Max Weber's Flute Soloist

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MAX WEBER'S FLUTE SOLOIST

by

Gerald Kramer

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Chairman: Professor Eugene Ludins
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INTRODUCTION

To what extent in the creative process is a given artist influenced by the art of the past and the art of his contemporaries? This question shall be discussed concerning the art of Max Weber. His painting, Flute Soloist, while not the entire subject of this thesis, offers in itself an exceptionally suitable device for the above considerations. The following discussion will of necessity, for the fulfillment of this thesis, concern a selective reference to the entire production of the artist. Yet the focal point will be Flute Soloist, not only for the advantage it offers for personal inspection due to its presence in the collection of the University of Iowa, but for its unique stylistic qualities as well.

This thesis, then, is a discussion of the extent in the creative process, that Max Weber has been influenced by his own past experiences and how these environmental experiences have achieved form in his art. It is this author's thesis that originality lies in the individuality of the artist; in his existence separate from that of all other persons. Thus, in dissecting a given work of art, to what extent shall we find the artist consciously depending upon and/or learning from art other than his own, and to what extent is he consciously and unconsciously drawing
from his own past experiences? In other words, to use a word difficult to define, to what extent is he original?

This question has its particular connotations in a world today which holds dubious propositions about what is valid and invalid in art. We are dominated by notions which have raised the virtue of originality so high that to imitate has become one of the artist's capital crimes. To copy, to follow, even to quote from the past is to be condemned. There is a tendency to describe a painter who learns by imitations as "derivative," even though his procedure is solely for the purpose of learning. Such an artist will be suspect and considered trivial, due to the concept that all artistic virtue lies in "personality" and "originality."

Yet this "discredited" activity has been practiced for hundreds of years by artists, among them the greatest in history, for a variety of valid reasons. As far back as Hellenistic times, if not earlier, the copy has been made with the most honest intentions to fulfill a need which persons have had for more than one version of an image. 1

The primary purposes of copying, from the point of view of the artist are those of acquisition: the enlargement of his vocabulary of forms and ideas, and solutions to problems. No work of art is utterly self-engendered and very few have really been engendered solely as a result of
the artist's direct experience of nature. Even to make a life drawing from the nude or a study of a patch of grass requires certain terms of reference. Since the eye is never entirely innocent, it refers to precedents in the memory. A work of art, however original, due to the organism which has created it, is dependent upon precedents.

An artist's production is also conditioned by the times, by the circumstances of the artist, and by the prejudices and desires of the society to which he belongs. For an artist such as Weber the distinction between conscious and subconscious environmental forces other than what he had learned from copying and studying of other works of art, and his employing of particular forms from whatever he chose to take from is difficult to make, Weber is not unique in this characteristic, yet the attempt to make this distinction in the form of a definite thesis is a fascinating procedure in itself.

Several areas of study must be taken into consideration: an involvement with the artistic and literary achievement of Weber; a stylistic analysis of certain "key" works, particularly the Flute Soloist; as thorough a knowledge as necessary of the history of art; and Weber himself; his complete environmental circumstances and experience.
CHAPTER I

The degree of anatomical distortion in *Flute Soloist*, as well as the emphasis on the use of line, requires the initial discussion of Max Weber to concern his draughtsmanship.

As far back as his attendance at Boys' High School in Brooklyn, New York, Weber was always considered the best draughtsman in his class.³ Facing the alternative of learning a profession or going to work, after only one year of High School, Weber decided, therefore, to study art. He entered the Pratt Institute at the age of sixteen in 1898. The course at Pratt Institute was intended for teachers in the art and manual training classes of the public schools. For two years Weber studied drawing and composition, woodcarving and clay modelling, the former two subjects under Arthur Wesley Dow.

At the end of the two-year course, he won a scholarship which gave him another year at Pratt. Toward the end of the year, he was asked to make a series of drawings of paleontological specimens for Professor W.B. Scott of Princeton. The quality of these drawings was commented upon very favorably by his instructors.

Almost immediately after his graduation, he was ap-
pointed teacher of drawing in the public schools of Lynchburg, Virginia. Weber taught there, as well as at the University of Virginia summer sessions, for two years, and was then made head of the department of drawing at the State Normal School at Duluth, Minnesota.

In 1905, he went to Paris, and submitted to further discipline by drawing at several academies, as well as in a small class conducted by Matisse.

His first studies in Paris were extremely academic, at the Academie Julian, where the whole emphasis was on the daily drill of drawing from the model. His teacher was the old academician, Jean Paul Laurens. At first he was put to drawing parts of the figure, and later the whole figure. For several months Weber was drilled in the photographic and mechanical work characteristic of the French academic schools.

Receiving such training does not necessarily prove that Weber was a capable draughtsman, able to draw as was required of him. However, incidents between Weber and his instructor Laurens do tend to substantiate a high degree of ability even then.

One would not expect such an academic drillmaster as Laurens to congratulate any student, except those who might impress him the most. Yet it was often that Laurens would
stop before Weber's work and say, "Tres bon." It was also at the Academie Julian that the following significant incident took place.

For a long time all he was allowed to do at the Academie Julian was to draw small sections of the model's anatomy - one day a part of the arm, another day a part of the leg, and so forth. Rebellling against the discipline, he one day drew the whole figure. Surprisingly, old Jean Paul-Laurens, far from scolding him for violating the rules, expressed his approval of the sketch, putting a stamp on it. Students treasured this little stamp as they would a medal pinned on them. As for Weber, he was now the prize student in the class of eighty, the only one allowed to move his easel to any position he desired.4

While the approval of Jean Paul Laurens does not establish that Weber was a skilled draughtsman, it does establish the fact that a French academician, teaching anatomical discipline, singled out Weber from all his students for commendation.

In the autumn of 1906, Weber continued to work from the model, but at the sketch class at the Academy Colarossi and the Academy de la Grande Chaumiere. He painted from the model but took no criticism from the instructor. He continued doing this into 1907, and it was at this time that Matisse also often worked from the model at the Academy de la Grande Chaumiere.

At Colarossi's Weber became friendly with a German student, Hans Purrmann.5 Since Weber was studying constant-
ly from the model yet taking no instruction, it seems to follow that the importance of working from the human figure was still uppermost in his desires. Still he wanted to go about it in his own way rather than be subject to academicist ideas and discipline. Purrmann, who shared Weber's dislike of academic instruction, and who knew Matisse, proposed to Max that they organize a Matisse class, which they did in the fall of 1907 with the help of Gertrude Stein's sister-in-law, Mrs. Michael Stein. There were eight pupils.6

Matisse did not encourage a complete break with discipline, yet did insist upon simplification of drawing and swiftness of statement. In this freeing the drawing of all trivialities, he found, for Weber, an antidote for the tight restrictions of the academies.

In Weber's own words, "Sometimes we used to draw like cameras, using plumb lines, but to purposes other than the mechanical and futile constructions of the academicians."

The class drew and painted from life and even bought a Fifth Century Apollo, among other things, from which they drew and painted over and over. (Plate 1).7

What has been developed thus far, then, is the fact that as a youth, Weber received constant and capable instruction and practice in drawing. He has attempted to
indicate this to his critics by always including at least one naturalistically drawn picture in his exhibitions. His critics could charge him with deliberate perversion of nature if they were so minded, but never with incompetence.

It has been necessary to establish Weber's ability as a draughtsman, not only to explain his ability at anatomical correctness, gesture and expression in Flute Soloist, but, I feel, to justify his use of distortion as well.

Objectively, Flute Soloist depicts a solitary man playing the flute. Seated on a stool, he plays before an opened book of music placed upon a music stand. His attire consists of a jacket and pants, shirt and tie, shoes and a hat. He is contained in a bare-walled, room-like enclosure (Plate II).

Weber's use of line in Flute Soloist, although defining shapes and bodily articulation, also distorts and exaggerates form, accenting the psychological and physical characteristics of the figure by gesture, position and facial expression. A line of varying thickness is not used solely for the above purpose, but seems charged with an intense, energetic movement, as if it could also be considered as a form in itself, exciting and full of movement, enclosing and composing a composition of varied shapes.
The figure is thus translated into a rhythmic, linear pattern, the eye being led around by the strong movement or direction of line. At times continuity of line may be broken, but direction of movement is maintained by resumption of, or continuity from another line. An example of this is the floor line entering from the lower left of the painting and being picked up in the linear definition of the right leg, then being carried either to the left leg, or sent upwards along the contour of the body, either to return by route of the opposite side of the body and continue to the left leg, or to continue to the head to be swung around and descend. Throughout there is the rhythmic swing of linear movements. This is linear distortion for the purpose of expression.

It was from Matisse's insistence upon simplification of drawing and swiftness of statement, as well as Weber's looking at the linear expressions of Rodin and Cezanne, all in 1907, that he began to concentrate upon line as something other than photographic, anatomical delineation.

It was from the active studying from Matisse more than any other that he learned how to feel line and outline. The particular type of thick and thin, irregular, agitated line of Cezanne does not begin to appear in Weber's painting until well into the 1920's, although the
Autumn Salon, with a group of ten painting by Cezanne, occurred before Weber's study with Matisse. The degree of departure from the academic method to that learned from Matisse is depicted in two paintings which Weber painted in 1907, the year he began his study at the "Academie Matisse." The difference in line and feeling in The Young Model (Plate III), a depiction of a seated female nude, and the depiction of La Parisienne (Plate IV), after Weber had studied but a short time with Matisse is quite apparent.

From a rather academic and accurate depiction of a nude female figure, seated upon a bed, to the later figure, this time reclining upon her bed, Weber has clearly shown not only a greater interest in the hierarchy of line over the more chiaroscuro effect of his previous attempt, but a line which immediately is reminiscent of Matisse, particularly those nude figures Matisse himself was doing in 1907 (Plate V). It displays Weber giving an early emphasis to the moving and delineating contour-line of the figure.

There is even present in both representations the compositional device of a partially exposed picture hanging on the wall. As a whole, however, Weber's nude is not yet radical. It is still basically naturalistic with no
drastic liberties being taken with the natural forms.

Yet the groundwork for Matisse's influence was laid with the training Weber received from Arthur Dow at Pratt, before his arrival in Paris. Dow was a teacher whose attitudes were drawn from an acquaintance with many phases of European and Oriental art, and were not limited to the prevailing academicism. Dow's history is not necessary as such, however, a selective explanation of his life and work does enable a clearer understanding of what Weber learned from him.

Dow was, as a teacher at the turn of the century, one of the most un-academic, if not enlightened, from a modern viewpoint, art teachers of his time. He had spent five years abroad, had attended the academies, had been at Pont Aven with Gauguin, and in Boston, an assistant to Ernest Fenellosa, curator of Japanese Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It was from working with Gauguin and Fenellosa that Dow became aware of, if not intimate with, the art of the Near and Far East, and particularly with Fenellosa, that of Japan and China.

Dow's milieu, rather than painting seems to have been teaching. Weber has said of him that he was, "not a great artist, but a wonderful teacher." This statement of Weber's, while not completely valid as a qualification
of Dow’s abilities, seems in this case to apply. Dow threw all of his mature energies into teaching and did not consider himself, probably upon a realistic evaluation, a professional artist.

Up to 1890 practically no theories had been advanced concerning the teaching of design in America. Composition was taught in the art schools by the simple method of criticizing sketches for pictures and up to the end of the century training in drawing was practically the only instruction artists were supposed to receive.

It remained for Arthur Dow as late as 1892 to make the first written contribution to a truer understanding of the properties of beauty and of design. In his book called "Composition," he set forth in clear and simple terms the importance of design as the aesthetic force in art.

His teaching was based not on a naturalistic study of casts and models, as in other American art schools, but on the principles of design as he saw them in the great art of the Far East and Europe. Space relations, and the balance of mass, line and color were what he emphasized, always stressing simplicity and harmony.

This statement is further developed by reference to Dow’s own words, quoted from "Composition." The ideas promulgated in this manual were those then being expound-
ed by the Nabis in France, but as such were unique in America. Strongly against picture-writers, story-tellers and those who believed that close imitation of nature was the primary reason for a work of art, Dow writes,

In the world's art epochs there was no...division between representative and decorative art. Every work of space-art was regarded primarily as an arrangement with Beauty as its "raison d'etre." Even a portrait was first of all a composition, with the facts and the truths subordinate to the greater idea of esthetic structure.

The nature-imitators hold that accurate representation is a virtue of the highest order and to be attained in the beginning...to start with it is to begin at the wrong end.

It is not the task of the landscape painter, for example, to represent so much topography, but to express an emotion...17

So Dow opened his students' eyes to the art of the past, taking them to museums, talking much about Oriental art; and for a group of advanced students of whom Weber was one, he gave lectures on design, illustrated not only in painting but in sculpture and architecture.

Likewise it was Dow who, upon returning from Europe, and wishing to study further the arts of the Far East, turned to a collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.18

It was there that he met Ernest Fenellosa.

It would not be pertinent to discuss Fenellosa in a direct relationship to Dow were it not that Max Weber also
learned from him, even though by the indirect method of study, rather than from personal relationship.19

In his book, The Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art,20 a book which Max Weber regards as a milestone in his own education as an artist,21 Penellosa comes to the conclusion that all art is a kind of spatial music, and must be studied and criticized from this point of view.22

The tentative effort of art expression in childhood and in primitive races has been in all ages and lands practically the same, and its keynote is spacing....A universal scheme or logic of art unfolds which as easily subsumes all forms of Asiatic and of savage art and the efforts of children as it does accepted European schools. We find that all art is harmonious spacing...23

It develops then, that through Penellosa the arts of China and Japan became reinforced as the dominant factors in Dow's art teaching. Together the two men worked out a series of lessons for students.24 The method was first tried in Boston, and was later put into practice by Dow at Pratt Institute.25 Finally, it was at Pratt Institute that Max Weber came under Dow's influence, completing the chain.

In practice, Dow believed that the time honored approach to painting through the copying of casts and models, and the imitation of historic styles, led only to a gathering of facts with little or no imagination nor ability to
use them. To him academic teaching was, therefore, meaningless, and he often said that most painting in America was mere picture writing which had no connection with art. He thus directed the thought of his students first of all to design.

It follows then that as a legitimate element in design, a more non-naturalistic or daring use of color and the use of distortion, coinciding logically with the abandonment of naturalism as an ideal, as directly related to teaching methods in the United States has been due in part to the methods of Dow.

Dow would come into class and make an unbounded drawing of trees and hills, or perhaps a winding road against a sky. Then he would ask the class to copy the drawing freely and to enclose it in a rectangle, to make a horizontal picture or a vertical, as they chose, and to make whatever changes necessary to fit the drawing to the frame which they had selected, to balance the drawing by making less foreground, or more sky, to change the masses, and what not. He would then criticize the studies, emphasizing good design. Later the students would make similar studies in several colors, always giving first consideration to spatial organization and distribution of light and dark masses. When he had his pupils copy pictures, he would ask them not to copy naturalistically, but to make a drawing of the outlines of the composition, and a notation of the color in washes.

Dow impressed the idea of ordered and unified spatial relations upon his pupils, through classroom exercises and through talks on art which he gave them, pointing out these qualities in the work of the masters of Europe and the Far East. He brought prints by Utamaro, Hiroshige, Hokusai and Korin into his class, and reproductions of the works of masters of the Renaissance.
The idea that every part of a work of art must function seems to have been the result of Dow's and Weber's studying of Far Eastern art, particularly Japanese prints. It seems quite understandable, then, why Weber experienced a dissatisfaction with the academic practices of the French academies, and why he felt that Dow's teaching were realized in the work of Matisse.

Looking once again at The Young Model, and La Parisienne, of 1907, the strong linear quality of the latter is not only that of Matisse but of Japanese prints as well. This idea is reinforced when considering the cut-off picture in the background of each painting, a favorite Oriental device. A further examination of The Young Model, reveals that the background picture itself seems to be a Japanese print, complete with flat planes, unscientific perspective and Japanese screens. La Parisienne appears particularly Japanese in its almost completely flat effect, achieved by the lack of light and shade areas; its particular emphasis on line, which gives a quality of grace and elegance; the cutting off of the figure's legs at the right of the canvas; the slightly Oriental slant of the figure's eyes; and particularly the conscious attempt to get all parts of the canvas to function equally, as far as its design qualities are concerned.
CHAPTER II

It is quite possible that Weber's "discovery of the merits of primitive art predated by several years Kirchner's excitement over the carved figures from Africa and the South Seas, in the Ethnographic Museum of Dresden. But whether or not Weber was the first western artist to "discover" primitive art, the preparation by Dow and Fenellosa equipped him with an eye for the arts of the orient and Africa.

It was from the study of these "primitive" arts, more-so than his work with Matisse, that I feel Weber became convinced of the need for a distortion which emphasized gesture and expression.

It was Dow again who opened Weber's eyes initially to the art of the past through his class trips to New York Museums, particularly the Museum of Natural History, and certainly before 1901, his date of graduation from Pratt. But this initial response was to wait for further development until 1905, the date of Weber's arrival in Europe. This was also the year of the first Fauve exhibition at the Salon d'Automne, although Weber missed seeing that show.

After about four months of study with Jean Paul Laurens a bad cut on Weber's right hand forced him to stop drawing
for several weeks. His time was spent in museums looking at primitive and aboriginal art, which was then generally considered not art at all. He spent hours in the Louvre basement, where the collections of Egyptian, Assyrian and Greek sculpture are kept. He visited the Oriental collections of the Musee Guimet, and the African and other primitive works in the Trocadero. It is from these works, I feel, that Weber discovered as far as his own work was concerned, the emotional force for which he felt he had to strive.

Weber's life in Paris reveals another source of inspiration for his means of expressive distortion. Being in Paris during the years 1905-1909, he knew Picasso, who also was influenced by primitive art, and who was painting *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*, in 1907. During 1907 and 1908, Picasso and Braque were adding to their researches certain principles of design which they had discovered in Negro sculpture. Weber was witness to, and frequent participant in these researches. Many of the new ideas had been implicit in the teaching of Dow, but now he found them realized with compelling power in the work of Picasso.

Weber and Picasso were good friends. The idea of Picasso responding earlier to Negro art, finding in it effects similar to those he was trying to achieve in the analysis of objects in nature into design elements, and thus using these
elements as building blocks for new combinations of forms, and by his ideas and research influencing a good friend who also was inclined in a similar direction, follows very easily.

This was not a complete change of gods from Matisse to Picasso. Weber was during this period to synthesize his studies of both painters into something more his own. Matisse's connections with the Fauves and their dependence at first on African art should be considered when discussing Weber's looking to the primitive arts. As early as 1906, Weber was exhibiting in the Salon d'Automne, and at the Independants. But for a while at least his work seemed to approximate what Picasso was doing with African art more than what Matisse, or any other Fauve was doing. This is well illustrated in a comparison of Picasso's and Weber's figure paintings during the four year period. The change from La Parisienne to his Figure Study (Plate VI), of 1911 is quite extreme. The departure is made more prominent by the similar poses in both paintings. This might seem to indicate that Weber was interested in a means of experimenting with a more emotive form within the pose, rather than trying to achieve a completely new conception. This might also account for the picture being titled, Figure Study, as opposed to a more subjective title.
The form which Weber achieves in this series of "African figures" is clearly distorted from nature. The purpose for such a distortion has been an attempt at a more expressive and less academic means of depiction. Whether this "African means" is more expressive than the former "Matisse like means" is a debatable and, I feel, unanswerable question. It certainly is a more violent and un-naturalistic means. It indicates that Weber has not been satisfied with expression based purely on line and space and is searching for a more violent means within the form itself. His looking to Picasso and African art is fully within the quite natural thinking of an experimental artist in Paris during the first and second decades of the twentieth century.

This discussion of Weber's attempts at distortion for the purpose of expression, has been for the purpose of establishing a relationship to that achievement in his succeeding forms through the following thirty-five years and its culmination in Flute Soloist, 1945.

His purpose for such a direction aside from those points already established, can be further clarified by references to Weber's own words.

From his Essays on Art, published in 1916, he writes,

Always it is expression before means. . . . Means alone cannot build up an art. . . . Art does not lie in its means; it lies in its mission, in its purpose, in its
message, in its prophecy.... Means may hamper or even bar expression. Means and methods are only the mechanisms of art.\textsuperscript{31}

What a perfect argument directed by Weber at Jean Paul Laurens the above seems to be.

Weber continues,

A work may be ever so anatomically incorrect or "distorted" and still be endowed with the miraculous and indescribable elements of beauty. Primitive and archaic art is rich in examples replete with "distortions" that gladden the very soul...."Distortion" is necessary for the more emphatic expression of an idea or emotion. Distortion is born of a poetic impulse, it is the very quintessence of the finest and most subtle discernment and preference.

Eternal principles must be made to function so that they help convey and even augment the quality and beauty of gesture and attitude. Art has a higher purpose than mere imitation of nature. It transcends the earthly and measurable. It has its own scale and destiny.\textsuperscript{32}
CHAPTER III

The one artistic common denominator which has always characterized Weber's work is not a borrowed motif but a principle of design taught to him by his early teacher Dow: that every part of a canvas must function. It becomes obvious from viewing reproductions of Weber's work, and especially from Flute Soloist, that the above statement certainly is valid. There are no real blank spots in this painting, for the frequent large, flat areas are alive.

The teaching by Dow of space relations and the proper balance of light and dark masses, in short, plastic design, was reinforced by Matisse, who insisted upon sound construction, that every part of the canvas be alive, and "right" in value and color harmony, and that the furthest point of the rectangular surface of the painting be considered as important, from the point of view of the whole, as any other part of the canvas. 33

These theories are evident in Flute Soloist, particularly in the use of color. Color consists of a variety of analogous blues throughout. Mainly employed are greyish blues of low intensity, accompanied by greyish browns, as well as various silver greys. This duality of tone is due to the procedure of applying the particular blue hue rather
lightly to a given area, thus permitting a lighter color to show through. This practice is also varied by applying a lighter or greyer hue over a blue area in the above manner, thus permitting the blue to partly show through. The results of this procedure detracts from what might be regarded as local color, and permits an all over vibrating activity of multi-colored areas with various degrees of transparency. Areas of similar hue, value and intensity are repeated at various intervals so as to carry the eye through the painting, and organize a complete compositional pattern. There is a minimum of shape differentiation by color due to the repetition and "bleeding" of colors, and the overall transparent effect.34

Deviations from this analogous color scheme are the areas of bright color employed in particular places. The red shape at the left, while not an intense red, is less grey than the central colors and thus relatively more intense. The red is repeated in the lips of the figure and in other spots throughout the canvas for a particular emphasis in those areas. Spotted in several areas also, are small patches of bright yellow and yellow-green. However, the overall impression is one of "blue".

The use of color by Weber can be traced to several sources. His incorporation into the company of Matisse was
not only as a student of the Matisse Class. Through the Ju­lian Academy, he became acquainted with Jules Flandrin. Flandrin was of the group of Matisse, Maurice Denis, and Marquet, who had studied under Gustav Moreau. It is through Flandrin that Weber came into contact with the painters who were then struggling for new solutions to space problems.

Since the search of these men was the same as Weber's own, I feel he prepared himself to learn as much as he could from them.

Persian and Rajput painting had taught Matisse and the others to introduce a boldness and freedom of color. What interested Weber most in their work was the emphasis on the spatial value of color; the realization of space which color construction gives to painting, as well as their pure use of color.

Dow had prepared Weber to understand this use of color, but it was a preparation preceded by a childhood of environmental exposure to a particular usage of color.

Weber was born in 1881, in Byelostok, in Western Russia. Memories of his childhood must have left him with certain impressions: the religious processions with their painted icons passing in the street; the Russian churches and shrines with their Byzantine color and decoration; the synagogues with their carvings and painting of lions and dra-
peries, curtains and musical instruments. There were, too, the painted toys and utensils of the Russian folk artists, which he saw around him, and the rich stuffs of costumes and ceremonial dress which he had many opportunities to see, for his grandfather was a noted dyer and colorist, and was sought through all his native province to supervise the dyeing of cloths and silks.

The above is not to say that everyday in his ten-year childhood spent in Russia was Max Weber exposed constantly to all these occurrences and objects so that they became permanently imbeded in his subconscious. The idea is rather that during his childhood he was exposed to all of the above at least sometimes, and to some of the above all the time. Overall, it was a childhood peculiar to only a Russian child and, therefore, exposure to a daily usage of color unlike that of any other part of the world.

A critic, in 1912, speaking of Weber's painting, remarked that the color had "an exotic opulence that reminds one of Weber's Russian origin". He also stated that "the nearest parallel abroad was the current work of Kandinsky, also Russian born."36 One must naturally and necessarily include Chagall into this group to complete the threesome, as far as Russian origin and use of color is concerned.

While the paintings of Kandinsky and Chagall reveal
the very same colors as those mentioned above, those of Chagall seem to be close to Weber. Many of his paintings display an overall blue quality, with areas of red and patches of bright green and yellow, and even seem to be moreso derived from Russian icons, than do those of Max Weber. However, the similarity in color of these three Russian artists, painting in the same generation, does seem to point out a common influence or source of this color usage.37

An examination of Russian icons will reveal a bright, jewel-like use of isolated reds and blues, as well as greens and golds, although these latter in a lesser proportion. Recalling that Weber studied Byzantine and Persian art while at Pratt Institute, one begins to gain an insight into his sources of color use, especially when Flute Soloist has been described as "blue" featuring bright isolated areas of red, yellow and green.

Although Max Weber was in Paris during the color outburst of the Fauves, a group of painters known for their use of bright, arbitrary color, and although he exhibited with them in 1906, 1907 and 1908, Fauvism itself left no lasting impression in his art, except as a catalytic agent. Rather it was from the immediate color of Cezanne and Picasso that, I feel, Weber received a more lasting impres-
The light of Cezanne was not a beam directed at Weber alone, in the early years of the twentieth century, so that his looking to that master seems quite natural.

In the Autumn Salon of 1906 were hung a group a ten paintings of Cezanne. Weber, who had never seen his work before remembers their making a tremendous impression on him. "As soon as I saw them they gripped me at once and forever."  

In 1907 came the retrospective exhibition of Cezanne at the Petit Palais, with eighty or ninety canvases on view. Weber spent whole days at this exhibition, discussing it endlessly with Flandrin and with his student friends. He frequented the galleries of the dealers where Cezanne's work could be seen; Vollard's, where young painters were made welcome and where they might study the work of Cezanne by the hour; and Berheim-Jeune's, where there were whole walls devoted to the master. In Gertrude Stein's house Weber saw her Cezannes.

The connection between Weber's work of the 1940's and Paul Cezanne is perhaps the most indirect in development, yet I am sure Flute Soloist would never have been painted the way it has were it not for Weber's early involvement with Cezanne's art. Weber's words and the statements of
Max Weber's use of color, through all his years of painting, and through all his numerous and varied "styles," has been consistent. This does not mean that the relationship between colors which exists in Flute Soloist, is exact in all his work. For an experimentalist of the degree of Weber, one could not expect this to be so. Yet, through all these varied styles, the "feeling" of the color is the same, whether it be blue, as it often is, or grey or ochre. Always is is the subtle use of colors of low intensity and low value. Even in the Paris years of 1907 and 1908, or the period of a few years later when Weber experimented with Futurism and his use of high intensity color was at its greatest, it was held to a minimum. If there be one facet of Max Weber's art which identifies it as the work of one painter it is the quality of the totality of color impression.

Oftentimes this quality is of blue, or achre or grey. This statement can be made not only concerning Weber, but others as well. It can be said of Cezanne. It cannot, I feel, be said of Matisse. It can, finally, during this artist's early years until his involvement with synthetic cubism, be said of Picasso.

Picasso's "blue period" occurred during the years, 1901-
1904. It seems likely that Weber's arrival in Paris in 1905 and his friendship with Picasso enabled him to see these "blue" paintings.

A sub-conscious attempt to be like one he admires is present in Max Weber. I feel the possibility exists that art is a sub-conscious attempt at flattery of the artist's favorites - those artists whom he admires. This idea can be related to the concept of a child wishing to be like his parent without realizing it. I feel the basis for this theory shall be stated more definitely in the relationship between Weber and Henri Rousseau, but it exists, as well, in his friendship with Picasso and his hero worshiping of Cezanne.

"As soon as I saw them," had said Weber referring to the paintings of Cezanne, "...I began to paint with the palette knife, and to handle the brush as a tool, not as one would hold a pen, to get solidity." Weber was yet to pass through years of Negro Africanism, Futurism, trompe-l'oeil and Synthetic Cubist-like paintings, and also continue his Matisse types before maturing. The processes of growth are slow, and an adolescent will make many imitations before maturing into a statement much closer to the parent than ever before. And Weber's work of the 1920's and 1930's, I believe, is closer to that of Cezanne than
any other major artist. It is in these paintings of the 
1920's and 1930's that there is a more definite statement of 
the form which shall culminate in the birth of Flute Solo­
ist, and other works of the 1940's.

Cezanne's use of blue in local color, shadows, model-
ing and background, alternates between being quite rich and 
quite subtle in almost all his major painting. The intense 
yet subtle richness of his garment blue, to the almost con-
stant use of pale blue backgrounds and skies in still-lifes 
and landscapes respectively; the constant blue of hair, no 
matter what its local color may be and the deep, dark sub-
tle blue of shadows of garments no matter what their local 
color may be, developed more and more into the inclusion of 
a constant coolness in most all, if not all in some works, 
of his forms. The Portrait of Louis Guillaume, painted 
during 1879-1882, with its totality of rich and grey-blues 
setting off an ochre or beige head seems to anticipate 
Picasso's blue period.

Late Cezannes are almost completely saturated in blue, 
although Cezanne's use of blue throughout the late 1880's 
and 1890's was consistently dominant and important. I can-
not help but feel Weber's large usage of blue to be fully 
within the sphere of "his god." Had Weber selected just the 
color of Cezanne, the above thesis might have been less
justified. But comparisons of black and white reproductions of landscapes, figures and still-lifes reveal a definite similarity (Plates VII-XVI).

Relationships between Weber and Cézanne can be carried to extremes. A visual comparison at this point suffices. But it seems quite evident to me that the ability and interest in line that Weber was experiencing while in Paris had now developed into the line of varying thickness, used not solely for the purpose of defining shapes and bodily articulation, but for the purpose of distortion and exaggeration of form.

This quality of line becomes increasingly exaggerated during the 1930's and as the decade approaches and develops into the 1940's, it becomes less and less recognizable as Cézannesque, and more and more the compositional arabesque of Weber, emanating a feeling of surety of exact effect of each directional thrust in the totality of impression.

The final consideration of Cézanne is one based not upon documented analogies to Weber's development, but on a direct visual and objective approach. This is no attempt to state that Max Weber had particular paintings in mind while painting Flute Soloist, but that both painters, one due to the other, were thinking in similar processes. This discussion shall consist of a comparison of Flute Soloist
with four paintings of Cezanne, the first of which is The Blue Vase (Plate XVII).

Similarities include the clear use of various tones of blue, with a loud shock of red for emphasis, and lesser uses of yellow and green also for that purpose. A further comparison reveals the "L" shapes appearing in the right background of each painting, the diagonal linear movement across the picture plane behind the dominant form, and what might seem irrelevant at first, the partly exposed bottle shape on the left edge of The Blue Vase and its counterpart in the partly exposed red wall on the left edge of Flute Soloist. A close inspection of these forms reveals that both serve the same function. The half-bottle with the vertical shape behind, joining with the horizontal sweep of the table not only presents an additional "L" shape, and perhaps a variation to that on the right side, but serves as well to introduce or tie the background into the foreground. The red shape of Flute Soloist, combining as it does with the floor to form an "L" movement serves this same purpose. An additional necessity for Cezanne's brown bottle is to balance the thrust to the right of the horizontal form of leaves. Too much of a bottle shape exposed would detract from the more important form of the vase. Likewise, the necessity for Weber's red shape is to balance
the thrust to the right of the horizontal movement of the flute and arms. Too much of a red shape exposed would detract from the more important form of the flutist.

Finally, and leading to the next Cezanne, is the obvious linear outlining of all forms, particularly those which are slightly off the center of the paintings: the almost oval shaped vase of Cezanne and the similar shape of the torso of the flutist, emphasized by a transparent white oval shape, outlined in black, behind the flutist.

Specifically, the most important visual motif of Flute Soloist is an oval variation, or more clearly, a "gothic arch" shape. This shape, indicated by differentiating values of color, as well as by line, appears again and again in various degrees. It is stated most prominently in the upper-middle portion of the painting, surrounding the figure, and is repeated inverted and in smaller instances beside the hands. The left foot is this shape; the upper body as well. This theme appears varied in the left thigh, twice in repetition in the hand; in the fingers, shoes, nose, sleeve, wrists, ears, head, lips, arms and in negative background shapes.

Inspection of Weber's previous work reveals that this shape appears quite often in the form of an arched doorway, a cave, or the torsos of his figures. This indicates that
Weber's use of the "gothic arch" motif is not a chance or momentary occurrence, but one based on years of repetition.

Cezanne's use of the above motif has not been as prominent in its use, not as prominent when used. The suggestion that it has been derived from Cezanne could only be valid in the most remote way. The far less exaggerated and much more naturalistically integrated use of a central arch shape I have found in only one of Cezanne's Paintings (Plate XVIII), and its use is such that it would be doubtful at most to suggest a swipe by Weber.

However, the use of line and/or shape defined by line for the purpose of permitting the entire canvas to function visually as a whole was practiced by Cezanne so prominently that it led eventually to his distorting nature. I feel Max Weber's use of the technique is just a step beyond. I also feel it is a usage by Cezanne in an attempt to bring back "old master" methods which the Impressionists had ignored.

Cezanne's Boy In A Red Vest (Plate XIX), involves the movement of interconnecting lines and shapes very subtly. The drapery line to the left of the boy's head travels downward until picked up and continued horizontally by the bottom line of the red vest. Likewise is the next drapery line one over picked up by the arm demarkation line and continued not only horizontally by the line separating the sash
from the pants, but downward as well by the leg to the left. The drapery line to the far left is picked up and continued by both the abdominal movement and the outline of the leg.

Further continuance in **Boy In A Red Vest** with this type of discussion, I feel, would be unnecessary as the point has been made. However, a glance at Cezanne's **Still Life With Peppermint Bottle** (Plate XX), will reveal the extreme result of this usage. Not only has he distorted forms to form an interweaving web of an almost continuous linear movement, but he has emphasized such a movement so that it begins to take on a life of its own. I might add that the particular shape which Cezanne, in this picture, has selected for repetition in variation is the oval shape. It appears as the shape of the central decantor, as an inverted shape in the white cloth to the left, as repeated in the circular movement of the blue cloth in the lower right, and as suggested in the pattern-like decantor shape on the cloth at the lower left.

Weber was making use of a dominant visual motif and its variations throughout the painting, as early as 1911 in **The Geranium** (Plate XXI). The central relationship of arm shapes becomes more significant when it becomes evident that almost the entire painting is constructed from similar or exact arm shapes. Both positive and negative shapes in the drapery
consist of this form. The mountains in the background, particularly the vertical mountain to the far left is of this shape, as is the mountain above the figure to the right an exact repetition of the right arm of the figure on the left. Perhaps the most subtle expression of the arm shape is the negative sky area fitted between the two heads and the tree.

Weber's use of color, line, theme or dominant visual motifs and their variations, and distortion for the purpose of expression has another major source. It is Weber's looking at the art of the old masters throughout the major museums and churches of Europe.

While at Pratt Weber studied the masterpieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and made copies of works by Velasquez, Corot and others. Arthur Dow, in emphasizing the lessons to be learned from the primitive arts, also included, according to Weber, early Italian Renaissance artists, specifically Giotto, in his instruction. Weber, in the spring of 1907 went to Italy for five months, going to Florence, Pisa, Rome, Naples and Venice. His immediate impression is revealed by his own words:

I can remember when I arrived in Florence. It was four o'clock in the morning, in that hour just before dawn when everything is still. I was tired from my long trip but I could not bear the thought of going to a hotel at once. I left my bags at the station and went immediately to look at the Duomo and Giotto's tower, about ten minutes' walk from the station. I was alone except for
a few early-morning worshippers in the Duomo. It all looked strangely beautiful in the light of early dawn, but it was not strange to me for I had met it in Arthur Dow's class in Brooklyn. "There it is," I said, and opened my arms to it as to a dear friend who had come back after years of absence. I stood before Giotto's tower following the rhythmic flow and balance of its masses, the sweep of line, my eyes lingering on its colored marble, on the lovely detail, its beautiful proportions and the grand composition of the whole, which I had drawn from pictures, so many times. I looked at the bronze doors of Pisano in the Duomo and at the paintings of Castagno. It was hours before I thought of breakfast.

The clarity and enthusiasm of the above quotation indicates that what Weber experienced in Florence seems to have been very impressionable. Weber mentions Dow and so connects his teaching with what he himself was looking for and found in the Renaissance art of Florence.

Any collection of reproductions of Giotto's frescos will reveal fold lines of the drapery used solely for the purpose of indicating movement of the figures and the contours of the bodies. I feel the art of Giotto reinforced Weber's thinking along these lines just as Matisse's instruction had reinforced the teachings of Dow.

A comparison of Giotto's fresco of St. Francis Appearing at the Council at Arles (Plate XXII), with Weber's Friends (Plate XXIII), painted in 1935, and with Flute Soloist shows quite clearly, I believe, the validity of the above statement.

Giotto's fresco appears on the walls of Santa Croce in
Florence. It depicts the centrally placed and main figure of Saint Francis enveloped in a central arch shape, and with arms outstretched in a movement symmetrically echoing the arch shape above. This statement and answer of the arch and arms forms a circular shape around the head of Saint Francis which is located in the center of the shape.

At the far left of the fresco appears an arch shaped doorway, in perspective and faulty in scale. This door appears to be an oft repeated form throughout fourteenth century Italian art.

The flutist in *Flute Soloist* is enclosed much the same way that Saint Francis is, even to the extent of similarly focusing the flutist's head in a circle by having his arms continue the circular movement.

The strong red shape of the left in *Flute Soloist* cannot arbitrarily be said to be equivalent to the left side archway of Giotto, but further examination reveals the possibility of Weber's red shape as a logical culmination of this form. Weber's *Friends*, painted in 1935, shows the tall arched doorway in faulty scale and perspective almost equivalent to Giotto's form. It appears to serve quite an important role in the design of the whole. Since Weber does relegate an important design form to the far left in *Friends* and *Flute Soloist*, as well as in other paintings, I see the
possibility of a development of one form to the other, with the suggestion that Weber has moved his archway from the left to the center of his painting, replacing it with the red shape.

I feel it has been necessary to develop the more than possible influence of Giotto on Max Weber, not for the purpose of attempting to state a direct remembering and copying by Weber after thirty or forty years (although I do consider as a strong possibility Weber's continual use of reproductions throughout his life), but as with all that he was concerning himself with in his few years in Europe, a continuous absorbing and eventual crystalizing with his own personality. These influences, therefore, are not merely imitations but a recognition of a source of solution for common problems.

In the summer of 1906, previous to his sojourn in Italy, Weber went to Spain, going first to Madrid. He spent two months there, nearly all of it at the Prado.

Weber's interest in Velasquez has already been hinted at by reference to his having copied a Velasquez at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. While at the Prado, he continued this practice by making a small copy of Las Meninas. I feel that Weber's study of Velasquez had much to
do with his use of the dominant visual motif and its variations. Velasquez' use of such a form is quite evident in Las Meninas, namely: the rectangle and its numerous variations.

It can be assumed with certainty, then, that is Weber spent two month at the Prado and made a copy of Las Meninas, his interest in Velasquez was such that he must have studied the other works in the Prado of that master, particularly, The Spinners (Plate XXIV). The most dominant visual motif of The Spinners and its placement on the picture plane closely echoes that of Flute Soloist. Velasquez immediately directs the eye to the circular opening in the far wall in the center of his painting and surrounds it by a vertical archway in much the same way that Weber directs the eye to the head of his flutist. The circular shape of The Spinners is, as well, varied constantly throughout the painting.

Much as Velasquez connects a group of figures on the left with a group of figures on the right by the line of the archway which seems to move through the painting from the wrists of the figures to the right and left of the archway, so does Weber also employ it for a movement purpose between the sheet music and the flute or hands playing the flute, as if to indicate the music literally jumping from the written note to its audible expression.
While in Spain, however, El Greco was the man Weber wanted most to study. His great interest in El Greco as opposed to the abundance of paintings by other masters in the Prado can be understood quite clearly. The expressive power of El Greco comes through quite powerfully, and I feel that Weber was of the opinion that El Greco was purposefully distorting the human form for the purpose of expression; the exact realization that Weber had begun to investigate only a few months before in the Paris Museums, and which he was soon to experiment with in his linear distortions in the Matisse class. In fact his trips to the primitive art museums of Paris had already, before his trip to Spain, caused him to invest his figure with a new spirit which caused Jean Paul Laurens some displeasure.

El Greco's distortion of form was not merely an emphasis of the human figure, but of the totality of the painting as well. He not only reinforced the Italian High Renaissance practice of carrying the eye throughout the particular work by means of a continuous movement of line, and thus causing all parts of the picture to function equally as a design, but particularly he imbued in his art a deep spiritual content, although this was not to appear in Weber's work until the 1930's.

It began to appear because after years of studying
and learning, Weber was reaching the maturity which permitted him to paint that which he felt most strong about. This distinctive feeling and, therefore, style begins to emerge in the 1920's when Weber started to tap a Jewish mystic and religious feeling. He began painting themes with a religious undertone, with figures more expressive of a racial character. 49

Childhood memories with a definite Jewish tinge do not not play as great a role in Weber's work as they do in Chagall. Weber was only ten years of age when brought to America, while Chagall was twenty-three when he first left Russia for France. When the Webers settled in Brooklyn, New York, New World impressions undoubtedly overlaid those of the Old. But the Jewish motifs Weber produced from 1918 onward can be said to owe as much to Byelostok as to Brooklyn's Williamsburgh, and predominantly Jewish section.

These motifs, appearing in 1918-1919 in paintings such as The Rabbi (Plate XXV), and Invocation (Plate XXVI), reveal a spirit in Weber different from anything he had yet done, although the sharp contrasts of light and dark seem to indicate his working out of the woodcut style with which he began these religious themes. The spirit of El Greco eventually begins to dominate Weber's original approach. The same two subjects painted in the 1930's, Rabbi (Plate
XXVII), and discussing the Torah (Plate XXVIII), suggest El Greco both in their deep spiritual content and perhaps mannered handling.

The entire series of Talmudists, discourses and discussions which Weber painted could be considered the equivalent of a Jewish "Disputa."

I was prompted to paint this picture after a pilgrimage to one of the oldest synagogues of the East Side in New York. I find a living spiritual beauty emanating from, and hovers over and about, a group of Jewish Patriarchal types of the past. Their discussion of the Talmud is at times impassioned, inspired, ecstatic, at other moments serene and contemplative. To witness a group of such elders bent down and intent upon nothing but the eternal quest and interpretation of the ethical and spiritual significance and religious content of the great Jewish legacy - the Torah - is for me an experience never to be forgotten.50

I do not find it necessary to confine comparisons between Weber and El Greco to only those paintings of the latter which are in the Prado, although Weber's initial great impressionable experience with that master was in Madrid.

When Weber was yet a child in Russia, he was taken to a Hasidic service.51 The impressions of that experience were put on canvas in 1940 in a painting titled, Hasidic Dance (Plate XXIX). An Hasidic dance is a ritual dance, performed by males only, beginning slowly with a definite touch of sadness, and gradually assuming faster rhythms, until it reaches a climax in a state of veritable ecstasy.52
The painting is filled with the movement and ecstasy, and religious feeling of the event that shows Weber in his supreme interpretation of Jewish subject matter. I feel that such sources as Matisse's *The Dance* (Plate XXX) for the circular composition of pictorial representation, and the "revival meetings" of Benton and Curry should be considered.

However, the intensity of the spiritual fervor, as well as the circular revolvement seems to have much more of a parallel with El Greco's *The Cleansing of the Temple* (Plate XXXI), which was in the National Gallery in London when Weber spent two weeks there in 1909.\(^5\) I also suggest that the eye directing device of the archway over the head of Christ is not only seconded by Weber in *Hasidic Dance*, but is used in *Flute Soloist* for the same purpose which it performs in *The Cleansing of the Temple*.

The *Flute Soloist* in its anonimity displays some of the characteristics of those personages which, in the "disputa" or "racial" series, can definitely be established as being Jewish types. These characteristics are the long nose, curly hair and hat atop the head. The similarity of the "flutist" in his expression, his clothes and his features, to those subjects definitely labeled as Judaic, marks this solitary figure as a continuation of Weber's religious
inheritance in his painting.
CHAPTER IV

As distorted as Weber's form has become in Flute Soloist, the basis for the form is still nature. Even his most abstract work is linked to reality and to human associations. This human aspect of his art has already been defined in terms of his racial inheritance. However, there are other factors which seem to have influenced Weber in his use of nature, and particularly his use of the human form.

I feel his thorough academic training of working from the human form has created an inner esthetic towards the figure. Drawing the figure seems to be something which Weber has always done exceptionally well, as far back as High School. The satisfaction thus continually received, I feel, has either consciously or subconsciously instilled in him a desire or perhaps need to make the human form synonymous with his esthetic.

In Paris, Weber was an intimate friend of Henri Rousseau. The affection and admiration which he held for Rousseau has frequently been quoted by Weber. Meeting the "douanier" at the impressionable age of twenty-six, and maintaining such a friendship for two years leaves more than enough room for the possibility that Weber's esthetic thinking became affected by his friend. Weber himself has
stated that, "He constantly admonished me to study nature, and his words still ring in my ears. The wisdom of his advice I have held a sacred all these years and always will." It was Rousseau's thinking that one should always take lessons from what to him was the greatest of all teachers, Nature. He was troubled at Weber's researches into the abstract, and upon bidding Weber goodbye at the railway station in Paris, in 1909, yelled to him as the train slowly moved away, "Weber! N'oubliez pas la nature!"

Except for a short period of time during World War I, when Weber experimented with synthetic cubism and futurism, and except for occasional landscapes and still-lifes, his art has always featured compositions of figures. Since about 1920, he has constantly painted groups of his Jewish protagonists, groups of men, women, and musicians.

Flute Soloist, while depicting a solitary figure can still be said to be part of this tradition, even if the flutist has by 1945 been endowed with a greater anonymity, and almost seems more of a pretext for compositional play.
CHAPTER V

Subjectively, the theme of Flute Soloist is music. This idea seems to have been a favorite of Weber's, having appeared in many of his paintings. From the early years, the subject of musicians playing and singing has recurred constantly.

"Next to painting, Weber's second love has always been music." While teaching in Virginia, Weber, gifted with a fine voice, not only sang in the synagogue choir, but sang tenor in a Unitarian Church choir. When first having arrived in Paris, he took singing lessons, seriously thinking of becoming a musician.

If Weber's association with Henri Rousseau is a valid substantiation for the former's concern with nature and the human figure, that relationship must also be considered in terms of Weber's use of musical subject matter. In addition to painting, Rousseau wrote poetry, sang, played the violin and gave music lessons. On Saturday evenings, he held musical "soirees" in his studio. Rousseau's biographer, Adolph Basler, writes:

It was with Max Weber that I used to go occasionally to the soirees in the rue Perrel. This American, a tenor who had apparently sung in synagogues, was the chief soloist of these friendly parties.... The concert, not much like a symphony orchestra, invariably began with the Marseillaise. Henri Rousseau, first
violin, led the orchestra, composed of his pupils: a mandolin, a flute, a cornet, etc.... Max Weber would sing Handel. Violin solos by the maestro would interlard the program.58

The instruments named above are the instruments which appear most often in Weber's "musical" paintings. Most frequently has appeared a female figure or a group of female figures, playing the mandolin. Weber has painted singers, violinists, a cellist, a woman with a horn, a flutist, and a wind ensemble.59

An early musical composition of Weber's is a drawing of the Barree Wind Orchestra, (Plate XXXII), of 1911. In its freedom of line and movement, it anticipates Weber's later style: a style fully realized by Flute Soloist and Wind Orchestra (Plate XXXIII), both of 1945.

Barree Wind Orchestra illustrates Weber's perhaps somewhat unsophisticated attempt to indicate the constant movement of the baton, by means of repeated curved lines. There is also the possibility that these lines are a means of indicating the connection of the leadership of the conductor to the musicians; the continuous call and response from baton to instrument. This anticipates his use of such a linear movement from the notes of the music book to the flute in Flute Soloist.

Weber passed through several stages in this development. From the guitar and horn playing, and somewhat mas-
vive female figures of Solo (Plate XXXIV), 1918, where by the way, Weber makes use of a series of arched openings over the figures, to a specific later movement between the music book on the stand and the female musicians, Weber finally developed in the 1940's similar compositions where his method of painting was by then approximating that of Flute Soloist.

The problem of the compositional relationship between the musician and his music is one that Weber has constantly been working with. The music stand has never been just a secondary device, or a form "just there", but has always integral literary as well as compositional function. Its relationship to the violinist in Music (Plate XXXV), 1940, gives it an equality with the figure that it doesn't have in Flute Soloist due to the dominance of the flutist. In Music, Weber has created a negative space to the right of the violinist which acts as a perfect frame surrounding the music book.

The relationship of a flutist to his music was one which in 1945 also involved Thomas Benton. In T.P. Playing the Flute (Plate XXXVI), Benton has related the music stand to his flutist also by means of a circular movement - that of the piano and the flutist's arm, yet a comparison of Benton and Weber's flutists reveals a startling literary
difference. Benton's flutist, although slouching, is holding his flute to the right of his body, in correct position. Weber's flutist is completely reversed. A further examination will reveal a possible explanation for Weber's presentation. Benton's flutist is playing a more common flute, consisting of a mouthpiece, levers and keys. Weber's flute has none of these devices. His flutist's fingers are playing directly on the holes themselves. In this later type of flute it is possible to reverse position. But why did Weber reverse the flutist's position? There are several possible explanations.

Weber has represented a particular flutist, one who was left-handed. This explanation is the least acceptable due to the fact that flutists are all taught to play in one correct position, and there would be no reason for one to reverse positions merely because the type of flute permitted it.

Another explanation is that Weber was not aware, when painting this picture that the position was incorrect, and believed he was painting the figure correctly. This is always a possibility even considering Weber's musical background. Yet the position of the flutist, whether holding the flute to the left or the right of his body possibly was not important enough for Weber to consider. Reversing the entire picture in a mirror image would have been the result of such
a consideration and possibly Weber himself posed in front of a mirror. The third explanation, then, is that Weber was neither interested in correct position for the effect he wished to express, nor does the painting suffer from such a lack.

I feel, finally, that Weber knew perfectly well the correct position of the flutist, and even used a model, at least part of the time. The effect he desired did not require a modern western flute-playing position. Weber's philosophy of, and reasons for distortion of the anatomy have already been discussed. Therefore, we might possibly consider an attempt on the part of Weber to consciously instill in his flutist a quality of the oriental and/or the ancient. I refer to a 16th century depiction of Krishna the flutist (Plate XXXVII), playing a flute similar to Weber's and holding it to the left of his body.

The positions of Weber's flutist and Krishna are remarkably alike. Both feature heads turned completely away from the flute in bad, if not impossible position, and both have arms arranged rhythmic stylized patterns. The possible connection between Weber and Krishna lies in the meaning of Krishna playing his flute and whether this meaning is the expression of Flute Soloist.

The illustration of Krishna playing the flute is from
a collection of miniature painting from the Vidyavibhaga of Kankroli. The pictures mostly refer to Krishna's life and the Pushti Marga Vaishnava religion. This cult introduced Krishna as the incarnation of God and the manifestation of the Divine Love and Grace.

He (Krishna) teaches men how to annihilate the evil tendencies of mind or sins that thwart spiritual development of the soul and become a hindrance in God-realization. Having thus taught the value of self-discipline and purity of mind and character, he, in order to uplift them further, plays upon his flute which is nothing but knowledge of God as perfect and super-reality, without which it is not possible for the soul to reach the plane of perfection on equal footing with God where the soul can participate in the dance with the God.

In short, Shri Krishna...is none but the highest form of God....Though he incarnates himself as a human being, he is not human. His body has no material elements or qualities. Incarnation of God as Krishna is the manifestation of the absolute joy and beauty on the physical plane but without any materiality or worldliness. Even as such, He has His Divinity.

It is also stated that on one occasion Krishna killed Kamsa, the greatest enemy of the people and at last made the land free from oppression.

To see such a work as Flute Soloist casually is a pleasant experience. To examine all the forms and their sources involves something else. But to come in touch with the vision and the spirit of the maker of it, is then not only a gratification but an exaltation. Flute Soloist suddenly becomes so much more than the depiction of an anonymous flutist.
1945 and the painting of **Flute Soloist** witnessed the significant events subjugation of Nazism, the death of Hitler and the end of the war. Equating these events with the deeds of Krishna and the triumph of good over evil, the flutist then takes on the symbolic reference to Krishna who, as stated above, killed the greatest enemy of the people and made the land free from oppression. Yet as Krishna is not human, but just the manifestation of absolute joy and beauty, so becomes our flutist. With the timely characteristics of the Jew, Weber's flutist stands for his only way of answering Nazi atrocities - by the creation of beauty, yet a beauty symbolizing the triumph of the forces of Creation over Destruction.

*Creation is the highest form of life. Destruction is the lowest form of death.*

Up to the 1930's Weber's social beliefs had not appeared in his art. Yet during that decade a subject matter more related to the contemporary world began to come forth. Several pictures of refugees fleeing with their possessions, and scenes of terror and flight are fully within the late 1930's growing crisis in world affairs and the rise of fascism with its racial persecution and undeclared wars.

It seems possible, then, that **Flute Soloist** is but a more abstract and poetic presentation of Weber's social statements.
CHAPTER VI

One final study remains, and that is the examination of particular forms in Flute Soloist which seem to have a relationship to similar forms of Picasso.

The face of the flutist, featuring the double image, when compared to Picasso's Girl Before a Mirror (Plate XX-VII), of 1932, will reveal a common usage by both artists of this form. Weber's use of the double image in Flute Soloist is not his initial one. The Imaginary Portrait of a Woman (Plate XXXIX), of 1913, also breaks up the face into more than one view, but much more analytically and closer to Picasso's method of presenting multiple views of a head during his experiments with analytical cubism, 1909-1911.

Innovations of Picasso have preceded Weber's use of similar motifs throughout their entire careers. The influence of Picasso's blue, primitive and analytical cubist periods have already been discussed. Weber left Paris in 1908, before the high style of analytical and synthetic cubist periods of Picasso. Yet his contacts were renewed by the Armory Show of 1913, and throughout the years following, Max Weber experimented with such devices as trompe-l'oeil and "rococo" cubism in much the same way that Picasso had.

In addition the squat and solid female figured compositions of the 1920's of Weber clearly echo Picasso's simi-
lar types of his "Neo-classic" period.

In a review of Weber's work, in 1935, one critic remarked, "The Picasso-like figures of Advice and The Tablet may easily be classified as derivative;" in a review of 1942, "In The Toilers, he (Weber) again acknowledges a debt to Picasso, this time to the Picasso of Guernica, one of whose motifs he borrows."

This motif appears also in Flute Soloist, and is the geometric forms of the arms and hands with the reduction of the palms and fingers to geometric circular shapes.

Its use in The Toilers (Plate XL), 1942, is not a new development for Weber at that time, but is a form which had been forming in conjunction with his stylization of the human figure. Yet the similarity of the entire figure of the extreme right, with the figure to the far right and the dead figure figure at the lower left of Guernica (Plate XLI) seems too close to be a coincidence. But while the similarity appears in Flute Soloist, it remains only a similarity. The hands of Picasso's figures, although stylized geometrically are contorted and disfigured, as are the hands of The Toilers, and are expressive of something other than what the flutist's hands are expressing. While Guernica and Flute Soloist could very well be considered a before and after in
relation to Nazi terrorism, there is no place for violence in *Flute Soloist*, thus eliminating the need for a violently disfigured hand. The reduction of the fingers into calm, rhythmic ovals is fully within the form of the entire painting.


22. In evaluating the effect of Fenollosa’s ideas on Weber, the use of the term “music” and the ideas of both concerning art as “spatial music,” may possibly be accounted for by the similarity in personality of both persons. According to Fenollosa, vii, at college he was a member of the College Glee Club and sang in the Handel and Hayden Society. The musical background of Weber will be developed in context with the thesis proper, yet it should suffice to state at this point that Fenollosa’s musical background closely relates to that of Weber.

23. Cahill, 3-4.


25. Ibid.


28. (Goodrich), 9.

29. One of the reasons Weber was so desirious of leaving Lauren’s class, and studying with Matisse, was that upon his return to the former’s studio after his hand had healed, his work revealed the new interest with which Laurens did not approve. Weber, to avoid criticisms, would turn his drawings around and leave when Laurens came in. (Goodrich), 5.

30. Weber had made the acquaintance of Picasso in 1907 through Flandrin’s nephew. Cahill, 19.


It might also be brought out that while at Pratt, Lax Weber studied joinery, the skill of fine craftsmanship and sound construction. This may also have had something to do with these qualities being present in the artist's paintings. Max Weber: Retrospective Exhibition, 1907-1950, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1930), 7.

The role of line in differentiating shapes has already been discussed in chapter I.

Cahill states, "(Dow)...was not a colorist himself for colorists, like poets, are born, not made." Cahill, 13. Regardless of the validity or lack of such for the above statement, it seems to point up Cahill's opinion of Dow's own work and also serve as a possible expiation of why Dow's work is not well known.

Ibid. Cahill, 14.

As well as her Matisses and Picassos. (Goodrich), 11.

Goodrich says, "...Cezanne's art has been the deepest and the longest lasting influence in Weber's work." (Goodrich), 11; "Cezanne taught me piety and reverence..." Bird, Art Digest, XXV, 6; "(Weber)...took Cezanne on as his god." "Obituary," Art News, LX (November, 1961), 8.

For color impressions of the following paintings not included in the Plates of this thesis, see Schapiro.

Although many of Cezanne's late paintings were saturated with blue, and Matisse had painted several large figure studies in blue just before the turn of the century, these paintings were probably not known to Picasso. Alfred H. Barr Jr., Picasso-Fifty Years of His Art, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 22.

Cahill, 9-10.

"Most of his days were passed in the Prado, where he discovered El Greco and was overcome by the revelation." (Goodrich), 9.

His first religious painting followed a religious woodcut requested by a Yiddish cultural publication. Ford, Art News, XLIII, 4.

Weber is speaking about Discussing the Torah. (Goodrich), 47.

Hasidim: (the pious or godly ones). A Jewish sect founded in Poland about 1750, by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer Baal-Shem, to revive the strict practices of the earlier Hasidim: a Jewish sect founded about the third century B.C. by opponents of Hellenistic innovations. It was devoted to the strict observance of the ritual of purification and separation. They are devoted to mysticism and opposed to secular studies and Jewish rationalism. Webster's New International Dictionary, (2d.; Springfield, Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1957), 1142.

Werner, Arts, XXXII, 26-29.


Werner says Rousseau was attracted to Weber because the latter had become the substitute for a son. Weber was 26 years old while Rousseau was 63. Werner, Arts, XXXII, 26-29.

"To this very day a conversation with Weber without
the name of his old friend is almost impossible, and so ardent is the artist's reverence for the toll collector that one might wonder whether Weber does not consider it the greatest achievement of his life to have acquainted his compatriots with the work of 'cet ange.' " Werner, Arts, XXXII, 26-29.

56. Continuing with the words of Weber, "The acquisition of several small pictures by Rousseau was the one item that loomed up in my calculations above any other, even if I had to deprive myself of several other things." Weber bought four small paintings and Rousseau gave him two more as a gift, inscribing one of them: "Gift to my friend Weber, the 8th of August, 1908, union of America and France, the two Republics." (Goodrich), 16.

In September, 1910, Weber arranged, upon hearing of his friend's death, at Stieglitz's 291, the first Rousseau exhibition in America. It consisted of the six small paintings which Weber owned, and a group of small drawings. Cahill, 23.

57. (Goodrich), 49.

58. Ibid.

59. These instruments include only those that I was able to discover in a thorough, yet not totally complete inspection of reproductions of Weber's work. The possibility exists that he has painted other forms of musical activity.

60. Having read the chapters dealing with the position of a flutist in Richard Shepherd Rockstro, A Treatise on the Flute, (London: Rudall, Carte and Co., 1928), and Henry Altes, Complete Method for the Flute, (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1906), and having questioned several members of the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Iowa, I have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a "left-handed" flute.

61. For all information concerning Krishna I am indebted to Prabhudas Balubhai Patwari(ed.), The Divine Flutist (Lord Krishna), (Kankroli: Vidya Vibhag, 1962).


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