Warburg stressed the `many sidedness' of a culture and of an artist. To find out about how the artist responded to his culture, Warburg world analyze not only the style of the works but also their symbols, and thereby

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[12]Ibid. p. 530.

[13]It might be said, however, that berenson himself contributed to a decadence in connoisseurship in that he made many erroneous attributions with the end in mind of being paind for his expertise.

stressed the study of iconography not merely in the sense of identifying subject matter but in the posing of questions as to *why* the artist depicts this or that subject or utilizes this or that symbol. E. H. Gombrich, who, until very recently was the director of the Warburg Institute in London, has been a driving force in the continuing study of iconography and the psychology of images in our century.[14] Like Warburg, Gombrich uses an approach that spans many academic disciplines including psychology, and has "proposed... that no artist can merely 'paint what he sees' and discard all conventions."[15]

In the early twentieth century yet another approach towards art history emerged, which stresses the formalistic aspects of art. As an historical approach, Formalism is defined as the study of the history of formal values in art throughout history. In Roger Fry (1866-1934) we find an artist, an art critic and an art historian combined. Fry is the first artist since Vasari to hold authority in the world of painting as well as the history of art. His art, criticism, and history of art all took on a formalist flavor. The approach of Fry is, more precisely, "...a synthesis of

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[14]It is imperative here that the art historian and iconologist, Erwin Panofsky's name be noted as probably the most influential scholar in this field. Panofsky, who was also influenced by Aby Warburg, was a contemporary of Kenneth Clark's.

[15]W. Eugene Kleinbauer, ed., Modern Perspectives in Western Art History (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971):272.

methodologies in connoisseurship, formalism and aesthetics."[16] These methods are derived from a conscious study of previous traditions in the historiography of art.[17]

When Kenneth Clark undertook the writing of his book on Leonardo he brought to this task an exceptionally keen awareness of the historiographical tradition delineated here. As I describe his book in the following chapter, I will note the variety of approaches which he utilized from this tradition.

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[16]Katherine S. Dutton, "Roger Fry: An Analysis of His Methodology," Michigan State University, June 8, 1988. (Typewritten.)

[17]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939: reprinted with revisions, 1952: revised edition, London: Penguin, 1959: reprinted, 1961,1963, 1965: reprinted with revisions, 1967: reprinted, 1971, 1973, 1976 (twice), 1978, 1980, 1982: revised edition and an introduction by Martin Kemp, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1988):20.

I

DESCRIPTION OF THE 1939 EDITION OF *LEONARDO DA VINCI*

Chapter One

Chapter One focusses on the first thirty years of Leonardo's life. The main problem Clark had to face here is the lack of hard, documentary evidence for this period of the artist's life -apart from Vasari's account of it. There is also the problem of attributing many of the paintings and drawings to Leonardo because his early style is more difficult to pinpoint than his mature style. Many of the related sketches used to support past attributions of paintings had been, themselves, mis-attributed and these sketches were sometimes attributed to Leonardo as a result of suppositions over lost works to which these sketches may be related. Thus Clark's ability in connoisseurship had to come into play here: his ability to examine a work in terms of source, date, quality, and ultimately authenticity, and to reconstruct the formal and creative personality of an artist or an artistic school. Clark had to resort to this means of identifying some of Leonardo's earlier works, although he would, of course, rather have had solid documentation in the form of a contract or a note made by Leonardo in one of his notebooks.

Throughout the chapter Clark will endeavor to use such documentation wherever he can, but for the most part he proceeds on the evidence of style only - as, for example, in his discussion of the Munich *Madonna*:

> "In this period, the one picture which can be dated is the Virgin with the vase of flowers in the Munich Gallery, which is connected in many ways with the studio of Verrocchio. Credi did a drawing and picture of the same model in the same costume, and an almost identical pose was used in a composite production of Verrocchio's shop, the altar-piece in Pistoja Cathedral. Perhaps the fact that the Munich Madonna was little more than a workshop commission accounts for the absence of most of those qualities which we value in Leonardo's other work, The picture is in very bad condition...There are many other damages, and it may well be asked on what grounds the picture can be ascribed to Leonardo. The answer is that all their surviving parts are wholly characteristic. The Virgin's plaited hair, and her left hand, large parts of her drapery and in particular the flower in the vase at her side, all these are painted in exactly the same style as the Uffizi Annunciation, and they combine to give the picture as a whole a quality of form and colour which is unlike anything else of the period."[1]

Nevertheless, with regard to Leonardo's contribution to Verrocchio's *The Baptism of Christ*, Clark uses the full range of approaches in methodology. He begins with a documentation of the angel figure: the account in Vasari; he also sees it as a forshadowing of what will occur in Italian art of the future and thereby offers a statement of Leonardo's relationship to his art and the artists of the future. Clark

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[1]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939),18-19.

recalls here the words of Pater regarding Leonardo's early works in general, and gives documentary evidence of Leonardo's artistic working method.

Clark interprets the look on the face of the angel as belonging to Leonardo's psychological world and not to Verrocchio's. Clark writes, "In every line of the nose, cheek and chin, this head reveals an ideal of perfection. To some extent this idea, like all our dreams of physical perfection, was inspired by the antique fragments from the Greek and Roman civilizations, which Leonardo must have seen in Florence at the time."[2] One can read into this statement several art historical approaches at once: the concerns of the connoisseur; of the psychologist implicit in the words "ideal of perfection", and "dreams of physical perfection"; and of the cultural historian, in the phrase: "...was inspired by the antique fragments of which Leonardo must have seen in Florence at the time."

Clark offers a stylistic interpretation with regard to the painting of the landscape in the *Baptism*, refuting Vasari's attribution of the landscape to Verrocchio. Stylistically the Baptism Landscape does not compare well with the body of Verrocchio's works, as Verrocchio "...had no personal or original conception of landscape."[3] Clark sees a

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[2]Ibid. p. 12.

[3]Ibid. p. 13.

correspondance, rather, with Leonardo's own, later works, and concludes that the landscape was therefore painted by Leonardo. Clark compares the style of the landscape also to the famous landscape drawing in the Uffizi on which is written: "*didi Sta Maria della neve addi 5 d'aghossto*". Clark notes the condition of this painting, as he does with all other paintings of Leonardo's, emphasizing an interest in the conservation of art, a concern of the museum director that Clark had become on 1931.

Chapter Two

Because of the grouping together here of the works on the theme of the Virgin and Child and those biblical stories which include the Virgin and Child, Chapter Two is begun out of chronological order. The first chapter is stated as an account dating from 1452 to 1482 and the second is stated as an account dating from 1481 to 1490. Although Clark, due to his focus on a thematic portrayal of Leonardo's works in fact does not adhere to the dates which he set for himself. The second chapter begins instead in the 1470's because it was in those years that Leonardo began the sketches for the *Adoration of the Magi*, which is to be the focus of half of this chapter. Another portion of the chapter will comprise a discussion, using documentary evidence, regarding Leonardo's move to

Milan. This required Clark to make a analysis based on documents; here he is not involved in questions of attribution, such as he encountered in the *Baptism of Christ and the Munich* Madonna, but more in the use of literary and documentary evidence. Clark forthwith introduces the *Codice Atlantico* and the *Trattato della Pittura*. Discussed fully in later chapters, these are his main sources for the rest of the book along with the paintings themselves that have been firmly dated. The end of the chapter is devoted to identifications of paintings mentioned found in a list of works in Leonardo's handwriting. The *Madonna of the Rocks* is analyzed as fully as the *Baptism of Christ* and the *Adoration of the Magi*. The smaller scale works which are and are not on Leonardo's list are each briefly analyzed. These are the problem works in terms of attribution; mainly due to the condition and due to partial completion by Leonardo's students. Clark in his approach analyzes only what is required in order to arrive at a concise opinion.

With the analysis of the *Adoration of the Magi* Clark has recourse to any number of different approaches: he weaves a tapestry from a variety of threads: heterogeneous kinds of evidence and modes of discourse - from document, intuitive stylistic judgment, psychology, comparison, and analogy. The most important single piece of evidence for him in this discussion is the use of a series of preparatory sketches. Using these sketches, Clark indicates the changes that occur

during this developmental period, and the periods that will follow, in Leonardo's work.

Another issue introduced in the chapter is that of the polarities within Leonardo's style and personality:

> "There remain the two figures at the sides, which seem to stand outside the scene, like leaders of a Greek chorus. To the left is the philosopher, whose noble form we saw in evolution. Morally and materially he has the grandeur of one of Masaccio's apostles. Opposite the Masaccio is a Giorgione: for no other name will fit the deeply romantic figure of a youth in armor on the right. He looks out of the picture with complete indifference, and as is usual with such detached figures a tradition has grown up that Leonardo has here portrayed himself. Whether or not this is true in a literal sense we cannot tell; but the student of Leonardo may feel that in these two figures of youth and age, moral and physical beauty, active and passive intelligence, he had indeed represented his own spirit, symbolizing his dual nature as he does in those familiar expressions of his unconscious mind, the contrasted profiles"[4]

This is a most important passage in the book, as its words are laced with double meanings referring to Leonardo's present and also to his later work, his existing and future personality, past and future artists, and various polarities. The statements concerning the two flanking figures incorporate themes that Clark will utilize again and again, as a brightly colored strand running through the fabric of the rest of the book.

Literary evidence, social and cultural history, and the history of ideas then come into play in Clark's speculations

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[4]Ibid. p. 32.

on the reasons for Leonardo's move to Milan. He consults the following set of documentary evidence: the Anonimo Gaddiano's account of art and artists, Leonardo's letters, the *Trattato della Pittura,* Manetti's *Life of Brunelleschi,* and the *Codice Atlantico.*

> "It is less easy to know why Lorenzo the Magnificent, that fine connoisseur of fine discrimination, allowed him to leave Florence, especially as he had been a patron of his master Verrocchio. It is possible that when Leonardo left Florence his renown as a painter was not so great that Lorenzo would have made efforts to keep him. In the same year he had allowed older and more distinguished painters to go to Rome. But it is surprising that later, when Leonardo's real greatness was established, Lorenzo made no effort to bring him back to Florence. And this, I think, can only be due the lack of sympathy which existed between Leonardo and the Medicean circle. He was essentially a scientist and mathematician; the Mediceans were of course Platonists of an almost religious ardour. By contrast, Milan was predominantly Aristotelian, which at this date still meant encyclopedic. At the court of Ludovico there were ingenious men in plenty, doctors, scientists, tacticians, mathematicians, military engineers, men of fact and experience, who could feed Leonardo's insatiable craving for information. It is understandable therefore that as Leonardo's scientific bias grew with his development as a painter, Lorenzo felt no inclination to recall him, nor Leonardo to return; and unless he could be sure of employment by the Medici there were many reasons why a young artist should be anxious to leave Florence.[5]

The theme of polarity is implicit here: in the distinction set up between Platonist and Aristotelians, Florence and Milan. Political and social developments of the time are only

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[5]Ibid. p. 37-38.

suggested, however, insofar as Clark sees them as personally effecting Leonardo. This is a life of Leonardo, not a record of his life-and-times, and in concentrating consistently on the man and his works, Clark makes him into something like a hero, and in this respect the book resembles biographies, such as Vasari's, that had been written long before.

To analyze rather than glorify the man was invariably a governing concern of Clark's. In a quote from his February 1929 article titled "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci", he had said:

> "Now we may worship Leonardo's drawings, but we must admit that they are very different from those of Michelangelo; and a difference implies a limitation, which it is the critics' business to explore. Leonardo, we may say, could draw a blackberry and not the apse of St. Peter's. Can we find in his other, and especially, in his written work. analogous limitations which will make our idea of Leonardo a little more precise?"[6]

The book recognizes Leonardo's limitations, although it also displays much affection for him, and even aspires to defend his weaknesses; "...when Leonardo left Florence his reknown as a painter was not so great that Lorenzo would have made efforts to keep him."[7] This softens the fact that Leonardo had, according to Clark, the reputation for not finishing his work, that he worked in long-drawn-out and experimental ways,

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[6]Kenneth Clark, "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci," Life and Letters 2 (February 1929):123.

[7]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):37.

ways which were not tolerated by Florentines, least of all the Medici. A comparison of the 1929 article with the 1939 edition of *Leonardo* would indicate that Clark began his analysis as dispassionate critic and documenter of Leonardo's development as an artist but as he studied became so personally involved as to become rather like the writers on Leonardo whom Clark himself criticized unmercifully in 1929. In some cases Clark does show restraint, but this chapter overall does tend to build Leonardo up as an artist-hero, even though imperfect and periodically in need of defense. The following quote is an example of Clark's defense of Leonardo's reputation:

> "To my mind the proof of Leonardo's homosexuality need not depend upon a rather sordid document. Perhaps we may even say that it explains the element of frustration which even those who are most conscious of his greatness are bound to admit... I would not press too far into a matter which is more the domain of the psychologist that the art-critic, but I cannot omit it from an honest survey of Leonardo as an artist because it colours his outlook in a way that the same characteristic in other great men does not always do... And those who wish, in the interests of morality, to reduce Leonardo, that inexhaustible source of creative power, to a neutral or sexless agency, have a strange idea of doing service to his reputation."[8]

The issue of Leonardo's strange sexuality seems to have discomfited Clark, ant it will be brought up again, in later chapters of the book. (Brief discussion of sexual influences

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[8]Ibid. p. 55.

in Clark's own life are found in the narrative portion of this paper.)

Chapter Three

Clark introduces the Notebooks in Chapter Three. He presents them as yet another biographical tool, to assist in establishing the chronology of the artists' life, and to lend more substance to the portrayal of his character. Clark describes the Notebooks as to size, arrangement, dating, and how they function as documents for the Leonardo scholar. eH divides and arranges the material of the Notebooks into categories: war machines, architecture, pageants, scientific mathematics, caricatures, prophesies, and bestiary. These labels imply themes for this chapter and for the book as a whole.

Clark considers at length the themes relating to the subjects of the notebooks: Leonardo as scholar, engineer, architect, scientist, man of many talents, man of imagination, pessimistic philosopher, his strangeness, his genius. Throughout this discussion heroicizing and de-heroiciziing notes are sounded: Clark seems to run hot and cold in this chapter;

> "...some drawings of machinery and engines of war done in a simple diagrammatic style, with a primitive motion of dynamics, and show that in spite of his boasting letter to Ludovico, Leonardo's

knowledge of military engineering was not in advance of his time."[9]

"But almost from the first, Leonardo's penetrating grasp of construction, combined with his restless curiosity, gave his notes on technical matters a more general value. He was not content to record how a thing worked: he wished to find out why. It is this curiosity which transformed a technician into a scientist."[10]

"...the notebooks give evidence of very wide reading. They are full of reminders to borrow or consult books, and research has shown how many passages, which used to be taken as original discoveries, are copied work for work form other authors."[11]

"His passion for finding things out was accompanied by a far less profitable passion for writing them down... This thoroughness is an essential characteristic of his mind, and he defends it in a passage which may will make the author of a brief study of Leonardo pause in embarrassment."[12]

The theme of polarity in Leonardo is brought in again with regard to a drawing in the Windsor collection - although Leonardo's Windsor drawings, for which Clark wrote the Catalogue, is de-emphasized in this chapter more than any other. In this drawing Clark perceives the theme of polarity in the form of two, profile, heads facing one another, one of the old man and the other of the young man, the caricature of age and the picture of ideal beauty, and, by extension, Clark

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[9]Ibid. p. 56.

[10]Ibid. p. 58.

[11]Ibid. p. 59.

[12]Ibid. p. 60.

suggests the contrasting societies and styles of Florence and Milan;

> "These are, in fact, the two hieroglyphs of Leonardo's unconscious mind, the two images his hand created when his attention was wandering, and as such they have an importance for us which the frequent poverty of their execution should not disguise. Virile and effeminate, they symbolise the two sides of Leonardo's nature, a dualism I have already suggested in the contrast between his life in Florence and in Milan... but there they have a Florentine *quattrocento* character, which they lose as they become more expressive."[13]

This paragraph concludes Chapter III and acts as a transition into Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Having discussed Leonardo's Quattrocento aspect, especially as it comes out in the Notebooks, in Chapter III, Clark then deals in Chapter IV with his more mature character, as developed in Milan, and manifest in the *Trattato*. Clark depicts Leonardo's world as well as a collection of responses to that world by constructing comparisons to later artists ranging from the sixteenth century down to and including Clark's own time.

Clark will deal subsequently with the Notebooks, again, as well as with the *Trattato*. Here again, he will use this

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[13]Ibid. p. 69-70.

documentary material in conbination with other kinds of evidence: paintings, copies of these works, and the history of these copies through the ages. Clark examines how all of these indications found in Leonardo's works and in the works of those who were influenced by him, help the scholar in studying him.

> "First, they give Leonardo's general views on the nature of art; secondly, there are notes on the science of painting; thirdly, there are notes on studio practice; and fourthly, there are entries, scattered through the *Trattato*, in which Leonardo expresses, sometimes half-unconsciously, his personal tastes and feelings as a painter."[14]

Each of these four points is illustrated in a succession of four paragraphs, using quotes from the *Trattato*. Certain themes recur: the exercise of the imagination, philosophies of Plato versus Aristotle, Leonardo's understanding of aesthetics, his methods of art instruction, and himself as hero. The duality of Leonardo's scientific research versus creative sketching[15] to improve his art is suggested through Leonardo's own writings, and is related to still other dualisms: painting versus sculpture, painting versus music, painting versus nature, Leonardo versus religion, science versus religion, Leonardo versus Michelangelo, experience versus inexperience.

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[14]Ibid. p. 73.

[15]Ibid. pp. 74, 77, 78.

The discussion at this point focusses on Leonardo's development as a whole: a generalizing statement concerning his art in flux without going into the chronology of specific works. Interrupting the step-by-step progress of his narrative, Clark interjects a mini-biography of the artist, stressing the change from the early, Florentine, quattrocento style to the later, Milanese, cinquecento style.

This brief passage amounts to a small, condensed version of the book as a whole, and also serves as introduction to the chapters following, which are documented mainly by the Notebooks and the *Trattato*. In this passage, the theme of the hero is recalled from the Notebooks chapter (Chapter Three), but along with some critical comments. This chapter stresses the social background more than any other chapter so far, and applied usually to a theme of exemplifying the polarity of Leonardo's personality.

Chapter Five

In chapter five Clark concentrates on the two most important works in Leonardo's career: the equestrian monument to Francesco Sforza, and the *Last Supper*. Both were commissioned by Ludovico Sforza, and both fit together chronologically, between 1485 and 1496.

The chapter can make use of only fragmentary, and sporadic written documentation and preparatory sketches - all that happens to have survived concerning these two works: and it has to contend with two main deficiencies in the material: the unfinished equestrian monument no longer survives, and the *Last Supper* is a ruin. Because he admittedly does not have the amount of documentary material and prepatory sketches that he would like, Clark uses primary sources of other kinds: the official documentation of the period and copies and descriptions by contemporaries and by later artists. This chapter, then, like the others, has its own shape: in response to the particular problems encountered here. Moreover, a new emphasis is introduced: an increased sense of place. Also, a particular stress is placed here on Leonardo's anatomical studies of horses, although they were in fact a life-long interest of his, and are encountered throughout his Notebooks. Clark mentioned this interest only briefly during his discussion of the *Adoration of the Magi*, as though to save it for now: the discussion of the project for the equestrian monument.

The commission for the *Horse* is handled at first in the usual way: a consideration of preparatory sketches. These sketches and also the notes about the monument by Leonardo seem to date only from the initial stages of work on this project: there are none concerning the subsequent phases. The rest of the discussion involves an interpretation of how

the monument must have looked, from descriptions and copies. Some attention is focused, again, on Milanese history although, not in a way as to make Leonardo himself seem a part of this history.

The *Last Supper* presents a problem for Clark, as for all other writers on Leonardo, because of its ruinous state. It, like the project for the *Horse*, has a fine retinue of outside documentation, as well as some preparatory studies, but none of which is complete in any way. There are two composition sketches and some detailed expression and gesture sketches, which Clark does not use for any comparison with the wall painting, but only to add to his "what might have been" literary sketch of the completed work. The blanks which are left in this sketch are filled with the descriptions of the work in progress and the copies taken directly from the completed work, and those that came after that.

The total loss of the Horse and the ruination of the *Last Supper* are to be blamed partly on the artist himself, especially his inclination to experiment. Partly because and partly in spite of these failures, Clark finds room again to heroicize Leonardo. Dualistic themes: the scientific Leonardo versus the creative Leonardo, the antiquarian versus the imaginative classicism of the Italian Renaissance, and the spontaneous and the non-spontaneous aspects of Leonardo's art are woven into the fabric of the chapter with the literary flair of a novelist.

Chapter Six

Chapter six is involved with Leonardo's movements and various undertakings between the completion of the *Last Supper in 1497 and* 1503. The chapter utilizes heterogeneous materials: written documents, influences from Leonardo's art, and Leonardo's surviving and lost art. Although themes introduced in previous chapters are repeated here, Clark maintains his flexibility, his undogmatic approach, so that a sense of repetitiousness is never present.

The movements from Milan to Mantua to Venice are confirmed by documentary evidence: official and what can be termed social documents. The two art works which date from this period of movement, the decoration for the castle in Milan, in particular the ceiling painting for the Salle delle Asse, and the cartoon of Isabella d'Este, were problematical as of the time that Clark wrote this first edition of his book. The ceiling had been painted over, and the cartoon was known only in various copies. Clark had therefore to analyze both works on the basis of copies only. There are different themes for each of these works: the ceiling is described as having the elements of classicism, sensitivity, and hatred of abstraction, and also, at the same time, a contradictory appeal to the Gothic aesthetic through Leonardo's use of pure decoration in his all-over, horror-vacuii composition of

vegetation. The disparateness in the character of this work, of course, had an appeal to Leonardo; it is yet another sign of diversity within his own character.

Clark then follows Leonardo to Venice, a new opportunity for Clark to show yet another facet in Leonardo's importance; that of the connection between Leonardo's art and a new Venetian style that becomes developed first in the art of Giorgione. He takes up the problem of Leonardo's supposed influence on Giorgione.

> "...more important, if less easily demonstrable, is the influence on Giorgione of Leonardo's whole way of looking at forms. This is most easily seen in a change of feminine type, whereby the wide shallow features of Bellini's Madonnas was replaced by a more plastic and more regular oval. The head of the gipsy in the *Tempesta* magnified and seen in isolation is intensely Leonardesque; the Giorgione portrait of a lady with laurel leaves in Vienna reflects the same sense of form as the Belle Ferronniére. And as a complement to this ideal beauty, Giorgione like Leonardo portrayed an ideal of ugliness.... The drapery of the Judith , so completely unlike that of Bellini, or, it must be confessed, of Giorgione's other work, is directly inspired by Leonardo. The cunning, intricate folds which fly out round the left side of the figure can be compared with the drawing of angels in the Venice Academy... similar use of light and shade... The subjects described in the *Trattato*--how to paint a night piece, how to paint a storm, how to paint a woman standing in the shadow of an open door---show that he delighted in effects of light and shade of a strangeness and violence which Giorgione and his school were the first to attempt.[16]

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[16]Ibid. pp. 106-107.

Clark then makes stylistic distinctions of Leonardo's influences in each of the cities: Florence, Milan and Venice, a topic that he will take up again in the next chapter.

Clark then moves onto the subject of Leonardo's return to Florence after an absence of some twenty years, and he can go back, now, to the kind of approach to Leonardo's art used in the first two chapters: describing an actual, surviving work in most cases, and studying it side by side with preparatory sketches, and using the connoisseur's way of considering art works. Clark now amplifies this approach, however, through discussion of the written documents by other artists, and social and political documents from Florence, as well as the Notebooks, and also he uses a formalist approach, involving comparison with twentieth and late-nineteenth-century works. The various approaches seen in the course of the first five chapters are here encountered for the first time all at once, as though to respond to the particular complexity of the material of this chapter.

Spiritual and social changes at this time in Florence are cited: the revival in religion and the revival of republican politics. Clark observes also, a change in taste: a shift away from the dainty, so typical of later-fifteenth-century Florence, back to the heroic, and thus in Leonardo's favor. Leonardo, himself now shifted from his unproductive to his productive mode as he moved now from an environment

that no longer engaged his productivity to one that demanded it.

The works discussed are the two representations of the Virgin and St. Anne; the cartoon at the Burlington House (now in the National Gallery of Art, London) and the unfinished painting in the Louvre. The discussions of these works are of types that the reader will find familiar: studies in iconography, in-depth scrutiny of Leonardo's personality, comparisons with earlier and later artists, Leonardo's love of drawing, the classical tradition found in Leonardo's art and its motifs, and, finally, "...how far Leonardo's study of shadow and twisting movement led to a certain coldness and artificiality in his later work... the delicate problem of the painter-theorist."[17] Clark then digresses from this into discussion of the distinctiveness of Leonardo's coloring and lighting and the influences and consequences of his chiaroscuro:

> "He had never used the bright colours of the quattrocento. His early work is largely distinguishable by its mysterious twilit tones... I think that Leonardo's theories of light and shade led him to push his chiaroscuro a little further than sensibility would other wise have warranted."[18]

Only writtem documents are consulted for the Madonna and Child for the secretary of the king of France and the

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[17]Ibid. p. 112.

[18]Ibid. p. 112.

employment by Cesare Borgia, aside from the three red chalk sketches of him. The lack here of still-existing works is likely due to the fact that these were done away from Florence; upon his return to Florence in 1502 he again became engaged in works which still do exist. Between 1502 and 1503 Leonardo enjoyed the first year of a very productive stay in the city. This chapter includes the *Mona Lisa* and the *Leda and the Swan*, as well as themes evoked by these masterpieces: landscape, the world as organism, the classical ideal of beauty, and psycho-sexuality. And, as Clark stated on page one in chapter one, he states again, now, with regard to the *Mona Lisa*, "... the Mona Lisa is one of those works of art which each generation must re-interpret."[19] Keeping this theme, of the necessity of reinterpretation in mind, we may infer, from the clues which Clark has given us, that the *Mona Lisa* indeed may be autobiographical. Note the following quotes from Clark's monograph which embody notions important to his generation which would not have occured to earlier biographers:

> "At least we can be sure that his feeling for her was not the ordinary man's feeling for a beautiful woman. He sees her physical beauty as something mysterious, even a shade repulsive, as a child might feel the physical attraction of his mother. And as often with Leonardo, this absence of normal sensuality makes us pause and shiver, like

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[19]Ibid. p. 119.

> a sudden wave of cold air in a beautiful building."[20]
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> "To Leonardo a landscape like a human being was part of a vast machine, to be understood part by part and, if possible, in the whole."[21]

Leonardo's landscape in the *Mona Lisa stems from his landscape studies*. Romance, and the nature drawings found in the Windsor collection are interests of Clark's and he writes about them in relation to the shape they give to Leonardo's life and personality.

The two groups of copies of the now-lost *Leda and the Swan* present yet another theme of duality: a duality of influence; the Raphael or Florentine group, and the Milanese group. I call this duality, because of the great difference in style between them, as they have appropriated distinctively different qualities from Leonardo's art. The main question that Clark pursues, however, is that of why Leonardo chose to do this subject.

> "We can be sure that the myth of Leda had some special meaning for him, although at first sight at the furthest remove from his nature, No classical myth is more unblushingly pagan, and Leonardo was the least pagan artist of the Renaissance, never content to enjoy the sensuous surface of life, but searching for the bone beneath the skin. To him, then, the Leda myth could not be what it was to Correggio, an allegory of sensual ecstasy. he saw in it not the joy and beauty of sexual intercourse, but its mystery, and this analogy with the creative processes of nature, His Leda symbolizes the female aspect of creation... All round this passive figure, nature is bursting with now life, thick grasses

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[20]Ibid. p. 120.

[21]Ibid. p. 121.

> writhe out of the earth, thick leaves weigh down the branches; and at her feet, four human babies tumble out of the broken eggs."[22]

These sentences blend together a number of the themes that recur in the monograph: the classical influence, the psychosexual, the richness of Leonardo's nature drawing, and the passivity of the painter as though embodying himself in female form on the picture plane with the aspect of his creation flourishing about him.

Here again, as in previous chapters, however, Clark does not attempt to integrate his observations of the artist with knowledge of contemporary social and spiritual changes, enen though, as Clark knew very well, such changes were indeed happening at the turn of the century.

Chapter Seven

Chapter seven is concerned in part with lost works from the productive five-year period discussed in Chapter Six. Clark states the need to reconstruct these lost works. This concern is mentioned both in the first and last paragraphs. Another topic in this chapter is the contrast in anatomical studies between Leonardo and Michelangelo; documentary evidence as well as the comparison of the two men's works are involved.

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[22]Ibid. p. 126.

Leonardo's interest in water intensified considerably at this time, and Clark will take this topic up again in Chapter Nine with regard to the Deluge drawings. In the present chapter it is mentioned in connection with the relationship btween Leonardo and Machiavelli who, after the failure of the product of re-routing the Arno, would commission Leonardo to the most important painting in his career. The fresco for the Sala di Gran Consiglio of the Palazzo Vecchio is a work that incorporates many of the themes that have been pointed out by Clark throughout the book: dualistic qualities found in the subject, Florence versus Milan, the human figure versus the equine figure, the Florentine preference for figures, Michelangelo versus Leonardo, the twisting movement, Leonardo's use of classical forms, Leonardo's humanity in the depiction of war, and the fact that the fresco no longer exists - these are themes of various kinds that Clark has had to deal with in previous chapters. As with other missing paintings, Clark must use preparatory drawings and copies as well as the written documentation on the subject.

Following Leonardo next in his move back to Milan in 1506, Clark arrives at the controversial subject of the London Madonna of the Rocks: a subject which had yet to be proven a valid one and was in need of further discussion in 1939. It had always been Clark's contention that Leonardo could not really completely finish a work and thus it was hard for him to believe that Leonardo could have been largely responsible

for this second version of the picture. Clark may today, come under fire due to some close scrutiny of his text concerning the Madonna of the Rocks and a book review of *Leonardo da Vinci* written in the November 1939 edition of *Connoisseur*. The article refers to a question in a matter of opinion with regard to the quality of the London painting in comparison to the Paris Madonna of the Rocks, and to what extent the paintings are and aren't Leonardo's.

The subject of opinions concerning Leonardo works in 1929, earmarks a tendency I have mentioned before, that of Clark's running hot and cold with regard to Leonardo the hero-non-hero. The question is, in how unbiased a manner or how clearly did Clark read Leonardo's character and his work? The following is an exerpt from Chapter II, where he compared the London and Paris versions:

> "... the Madonna's head, but here our standard of comparison must be the National Gallery version, which, although not entirely executed by Leonardo, was probably designed by him about twenty years later. In comparing the two heads, the delicate imaginative beauty of the first, the waxen chiaroscuro of the second, we cannot help feeling how far Leonardo's theories of painting led him away from out affections. A comparison of the two children yields the same result. Only in the later angel's head do we feel that Leonardo, by sacrificing freshness to regularity, gained a new quality of classical completeness, though, to out eye, the gain is not worth the sacrifice... Although the imagery and, to some extent, the details of the Virgin of the Rocks are still perceptible, we must always remember how much of Leonardo's intention is obscured... It (the National Gallery Picture) is

> apparently by the pupil who painted the greater part of the Virgin of the Rocks... .[23]

Chapter VII, on the other hand, presents a different air with regard to the London Virgin of the Rocks;

> "An analogous change has been made in the heads, which have been redesigned under the influence of Leonardo's later theories of painting. The types have lost their Gothic freshness and naturalism, and the modelling is carried out with darker shadows. Contrary to the best critical opinion I believe that Leonardo also had some part in this execution. One passage is intact, the Angel's head, which departs entirely from the Paris version, and which achieves real beauty of a kind made familiar in the work of the Milanese school, by certainly deriving form Leonardo himself.
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> "Although much can be said in praise of the National Gallery Virgin of the Rocks, it falls far short of the Louvre picture in every kind of beauty and must be largely pupil's work, which pupil we do not know."[24]

In comparing the two passages, we can see Clark dealing with each painting in its own time, and, concurrently, offering an opinion concerning both paintings in comparison with one another. This comparison shows that Clark's personal preference still runs with the earlier Madonna of the Rocks, and that for him historical considerations are one thing - to be immersed in this or that phase of the artist's development and aesthetic judgment is something else.[25] In this case, however, I would think that Clark might have opted for the

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[23]Ibid. pp. 46-48.

[24]Ibid. p. 142.

[25]This may reveal to us that Clark worked chapter by chapter and thus period by period, allowing himself to 'get into' the mind set of that time period.

National Gallery Madonna, as he was the director of the Gallery, but even here his involvement with the subject did not bias his aesthetic judgement.

Chapter Eight

Examples of Clark's involvement in further intricacies of Leonardo's life are presented in chapter eight but now without new problems such as would require yet another, different, art historical approach. All of the themes come together into different combinations, and the various approches are all used, as needed.

This chapter covers the period from 1508 to 1513, Leonardo's movement back to Milan, and his retreating from actively pursuing painting. Clark begins the chapter with the man who, for the following three years, was to be Leonardo's patron, the Frenchman Charles d'Amboise. D'Amboise's background is focused upon, and its relevance to his patronage of Leonardo.

> "Early in his life d'Amboise had been touched by the spirit of the Renaissance, and in Milan he tried to revive or maintain the civilisation of the Sforzas. Of this civilisation Leonardo had been the greatest glory, and we know that d'Amboise treated him with the utmost consideration."[26]

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[26]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press):149.

Architectural drawings found in the *Codice Atlantico* are described, and compared in subject matter to other works by Leonardo and by other, contemporary artists, and to Leonardo's own notes. Using these notes and drawings, Clark speculates on the travels that Leonardo took to explore scientific aspects of nature. The theme of duality in these notes and sketches in the *Codice Atlantico* takes on the aspect of the disparity between Leonardo's scientific observations, resulting in drawings, and his artistic studies, also resulting in drawings, for major works of art. Overall, as Clark observes, "Although Leonardo's approach has become more scientific, he still sees with the eye of a painter."[27]

The various manuscripts are investigated within the *Codex Atlantico* using the approaches that Clark has used in previous chapters. But here he has choosen to be brief, analyzing each topic by means of only one or two approaches. Clark relates the drawings to other later works to literary movements, art move-ments and to Leonardo's later works. The dualism of Leonardo as hero-non-hero,as well as the dualism of his meticulous drawing and writing regarding a single subject or group of subjects, yet never completely finishing a job is noted, versus the his dis-taste for formulas.

> "Many pages of MS. G are concerned with light striking on trees, the various greens of transparent leaves, and the blue sheen which they reflect form the sky. The same book contains valuable notes of what Leonardo called *la prospettiva di colore*, the

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[27]Ibid. p. 150.

> modification of colour by atmosphere; in fact, such observation seem to have been one of the chief motives of his mountaineering expeditions. A drawing of the Alps at Windsor, one of a beautiful series in red chalk on red paper, contains an elaborate note of the colour of mountain flowers when seen through a great gulf of intervening air at a considerable height. There are also notes on the colour of smoke and mist which remind us of Goethe, and only his dislike of formulas prevented hem from anticipating Goethe's principle of translucency. In these writings Leonardo anticipated the impressionist doctrine that everything is more or less reflected in everything else and that there are no such things as black shadows. Meanwhile, his paintings were growing more and more shadowy, so that his last work, the equivocal St. John in the Louvre, only just emerges form a welter of darkness."[28]

Clark now discerns in the Notebooks much evidence for maturation towards eccentricity, and his concern for the mysteries of creation, but not mysteries in the religious sense. Clark, as before, stresses the love for nature that Leonardo had, but he refused to acknowledge that nature had any other creator or God besides Leonardo himself.

Clark moves back and forth frequently, throughout the book, on the subject of whether he, himself, would rather heroicize or de-heroicize his subject, given Leonardo's own vacillation between scientific study and artistic creativity.

> "... Leonardo anticipated the impressionist doctrine that everything is more or less reflected in everything else and that there are no such things as black shadows. Meanwhile, his paintings wwere growing more and more shadowy, so that his last work, the equivocal *St. John* in the Louvre, only

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[28]Ibid. p. 150.

> just emerges from a welter of darkness."[29] "... there remains a serious obstacle to contemporary apprecation of the *St. John*: its darkness."[30]
>
> "This study of geology is sometimes quoted as evidence of Leonardo's drift away form art to science; but I need hardly repeat that Leonardo's researches, however austere, became fused with the texture of his imagination."[31]

The Louvre Virgin and St. Anne is a subject that demanded all of the approaches that Kenneth Clark had at his disposal. In the absence of documentation, he speculates that Leonardo made the work upon his arrival in Milan or no later than 1510. Confronted by the grandeur and mysteriousness of the work, he elaborates several kinds of interpretations for it: formalistic, psychological, and symbolical:

> "The design has for me the exhilarating quality of an elaborate fugue; like a masterpiece of Bach it is inexhaustible. We are always discovering new felicities of movement and harmony, growing more and more intricate, yet always subordinate to the whole. Yet, as with Bach, this is not only an intellectual performance; it is charged with human feeling."
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> "... In a sense... Leonardo had two mothers. And it is the unconscious memory of these two beloved beings, intertwined as if in a dream, which led him to dwell with such tenderness on the subject of the Virgin and St. Anne. Whether or not this is true in fact, it seems to express the mood of the Louvre picture; and explains the apparent nearness in age of mother and daughter, the strange intermingling of their forms and their remote, mysterious smiles."[32]

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[29]Ibid. p. 150.

[30]Ibid. p. 176.

[31]Ibid. p. 151.

[32]Ibid. p. 154.

The key words that I find here, as frequently elsewhere in Clark's work, are "dream", "feeling", "mood", "unconscious", "intellectual" and other, related, words used in psychological study. Again, Clark displays his curiosity about the psychological da Vinci. What is interesting is that in all of Leonardo's drawings of observed people we have no *written* documentation that Leonardo was interested in their psyche per se; all that is available are his works as documentation, onto which Clark projects a twentieth-century style of interpretation.

The death of Charles d'Amboise occurred in 1511, and brought with it new patrons in Milan. Leonardo was commissioned to make an equestrian monument for Gian Giacomo Trivulzio. Clark states the problem of separating the studies for this commission from those for the Sforza monument. He notes stylistic differences, and that the commissions were from men who had been enemies of one another. The differences in notations that come with the sketches in comparison with the Sforza project, and the overall description of what the Trivulzio monument was to look like is paraphrased from a sketch in the *Codice Atlantico*. With this paraphrased sketch, Clark matches up three, similar drawings in the Windsor collection and gives a brief description of the entire group of sketches. In the comparison of the sketches for the monument for the Trivulzio and for the Sforza monument, Clark discerns a movement from Leonardo's quattrocento style to his

High Renaissance style. With regard to another High Renaissance work, the Tomb of Pope Julius by Michelangelo, Clark goes back to the theme of polarity: in this case between the older man and the younger, between Leonardo and Michelangelo.

This essential theme comes up again in the phenomenon, mentioned before, of the scientific versus the artistic Leonardo. Clark notes here that in the later phases of Leonardo's lifelong study of horse, he was tending to digress from his skills as an artist towards those of the scientist, especially as compared with the other artists of the quattrocento.

> "...the walking horse had to be re-designed with more severely plastic intention. With this end in view Leonardo made another series of studies form nature... He had been drawing horses all his life with a matchless power of observation. He had studied their anatomy and worked out a theory of their proportions; and at the age of fifty-five he begins again to make detailed and conscientious studies form nature. Superficially these drawings are less attractive that those made for the Sforza monument... These are not simply exquisite drawings from nature; they are studies for a piece of sculpture."[33]

In passing, Clark again assumes the tools of the connoisseur, noting the differences in technique between the earlier and later sketches and studies of horses, and suggests that these changes were of a kind that would influence other

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[33]Ibid. p. 156.

artists of Leonardo's era, thus reminding us that Leonardo was by no means an isolated fugure by this time.[34]

Concerning the last set of drawings for the Trivulzio monument, Clark cites Müller-Walde and also quotes from Leonardo's *Codice Atlantico* in order to further support his theory that classical models were used in these final drawings. In Clark's way of relating a good deal of information in a single stream of thought within the confines of a paragraph, he not only relates these drawings to monuments in past and future art, but also sees in them, themes that have been consistently sounded throughout this monograph.

Clark continues his study of the Trivulzio monument with regard to the problems Leonardo continued to have with pose, using the sketches as documentation as well as the equestrian monuments of Donatello, Verrocchio and Leonardo's own project for the Sforza monument.

As with some other works of Leonardo's, Clark offers stumulating comparisons: in this case, to Michelangelo,

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[34] Clark's contemporary ties to the art world and the theories about making art and what the currents of art were at the time. This is briefly discussed in the narrative section of this work with regard to Clark's coming to study Leonardo and the influences to his approaches towards Leonardo as a subject. Getting into the "nitty-gritty" of the issue of making art in isolation during Clark's writing of this monograph and the issues surrounding it is yet another thesis topic.

Leonardo's contemporary, and then to a modern artist, Cézanne.

> "It is Leonardo's last work on a subject which had interested him all his life, and is worth comparing with Michelangelo's last work on one of his problems, the composition of two nudes, as we see it in a drawing in the Ashmolean. The similarity of the two drawings is obvious and rather touching since it would have been equally distasteful to either artist. Both have learnt in old age to avoid outlines and to present their subject through interior modelling, suggested by mysterious blots and blurs. This is what Cézanne meant when he praised a picture by saying that is was *dessiné dans la forme*."[35]

The theme in this chapter is one of endings or completions, as can be seen in the above quotation. This is the last group of commissions from Leonardo's French patrons in Milan (though he has yet to move to France itself), and the anatomical drawings are the last datable notebook drawings. All of these endings are ironically related to Leonardo's beginnings as an artist and to the studies which he persued throughout his life. One senses now that the progression of this life has gone full circle.

Clark concludes chapter eight analyzing the masqerade costumes, and recapitulating themes that have been stated before, He also focusses now on the following documents: the anatomical drawings dated 1511-13, the Anatomical MS. A, Vasari's *Lives*, and related drawings and paintings. He puts

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[35]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):159.

connoisseurship to use in ascribing dates to the various drawings found in Anatomical MS. A by comparing them with related examples, and through stylistic and technical analysis. Clark relates these drawings to earlier and later works such as the *Leda and the Swan*. Again, a dualism is noticed, that of art versus science:

> "The line is dry and wiry, seldom betraying any feeling or vivacity, a sad, scientific style, compared to the beautiful anatomical drawings of 1489; yet the masquerade costumes of the same date show that Leonardo had not lost the magic of his touch when he chose to release it. The manuscript deals chiefly with musculature: but as a whole his later anatomical studies show him interested less in the mechanical than the organic side of his subject."[36]

Description in general of the texts of each year provide a means of communicating these themes showing both the victories of Leonardo and his failures;

> "It is characteristic that although he investigates the action of the heart and arteries with great thoroughness, he never brings himself to propose the circulation of the blood as a formulated theory. ...the illustrative drawings have a deliberate carelessness of touch as though Leonardo were denying himself the comeliness of his earlier style. This is the technique of nearly all his latest drawings. It is not attributable to any physical decay, for we have writing of a later date of the greatest neatness: rather it seems to reflect the pessimism and the disillusion of old age, which rejects material beauty even if it consist in a dexterous line or a finely-turned cadence of verse."[37]

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[36]Ibid. p. 161-162.

[37]Ibid. p. 162.

Chapter Nine

The final chapter deals with the last six years of Leonardo's life, beginning with his experiences in Rome. Clark describes the social atmosphere in expressive words, concerning the new artistic powers in Rome at the time when the "solitary old exquisite" traveled there to once again attempt to serve the Medici, now elevated to the Papacy and cardinalates. Various themes inevitably reoccur: Michelangelo versus Leonardo, the Medici's Platonic versus Leonardo's Aristotelian ideas, the young versus the old, but, this time, in a very different social setting, which Clark describes admirably, more so that he did the society of Florence or of Milan.

In this last chapter, moreover, one senses an increased empathy with the man, as he seems now to be losing his sense of position in the world:

> "The solitary old exquisite, who had lived for so long according to his fancy remote form the world, found himself quartered among half the leading artists of Italy, crowding, criticising, jockeying for positions. Raphael, with his troupe of ambitious youths, must have been frequently in the Belvedere to study the fragments of sculpture collected there, but we ask in vain if he visited the master from whom he had borrowed so freely. Worst of all, Michelangelo was in Rome, having gained by his work on the Sistine ceiling a position of unassailable authority. No wonder that Leonardo felt too weary to engage with such formidable rivals, and withdrew further into a melancholy and mysterious solitude."[38]

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[38]Ibid. p. 163-164.

This melancholy is enhanced as Clark now recalls, in this final chapter, that reiterated phrase of Leonardo's: "*Tell me if anything was ever done.*" Clark also conveys here a consideration of the effects of the turning of the century, which he might have placed in Chapter Seven, but, instead, is woven in here, into this tapestry of melancholy.

Among the late drawings Clark cites a recurrent self image, or caricature, that of an old, bearded man - no longer paired with a beautiful youth, and also images of cataclysm and dissolution: the deluge drawings.

> "At various times in his life he had been able to turn this obsession to semi-practical ends by applying himself to problems of canalisation and irrigation. But the quantity of his notes on the subject--it forms one of the largest and most disheartening sections of his written work--and the quality of his drawings show a passion with no relation to practical life. Some of his studies of swirling water are amongst the most direct expressions of his sense of form, springing from the same mysterious source as his love of knots and tendrils. ... But as he gasped half hypnotised at the ruthless continuum of watery movement, Leonardo began to transpose his observation into the realm of the imagination, and to associate them with an idea of cataclysmic destruction which had always haunted him."[39]

Regarding the Deluge as reflection of the last years of the fifteenth century, Clark writes of the sociopolitical and spiritual upheavals and their possible effect on Leonardo. Images can now be seen at once as art and as historic document, just as Dürer's work has been examined in relation

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[39]Ibid. p. 167.

to the occurrences of the turn of the century. The duality of terror versus glorification found in the Deluge drawings seems now incarnate in the personality of Leonardo.

Clark sees the drawings of this period to be the most indicative of Leonardo's personality, his psyche.

> "They express, with a freedom which is almost disturbing, his passion for twisting movement, and for sequences of form fuller and more complex than anything in European art. They are so far from the classical tradition that our fiest term of comarison might be one of the great Chinese paintings of cloud and storm, for example, the Dragon Scroll in the Boston Museum."[40]

Clark again highlights the dualism of Leonardo, going so far as to liken it to the difference between East and West, and, once again, sensing a dichotomy between Leonardo as scientific observer and inquirer and Leonardo as a maker of art.

Amid more quotes from Leonardo's own writings than in any other chapter, Clark focusses still more, now, on the uniqueness of Leonardo as man and artist, and his cosmic visions.

Turning to the Louvre *St. John* Clark evokes the aestheticism of Pater, the traditions of the connoisseur and of the iconologist, and the modern science of psychology, as well as particular themes that have recurred throughout the book:

> "The St. John is the least popular of Leonardo's works. Critics have found it so little to their taste that they have called it the work of assistants. This is certainly false. The St. John

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[40]Ibid. p. 170.

> is a baffling work, but every inch of it smells of Leonardo. Even if we dislike it we must admit its power to trouble the memory, both as image and design. The chief cause of our uneasiness in iconographic."[41]

The problems of the non-conventional iconography is solved partly through connoisseurship as well as literary evidence. Vasari's description of the work and various replicas of it are brought into the discussion. In keeping with a pattern that Clark has followed in dealing with other major works of Leonardo's, he uses a combination of art-historical methods which lead him to a new, bold interpretation of the figure: that it is no less the announcing angel of the Annunciation, than Baptist:

> "Leonardo, with an audacity which is almost disturbing, has shown us the Announcing Angel from the point of vision of Our Lady. We can imagine what strange ideas Leonardo might draw from this extraordinary conception; for the Annunciation can be made to imply that union of flesh and spirit, human and divine, which he wished above all to express. Just as the forces of nature, subject to material analysis up to a point, became suddenly incomprehensible, so the Angel of the Annunciation, though taking human shape, was the agent of a mystery; and mystery to Leonardo was a shadow, a smile and a finger pointing into darkness."[42]

Clark then proposes that the picture is profoundly personal in its meaning:

> "Of several possible interpretation I offer the following which is at least in keeping with Leonardo's spirit. St. John the Baptist was the forerunner, the necessary forerunner of the truth and the Light. And what is the inevitable precursor

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[41]Ibid. p. 173.

[42]Ibid. p. 174.

> of truth? A question. Leonardo's St. John is the eternal question mark, the enigma of creation. He thus becomes Leonardo's familiar--the spirit which stands at his shoulder and propounds unanswerable riddles. He has the smile of a sphinx, and the power of an obsessive shape. I have pointed out how this gesture--which itself has the rising rhythm of an interrogative--appears throughout Leonardo's work. Here it is quintessential. The design has the finality of a hard-won form rendered in an intractable material. Leonardo who could give life to every pose and glance, has subdued his gifts as if he were working in flenite. A generation which admires Picasso should be able to understand the St. John."[43]

"...he thus becomes Leonardo's familiar...": the St. John is yet another confirmation of the theme of the self-portraiture within the art of Leonardo, a theme that runs through the chapter form beginning to end, and unifies the book as a whole.

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[43]Ibid. p. 175.

II

THE STATE OF LEONARDO STUDIES AS OF 1939

> "His art, and the personality it reveals, is of universal interest, and like all great art should be interpreted for each generation."[1]

Kenneth Clark had a compelling scholarly reason to write this book: to clear up the confusion concering the authenticity of paintings by or associated with Leonardo, and to approach this problem not only by looking at the "morphological details", in the old, Morellian way, but also through considering these works as products of the human spirit, the psyche. Clark points out in his article of 1929: "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci", that the recent criticism of Leonardo has not been about the actual works but the works that might have been: the Leonardesque abstract. He brings to the whole subject an openness of mind, which he shares with his modern contemporaries, and which has affirmed the cessation of academic, classicistic, prejudice. Now, in Clark's modern way of thinking, the eccentricities that occur in Leonardo's work can be dealt with directly and with greater understanding. The work of Sigmund Freud and other

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[1]Ibid. p. 1.

psychologists had helped in this opening of the contemporary mind, to include not only the form of the art but the personality behind it, and although Clark may not have agreed with everything Freud had written about Leonardo, it was now clear, as far as Clark was concerned, that there could be no longer any simple way of dealing with this artist. "He is a standing refutation of the comfortable belief that all great men are simple"[2].

Clark elucidates his reasons for the need of a modern investigation of Leonardo in several places: in the 1929 article, "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci," in the periodical *Life and Letters*; in the Introduction to the *Catalogue* for the Leonardo drawings at Windsor Castle, published in 1935; in the first chapter of the book *Leonardo da Vinci,* 1939; and in his autobiography, *Another Part of the Wood,* 1974. Clark notes that there were few books on Leonardo worth reading, that there was large scale confusion as to which works were Leonardo's (indeed, that most of the ones thought to be his were not authentic) and, most importantly, that no one had related the thousands of drawings and writings in his notebooks to his paintings. Leonardo had yet to be considered historically and critically in a logical fashion, and his works had yet to be understood, moreover, as to the spirit in which they were created, that they were, as Clark

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[2]Ibid. p. 2.

wrote, "not simply of the human hand, but of the human spirit."[3]

While persuing his studies in preparation for the Windsor Drawings Catalogue, Clark wrote with regard to the history of Leonardo studies and the kinds of materials found in these studies, and their deficiencies. The dates of activity in this field he recorded with much care. The most important ones are listed in the bibliography of the Windsor Catalogue. In this bibliography Clark makes valuable notations for nearly each entry. I used this bibliography and not the one for the 1939 Leonardo text, because the latter was designed for the general reader and I wanted something closer to what Clark used.

Clark's comments on these various studies indicate that none of them would now serve as a general consideration of this artist, except perhaps that of Waldemar von Seidlitz, published in 1909, which Clark describes as "The fullest and, on the whole, the best life of Leonardo, but better for life than art."[4] There were, however, fine *specialized studies*. For example, Bodmer is noted to have the "...most convenient collection of reproductions with notes containing accurate information"[5] in his manuscript, *Leonardo: des Meisters*

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[3]Ibid. p. 1.

[4]Ibid. p. 188.

[5]Ibid. p. liii.

Gemälde und Ziechnungen, written in 1931. Girolamo Calvi's *I manoscritti di Leonardo da Vinci dal punto di vista chronologico, storico e biografico,* published in 1925, is noted by Clark as being of fundamental importance with regard to the chronology of the manuscripts, and also that it is an excellent example of scholarship.

Not every notation is positive, however. The 1812 publication of J. Chamberlain's *Original Designs of the Most Celebrated Masters in His Majesty's Collection* Clark notes as a "a curious selection" because it included drawings not by Leonardo. Evidently, at least one of the plates had been proven to be of a falsely attributed example even before the publication was written. Such inaccuracy is typical of a work written in the early nineteenth century, and led to misconceptions that later scholars could correct only gradually. Clark also notes the work of Malaguzzi Valeri, *Leonardo da Vinci e la Scultura,* written in 1922, as being worthless, with the exception of some of the reproductions. Clark criticizes the work of Simon Meller for its iconographic evidence alone. Clark criticizes Müller-Walde's weakness as a connoisseur in the 1889 publication of *Leoanrdo da Vinci Lebensskezze und Forshungen über sien Verhältness sur Florentiner Kunst und zu Rafael.* Müller-Walde did prove useful to Clark, on the other hand, in studies concerning the equestrian monuments and the *Leda.* Clark notes, "For patience, observation and a scholarly sense of method they have

not been surpassed."[6] This was with regard to "Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Leonardo da Vinci", in *Jahrbuch der Königlichen Preusseschen Kunstsammlungen*, published in 1897, 98, and 99.

Clark found Eugene Müntz's *Leonrdo da Vinci, l'artiste, le penseur, le savant,* to be methodologically out of date but useful in its illustrations, and in Müntz's documentation of social conditions in Milan.

Of the rest of the entries, two stand out as of exceptional importance to Clark's project: a study by Anny Popp, and the other, which I mentioned above, by Waldemar von Seidlitz. Popp's *Leonardo da Vinci: Zeichnungen* was published in 1928 and Clark identifies it as an excellent short study on drawings. He applauds her vision concerning the importance of chronology, which was essential to the new biography of Leonardo that Clark was to write. The biographical form is a set standard: it tells a story in chronological order, noting facts in order to create complete understanding of the life of the artist. Correct chronological order had already become a particular concern of Clark's in his work on the Windsor catalogue. In the introduction to this work Clark states on page 188, regarding Anny Popp's book, "...it is the only book to attempt with

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[6]Ibid. p. liv.

success, a chronological arrangement of Leonardo's drawings."

The bibliography in the Windsor Catalogue tells us a good deal about the state of Leonardo studies as of 1930, when he started the project for this catalogue. It tells us also that the really useful works published before 1934 were short and of limited scope. They also were highly specialized books or articles, but those scholars who did try to write a book of the same , general scope as Clark's did not, in Clark's opinion, shed a great deal of light on the subject of Leonardo and his art. As Clark implied, the modern, up-to-date general study had yet to be written.

Bits and pieces of such a comprehensive work had been attempted by Jacob Burckhardt. But Burckhardt's treatment only got as far as the social surroundings of Leonardo's art, and the notion of the many-sided man, but really never got around to writing a serious evaluation or history of Leonardo's development as an artist.

Vasari at this time and even today is the most important single source for the study of Leonardo and his art. Vasari's genre was that of biography, which was then and remains to this day the essential model for a complete study of Leonardo. Vasari's treatment of the complete Leonardo included some hints of social history only where they might enhance one's understanding of art, in general, and help towards the propagandizing of his favorite artist and

culminating figure in his *Lives*, Michelangelo. The five writers who preceded Vasari (anonymous, *Libro di Antonio Billi*, c. 1518; Paolo Giovio, Leonardi Vincii vita, c. 1527; Baldassare Castiglione, *Il cortegiano*, c. 1518;, Anonimo Gaddiano, c.1540; and Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi*, 1546) gave an incomplete and often unchronological interpretation of Leonardo's life and work, although their documentation is important due to the fact that they were more nearly contemporary with Leonardo.

In 1938, just before the outbreak of World War II, an authoritative and complete treatment of Leonardo was published by the Institato Geografico de'Agostoni. There was an exhibition in Milan which, in conjunction with the Instituto, assembled the works discussed in this publication. The text includes contributions from scholars in every aspect of Leonardo studies, so it is quite encyclopedic. In its vast bibliography of books and periodicals it includes the works mentioned by Clark in his bibliographies and includes, since it is a later work, Clark's Windsor catalogue. What I found of particular interest in this book was the chapter called `Studying Leonardo' by Faresto M. Bongioanni.[7] This document is important as a second source, in addition to Clark's own comments, with regard to what needed to be done in Leonardo studies.

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[7]Bongioanni, Fausto M., "Studying Leonardo", Leonardo da Vinci, (Milan: Instituto Geografico De Agostini, 1938):175-185.

This attempt to treat the whole subject of Leonardo in one book shows that there was a need or a desire for such an undertaking not only in England, with Kenneth Clark, but in Italy as well. Mr. Bongioanni points out, as Clark did, that each age has its own specialists in a particular topic such as Leonardo and that age is recognized in their works because each age has its own set of concerns.[8] This agrees with Clark's assessment of the history of Leonardo studies, in the Introduction to the Catalogue, where he noted times of great scholarship and other periods of no scholarship at all.

What is more, Bongioanni notes the areas that seem to him to be of particular interest in his and Clark's age. He presents the idea that the scholar of Leonardo is not simply an art historian but one who also considers culture and philosophy.[9]

Bongioanni stresses an interest in the complete humanity of Leonardo, with which Clark agrees. Bongioanni also notes, " ... the vitality of Leonardo's thought,... poses the necessity of placing the historical interpretation of Leonardo within the general question of the reality of ideas."[10] He goes on to say that, although he sees this as a primary concern, a re-evaluation of history itself might be

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[8]Ibid. p. 175.

[9]Ibid. p. 175.

[10]Ibid. p. 178.

achieved using the study of Leonardo as a starting point, as he belonged within a tradition and at the same time was engaged in the process of revival and rejuvenation, and worked in the most important cultural centers of his time.[11] Bongioanni notes other themes of study: the contradiction between the scientific and the artistic in Leonardo, his inventions, the refutation of the argument that Leonardo was not appreciated in his own time, and the study of landscape.

[11]Ibid. p. 179.

I I I

NARRATIVE

> "His art, and the personality it reveals, is of universal interest, and like all great art should be re-interpreted for each generation."[1]
>
> "How many authors who have written on the history and criticism of art can still be read with pleasure by those not already interested in the subject? Relatively few. The history of art is largely occupies with fact finding, the criticism of art with fault-finding or the ephemeral praise of journalism. ... Taking this empirical view of the subject, we may ask how the few outstanding historians and critics of art set about their aim. Broadly speaking, in four ways: biography, description, analysis and rhapsody."[2]

Kenneth Clark began at a very young age to notice and also to experience art. Evidence is found in his autobiographies, Secrest's biography, and in his various entries of testimonial found in many of his written works to this effect. Art, in fact, was the only thing that he could respond emotionally to.

> "Kenneth Clark's emphasis on the importance of his aesthetic gift was his way of conceding that he

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[1]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):1.

[2]Kenneth Clark, Moments of Vision (London: John Murray, 1982; New York: Harper and Row, 1982):82.

> had felt short-changed by life. ... Art was his sole remaining emotional outlet and one he desperately needed. Art would sustain him where life had let him down."[3]

Clark notes that during his childhood he had "...no friends of my own age and species...", only the toys found in his nursery and the hobbies that he found in the Clark household. At the age of seven Clark would, once a month, rearrange the paintings that had been collected by his father. His favorite books were a book from a Japanese show that came to England in 1910, which he attended, the other was a book of fifty-five color plates of pictures from the Louvre, which was his favorite. Clark would lecture to his grandmother, expounding at length with regard to the pictures found in the book of the Louvre.[4]

Another aspect of Clark's background that may possibly have an effect on his method, although, it might be said, a negative one, concerns the lack of consideration that he had towards the social surroundings in Leonardo's period. In several places in *Another Part of the Wood*, he notes not having a feeling for the society in which he lived, although later, as in his regard for Eugene Müntz's book on Leonardo, cited above in Chapter Two, Clark was to recognize the value of this kind of consideration.

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[3]Meryle Secrest, Kenneth Clark: A Biography (London: 1984; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985):27-28.

[4]Kenneth Clark, Another Part of the Wood (London: John Murray, 1974; New York: Harper and Row, 1975):48.

> "My parents belonged to a section of society known as `the idle rich'... there can have been few who were idler. They took no part in public affairs, did not read the newspapers, and were almost entirely without the old upper-class feeling of responsibility for their tenants."[5]

> With regard to the year 1914: "That ominous date found us still anchored in Loch Ewe and in a state of despondency; not, of course, for political reasons, but because the sea-trout had vanished and the salmon had grown sluggish and disinterested. None of us read the three days old newspapers, although I think that the news that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been assassinated somehow reached us..."
> "The news of the declaration of war on August 4th was well received by our friends and neighbors. They had long hated the Germans and were glad to `have a go' at them."
> "The slaughter that decimated the upper classes did not touch us. Bombs, jettisoned by returning zeppelins, fell in the park at Sudbourne and made small hazards on the golf course. My parents continued their way of life."[6]

This oblivious way of life may not appear auspicious of Clark's eventual success in art history, except that art itself, and the study of it, were then, and often still are, associated with leisure and a lack of concern for economic realities. As mentioned above, there was a great deal of art in the family house, some of which Clark's father collected. When at the age of nine the decision to be an artist was clear in Clark's mind, his father was pleased.

> "He enjoyed the convivial company of artists, was a member of the Arts Club, and was invited to the

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[5]Ibid. p. 1.

[6]Ibid. pp. 39-41.

annual banquet of the Royal Academy, although he seldom bought pictures form the Exhibition."[7]

Knowing the details of his childhood, I think that, though Clark never mentions being alone,he must in fact have suffered from loneliness at times, just as Leonardo may well have suffered in the same way in his often solitary existence. Clark's probably lonely childhood, and his desire to create art, would suggest a basis for Clark's affinity for Leonardo.

When Clark mentions his childhood or other periods in his life, he at times relates them in writing to a Leonardo work.

> "A row of mortars were dug into the grass in front of the house at Pool Ewe and into them were placed large but light cannon balls. The general effect comes back to me vividly when I look at a Leonardo drawing at Windsor (12275).[8]

> "A few days ago I received a card of invitation which made me pause in the reprehensible, but almost mechanical, action of throwing such things into the waste-paper basket. It was to an exhibition of photo-graphs of stains on walls, not, as one might suppose, organised by some enterprising manufacturer of paint or plaster, in order to show the bad results of ignoring his product, but by an art gallery which was exhibiting these results of damp and decomposition as works of art.
>
> I wonder if that invitation has made you think, as it did me, of Leonardo da Vinci."[9]

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[7]Ibid. p. 50.

[8]Ibid. p. 39.

[9]Kenneth Clark, Moments of Vision (London: John Murray, 1982; New York: Harper and Row, 1982):18.

Kenneth Clark's methodology gradually took shape because of the effect on him of particular individuals who come into his life either through personal contact or by their writings on Renaissance art. The most fertile period of time was during his education at Winchester College, where he read Ruskin, Pater, Fry, Berenson, and most likely Vasari.[10] Clark gives us considerable references to influential scholars within his 1939 text, in his autobiographies, as well as in his article concerning the study of art history. These scholars' works display a variety of ways in art-historical inquiry, each proven to be an effective, single method of discovering or unlocking truths about art, and Clark, in his undogmatic process, was to make use of them all.

Clark was influenced a great deal by Ruskin's art criticism and theories on taste. Ruskin was of the belief that the architecture and the art of a community would directly effect the psychology and mental health of that community, and that close imitation of mature world insure beauty. He lived in the age of Queen Victoria, when the lives of Europeans and Americans alike were governed by a strict code of morals, exemplified by the Queen. Concerning architecture, Ruskin believed that the style in which a building was fashioned would have a direct effect on the behavior and values of people who lived in and around it.

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[10]Kenneth Clark, Another Part of the Wood (London: Harper and Row, 1974):75-76.

Clark considered Ruskin to be "the greatest member of my Profession."[11] and further wrote, "...I was becoming a little more aware of the world around me. This was a by-product of art history, and I owed it to Ruskin."[12] Ruskin's clear analysis and honest criticism required Clark to look at the world according to who he was: as someone who was brought up rich and without a need or care in the world. Clark writes that he had some Marxist leanings during this time, much to the astonishment of fellow students at Oxford when Clark gave a paper on Ruskin. Given the political air at this time of imminent war, Ruskin was fairly unpopular because of his leanings towards Marxism.

> "My contemporaries would not have been interested in these questions (of the reasons and effects of class structure in England and elsewhere) and I did not mention them. When I read a paper on Ruskin to the College literary society, the only response was one of astonishment that anyone should take him seriously. There must have been some earnest Marxists in Balliol, but they were not to be found in Sligger's rooms, and I never met them, perhaps fortunately, because Marx now seems to me such a marvellous genius that he might have swept me off my feet, and left me suspended in an artificial vacuum..."[13]

From these experiences of literature and art historical reading, Clark gained, as mentioned above, an acute awareness of the world around him, which I believe manifests itself in

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[11]Ibid. p. 56.

[12]Ibid. p. 111.

[13]Ibid. pp. 112-13.

his way of writing about art. Attention to this awareness is present in the 1939 Leonardo text in the form of Clark's alertness to the life around him in his own time, even though he says little of Leonardo's own social context.

Also while at Winchester and later at Oxford, Clark read Pater, as is apparent from hints in Clark's autobiography and Secrest's biography of Clark. Pater I believe to have been both a negative and positive influence on Clark's work. Positive as it entered into the flow of Clark's words, became an inspiration for his own writing style. Negative in the fact that Pater's writing style was so very agreeable and his 'criticism' of a kind that led to an effect of over heroicization, especially in Leonardo's case. Clark, however, saw Pater as an extremely positive model for his writing style, and yet had to say, in an article published in 1929, that "...Pater's silver intuition...would have us believe that Leonardo was limitless."[14] Clark then did go on to prove limitation through his scrutiny of Leonardo's drawings.

Vasari for Clark was perhaps a starting point for his scholarship in the Italian Renaissance, as Vasari has always tended to be for all Italian Renaissance art historians, and for anyone beginning to write history concerning that period.

> "...from the first the biographical approach has added greatly to our understanding of certain artists... Vasari's two masterpieces, the lives of

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[14]Kenneth Clark, "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci," Life and Letters, (February 1929):125.

> Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, have contributed so vividly to our concept of each artist that no educated person can look at their work with our having his perceptions enriched by the memory of Vasari's anecdotes. Vasari never attempts what might be called a psychological interpretation the artists' personalities. He simply tells stories about them, strung together on a thread of rather dubious facts; yet the very selection of these stories was dictated to him by his enthusiasm for his fellow artists and his desire to explain their work."[15]

It is with this always in his mind, making the artist and the art come alive for the audience, that Clark was to approach his subject, although he was never to see himself in the role of a mere popularizer or sensationalist.

Clark read and studied the works of Roger Fry while at Winchester under the direction of Clark's headmaster, Montague John Rendall. Rendall had lectured on his favorite artists, one of which was Bellini, based on a book by Fry. Studying the scholars of the Renaissance was the motive for Rendall to lecture on the various artists.

> "With what persuasive eloquence did he describe that mixture of learning, courtesy and fair play, which seemed to him the ideal of a gentleman, either in Mantua, or Winchester College."[16]

Along with the lectures were cases of plates illustrating various works of art "chiefly Italians", to which there were notes by Rendall affixed. Clark recalls that it was among

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[15]Kenneth Clark, Moments of Vision (London: John Murray, 1982; New York: Harper and Row, 1982):83.

[16]Kenneth Clark, Another Part of the Wood, (London: John Murray, 1974; New York: Harper and Row, 1975):62.

these notes that he encountered the name of Berenson for the first time. He also became aware then of Turner.

> "Turner was derided by the critics whom I then admired, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, but the watercolours and seascapes were so ravishingly beautiful and so unassailably true, that for the first time I began to doubt my mentors."[17]

And, further into Clark's writings, a note on his reading Ruskin and then Fry:

> "I did my best to read Ruskin's writings, but without someone to guide me they were incomprehensible. ... Even the prose style seemed to me then turgid and over-insistent. It was a relief to turn to the clear contemporary language of Roger Fry, whose skill in analysing the components of a design, be it a drawing by Daumier, a painting by Poussin or a Ch'ang bronze, was the finest education in art criticism I ever received."[18]

During his time at Oxford, (dates not given) Clark met Roger Fry: the critic, artist, and art historian of formalist methods. The two would later become close friends. Clark was with him the evening of September 7, 1934, when he fell and later went into a coma, never to recover.

Clark was influenced by Fry's ability to make enlightening comparisons of art works actually separated by great stylistic and period distances: for example, an African mask and a drawing by Michelangelo. This opened up, as Ruskin's views did, Clark's perceptions of the world through a comparative method. Clark thus developed a keen awareness

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[17]Ibid. p. 65.

[18]Ibid. p. 76.

as to where he is and a sharp perception of the contemporary art world. Thus he frequently compares Leonardo to artists active from the late 1800's to the 1930's. Works by artists such as Blake, Picasso, Monet, Seurat, Burne-Jones, Cézanne, Corot, Ingres, Fragonard, Goya, Poussin, Reynolds, Rossetti, Turner, Watteau, are compared formalistically and psychologically to things of Leonardo's. Clark utilizes Picasso to point to the enigma of Leonardo's St. John: "...a generation which admires Picasso should be able to understand the St. John."[19] Clark thus not only achieved a keen vision of the past but was also able to see into his own generation's passion. Clark brings this awareness in these two examples to help the reader to better relate to the past and to better relate to the present.

Clark also was influenced by Fry's adherence to analyzing the object of art formalistically. Though Clark couldn't see that art history could be written solely on the basis of formal analysis, he noted that it is, when used with precision, a very useful tool. Clark couldn't agree, however, with Fry's ideas concerning significant form. He doesn't say why; neither does Secrest. Simply stated, the theory has to do with the separation of literary and psychological analysis

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[19]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):175.

from the analysis of art.[20] In the text Clark was to cite Fry's formalistic language as a way of dealing with Leonardo's *Saint Jerome,* but not the only way.

> "Both as an embodiment of passion and as what Roger Fry would have called a plastic sequence, this figure is a great invention."[21]

After his graduation from Oxford, which most likely took place in 1926, though sources do not divulge such dates, Clark was face to face with problems in Florentine Renaissance art, and Renaissance art in general. Charles Bell and Bernard Berenson brought him into confrontation with these problems, and it would seem that it was through Berenson tht Clark brought his interest in Leonardo into sharp focus for the first time.

The impetus towards Leonardo for Clark, began, I believe, with his first meeting with Bernard Berenson in 1926 in Florence, arranged by Bell. Berenson called Clark to him and they talked for a period of approximately ten minutes at the conclusion of which Berenson proposed that Clark help him to write a new edition of his Florentine Drawings.

Re-reading the 1903 text would have been a logical first step in this new project. This however cannot be

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[20]For further reading on this subject: Berel Lang, "Significance or Form: The Dilemma of Roger Fry's Aesthetic," Journal of Aesthetics 21/2 (Winter 1962):167-76.

[21]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):42.

proven and is simply an educated guess on my part. The chapter devoted to Leonardo is, of course, of special importance within this work as a whole, and Clark soon became involved in the work on this chapter in particular. Having come into contact with preparatory sketches for the *Virgin of the Rocks* at the Ashmolean at Oxford, and having worked during his first investigations for Berenson on the Leonardo chapter, he then went on to investigate the six hundred sheets of Leonardo drawings at Windsor Castle.[22] There he had made friends with the head librarian, Owen Morshead. The first catalogue for the collection was being thought of and planned for at this time.

Later in 1927, while Clark and Berenson were working on the revision, they were allowed to see in a private showing Leonardo's *Annunciation* in the Louvre. Berenson had previously attributed the painting to Lorenzo di Credi, but when he saw the original in front of him, he quickly changed his mind.[23] Clark was able to witness the connoisseur at his method first hand. I mention this because it may have stirred Clark and it may have caused him to ask questions with regard to many of the false attributions of Leonardo's works.

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[22]Meryle Secrest, Kenneth Clark: A Biography (London: 1984; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985):79.

[23]Ibid. p. 74.

It was Berenson who, as a scholar of the Italian Renaissance, was idolized by Clark in the beginning. The ways in which Berenson's methodology effected Clark are in Clark's skills of attribution and in his desire for art works to be placed in the proper time and place. Clark, having been brought up looking at art, was a natural connoisseur. But however skilled he eventually became in this, he could not trust the method fully.

According to Secrest, during the Spring of 1929, Berenson and Clark were feeling more and more uncomfortable about each other's role in the project, and Berenson ended the situation with a letter. The letter, however, did give reinforcement to Clark to create a `milestone contribution' in the history of ideas.[24] Kenneth Clark was appointed in 1930[25] to write the Catalogue for the Leonardo drawings located at Windsor Castle.

All sources suggest that Clark began in that year, 1929, to devote his time totally to Leonardo. Secrest tells us that Clark's interests at this time were '... supplanted by

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[24]Ibid. p. 79. The letter is not reproduced in anyway in Secrest's text, it is simply made mention of. Clark's autobiography, Another Part of the Wood makes no mention of this event or letter.

[25]This date is found in the Introduction to A Catalogue of the Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collection of His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle, by Kenneth Clark, (Cambridge, 1935):xvi. Other sources, such as the biography about Clark by Meryle Secrest date this occurrence to 1929, and in Another Part of the Wood, Clark himself does not mention any date for the appointment.

a new enthusiasm: Leonardo da Vinci."[26] "There was only one subject worth studying and that was Leonardo."[27] It was also in 1929, however, that Clark went to Rome to hear a lecture by Aby Warburg who, according to Secrest, Clark understood to be a new kind of theoretician. Clark would write later;

> "It (the lecture) lasted over two hours, and I understood about two-thirds. But it was enough. Thenceforward my interest in `connoisseurship' became no more that a kind of a habit, and my mind was occupied in trying to answer the kind of questions that had occupied Warburg"[28]

Warburg was reactionary against the Morellian and Berensonian approach to art history, thinking, as he did, of works of art as symbols, and inquiring into their meanings, their origins and the ways in which they could be transmitted. For Clark, this method affirmed his own growing interest in the psychological, and the study of hidden meanings.

Arriving at the Herziana to hear the lecture, the director of the Institute had Clark sit in a front row seat, so that he might understand the German more easily. It so happens, in any case, that Warburg tended to lecture only to one person in a room, as he didn't like confronting an entire group of people, and in this instance he singled out Clark to lecture to.

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[26]Meryle Secrest, Kenneth Clark: A Biography (London: 1984; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985):79.

[27]Ibid. p. 79.

[28]Kenneth Clark, Another Part of the Wood (London: Harper and Row, 1974):190.

Again in the year 1929 Clark published " A Note on Leonardo da Vinci", in *Life and Letters*, a literary periodical. The focus of the article was a critical view of Leonardo's Notebooks, and a critical review of the literature written about Leonardo at the time, with particular attention paid to Richter's book, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, to Pater's intuitions and shortcomings, and to Valery's *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci*. The thrust being criticism, Clark notes that all three men would have their readers believe that Leonardo was limitless, but that, on the contrary, he was in fact limited. Clark criticizes all three authors for their lack of critical severity.

Clark does state that it is difficult for the scholar, when faced with Leonardo's notebooks and his paintings, not to be terribly impressed with Leonardo's curiousness, and intelligence "... so infinitely greater than ours."[29] Clark writes this article with recommendations of how one studies Leonardo, as Bongioanni was to do later. In the following sets of short quotes, I believe that the reader can see what Clark was after in 1929.

> "He provides textual difficulties for the scholar, problems of attribution for the connoisseur, and for the professional psychologist a few alarming symptoms."[30]

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[29]Kenneth Clark, "A Note on Leonardo da Vinci," Life and Letters (February 1929):127.

[30]Ibid. p. 122.

> "...Anyone who makes his way through Dr. Richter's great selection of Leonardo's writings will be struck by a general falsification of values, due, no doubt, to the assumption that Leonardo was an entirely isolated, superhuman figure. The evidence of Leonardo's debt to his contemporaries and to the ancients, the mass of books he read and quoted, above all, his close connection with the Middle Ages have passed through Dr. Richter's glowing mind with out leaving a stain."[31]

> "Nor do the men of letters who have seen in Leonardo's many sided nature an ideal embodiment of their own personalities..."[32]

Clark wanted to show Leonardo's lack of method in his notebooks in contrast to Valery's statements in his work on the subject, and he wanted to compare Leonardo's mind and ideas to that of the ideas in the Renaissance, noting:

> "This simple way of looking at Renaissance thought is usually brushed aside by admirers of Leonardo with words implying that he transcended the spirit of his time: but without some such background his notebooks seem to me quite incomprehensible."[33]

Finally, Clark wanted to examine the polarity of Leonardo and Michelangelo.

> "He is the perfect antithesis of Leonardo, so obsessed with organic life that the dark faces which crowd around the Virgin of his Adoration seem, in the failing light, like creatures in a shallow pool, or a drop of water under a microscope."[34]

In these quotations from Life and Letters, Clark has pinpointed the need to study the social, the psychological, the

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid. p. 125.

[34]Ibid. p. 132.

formal, the documentary, in terms of connoisseurship and iconography.

While Clark was working on the Windsor Catalogue, a group of events occured which, paradoxically, led him away from his studies and yet closer to them. In 1930, Clark was appointed Keeper of the Fine Arts Department at the Ashmolean (as Charles Bell had been pushed out) and in 1931 he was appointed Director of the National Gallery of Art in London. Thrust into a celebrity role, Clark became busy with speaking engagements and procuring new art works for the museum. Secrest notes that at the time of Clark's acceptance of the Keeper of the Ashmolean position, Bernard Berenson had advised him against it, saying that Clark's mission was to civilize mankind. Clark agreed with this idea, but did what he thought was correct at the time. In 1935 the catalogue was published. The reviews which it received from English newspapers, and the publications noted in the bibliography,[35] were an incitement to him to write more about Leonardo. By this time, if not already in 1929, the project took shape in his mind to write a book devoted to Leonardo's development as an artist.

The matter of the lectures that occurred before the publication in 1939 should now be discussed. One can assume logically that Clark had already amassed a great deal of

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[35]see page for bibliography concerning the reviews of the catalogue in 1935.

information from which the lectures might take form, and that, in his position as Director of the National Gallery, he was sought after as a speaker. Thus the lecture series grew as he worked on the manuscript. In 1933 there were three lectures given at the Courtald Institute, as Clark says int he preface to the 1939 edition of Leonardo:

> "This book is the result of a number of lectures on Leonardo given during the last six years. Originally there were three given in Oxford and at the Courtald Institute."[36]

In 1935 at the Royal Institute there were four lectures, in 1936, six at Yale University. Sources do not indicate elaboration of the connection between the lectures and the book. However, Clark does, in his reflection upon his lectures and their effects on his writing:

> "At first sight it seems to have done harm. Piero della Francesca, which is the only one of my books on art not to have been given as lecture, is, on the whole, the best written. ... But literary polish is not appropriate to a lecture, which must have some of the character of the spoken word, and so gradually my style has grown freer and more colloquial."[37]

From this clue, it can be logically assumed that the book itself preserves the form of the lecture series in the way that Clark suggests. However, the fact that there are nine chapters in the book, which had to grow from the last set of

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[36]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939):xi.

[37]Kenneth Clark, The Other Half, (London: John Murray, 1977):95.

lectures, numbering six, would indicate that there had to be some degree of revision. In his Introduction to the 1988 edition of the Leonardo text, Martin Kemp notes the following with regard to the derivation of the book from the lecture series.

> "...his speaking engagements included a series of lectures on Leonardo da Vinci, culminating in the Ryerson Lectures at Yale University in the autumn of 1936. It was the six Ryerson Lectures, expanded to nine, that came to be published by Cambridge University Press in 1939 as the present monograph.
>
> "The frame work of his book is provided by the chronological understanding of Leonardo's artistic development as established during his work on the Windsor *Catalogue*."[38]

Without concise documentation from Clark's own hand, the issue of the fruition the text from its various sources: the notes from the *Catalogue*, or from the growing set of lectures, I can not make a concise statement regarding the question of how the book's composition came about. The issue is important for its own sake, but the fact that there were indeed two avenues from which the book originated that are known to us is also important.

The idea and the legacy of Leonardo persisted as a problem in Clark's mind. He would revise the book twice: in 1952 and in 1959, and would later write a number of articles concerning Leonardo.

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[38]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939; Revised edtion and an introduction by Martin Kemp, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1988):26.

I V

IMPACT

The reviews which followed the 1939 publication of *Leonardo da Vinci: An Analysis of His development as an Artist* were positive. The reviewers noted the clear, chronological analysis, appreciated the inclusion of a study of influences, and the concise criticism of Leonardo's work. They noted the problems of writing such a text and they recognized his attention to the diverse issues surrounding Leonardo. Clark is also applauded for not having attempted the full scale criticism of Leonardo as he had seemed to have in mind in the 1929 article in *Life and Letters*.

> "Instead he has merely removed Leonardo from a pedestal on which he was beginning to appear slightly ridiculous to one from which his outstanding gifts can be more properly appreciated. A far more difficult and praiseworthy performance."[1]

> "Moreover, we all tend secretly to resent the universal genius: it is hardly fair, we feel, that one man should excel at so great a variety of undertakings (not the least satisfying part of Sir Kenneth's book is that in which he demonstrates, with the aid of several reproductions of drawings, that as an architect Leonardo was rather less than

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[1]Osbert Lancaster, (Review of the 1939 edition) Architectural Review 87 (February 1940):70.

mediocre)."[2]

The criticism of the work is that it is too brief and that it addressed an alternative audience, the general reader and student. Thus for some of the reviewers, like H. G. Kell, writing for Connoisseur, "...he has found chords which seem to us left unresolved."[3] And although not all reviewers felt left out or dissatisfied by the brevity of the work, it remains understood that Clark is not recognized as a landmark in the history of art historiography, the reason being that he did not aim specifically at the art historians' audience in the first place, but that he chose, rather, to educate the general public. Kenneth Clark, however, had been by his very nature a teacher from the start (his lectures to his grandmother) and fundamentally interested in giving an understanding of the world to the people of the world. Upon Clark's death in 1983 critics and art historians alike were prompted to write about his accomplishments in obituaries, and tributes found in posthumous reprints of his books.

> "A year or two before its publication, in a little room in the Ashmolean he gave his first lectures on Leonardo. ... they were some of the most intellectually exciting lectures I have ever heard. In 1939 they were published in an elaborated form, and the lucid account they give of Leonardo and his work has never been, and maybe never will be

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[2]Ibid.

[3]H. G. Kell, (Review of the 1939 edition) Connoisseur 104 (November 1939):252.

surpassed."[4]

> "...the most gifted and influential art historian of the thirties, the most iumportant public fugure in the arts during the forties and fifties, and one of the most informative and entertaining television personalities in the sixties."[5]

In the recent 1988 edition of Kenneth Clark's *Leonardo da Vinci* the footnotes are revised in the light of the current state of Leonardo studies, and introduced by a leading Leonardo scholar of the present day, Martin Kemp. Kemp sees Clark's biography of Leonardo as one of exceptional quality and considers Clark's work with a tone of voice and with interpretive insights which are very different from the standards set so far for contemporary criticism. Yet, it seems to me that Kemp has underestimated the impact of this book on current art history. In a paragraph in his introduction, Kemp notes Clark's use of and awareness of the "major masters" that came before him: and yet also his independence from them:

> "In his approach to the major masters who helped shape his approach, Pater, Ruskin, Berenson, Fry, Warburg and Freud - Clark was instinctively undogmatic. He distrusted adherence to any creed that draws lines around the infinite flexibility of aesthetic response. At heart he was profoundly untheoretical and unphilosophical ... there is probably something deeply unsatisfactory in the writings of someone who believes in no system sufficiently profoundly to operate it as its ultimate power... what ultimately redeems his work

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[4]John Pope-Hennessy, "Lord Clark of Saltwood," Apollo 119 (January 1984):58.

[5]Robert Waterhouse, found in the editor"s biography in Ruskin Today taken from "Tribute to Lord Kenneth Clark," Guardian.

> is the way in which he can press the ideas into critical service, within the context of a superbly designed literary setting, to articulate his personal insight into the actual works of art. ... This strength comes not from the power of an explanatory system but from a responsiveness that he has been able to structure with the aid of more dogmatic and analytical minds."[6]

What Kemp did not completely put together is that this is the formulation of an approach which could feasibly be more effective than that of the art history of today, which is the focus of the articles in the book *The New Art History*.

The term "New Art History" refers to the currents in art history being defined today, and, as mentioned in the Introduction, the book entitled *The New Art History*, published in 1988, is a compilation of essays describing these currents. What comes out from these essays is that no single approach - such as that of connoisseurship, or formalism, or genius worship - is in itself adequate, but that one must resort to a combination or an assemblage of approaches. The "New Art History" would attempt to see the artist in the context of the society in which he or she lives, as producer and consumer, as opposed to the notion of the genius artist making art in a vacuum. In its consideration of the artist within the social arena, in psychoanalysis, in semiotics, and in philosophy: it is much the result of the demands of the

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[6]Kenneth Clark, Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development as an Artist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939; Revised edition and an introduction by Martin Kemp, New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1988):22-23.

subject, reaches into other areas of academe, and allows for many viewpoints, but without heroicizing the subject. From this brief description, I see Kenneth Clark's 1939 *Leonardo*, with its variety of approaches and interest in the various areas of academe, as a foreshadowing of these interests. Clark however, continued changing his methodology more and more towards the Warburgian symbol analysis, especially since *Leonardo* was finished. Because Clark did not profess to a dogmatic approach to art history, he and *Leonardo* are not favored as models for art historical methodology. The problem is that Clark's approach to the history of art is first of all difficult to encapsulate, and secondly, that Clark, due to the nature of his approach to art history, grew and changed from subject to subject. The subjectivity of the approach used in *Leonardo da Vinci: An Analysis of His Development as an Artist*, was and continues to emerge as being fresh and personal. It is a work that is emblematic of his generation and a demonstrative score for ours.

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