

# Consciousness-Related Issues in Minoan Archaeology Social Functions Gleaned from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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This preliminary study probes the *Weltanschauung* underlying part of the Bronze Age civilization based on the so-called Palaces that flourished for around six hundred years on the Aegean island of Crete between the 20th and the 15th centuries BCE that is commonly called Minoan, after the legendary King Minos. [1] As an historian of Asian art I trespass, in this essay, the disciplinary domains of feminists, psychologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and perhaps even historians of Western art, as I step far beyond traditional investigative "boundaries" and venture into *terra*, while not altogether *incognita*, certainly *non firma*. Nevertheless I shall review some of the archaeological evidence found in "Minoan" Crete, not from an Aegean archaeologist's perspective, but from that of a student of East Asian art history and, in a cross cultural and inter-disciplinary context, attempt to identify examples of concrete manifestations of what may be gender-related aspects of human consciousness. This is strictly speaking an exploratory essay in the methodology, perhaps even in the epistemology, of comparative art history and the recovery of the early human *Weltanschauung*. And we hopefully may learn in the process what contributions the study of Asian art have to offer to Western archaeology and anthropology.

I shall underscore the fundamental difference between the so-called "Minoan" and other, more "typical" Bronze Age cultures to illustrate what seem to me radical differences in human relationships (to nature, to space, to each other). And I believe that the differences may lie respectively, for lack of a more encompassing definition, in a *yin*- feminine and a *yang*- masculine consciousness. I am using *yin* and *yang* to represent characteristics common to many Asian civilizations, and not literally to Chinese cosmological *yin-yang* principles. And I shall argue that the "Minoan" civilization was characterised by an aspect of human consciousness that is characterised by egalitarianism, inclusiveness and peace (as we shall see) - an aspect I shall call - until a better term is found, a *yin* or largely feminine consciousness. I would like to suggest, with the greatest respect to my seasoned colleagues in the field, that we entertain the idea that there may have been among the "Minoans" an awareness of Earth as a living organism that must be treated with reverence and love, [2] and that it was this awareness that fundamentally conditioned the spiritual and physical life of the inhabitants of the temple-palace complexes, setting them apart from their contemporaries who clearly viewed the Earth as part of Man's Domain, to be manipulated and exploited. I would like to propose, again with deep respect, that such an awareness triggers a reverence and an inclination toward ecological and human nurturing, characteristics incommensurate with exclusion (walled towns), exploitation and oppression (of large labour forces for wall-construction), and subjugation (of persons, societies, or states) which, in order to highlight the contrast and for lack of more appropriate terminology, I shall term *yang* or masculine behaviour, behaviour which characterises most Bronze Age societies. [3] I would argue that this six-century span preceding 1450 BCE should perhaps be considered the *pre*- Minoan period. [4]

At a more general level, I am interested in the active ingredients in a society's *Weltanschauung* and behaviour, and firmly believe that gender characteristics need not necessarily be uncritically related to whether the

actors are biologically male or female. As an historian of Chinese and Japanese art, I propose to discuss Minoan archaeological remains in terms of structure and style in an attempt to derive possible implications regarding the social and spiritual orientation of this silent society. In short, I hope to show that while they were a Bronze Age people, the "Minoans" maintained - or adopted - certain behavioural patterns from the Neolithic inhabitants on whose site they built their palace of Knossos to whom they were arguably related in more ways than the purely physical. [5] To go one step further, I would like to suggest that the "Minoans" even while enjoying the technological advances of the Bronze Age, continued to live lives of open pacifism and relative egalitarianism characteristic of earlier, non-warring societies whose lives were regulated by foraging and gathering [6] or otherwise governed by spiritual attunement and ritual. [7] Implied here is the assumption that Bronze Age technology is usually associated with war-based societies and institutions, with concentrations of power and sharp social stratification as we see in Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, China - and, later, in Japan. While such an association may be unorthodox, I wish in this study to highlight what I consider the exceptional nature of Bronze Age Minoan civilization in this regard.

A serious problem lies in the designation of Minoan for entire Second Millennium BCE. For the separatist, exploitative and violence-based institutions that underlie the culture characterized by the tale of the Minotaur are entirely at odds with the holistic, broadly peaceful and worship-based lifestyle underlying archaeological remains of the Proto- and Neopalatial Periods (2000-1450 BCE) as we shall see below. On the other hand, such a fearsome tale seems to fit in much more readily with the more militaristic Mycenaean (and their civilization marked with increasingly linear and stratified decoration in the ceramic ware) that appeared on Crete after the island-wide cataclysm that had finally brought their palatial civilization to an end around 1450 BCE. But during these previous six centuries when the island may have had an influx of Luvian immigrants from Asia Minor, [8] the palace-builders managed to create a high civilization that in certain crucial aspects was not maintained. We glean from their material remains a life of largely peaceful (and joyful) worship and (clearly very profitable) overseas contacts with central activities organized from the temple-palaces and serving the regions around them.

Such a society could not have produced a fear-motivated climate like that associated in legend with the ruthless and brutish Minotaur. That is to say, King Minos and his foreign conquests occurred *after* the arrival of the Mycenaean Greeks, or Achaeans, from the Peloponnese. They date to the *Mycenaean* period in Crete (after 1450 BCE) and not, as is widely believed even today in Crete, reflect activities occurring during the previous, or "Minoan", period. [9]

Archaeologists tend to refer to the entire pre-Conquest centuries as Minoan, and do not seem particularly disturbed by the shift in resident populations in the temple-palace complexes from "Minoan" towards Mycenaean after 1450 BCE, noting the changes in material culture largely in a context of unbroken, continuous habitation of the Palace at Knossos, for example.

But the earlier civilization represents to my mind a rare and perfect example of a society whose spatial, religious, economic and social organization was nurtured on the whole by an inclusive, integrative, *yin* or feminine consciousness; while the subsequent periods at Knossos under the Mycenaean Greeks, produced a culture that was bellicose, boundary-conscious, *yang* and masculine, or typical "Bronze Age" in character.

The Minoan civilization was so named by Sir Arthur Evans when he first excavated the site of Knossos near Heraklion in the opening years of the 1900s: uncovering its dazzling remains, he declared that he had found the Palace of King Minos. [10] This sage king was famed for the half-bull-half-man Minotaur who exacted annual tribute of twelve live youths and maidens

from Athens as recounted in Homer's legend (set down in the early eighth century BCE). Since scholarship tends to stick fast to precedents, for virtually a century the Palatial periods have therefore been subsumed under the name Minoan. For ease of reading, therefore, I shall in this paper follow convention and call this period Minoan - but with the caveat that I believe it to have *preceded* the time of King Minos of the Minotaur, and that the designation Minoan for the Palatial periods is anachronistic and misleading. [11]

Seen from a Chinese perspective, the six centuries (20th-15th centuries BCE) during which this civilization flourished coincided with China's late Longshan Neolithic [12], continuing into the Bronze Age of the Xia dynasty. [13] And when the Minoan world finally succumbed around 1450 BCE [14] China was coming into the high phase of her Shang Dynasty. In a Japanese context, Minoan civilization flourished during the latter centuries of her Mesolithic, or late Jōmon period, [15] characterized by the typical cord-marked pottery which, during these centuries, was showing clear signs of continental influence in a smoothing down of the surfaces, in the new typology that included pottery versions of rhyta and rounded pots with sharp long spouts similar in contours to those in prehistoric Bulgaria. [16]

With regard to what seems a gender-based approach to states of human consciousness, I do not offer a political or feminist stand, nor a psychologist's interpretation. In fact, in attributing one shade (one polarity) or the other to aspects of the visual art, to space and to tactile sensations, I seem to be venturing into fairly untried realms, having come across virtually no discussion by gender specialists, psychologists or aestheticians in quite the way I propose to offer my definitions here. While I am tempted to borrow comparisons like inclusive and exclusive, enfolding and dividing, or pliant and rigid, each pair seems too limited in its own way. The gender-related terminology I have decided finally to adopt here, is more in line with the broader traditional Chinese notions of *yin*, (implying pliancy, yielding, darkness, moisture, notions which the Chinese associate with feminine aspects of consciousness, and *not* necessarily with human females), and *yang* (implying the hard, unyielding, dominating, [17] straight, bright, fiery, which the Chinese associate with masculine aspects of consciousness - though not exclusively with men). To this already pregnant definition I would add a further aspect where by the feminine-*yin* consciousness tends more to the accommodating and holistic, implying knowledge of oneness and interconnectedness (unbounded wholeness), whereas the masculine-*yang* consciousness tends more to the exclusive, territorial, dissecting, hierarchical, implying compartmenta  
may offend some colleagues as simplistic or reductionist, the radical difference between a holistic and a divisive approach in society seems to me precisely that which distinguishes most peaceable and warlike peoples. The relatively egalitarian, holistic and crop-growing Neolithic settlements [18] with their communal burials were mostly matrilineal, [19] These aspects differ radically from the typical warring and walled-in Bronze Age societies. It is tempting to ascribe them respectively to predominance of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Clearly human beings, biologically male or female, exhibit *both* tendencies in their consciousness, and it would be foolish to assign feminine consciousness as defined here to women, and masculine to men. Rather, we may see these tendencies as *polarities* of the same consciousness, and either may be in the ascendant under particular conditions. Let us assume therefore that genes, environment and upbringing condition people during their growth to favour and develop one aspect over the other.

Thus when I use the term feminine consciousness I do not mean that it refers to actions taken or choices made by *women*, nor do I mean the reverse when the term male consciousness is used. I mean only that the feminine or masculine aspect of our consciousness as a social group comes to the fore in the artwork (institution or behaviour) and becomes predominant. I would at the same time submit that society as a whole is conditioned by its ruling

bodies and will develop its culture as an accurate reflection of its predominant consciousness. I have therefore no political axe to grind in this paper, nor psychological battles to fight. Rather, it is a metaphysical problem I am tabling here. I hope by combining both the cogitative and the intuitive faculties, that is, the masculine and the feminine consciousness at my own disposal, to arrive at some kind of understanding and appreciation of how ascendancy of a particular consciousness in a society may so condition it as to affect the lives of all its members and its neighbours, for long periods at a time. I propose to transgress traditional academic boundaries that would confine explorative thinking to thoughts already verbalised by others by way of legitimization, and include in my discussion not only ideas and findings already published elsewhere, but some deductive "hunches" [20] based on my own previous researches in Chinese and Japanese art.

## I. Background

When, a century ago, Arthur Evans first excavated the site of Knossos in north central Crete, he uncovered a dazzling culture that stunned and delighted the Western world. Workmen found palaces or temples decorated with lively frescoes celebrating flora and fauna in a bright and breezy manner. They found no walled fortifications. They found little evidence of strife or human sacrifice. The ravishingly beautiful women in dark flowing curls and sensuous maquillage displayed to advantage their round and fully exposed breasts, wasp and waists, set off in their elaborate dresses as they sat in lively converse: the world gasped in admiration. The grace in their lifestyle, the apparent egalitarianism betwixt mortals and divinity, and the pacific architecture of the temple-palace complexes successively uncovered throughout the island have over the decades combined to produce a profile of the Minoan world that one art historian termed "the last of the nice civilizations." [21]

Recently women's study groups have widely promoted the Earth-Mother or Goddess concept in a host of studies and books, [22] films and video tape series. [23] Independently and as a result of group studies, the image of Minoan women mediating between celestial cycles and earthly fruition has kindled the minds of countless women as well as New Age researchers, cutting across racial, social, religious, and age barriers, it would appear, with unprecedented force. [24]

Perhaps in a swing of the emotional pendulum as a reaction to the infatuation with the youthful beauty presented by the Minoan world, the new generation of specialists in Minoan archaeology have come increasingly to question the rosy world view originally engendered by the Minoan finds: much of which, they contend, has been projected with elaborate gender baggage onto the Minoan world by the 1960s Flower-Power mentality, and more recently by feminists and the "New Age fringe." Adjustments in our understanding are being demanded by new evidence of child-sacrifice, [25] the reassertion of military capabilities, [26] and the reassessment of evidence for walled fortifications and strongholds [27] all of which have led some scholars to speculate on Minoan aggression in the Aegean. [28] Recent writings argue for a more detached view that would see the Minoans as not so unique or exceptional, but more similar in many ways to other Bronze Age cultures flourishing in the Aegean at that time. [29] The lack of historical writing from the Minoans themselves leaves us no verbal descriptions about their world, the argument goes, and care must be exercised not to impose on them a world view across four millennia which we have fashioned from our own twentieth-century rose-tinted lenses. While I admire such caution, I propose in this paper to uphold the earlier vision of the Minoans as rather exceptional in both artistic expression and, by inference, worldview.

## Thesis and Methodological Approach

I shall select certain facets from China's material culture to illustrate masculine-*yang* characteristics, and I shall choose from Japan's artistic heritage those aspects that reflect to my mind a feminine-*yin* consciousness. Since it is possible to corroborate our impressions with writings from these cultures both of which are well documented by their own written accounts, let us take some soundings, as it were, from China which has been recorded since the Shang era [30] on the one hand, and from the arts of Japan which began to be richly documented by writing since at least the eighth century CE, to describe in visual terms certain characteristic expressions of what may be regarded as gender-related consciousness.

First we may posit that the arts are true reflections or accurate material manifestations of the mindset of the people that created them. Once we identify certain clues for reading a society's arts as expression of its collective mindset, we can with some degree of assurance approach the mindset of peoples who have not left any writing.

That is, the cross-cultural art historian working with the arts of early literary societies who have described themselves in texts may, by sifting through their material culture, identify clues that reveal particular aspects of the mindset of a "silent" society like the Minoan. By analysing the structural and stylistic features of those arts selected from China that are largely informed by masculine consciousness, and those selected from the arts of Japan that in social tastes and mores are informed largely by a feminine consciousness (see discussion below), and where confirmation can be found in surviving writings, we may identify those characteristics that most directly reflect such mindsets. Then, with a greater degree of assurance, we may reverse the process and test the twin models against a reading of the unrecorded Minoan legacy.

At this point it is worth drawing attention to a notable difference between China and Europe around the eastern Mediterranean in their perception of fertility and the human anatomy. In Neolithic China, there seem to have been few instances of anthropomorphic representation aside from the rare instance of the head of a female deity (with inset eyes that appear to be blue) of baked clay uncovered beneath a caved-in shrine at Niuheliang in Western Liaoning Province, belonging to the Hongshan culture which has been dated somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 BCE. [31] There seems to be very little representations of deities from the Neolithic; and even less evidence relating the female body to agriculture or to fertility. [32] Of the Hongshan deity, found in a disturbed state, only the head was recovered, In the vicinity were found life-sized clay hands and feet which may have been votive offerings similar to those found in Minoan cave sanctuaries where pilgrims left behind representations of those parts of themselves they wished to have healed. [33] At Niuheliang there was a conspicuous absence in the figures' rendering of a stress on the reproductive cycle: genitals, abdomen and breasts. [34]

But in Asia Minor and the Levant, and by inference on the Aegean of the late-Neolithic and well into the Bronze Age, there was strong identification of the female body with apparent respect to its aspects of health, vitality and fertility. The earth both generated all bounty and received her dead. Early on in the Neolithic this association was expressed in stone and clay images of the Earth Mother or Earth Goddess, like the "Venus of Willendorf" (c. 25,000-20,000 BCE, Museum of Natural History, Wien) with her exaggerated breasts, prominent abdomen and clearly articulated genitals, or the Fertility Goddess from Cernavoda (Romania, c. 5,000 BCE, National Museum, Bucharest) of baked clay, with no articulation of the face, hands or feet (parts inessential to child-bearing) but whose reproductive parts are stressed with prominent elegance. In the Bronze Age which began in Mesopotamia in the late fifth millennium BCE (McCall, 1990, 32), Sumarians continued to worship the Fertility Goddess Inanna (Ishtar to the Babylonians). Early hymns to her reflect a literal association of the sexual act with vernal cultivation. Inanna sings of her own sexuality and her sexual organs:

My vulva, the horn,  
The Boat of Heaven,  
Is full of eagerness like the young moon.  
My untilled land lies fallow.  
As for me, Inanna,  
Who will plow my vulva?  
Who will plow my high field?  
Who will plow my wet ground?  
As for me, the young woman,  
Who will plow my vulva?  
Who will station the ox there?  
Who will plow my vulva?

(And here the King, Dumuzi, replies:)

Great Lady, the king will plow your vulva,  
I Dumuzi the king, will plow your vulva.  
(Wolkstein and Kramer, 1983, 37)

Elsewhere Inanna sings of her love-making with Dumuzi in pastoral terms:

I bathed for the wild bull,  
I bathed for the shepherd Dumuzi,  
I perfumed my sides with ointment,  
I coated my mouth with sweet-smelling amber,  
I painted my eyes with kohl.  
He shaped my loins with his fair hands,  
The shepherd Dumuzi filled my lap with cream and milk,  
He stroked my pubic hair,  
He watered my womb.  
He laid his hands on my holy vulva,  
He smoothed my black boat with cream,  
He quickened my narrow boat with milk,  
He caressed me on the bed.  
Now I will caress my high priest on the bed,  
I will caress the faithful shepherd Dumuzi,  
I will caress his loins, the shepherdship of the land,  
I will decree a sweet fate for him.  
(Wolkstein and Kramer 1983, 44) [35]

Here the goddess of fertility, pleased with the sexual prowess of the shepherd king and with his amorous techniques, grants him 'a sweet fate', - that is, fecundity of his flock. Agrarian economy, politics and sexuality are dynamically and inextricably fused in one single act. Conjunction - or indivisibility - of human physical desire, divine power, female sensibilities, affairs of state relating to agriculture and economy, appears entirely natural in the Inanna verses. Such literary documentation may help give voice to the silent testimony of Minoan society, where cult objects, often feminine in human sphere of reference are known everywhere. They are found not only in spaces especially designated for ritual practices, but in ordinary dwellings throughout the temple-palace complexes at Knossos and Phaestos. [36] We shall return to this indivisibility of functions later.

## **II. Gender-Consciousness Manifested in Cultural Artifacts of China and Japan**

For convenience and easy contrast, I here characterise the Chinese experience from the dawn of the Bronze Age (at the first half of the Second Millennium BCE [37]) as largely paternalistic, male-dominated, divisive, exclusive, fragmentary and boundary-conscious. And I characterise the Japanese experience of its long Mesolithic (from around the Eleventh Millennium to the Third Century BCE [38]), Shintôism [39] and its aristocratic aesthetic

developed in the Heian era (794-1185 CE) as one informed by a largely *yin* or feminine consciousness. [40]. This is not to deny the world of evidence in Chinese culture illustrating what I here term feminine consciousness (from the Yangshao of Majiayao to the wealth of material of the Warring States, especially Chu, as anyone remotely familiar with Chinese culture can at once see.) Nor do I deny the impressive evidence in Japan's cultural legacy of entirely masculine or *yang* characteristics. We can in fact very easily contrast what I term masculine and feminine aspects using material evidence of China, or of Japan, alone. It is not that I wish to paint China in a masculine mode and Japan in a feminine mode, but that I wish to make a broader cross-cultural exploration, and have therefore chosen in this study to use one particular aspect of each culture, in order to contrast some very strongly masculine aspect of Chinese Bronze Age culture (contemporaneous to Minoan Crete) with the very strongly feminine aspects of Japanese culture (which bear in some ways startling resemblances to Minoan art as we shall see - even though it post-dates Minoan Civilization by three millennia). I hope the reader will bear with this framework therefore and permit me to present the contrasts by this cross cultural means.

Chinese creation myths, for example, comparatively late in their collation and recording [41] include a giant male named Pangu, who lies down to rot and thus forms the mountains, rivers, and trees. Japanese creation myths recount how the divine pair, Izanagi and his sister Izanami, flew over the oceans and disgorged from their pearl spear heavenly droplets into the sea, thus forming the islands of Japan, and they produced among other deities the Sun Goddess Amaterasu-no-ô-Kami, ancestress of all Japanese. While these creation myths are doubtless much younger than their respective cultural histories, they nevertheless form a significant contrast in how these two peoples saw themselves (at the time of the genesis of these myths).

When in contact with artifacts we may experience, perhaps in the unconscious, a sense of gender when we encounter particular subject matter, particular manners of space-function, and particular patterns of interrelationships. We recognize in what we see that quality we most often associate with the *yang* -masculine, or with the *yin*-feminine. A sense of gender may also be evoked by inter-relationships of forms, of textures, by their relative mutual size, position, gesture or distance. We discern gender, again perhaps unconsciously, in chromatic choices, in their combinations, deployment and their inter-relationships.

As has been articulated in classical definitions of the archetypal male and female, features that evoke a sense of the feminine tend, on the whole, to give forth a sense of warmth, of enfolding and security, qualities associated early on with Mother. Here I wish to point out that an underlying yet subtle aspect of the feminine consciousness is an implicit knowledge of the interconnectedness of all things. [42] In other words, the absence of boundary lines, barriers, separation and segregation between all beings/things. Associated with this openness and integration is the sense of flexibility or pliability and adaptability. Photographs of the universe confirm this interconnectedness in Nature (feminine in our consciousness and with a capital N [43]): myriad concentrations of energy in various states of relative dynamic growth or decay, all interactive (butterfly wing to tornado) but without boundaries or barriers. Thus children of most known societies feel that Mother is the nurturer, gentle and approachable, for to them Mother represents fecundity, nurturing, and succor.

Features associated with the masculine side of our consciousness tend to be cool, logical, detached, regular, "severe": qualities we tend to associate with Father. Here a sense of boundaries, of territory, of distinctions and hence "a time and a place" for each thing or event, animate or inanimate, prevails. Closely allied is the sense of rigidity and inflexibility (in modern times often translated as strength, regularity and dependability.) This sense of

separateness, of isolatable and independently sustainable autonomy is consecrated on earth in the sole man-made object visible from the Moon: The Great Wall of China already begun in Bronze Age Shang, developed during the Warring States period, and connected by Qinshihuang in the Iron Age.

Later on we learn to look up to Father for knowledge in the Ways of the World, i.e. to external affairs. He is experienced often as the disciplinarian, the undisputed authority regarding all things outside the life cycle of feeding, clothing, and health. Indeed, *pater familias* is synonymous with authority. We feel safe in his strength, in his iron will. We admire (and fear) his vision and understanding of things far away, things unknown to us.

We tend therefore to feel like siblings with our mothers as we become adults, but with fathers the distance and the mutual sense of boundaries may never be bridged. Following from the above, let us isolate features in architecture, architectural space, in the arts and crafts that reveal such aspects, proceeding from public to private criteria.

### **a. Public Criteria**

**Architectural Proportions** that are human in scale and not oppressively large, engender a sense of the feminine. Human proportions in architecture can impart a personal, intimate and warm feeling, and make the individual feel enfolded, included, associated with and part of the space and its significance. [44] Non-human proportions, with high ceilings and doors over twice that of an average man's height and so proportioned as to appear larger-than-life, tend to dwarf, and to create a sense of smallness in the individual. By extension, such imbalance makes one feel unequal, hence separated or alienated from the space, and from what it stands for. Typical illustrations are the ways we create our spiritual or divine spaces: Buddhist temples scaled in Chinese imperial style, have vast Main Halls where the devotees are dwarfed by the doors and red columns as they prostrate before the golden, reflective images often three times life-size set on pedestals much higher than eye level. The feeling thus induced is not too different from the duality ingrained from the start in Christendom where supplicant and Almighty God (here Amituofuo Buddha) occupy separate loci in the consciousness, where the devotees' task is to seek reconciliation, pity, mercy, praying God will look their way and grant their wish. [45] This feeling of awe and dread evoke a sense of the *yang* or masculine.

On the other hand, many of the human-scaled Japanese Zen meditation halls devoid of icons, with their low ceilings and human-sized walls and doors, re-enforce our sense of Inner Perfection. The central lesson of the Buddha, as those of all realised beings, that Perfection is Within, is supported by architecture which underscores the indivisible unity of the divine and the mortal, thus bringing the pilgrim to inner contemplation. Only then can the quest begin for the Buddha Nature inside oneself, - only when one is not reaching outward for the Great Buddha glowing separately on a distant pedestal. Even though the disciplinarian routines of Zen practice are severe and unequivocal and masculine in character, the seekers' feeling of ease and of rootedness in the *Zendô* space is generated by a distinctly feminine consciousness of belonging, being one with and within the space(/universe).

**Space-Allocation and Spatial Functions** also reveal gender consciousness. A building organized along principles of formal bilateral symmetry, in which each room is assigned its unique, unchangeable function, becomes a predictable constant. Too many a priori conditions exert a sense of tyrannical authority over the inhabitants who in turn feel encaged, confined. Such are the pre-ordained constraints of traditional Chinese domestic dwelling, temple and palace architecture, - whose inhabitants would not dream of changing rooms. There was no hope of trying to exchange the dining area for the study, of moving the in-laws to the periphery, or even of giving the emperor a sunnier location. Spatial organizational rigidity and architectural dominion over

social conduct has been generic in China since the first palaces were built upon their rammed-earth *hangtu* foundations in the early Bronze Age. City walls separated barbarians from civilized folks, and palace-complex walls separated rulers from the ruled. Palace- and room-size were determined a priori, in accordance with column diametres, and the roof's pitch and span.

Such rigid and authoritarian utilization of space represents the *yang* -male consciousness in us that would create Order with a capital O. Mobility and intercourse within such regulated spaces became subject from the beginning therefore, to powerful regulation. Locked within a priori spatial definitions, human action was controllable and controlled.

Japanese architecture, on the other hand, is distinctly feminine in aspect and impact. With its relatively indeterminate use of space, flexibility in expanding or contracting room-sizes by means of removable sliding doors, it stresses multiple uses of space. Movable things are stored away into *oshi-ire* (closets). At different times, different activities take place in the same room - without impaling onto it a particular purpose with any permanence. Thus a room may serve as reception space for tea and chats with guests, for a family card or mahjong game, the evening meal, the children's homework, or, finally, it becomes the sleeping space for as many as would like to, at that time, drag their bedding onto its *tatami* floor. For each new occasion, furnishings, utensils, or books of the preceding function are removed and a new arrangement is given space to accommodate the new function. The sense of flexibility and multi-tasking is typically associated with Mother, who aside from gardening, bathing the children and cooking for the family, is charged with laundry, sewing, teaching, entertaining, accounting, tending the sick, or indeed of mourning. These have been the tasks, performed by the same woman, and often in the same space.

**Surface curvature** plays a role as well. Straight lines and curves engender a sense of male and female qualities respectively, associated with rigidity or flexibility, with strictness or pliancy. Thus contours with rounded corners, curved roofs, or cars with rounded bodies, feel feminine, while straight-sided, blocky, angular structures (including motor vehicles) with predominantly flat contours feel masculine.

By extension, groupings of paving stones or massing of building blocks that are natural or irregular in shape feel feminine, while walls or roads faced with angular blocks, predictable and even, evoke the masculine. Here we cite the courts and walkways of the Forbidden Palace in Beijing, designed to be smooth and straight, as masculine. Large effort had been expended to produce building blocks of equal size as in the Pyramids, so that regularity, regulatability, predictability, and efficiency are assured in the workmanship, and a sense of control can be achieved.

In contrast, we may perceive the irregular paving stones lining the meandering mossy paths that lead to the Japanese teahouse as *yin* or feminine. Stones of different shapes, sizes, textures and colours are brought together to make a flowing and harmonious pattern. The grouping is entirely irregular, but pleasing and imbued with a sense of life because of its ever-changing aspect. Beneath this association may lie experiences with Mother who loves her children by acknowledging their differences, who nurtures each child in the particular way it requires. This is in contrast to Father who tends to set unequivocal rules or codes to be observed by all regardless of age, gender, temperament or health - in the name of fairness and justice.

In England, a further extension of this comparison can be made between the straight roads built by Roman legions that penetrate space unbending and feel distinctly masculine, and both earlier and later pathways that twist and curve along the contours of mountains or streams, and impart a sense of closeness with Nature, a *yin* or feminine feel.

## b. Personal Criteria

**Texture** is another factor. Here the hard, shiny surface tends to impart a sense of coolness and distance. We slip on shiny surfaces. In another sense, shiny surfaces reject us. By contrast, rough surfaces feel warm, and exude a sense of enfolding as in a nest. Thus formal occasions call for halls, furnishings, even clothing, with shiny surfaces like marble, lacquered wood, taffetas, velvets, silks or brocades. The relatively reflective (rejecting) surfaces appear to hide the interior (or private feelings), revealing nothing of themselves but reflecting only the exterior, evoking a sense of impersonal space and of distance. This is perceived by our male-consciousness as dignity appropriate to formal occasions. Indeed, male-dominated autocratic societies have created such as St. Peter's Basilica based on earlier imperial models, just as Chinese palaces, grand temples and stately homes are paved and covered with glistening surfaces with the same intentions.

Thus marble walls, pillars and columns, or lacquered wooden doors and posts gleaming red, glazed roof tiles shining in green or imperial yellow, being reflective surfaces, seem masculine and formal. We feel distant from them. And walls covered with natural fibre, bark, textile or rough, unpainted wood, even stucco, pillars of natural wood, and thatched roofs, like knobby woolly sweaters, feel feminine and warm, cozy like a bird's nest.

Chinese imperial architecture's stress on glossiness and smoothness, on surfaces that look hard and permanent, achieves physical representation of authority and legitimacy appropriate to the perennial patriarch. That is, it reflects the awesome, subjugative imperial system. The unequivocal quality reflected by entirely even and smooth surfaces, a quality that suggests firmness and permanence, reliability - qualities favoured by the silk-loving Chinese and, for example, by Chinese calligraphers in their choice of "unblemished" paper, and by potters in the smoothness and firmness of their porcelains. Japanese architecture, by contrast, strove at all times to provide textural interest (except when overtly trying to imitate Chinese or Western masculine models). Even the most formal structure imaginable such as the Shishinden, the emperor's residence during the Heian period, had by imperial request no lacquered pillars with that startling crimson colour and high gloss, but featured architectural members all in plain, unadorned wood. The Heian Court preferred the relatively soft, matte, fibre-woven tatami floor matting, and a thatched roof. [46] Indeed, for the historical period in world civilizations, it was during the heydays of Fujiwara stewardship in Japan that the feminine consciousness was given the scope to come into full flowering. And poets and painters, male more than female, gave vent to one of the most refined expressions of human sensitivity ever witnessed on earth. [47]

Japanese love of rough, tactile, "woolly" surfaces is evident since the 7th millennium BCE with the emergence of cord-marked Jōmon pottery. And long after knowledge of the wheel had made it possible to turn out even-walled and smooth-surfaced pots, Japanese craftsmen continued to prefer hand-fashioned wares with "accidental" surface interest such as blisters and irregularities. By the 17th c. CE, tea masters came to name their favoured tea bowls each of which, with its particular set of imperfections, was unique and easily recognizable as "an individual". The names are imbued with poetic feeling full of nostalgia.

Here an interesting emotional feature underlies the Japanese preference for textures, - even for imperfection. Gompertz reports that a Japanese connoisseur had explained that Chinese porcelains were rarely left on his display table for longer than a day, for they "wait for no one" whilst a Korean or Japanese pot, because of its unique set of imperfections which, much like words felt but left unsaid, could stir in the viewer a sense that the pot would "wait for one". [48] Implied in this extraordinary statement is the need, on the part of the (art) lover, to interact with the beloved (artworks), to take part in the creation and re-creation of the intended form and potential perfection

which, in these particular specimens, remain uniquely, and poignantly, forever frozen in the realm of immanence.

**Colours** can impart a sense of gender. [49] For example, primary colours like red, blue, yellow, green (white and black, the total reflection [50] and the total absorption of light), feel *yang* and masculine because they appear strong, unequivocal, independent, uncompromising and non-compromised.

Mixed hues like magenta, pink, mauve, aquamarine, oranges and ochres, etc., created by combining two or more primary colours, feel at once more feminine, because unconsciously the eye discerns mixture, and by association the yielding, accommodation, self-adjustment that takes place - processes associated with the *yin* and feminine.

**Colour interrelationships** likewise evoke a sense of gender. Combinations forming sharp and stark contrasts (as in most national flags, and like the shiny marble walls and floors of major structures), create a sense of formality, of easy identification, of pellucid clarity. Black and white, black and red, red and green etc., make stark contrasts that excite the retina.

On the other hand, close-harmonies, different shades of ochre next to mauves, pinks, oranges, or a series of blue-based mixtures applied in close proximity, impart a sense of intimacy, almost of secrecy. Retinal excitement is notably less intense. By analogy, the decibel count is lower, and one senses these softened hues like a group of muted voices whispering softly together. This has a *yin* or feminine feeling.

Thus we acknowledge in China a notable love for stark contrasts, for the grand *yang* or masculine statement on universal truths, for paintings of hoary mountains in cosmic majesty, and in calligraphy for jet black ink that penetrates with unequivocal incisiveness the pristine white surface.

And in contrast we acknowledge in Japan a notable preference for the muted expression in all things from poetry to conversation to all the tangibles in daily life. [51] the equivocal and often unfinished sentence where emotions are deeply felt but left unexpressed, the intimate awareness of the temporary nature of life itself and the fragility of ideals, the impermanence of things, etc. The sigh implied behind their cultural expression, that "Ah-ness of things, mono-no aware" which informed Heian courtly art, produced calligraphy written (on the whole by men) in delicate emotive scrawls that flowed down in columns of unequal length and verticality, upon collage paper that had been hand-torn and stained and tinted in hues of close harmonies. Outstanding examples illustrating the quintessence of Japanese aesthetic sensibilities include, among others, the Sanjū-roku-nin-kashū, a selection of poems of the Thirty-Six Immortal Poets, inscribed by celebrated calligraphers of the Heian Court to celebrate the emperor's sixtieth birthday in the year 1112, the illustrated narrative scrolls of the Tale of Genji, and the Taira clan-commissioned illustration of the Lotus Sūtra (Hokkekyō, also known as the Heike-Nōgyō or Taira Offertory), breathtaking works surviving from Japan's Golden Age. [52] And they epitomize the feminine consciousness in historical times.

\* \* \*

## The Minoan Evidence

With the above descriptions and definitions of *yin* and *yang* characteristic in visual terms in mind, let us review the Minoan archaeological evidence.

### a. Architecture

The Minoan temple-palace complex of Knossos was built c. 1900 BCE, large over the Neolithic settlement tell which had been in continuous habitation

through at least ten successive building levels since 6,000 BCE comprising, and I think significantly, the largest Neolithic settlement in all Europe. [53] The Minoan structural complex, like those in existence at the same time at Phaestos, Aghia Triada, Archanes, Mallia and Zakro, was built on an agglomerate plan: one subject to easy, organic expansion. [54]

The basic principles of spatial organization, and of function-designation, are in clear contrast with those of Chinese architectural principles since the Bronze Age.

**Walled fortification?** At Knossos no evidence of walled fortifications has been revealed, though candidates exist in the First Palace period for such at Mallia and a concern for security is argued for the so-called 'forts' at the east of the island. [55] The typical palace layout - relatively open and unbounded - would not have been conceived without unquestioned assurance of either peace or an effective system of defense; and, as we see by its massive storage areas, a continued agricultural surplus. [56] The Knossian layout also speaks of the interrelatedness of all things: of ruler and ruled; and - as is clear from the many interior courts and lightwells - of sun and shade, of inside and outside, and again of the various spheres of Nature and the Spirit, as seen in the many remaining frescoes of plants, animals, humans, and divinities. I would argue that such interrelatedness, the unbounded oneness with given conditions, speaks of a *yin* or feminine consciousness.

**Outward growth.** Unlike the builders of the hangtu palace foundations in China who defined a priori the boundaries and size, forever precluding outward expansion of the same building, the Minoans reserved as their central court such space as was needed for their various ceremonies (perhaps including the sport of bull-leaping). Around this reserved area, moving outwards and upwards, they added rooms as needs dictated - a manner of construction that has its roots in the so-called agglomerative approach of the houses of the Early Bronze Age.

The consciousness that begins a project by defining its outer limits, thus confining future processes to present limitations, tends to produce a growing set of boundaries and limitations. It tends to lead the rulers to subdivide, to impose further internal boundaries in order to accommodate the demands that will arise with the increase in population, knowledge, and experience. A priori boundaries generate subsequent rules and procedures to accommodate growing priorities and such an approach is doomed to increasing pressure, stratification, and sometimes oppression which can be expressed in social, economical, political, or even spiritual terms.

The Minoan approach to space (and probably to society) was, I argue, based on an assumption of peace and on relative egalitarianism (see below). Architectural growth thus proceeded in an organic way, adding and expanding in all directions physically possible. There appeared to be few a priori limitations. [57]

**Interrelatedness of spatial functions.** A feature of Minoan architecture that may be remarkable to modern eyes is the close proximity of spaces assigned to the disparate activities that today occupy separate institutions. Especially notable is the easy accessibility to the areas of "cult rituals" and a pervasive religious atmosphere. Where in some societies "temple" and "palace" are easily distinguished by their structure, placement and internal characteristics, in Minoan Crete these seemed to have been more fused, so that the complexes have been called either palace or temple, depending on the particular archaeologist's predisposition. However, I would submit that the verbal division is peculiar to the contemporary scholar's mind - but not particularly to the Minoans' own concept of space. Apparently 'separate' activities (and their spaces) appear rather to have been entirely integrated - or at least undivided one from the other. Thus close to the central sanctuaries and adyton (sacred areas sunken beneath the floor level, the so-called lustral

basins) stood the rows of narrow storage rooms with their massive ceramic pithoi and under-floor cists filled with grains, wines, and oils, and likewise workshops where craftsmen carved ivories and stones, and produced items of faience, ceramic, metal and more perishable materials. Marinatos (1984), perceptively stresses the inter-relationship between religion and economy in relation to the domestic sanctuaries which are connected with one or more of industrial activities such as grinding grain, storage of produce and preparation and consumption of common meals. [58]

This is in contrast with architectural zoning of most other Bronze Age societies which reserved a single area for worship, apart from all other "profane" areas, and sometimes from administrative seats of "earthly power". Minoan thinking not only set areas aside exclusively for ritual activities, but further vessels of a ritual type were found in rooms primarily for dwelling or work purposes. This suggests that while a specialized group of people may have performed special rituals in the special sacred rooms, spiritual life was not their monopoly, that other people were not far from aspects of worship. [59] There is no doubt that a ruling person or group lived in these temple-palaces, but we know also that they were not separated from the artisans, smiths or wine-makers. We must therefore infer a ruling elite who singly or as a group were charged with spiritual or psychic attunement with the divine, who at the same time supervised all these activities without a sense of hierarchy [60] or segregation. And we must acknowledge the probability that on a daily basis priest(esse)s and leather-worker(s) rubbed shoulders.

What can we infer from such unity of activity and behaviour long subsumed elsewhere under separate and autonomous domains? I have referred to the Minoan sites as temple-palace complexes, requiring two words. If we were to be thorough, we should say "religious, economic, agriculture-administration, craft, and dwelling centre". These diverse activities have over the centuries become distinct provinces which in modern societies have supported mammoth governmental ministries each with its own separate building complexes and autonomous administration. The divisions have become sharp both politically and spatially and, significant in this context, in the minds of scholars, who today "specialize" usually in only one of the compartmentalized "disciplines".

## **b. Frescoes**

The especially "nice" qualities that have long impressed the world about the Minoan frescoes come not only from the subject matter, but also from their forms and colouration as well as the interrelatedness of the visual elements which, together, evoke a sense of joy, of peace and harmony. Although recent scholarship has tended to play down the differences between the Minoan world view and that of other Aegean civilizations, I wish here to explore the mindset underlying not only the subject matter, but its treatment in visual terms, highlighting what I consider a subtle but radical difference in basic outlook - and hence social behaviour.

**The subject matter**, long celebrated among lovers of Minoan art, is unusual for Bronze Age societies in that it does not obviously immortalize brutality and martial conquests, but celebrates everyday things readily visible at the time. Often entire walls were decorated, not with exotic subjects or fear-inspiring images, but with familiar images of frolicking dolphins, swimming fishes, garden-variety field lilies in bloom, octopi in motion, doves or swallows in flight or nesting, and most striking, the many group-portraits of beautiful women with long black curls, clad in wasp-waisted culottes and tight bodices, engaging in animated conversation, where one among them may be a priestess or goddess. [61] Male figures, usually as lithe youth - some naked, some with sumptuous kilts or loin-cloths - are depicted at times in more active postures - offering fresh-caught fish, boxing with gloves (at Akrotiri in Thera), or processing in rows holding huge rhyta of sacral libation (in Knossos). [62] Rooms with three contiguous walls celebrating the same themes without

division or interruption have been uncovered in fact on the island of Thera [63] and in Crete. [64] A common theme seen also in Knossos is of blue monkeys [65] gathering saffron pollen. These are not however, pictures without meaning: all objects and actions carry a symbolic significance. [66]

Of great significance is the intimate nature of the subjects which contrasts, for example, with those of the Chinese Bronze Age featuring fear- and awe-inspiring monster masks, the taotie, and registers of mysterious kui- dragons, all rendered as abstractions unseen in nature. Minoan images are rendered naturalistically, although in flat colouration with little shading, but with recognition clearly intended.

Equally significant is the relative egalitarianism implied in the paintings. Nowhere does one figure excessively dominate others in size, in detail of rendering or in posture. Among a group of female figures, for instance, the central priestess (or goddess) is identifiable only because others face or are processing towards her. This relative egalitarianism is perhaps confirmed archaeologically by the lack of tombs or tomb-furnishings that are extravagantly, or by several degrees, more imposing than the general run: such as are typical of autocrats - a practice that accompanied all other Bronze Age societies, from Egypt to China, even to Bronze Age Japan. [67] However, this should not be thought to imply a sort of primitive communism: central figures (male or female) of authority can be discovered in various media, [68] but they may involve a broader group of people than just a ruling family or two. Significant also is the size of the faience statues of goddesses who stand, never much over one foot in height, bare-breasted and trance-like with dilated eyes, sometimes holding snakes. These were possibly related to the principal Minoan Earth Goddesses - but were never perceived or constructed in super-human size, as the statue of Athena was made, a thousand years later in Athens, thirty-foot tall to tower over men, striking beholders with fear and awe.

Comparable instances of continuation of the same theme across different wall planes without interruption around the corners can be found only in Japanese fusuma-e and shōji sliding door painting developed in Heian times. Scenes from the same landscape, or floral motifs, evocations of the four seasons, progress along the four walls of a room, enfolding its space. This is in sharp contrast to the Chinese preference for disposition of particular images (deemed suitable, sometimes exclusively) to each of the Four Directions. Here is another instance contrasting the holistic and the separatist *Weltanschauung*.

**Curves and Straight Lines** in Minoan painting tend to be used for natural and man-made motifs respectively. Landscape elements in particular tend to sine-curved rhythmic undulations upon the walls, and rocky hills sprouting lilies, rise and fall much as the seashore contours ebb and wane in the marine frescoes, but with more emphasis.

The remarkable Knossean fragments of twin doves hatching their eggs, or a bird among reeds, show a love of bright but close colour-harmonies and curving forms that is seen too in Heian Japan among the collage-formed calligraphy papers of the Thirty-Six Poets where tissues of different texture, hues and designs are cut straight edge or hand-torn with rounded curves and pasted together to form abstract yet soft, rolling rhythms with a rich emotional resonance.

**Ceramics** from Minoan sites, especially those named Kamares ware (after the cave site near Phaestos whence the first group was discovered), are marked with lively patterns, abstract curves and spirals, as well as figural paintings of plant and marine life. [69] Here I wish to draw attention to the unique and complete fusion of form and decor which other Eastern societies seem to have left behind with the onset of the Bronze Age. [70] Chinese bronze vessels, departing from the unified decor of the Neolithic Yangshao, are marked with

registers or zones separating neck, belly and foot of the vessel, each of which may be decorated with different motifs, in different sizes. In this way a different statement, unrelated to the vessel itself, is made using the vessel, through which a division is projected between the high, the middle and the low.

Minoan ceramics in general, classic Kamares in particular, show the painter harmonizing his work with that of the potter, flaring his design where the vessel flares, bringing it inwards where the form tapers. Thus we find an octopus embracing a round pot, fully utilizing its tremulous tentacles to enfold and to highlight the spherical dynamics of the flask. Or plants that grow and taper upwards along the swelling and shrinking contours of a tall vase.

Such fusion, oneness, or interconnectedness of decor and form, is not commonly encountered - an exception being China's Northern Song (960-1126 CE) ceramics where incised or impressed floral motifs entirely occupy the centre of a bowl. It is most prominent again in the East in Japanese ceramics which over the Mesolithic Jōmon (11,000-300 BCE), in the Heian (794-1185) lacquer ware, and in Rimpa School (16th to 19th centuries CE) crafts of diverse media, which cover a bowl or a box entirely with a single continuous motif, unifying it, crawling over its entire surface without breaking to acknowledge the different planes. I would like to include such oneness under the *yin* aspect of human consciousness, in contrast to the separatist *yang*. [71]

### **Colouration**

Minoan colours [72] are bright, pan-chromatic, and move in lively combinations. Notable here is the use of matte crimson on the walls and pillars. Not especially bright and shiny, but matte and muted. Moreover in the frescoes the colours are always in notable close proximity: next to each other we find fluid swaths of ochres, yellows, aquamarine, grey, brick-red, brown and mustard, though this must in part be put down to the use of natural, often mineral, sources for the pigments. The similarity to Heian courtly painting is remarkable and one is forced to consider the impact of aristocratic women on the formation of court aesthetics in *yin*-oriented societies as a factor of major cultural importance.

### **IV. Conclusion**

To understand the significance of Minoan culture today, it is important that we re-examine the mindset from which we ourselves proceed to do the understanding, and reconsider our own particular assumptions about society and utilization of time, space and our interrelationships with each other.

We live in an age of propaganda through mass media, and most societies of the industrialized world have come to share the achievement-oriented world view. The GNP is expected to grow each year - based on expansion that in turn depends on take-overs or conquests (but always at the expense of other parties). In a world of "we" and "they" where compartmentalization and stratification have been ingrained in our minds the separateness of nations, races, classes, disciplines, earth-destructive ideas such as dumping "our" nuclear wastes onto "their" land can not only be readily conceived, but usually go unchallenged. Not that there is anything new in this latest manifestation of man's inhumanity.

Our approach to the past may therefore be based on assumptions of multiple agencies, separate in function and location, and an assumption of political authority of the type we have been used to since the Bronze Age. And in scholarship we naturally tend to see the "Minoan" civilization in the same way.

But if we impose relative institutional parity between Minoan Crete on the one hand and Pharaonic Egypt and the other Imperial powers of the Middle and Far

East on the other, we need to explain the apparent difference between the nature of the surviving material culture of the last set and that of the Minoan - little of which involves the glorification of brute force, killing and conquests as evinced in the artistic legacies of those societies.

But if we remember that Knossos, the largest and most sumptuous of the Minoan temple-palace sites, was built over the largest Neolithic settlement in Europe - and one which for a very large part of its existence had no rivals or even peers on the island, we may consider the possibility that the Bronze Age culture that developed in part from it in the Prepalatial period may well have had social restraints in place to minimize violence and territorial aggression. Much of the proposed Neolithic egalitarianism and the deep-rooted concerns for earth-nurturing activities, for peace and harmony may have survived to influence Bronze Age attitudes and developments. The abundant - and evidently most attractive - existing female-engendered contributions in the spheres of spiritual and psychic practices may have lasted longer and more effectively. Like the Sumerian song of Inanna which stems directly from Neolithic fertility goddess consciousness, Minoan civilization could have developed by fusing Bronze Age world-experiences with Neolithic knowledge of universal forces.

Thus it would not be surprising to find the architecture imbued throughout with reference to what we today call "cult" and "ritual" activities and appurtenances. It would be more natural for people to be living and working in the temple-palace complexes with heart and mind in a state of relative spiritual alertness. [73] Was Minoan life so imbued with ritual activity that such alertness became second-nature? Contemporary Western communities like Findhorn in Northern Scotland have over only a few decades turned the erstwhile barren land declared by agricultural experts to be unsuitable for cultivation of any kind into a flourishing miracle of vegetables and flowers, scents extracted of which have been extracted for aromatic and homeopathic therapy, and distributed all over the world. The single ingredient binding the entire community is the state of prayer that as it were resounds from the depths of each soul. Thus it is not remarkable that activities which we today perceive to be subsumed under separate domains like "government", "religion", "economy", "trade", "food-production industry" etc., were intimately "related" in Minoan society. Rather, I would submit, that in Minoan Crete, these activities had not been separately institutionlised or given autonomy.

We may in conclusion consider the probability that it was a particular internal condition that underlay all aspects of Minoan life. That Minoans, at least the elite whose cultural remains comprise the bulk of our archaeological data, may have lived in spiritual and probably also psychic connectedness at all times with the invisible forces at work in the universe. And it was this interconnectedness which four millennia ago sparked their civilization with such dazzling life and beauty, and which today rekindles in us memories of a long lost sense of oneness and liberation.

#### - ENDNOTES -

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1. King Minos of the Minotaur fame aside, Minos may have meant ruler or king. Many King Minoses might be assumed to have ruled from the Palace at Knossos, and perhaps also at other sites on Crete.
2. Such an idea surfaces periodically to the conscious level and, most recently, has been expounded by James Lovelock (1979) in *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, Oxford, and in a follow-up (1988) *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of our Living Earth*, Oxford.
3. As for example in the foundation of the Mesopotamian walled town of Habuba Kabira in the middle Euphrates around 3500 BCE (Reade, 1991, 22), or the earliest walled town excavated in northern China to date in the Longshan layers at Chengzi-yai of around the early third millennium BCE, where the top section of the

wall was about 9 metres and the original height about 6 metres. "Surely this massive town wall hints at two new characteristic features at least of the Lung-shan culture: the first construction of a public nature to have required enormous labor force, and the first erection of a defensive wall by a prehistoric settlement." (Chang, 1986, 248) Together with the walled town, archaeologists uncovered tomb clusters in which the furnishings became sharply differentiated. "This is the earliest example of a burial pattern associated with the stratified lineage society of ancient China that is seen often hereafter." (*Ibid.*, 249). Minoan sites are characterized by the lack of walled fortifications, and the lack of highly differentiated tomb furnishings, suggesting an absence of recurrent warfare and absence of significant concentrations of wealth in the hands of a few.

4. Or Luvian (that Homer called Kydonian), or Asia Minor, or Oriental period? (See note 6 below).
5. The question of whether the Bronze Age Minoans were essentially evolved from the Neolithic holders of the island or the result of considerable immigration in the fourth Millennium BCE is still well debated: Evans (1994) 19; Hood (1990a) 151 ff and (1990b) 367 ff; Broodbank (1992) 68.
6. René Lorraine (1993) summarizes the several studies on the aesthetic activity of African foragers, and on statistical studies of the relationships of social structures and song and dance styles in contemporary societies by anthropologist Alan Lomax on the one hand, and the "matriarchal aesthetic" offered by philosopher Heide Göttner-Abendroth based on her broad knowledge of ancient myths and art on the other, noting the remarkable similarity of their conclusions which include, among others and significant in the present enquiry, that egalitarianism is characteristic of societies where women enjoy high social status.
7. Unlike most other ancient cultures where animals, especially those that are not easily domesticated, and humans are pictured together in a state of psychological tension and threat, the relationship of human beings and "dangerous animals" in Minoan Crete are represented in a state of harmony, cooperation and what to present-day viewers may appear even to be "fun." For example, the famous bull-leaping scene represented in Minoan frescoes and carvings, the *taurokathapsia*(taurokaqayua) or bull-purification game show men and women leaping toward the bull, grasping its horns and somersaulting over it. There are never any weapons depicted in such scenes. "The purpose of the games has never been certain: no weapons were used and no scenes of the animals' death have ever been found. A part of the spring festival, the bull games were dedicated to the goddess Ariadne. Her sacred knot and her pillar shrine are found on frescoes and gems of the ritual. In some instances, her shrines overlook the arenas in which the acrobatic feats were carried out." ( Johnson, 1988, 298) Or, in the faience statuettes of the Snake Goddess, we find such descriptions as "The Snake Goddess bends to the snakes, not by imitating their snaky movements, but by holding their movements and letting them vibrate through her...Her dance is a joyful celebration of openness to difference, of the wondrous softness and openness of the human body, of its ability to bend to the swirling lines of nature.....The Minoan delight, as we have discussed, is not in the mastery of another but in the taking up and holding of another's movements." (Bigwood, 1993, 178,179).
8. Homer's suggestion that these ancient peoples of Crete were Achaeans, Eteocretans, Kydonians, Dorians and Pelasgians has been debated. Modern scholars have offered various opinions, but none conclusive. Evans himself believed that the advent of the Minoan (pre-Mycenaean) civilization was related to the arrival on the island of refugees from Lybia. Davis, according to Alexiou (1969, 127) believes that the Phaistos Disk (believed to be the earliest form of hieroglyphic writing found on the island) represents writing related to Hittite. Gaining greater acceptance is the theory that the "Minoans" were Luvians, a people from south-western Asia Minor: "Another interpretation would see the Kydonians as Luvians, a people from south-western Asia Minor...(regarding) Minoan connections with Asia Minor: Herodotus reported that the Termilians of Lycia believed themselves to be descendants of colonies who had come to Asia Minor with Sarpedon from Crete.

About 1600 BC the king of Knossos expelled Sarpedon from Cretan Milatos, whence the fugitive moved to the Asian coast and founded Miletos. If the Termilians descended from those who accompanied him did not change their language completely later on, then the implication is that an early form of the Lycian tongue was current on Crete. Termilian, or Lycian, is a Luvian dialect." (Cotterrel 1979, 66-67)

9. This is, obviously, a personal reading of the legends. I am aware of the question of the thalassocracy attributed to Minos by Thucydides: see in a 'Minoan' expansion into the Cyclades, and further afield to the Near East and Asia Minor in the later part of the First Palaces continuing into the Second: Hägg and Marinatos (1984) several articles. I do not argue against this having happened, but rather propose that the myths refer to the later and short period when the Mycenaeans were exploiting the island directly (c. 1450-1375).
10. An interesting account is Arthur Evans and the *Palace of Minos* prepared by Anne Brown of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which holds the largest collection of Minoan antiquities outside of Crete. Sir Arthur Evans was Keeper of the Museum from 1884 to 1908, and continued to be closely associated with the Museum until his death in 1941.
11. For a Western art historian's challenge to Homer's dating, and a different discussion of this problem, see Barbara Ward, *In Search of Theseus*, London 1967.
12. The clear indication of the knowledge and ritual uses of metals (perhaps beaten rather than cast) which is indicated by the typology of Longshan "egg-shell" blackware is irrelevant to this enquiry and shall not be entered into here. Suffice it to say that by 1977 two metal awls were excavated at the Longshan site of Sanlihe, of copper alloyed with zinc, with some lead and tin (*Kaogu* 1977.4, 267 and *Wenwu* 1981.6, 47), and that I believe the lustrous blackware phase of Longshan culture to have been product of a typical metal-working society.
13. On the question of whether the Erlitou phase of the early Bronze Age was of the Xia or Shang dynasty, the geographical, that is relatively westerly location of sites coinciding with traditional accounts of Xia cities has persuaded many archaeologist, including Chang Kwang-chih, of the former (Chang, 1986, 316).
14. Around 1700 BCE (or earlier), a severe earthquake, or a series of them, destroyed all the First Palaces. They were promptly rebuilt, giving rise to the Neopalatial Period. Later, around the time and preceding the Thera eruption, further extensive damage necessitated more substantial rebuilding as can be argued from the physical record. But we are still a generation or two away from the 1450 deadline - firmly in the "Minoan" phase. The absolute chronology of all this continues to be debated: see, for example a recent conference on Thera. More recent probes based on frost rings and sediments of volcanic sulphur in Greenland ice-cores, etc. M. Marthari, 'The chronology of the last phases of occupation at Akrotiri in the light of the evidence from the West House pottery groups', in D. A. Hardy and A. C. Renfrew (eds.) *Thera and the Aegean World III.3: Chronology, Proceedings of the Third International Congress, Santorini Greece...1989* (London, 1990), 57-70; J.S. Soles and C Davaras, 'Theran ash on in Minoan Crete: new excavations on Mochlos', *ibid.* 89-95; P. Betancourt, P. Goldberg, R. Hope Simpson and C. J. Vitaliano, 'Excavations at Pseira; the evidence for the Thera eruption', *ibid.* 96-9; T. Marketou, 'Santorini, Thera from Rhodos and Kos: some chronological remarks based on stratigraphy', *ibid.* 100-113, and the informative summary of the radio-carbon dating results by S. W. Manning, 'The Thera eruption: the third congress and the problem of the date', *Archaeometry* 32 (1990), 91-100. The first series of tri-partite divisions devised by Arthur Evans has been revised and the idea of an absolute chronology itself has been debated. G. Walberg, "Middle Minoan Chronology: Relative and Absolute," in *High, Middle or Low*, Part I (Göteborg, 1987); W. Hankey, "The Chronology of Aegean Late Bronze Age," in *idem*, Part 2 (Göteborg 1987); Ph. Betancourt, *Archaeometry* 29 (1987), 212-13; P. Warren, *ibid.*, 205-11. A chronology agreed to by consensus but without absolute firmness may be as follows: Neolithic period ? - 2900 BCE Prepalatial or Early Minoan

Period (EMI-III) 2900-2000 BCE Protopalatial or Middle Minoan Period (MM IA-MMII) 2000-1700 BCE Neopalatial or Middle to late Minoan Period (MMIIIB-LM IB) 1650-1450 BCE Postpalatial or Late Minoan Period (LM IB/IIIA-LM IIIC) 1450-1200 BCE Generally on the chronology of the Aegean Bronze Age, see Warren and Hankey (1989), esp. 72 ff. Warren also provides a very useful summary of opinions on Thera and the LM Ib destructions:

15. See Pearson (1978, 1986 and 1992) and Barnes (1988)
16. See illustrations in *Nihon no Bijutsu* series published by Shibundō, series 6, #145, Kobayashi Tatsuo, *Jōmon dôki*. But the issue of cultural diffusion into prehistoric Japan likewise belongs to a separate study.
17. In her definition of a masculine aesthetic (primarily in literature), Marilyn French writes eloquently on domination which to men, "is divine, so to pursue it is noble, heroic, glorious. The material to be dominated is, essentially, nature... Feminism considers transcendence illusory or factitious and pursuit of power a fatally doomed enterprise, since it cannot ever be satisfied, and usually or always involves the destruction of vital qualities and even life itself. Domination is not divine but lethal to dominator and dominated. It harms the dominator by cutting him off from trust and mutuality, the foundations of friendship and love, the two primary values; it harms the dominated by forcing them into dependency, which precludes truth in relationships. Domination creates false forms of friendship (society) and love (conventional marriage) which mask power relations. And feminist art focuses on people as whole; the human is made up of body and emotion as well as mind and spirit; she is also part of a community, connected to others; and - on the broadest level - to nature in both positive and negative aspects." (1993) 69, 70.
18. Renfrew and Bahn (1991) 154 ff.
19. I do not imply here that the "Minoans" were necessarily matrilineal, as this area of enquiry lies well beyond my competence and must await the expertise of trained anthropologists. My interest is in the mindset that underlies the nature of Minoan relating (to their environment and to each other), which wrought a society that in its visual legacy differs so radically from those of its contemporaries. Indeed, there is evidence of at least occasional male rulership, though not perhaps exclusive male kingship. We know also that the principal deity was always female, and women were depicted in elegance and at leisure, sometimes in postures of authority and often as primary movers in ritual - as seen in the gold rings: Marinatos (1993) 141 ff, 184 ff - on priestesses. Men in positions of authority are, of course, also visible - a fact all too often passed over: Marinaatos (1993) 127 ff. Otherwise they are often shown in postures of adoration, in process of ritual offering, or, as in the vase from Aghia Triada, singing on the return from harvesting.
20. Intuition is a valuable human faculty that has been too poorly served by male-dominated academicism which places undue weight on quantifiable externals, often to the detrimental exclusion of living internal qualities like inspiration or intuition.
21. Verbal communication, Professor John Onians, Director, School of World Art Studies, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, during a conference in honour of Sir Ernst Gombrich on "The Nature of Chinese Painting" September, 1994.
22. Those with an especial focus on archaeology or historiography include, among others, Foley, H.P. ed., (1981). *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* London; Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt, eds., (1983) *Images of Women in Antiquity* London, Routledge; Gero, J.M. & Conkey, M.W., eds., (1991) *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory* Oxford; and Archer, L.J., Fischler, S. & Wyke, M. eds.. (1994) *Women in Ancient Societies: An illusion of the Night* Basingtoke, among others.
23. Including the memorable Goddess Remembered. (1993?) produced by Margaret Pettigrew as part of the *Women and Spirituality* series, National Film Board of Canada.
24. Unaware of the phenomenon and a stranger to gender issues, as well as being a student of Chinese and Japanese art, I was drawn quite unexpectedly into the current when, in 1984, I first visited the Sir Arthur Evans Room in the Ashmolean

Museum, Oxford, and saw the extraordinary "Kamareos II" wares. I was stunned by their beauty and irresistibly drawn to the culture that had produced them. By 1992, again quite independently, it occurred to me to organize an exhibition of Minoan Civilization for the National Museum of Natural Science in Taichung. The exhibition even in its planning stages has attracted undreamed of enthusiasm from around the world, and active participation in the project by preeminent figures including Harry Lange of London, Oscar-winning designer of *Star Wars*, *The Dark Crystal*, etc., and Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson, Gold Medalist of the American Architecture Association. The National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., has written a Letter of Intent expressing interest in hosting the exhibition even before brochures had been circulated to travel the exhibition around the world. The Board of Advisers include experienced archaeologists working in Greece, as well as ranking administrators of the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, and the American Museum of Natural History of New York City. To account for this spontaneous enthusiasm and support one can only surmise that the topic evidently touches a wellspring in our present consciousness and seems to fulfill a widely shared desire.

25. "'Child-sacrifice' seems a reasonable explanation for the remains of at least four children of between under-8 years up to 12 years in age, which were discovered in the ruins of a house at Knossos (destroyed in LMIB) and accompanied by numerous finds of a 'ritual' nature. The children had not merely been killed, but were further dismembered and the flesh and internal organs removed - perhaps for cooking purposes. See S. M. Wall, J. H. Musgrave, and P.M. Warren (1986) 333-88. It must be observed here that this is the single instance of child-sacrifice that has come to light thus far, and would appear to have been a desperate act performed to propitiate the natural forces at the time of the terrible catastrophe that destroyed the entire civilization. Also for adult sacrifice, see the circumstances surrounding the bodies found in the rural shrine of Anemospelia on Juktas - Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1991) 137 ff. Also Marinatos (1993) 114.
26. A very large collection of weapons (unfinished swords) was recovered from a cave site at Arkalochori, along with many signs of ritual activity. The cave was blocked by a fall of rock in the Neopalatial period. Spirou Marinatos (1935) 212 ff; Hiller (1984) 27 ff; and Marinatos (1993) 125.
27. The evidence of fortifications and defensive concerns in Prepalatial Crete is collected by S. Alexiou (1980) 9-22. A defensive wall of Protopalatial date at Mallia is reviewed by H. van Effenterre (1980) 253, 256, 365ff. A road and fort system has been recently researched by Greek scholars and archaeologists in East Crete - it belongs to the Proto- and probably Neopalatial periods (reference not published). Neopalatial or later evidence is also found at such sites as Petras near Siteia of large walls of potentially defensive nature, but the citadel mentality so obvious with the Mycenaean cannot be paralleled. The concerns for safety at the end of the Bronze Age and beyond are obvious: for discussion on some recently explored, see K. Norwicki (1994) 233-68.
28. "The Palace at Knossos is by far the largest palace of this period. Was it a kind of *primum inter paria* or was it the political administrative centre of the entire island, and did it also play the leading role in the domination of a large part of the Aegean area by Minoan Crete in this epoch (the New Palace era, ca. 1700-1450 BCE)?" see W. D. Niemeier, "Knossos in the New Palace Period (MMIII - LM IB)" in Evely, et al (1994), 87. Concerning evidence for this domination, see D. Hood, "A Minoan empire in the Aegean in the 16th and 15th centuries B.C.?" in R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (1984), 33-37; W.D.Niemeier (1986), "Creta, Egeo e Mediterraneo agli inizi del Bronzo Tardo", in M. Marazzi, S. Tusa and L. Vagnetti, eds., *Traffici micenei nel Mediterraneo*, Taranto, 2245-59; M.H. Wiener, "The isles of Crete? The Minoan thalassocracy revisited". in D.A. Hardy, C.G.Doumas, J.A. Sakellarakis, and P.M. Warren, eds. (1990), *Thera and the Aegean World III, vol I: Archaeology. Proceedings of the Third International Congress, Santorini, Greece... 1989*, 128-60.
29. That is, autocratic societies with a conspicuous lack in social equality like Pharaonic Egypt, Imperial Sumer, Dynastic Babylon, the Hittite Kingdom, etc., the Levant, etc.,

by then long-established as typical Bronze-Age societies where warfare and oppression were major facets of daily life in internal affairs and external relations. This is indicated by massive rampart-, wall- and palace- or pyramid-construction projects requiring enormous labour forces suggestive of oppression. Moreover, surviving images of carnage and bloodshed by the sword or bow and arrow, on foot or from horse-drawn chariots, images covering mountain sides, palace walls, stone reliefs, and steles both in situ and in major Western museums testify to the importance of killing in the lives of these ancient peoples. Portraits of kings are never without their personal weaponry, indicating that warfare or physical danger was a constant aspect of life, as we see in palace reliefs of Ashurnasirpal at Nimrud, stone relief of King Sargon II talking with an official, details of embossed bronze from the Balawat Gates dating from the reign of Shalmanesser III, or from Sumer the charging chariots inlaid in the Standard of Ur, the mass suicides by attendants, together with ox-drawn carts, to accompany their lord into the nether world (Reade, 1991, 43); and images of fighting and warfare that continued for three millennia to decorate Egyptian rulers' tombs (Aldred, 1980, 33ff), would indicate that Bronze Age technological advancement did not serve to upgrade the lives of people at large, but was exploited by the privileged few for domination and exploitation of the masses.

30. Cf. the archives of oracle-bone divinations as well as inscriptions found on many bronze vessels that together give us a fairly detailed view not only of society and warfare, but concerns of daily life including religious practices among the ruling classes of the Shang. The primal archival materials have been amply published by Academia Sinica, Taiwan and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.
31. For excavation report see Sun Shoudao, Guo Dashun (1986), 1-17. The head is H. 22.5 cm. At another site close by, a small naked female figurine was found, some 12 cm in overall height (with the right leg missing). She covers her belly with one hand, and is wearing an ankle boot on her left foot. For recovery of relatively intact stone-carved female statues see Tang Chi (1994) 46-51. It is by no means established that any of these were fertility Goddesses, related to the land or to bounty. Well illustrated reports of the figurine and deity are published by Kuangfu Shuju, Taipei (1994), (plates 74, 75, and 76)
32. The more common "supernatural route" to bountiful harvests in China in antiquity seems to have been the propitiation of the rain-bestowing Dragon. This mythical animal acquired form in a type of funerary "mosaic" created with pebble-insets, at a very early time, from at least the fourth millennium BCE. There seems little sympathy with notions of the chthonic fertility deities or with notions like "from earth to earth", "in death resurrection" favoured in agricultural societies in and to the east of the Mediterranean. See discussion in Chang (1990), 95-101.
33. For example, from Petsophas above Palaikastro: Rutkowski (1991) 57, pls. 45-46.
34. In this aspect the Chinese Goddess is a textbook opposite of the Western Goddess of Cernavoda (see below).
35. Contemporary feminist scholarship has become interested once more in the female body-Earth analogy, with many books and papers devoted to the subject. Page DuBois, among others has written persuasively to argue that current psychoanalytic theory is consistently ahistorical in its readings of other cultures. See Page DuBois (1988), *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women*. Chicago.
36. Alexiou (1969), 102 ff. See also Cotterell (1979), 162 ff.
37. Archaeological finds of the most rudimentary bronze artifacts date from the Zhengzhou period of the early 16th century BCE.
38. The earliest ceramics, newly uncovered in the 1970s, lying immediately beneath the stratum dating from the seventh millennium BCE to which Japanese archaeologists had given the name Jōmon I, caused great excitement, and an overhaul of the entire periodization, with the original Jōmon I becoming now Jōmon II, and so on upward the strata. The new Jōmon I ceramics, according to Japanese carbon-dating, range from the 7th down to the 11th millennium BCE, creating a remarkable gap in time-span with neighbouring Neolithic or Mesolithic societies.

(See *Nihon shi no bijutsu* §E•a?I©I§B", =N(Prehistoric Japanese Arts), 6 volumes) We must also account for the fact that Japanese archaeology is nearly 75 years older than those of China or Korea, which, too may account for the relative depth of Japan's stratigraphical excavations to date. That is, for the fact that Japan has been excavating more deeply into her past, reaching deeper levels. On the other hand, Western archaeological scientists have in private expressed serious reservations about Japanese laboratory techniques. But the debate remains as yet beneath the surface.

39. The spontaneous, instantaneous recognition of the Divine in unexpected places, in trees, in rocks, in open spaces, recognition that is unexpected and unplanned; the sanctification of white pebbled beaches, worship of the supreme deity, Amaterasu-no-ô-Kami or Shining Celestial Great Divinity or Sun Goddess in temples served by vestal virgins, the communication taking form in physical dancing and singing . (See *Kojiki* 712, *Record of Ancient Matters* which carries some of the creation myths) On the potency and mythic significance of dance, see Langer (1953,190ff). The direct, wordless body-movement in communication with natural elements is in stark contrast to celebrated inscriptions in oracular questionnaires addressed to ancestors, and would seem to me on the whole representative of the more spontaneous and natural, perhaps also more feminine, aspect of human consciousness.
40. This intriguing aspect, as well as the quintessential quality of emotionality in Japanese art has been a leitmotif in Joan Stanley-Baker (1984).
41. The Pangu myth appears remarkably late, around the third century CE, according to Dirk Bodde (Samuel Noah Kramer, 1961, 382). The dearth of creation myths from along the Yellow River deserves further study. Most Chinese creation myths seem to date from the Han dynasty. The Nüwa-Fuxi image does not appear in tomb or other decoration before emergence of the State of Chu, and may have entered from Southwest China. Pangu, too, seems to come from this rather cosmopolitan and expansive period. For enlightening studies of the archaeology of mythology - all more or less from a Western Eurocentric perspective, see Joseph Campbell (1959, 1968), Jaan Puhvel (1987) Henrietta McCall (1990), among others.
42. Interconnectedness is an irrefutable biological fact: the experience of total interconnectedness is learned at birth when the baby is first put to the breast. There is no sense of territoriality or boundary regarding proprietorship of the milk. Our first "lesson" is of the holistic, dynamic process where Mother's breast and Baby's mouth are interactive and indispensable terminals of a living cycle. I offer the above from personal experience. Let me also invoke other, published, academic authorities for readers requiring citation of experiences other than one's own for fear of possible subjectivity (which has remained an all-too feared facet of being alive). Alan Lomax (1968, 164-69; 1972, 234-39) found that cultures where women enjoyed high social status (usually the gathering ones versus agricultural ones involving intense cultivation - and sense of territory) have the most "integrated and cohesive" singing and dance style, "The singing in these societies is described as 'interlocked' or 'varied synchrony,' a contrapuntal unity in which everyone sings together yet independently, and there is no dominant part. ... The dance style is described as flowing, curved, successive, highly synchronous, and erotic, with multipart trunk action and accentuated hip, pelvis, and breast movements. What is remarkable about this is that all of these characteristics are positively correlated with the significant social participation of women." (Summarized in Lorraine, 1993, 46). Göttner-Abendroth's nine principles of matriarchal art "preclude any divisions of aesthetics into 'a formalist, elitist, socially effective art on one hand and a popular, widespread but socially vilified and outcast art on the other'." They are based essentially on interconnectedness, on "the ability to shape life and so change it, it is itself energy, life, a drive toward the aestheticization of society" (1986, 82-84, 88-92).
43. The Greek word for Nature h Fysis (physies) is rendered in the feminine form. Note that the adjective for natural is Fusikos (physikós), but in English "physical" has acquired a different meaning. The Latin *la natura* and German *die Natur* (or indeed

*Eigenschaft*) are also in the feminine. Similarly, earth, gh (ge),- the ancient Gaia (often rendered as Gháya), like the Latin terra or the Teutonic *Erde*, were perceived in the feminine. Thus the Western European mind can be described as conceiving of nature and earth, those environments that nurture and sustain, as feminine.

44. Even in a large space, as long as the major components like alcoves, windows and doors are kept in human proportion, the effect remains that of a smaller enclosure. This has been successfully accomplished in many contemporary civic buildings which seek not to awe but to welcome the visitor, and is best exemplified in the works of Arthur Erickson as in his supreme court in Vancouver, of the Canadian Chancery in Washington.
45. In the West, the feeling of dichotomy, of the beauty of God and the misery of mankind, or of our spiritual impoverishment, is keenly brought out in Gothic architecture in cathedrals that stretch skyward, often soaring up over three storeys. Moving ant-like in their cool and resonant silence engenders in us a sense of our own helplessness. More subtly, it induces in us as well a palpable sense of our distance - hence separation - from God. This architecture effectively throws the supplicant at the feet of the priests, the only human-sized beings accessible. The central message Jesus taught while sitting in close intimacy among his disciples beneath a tree, "the Kingdom of God is within" can hardly be part of psycho-physical experience when the Cathedral assumes patriarchal dominance in its commanding space, and pilgrims are made to feel they have "entered the house of God" by stepping inside, and once service is over, they are "leaving the house of God."
46. The Shishinden, or Purple Private Palace within the Dairi of the imperial palace complex in the ancient capital of Kyoto, is a wooden structure that still stands today, after restorations and some modernization.
47. The world's first full-length romantic novel, *Tale of Genji*, was written in the tenth century by a Japanese noble woman, Lady Murasaki Shikibu. In it to this day we recognize detailed revelations of the feminine worldview (as experienced and as expressed by both men and women). A useful general introduction to Japanese poetry in English remains Earl Miner (1969). A typical Heian love verse for the period:  
On her straw-mat bedding  
The Lady of the Bridge of Uji  
Spreads the moonlight out,  
And in the waiting autumn night  
She lies there in the darkening wind.  
(113, Poem by Teika (1162-1241) from the *Shinkokinshû*)
48. Gompertz, G. (1958).
49. A classic in the study of colour perception remains the work of Brent Berlin (1969). *Basic color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* Kay, Paul. But Berlin does not address the sensation of feminine or masculine consciousness in association with certain colours or colour-groupings in the way presented here.
50. "A smooth white surface can reflect things." "We speak of a 'black mirror'." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*. edited by G.E.M. Anscombe (1977), Berkeley and Los Angeles.
51. Here I refer to conditions in ordinary times of peace. During conditions of great stress, extraordinary violence and brutality may erupt, as the world has witnessed in the twentieth century. Such extremes of behaviour in the same people serves to confirm the polarity rather than dichotomy between *yin* and *yang*, feminine and masculine characteristics which are but perceptual and behavioural tendencies that cohabit the same individual consciousness, and serves to underscore the fact that it is not a matter of separate or distinct psyches being unique to one or the other gender, and for all time. The Japanese themselves have been keenly aware of masculine and feminine tendencies of their own cultural expressions, and have devised since the Heian era terms like *otoko-e* and *onna-e* meaning masculine painting and feminine painting, referring to subject matter and technique (Louisa

McDonald Read 1976). But Japanese art as a whole compared to Chinese art reflects a relative leaning toward the feminine, and in this paper I refer only to the most "feminine" of Japanese art expressions, that is, to aesthetics engendered by courtly Heian aristocrats, and periodically resurrected in later art, and even discernible immediately beneath the surface of much of contemporary art.

52. All three works are copiously published with brilliant reproductions in many Japanese publications under their respective titles, in Japanese, and fragments are reproduced in English language works, among which see J. Stanley-Baker, (1984), which illustrates a scene from the *Tale of Genji* (pl. 64), the *Heike-Nôgyô* (pl. 65) and, in black and white, *onnade* calligraphy (pl. 68, 69). See also Kurata & Tamura (1987) with lavish illustrations of different versions of the illustrated Lotus sūtra. For the Thirty-Six poets collation see Kinoshita Masao in the Shibundô series *Nihon no Bijutsu* #168 (Shôwa 55), *Senjûrokuninkashû* which illustrates some of the leaves in colour. The *Tale of Genji* is massive illustrated in Tokugawa Museum publications, also.
53. Cotterell, 86
54. Shaw (1971) 74. Footnote 4 - for summary of opinions of himself, Graham and Preziosi concerning Minoan unit of measurement and planning techniques.
55. Recently fragments have been found in some of the southeastern coastal sites. See note 27.
56. Assurance of continued agricultural surplus is a result of a particular conjunction in Crete of geographical and climatic conditions which favoured the production of olives, grains, and honey on that island. This "state of Grace" is all too rare in other parts of the world, necessitating plunder and warfare, a fascinating topic that deserves a separate discussion.
57. "A Mycenaean palace in its heyday would in many superficial respects have resembled its Cretan counterpart, but there were certain fundamental differences. In the first place, Mycenaean palaces were heavily fortified with circuit walls of enormous stones, whereas Cretan palaces were unfortified. In the second place, Mycenaean palaces were designed on a fairly rigid plan, based on one or more units known to archaeologists as the megaron, whereas Cretan palaces possessed a much more elastic layout." (Higgins, 1981, 82).
58. At Zakros connection between religious and economic activities is shown in the West Wing of palace which contained the central shrine, with a 'Lustral Basin', a treasury, an archive, etc., also a series of magazines and workshops both on the ground floor and the upper storey. And a banquet hall with a great number of jugs, cups and amphorae, and a Kitchen. H. Reusch's theory is that the priestess played the role of the goddess, sitting on the throne and flanked by griffins (Reusch, 1958)." Both Marinatos (1985) "Function and Interpretation of the Thera Frescoes" (BCH Supplement XI, 219-230), and Robin Hägg's "Pictorial Programmes in Minoan Palaces and Villas" (idem, 209-217) persuasively argue that the frescoes were not merely decorative but that they fulfilled a definite function relating *directly*, that is physically, to activities that took place within them, with indications of where celebrants were to stand, to place the offerings, etc. I.e. that in part the painting took the place of actual furnishings. The activities relate to fertility, germination, economy (industrial activity of saffron-gathering) etc. Although the close observation and analysis are most admirable, I find the implication that *each* single painted room was restricted to a specific ritual incommensurate with the interflowing, integration of Minoan space on the one hand, the in painting the integrative, fusing methods preferred in the deployment of forms in space. In Chinese and Japanese wall decoration, religious or secular, it has since the earliest antiquity been the inspiration, the metaphor or association which engendered the particular feelings of the spaces - but I know of no instance where a room is painted with the exact activities that took place in it. Rather, I would suggest, as in the Chinese love of painting rugged northern rocky mountains or soft southern hills bathed in lake-side mists, or the Heian practice of *meishô-e* painting which were evocations - not direct "photo-copies" - of famous sights celebrated in landscape poetry, the idea was simply to enhance the poetic nostalgia inspired by

the poem or the regional flavour. Figure paintings of historical figures, real or fictitious, as well, served to produce a sombre or poetic mood - but did not confine the rooms to particular juridical or poetic activities. But this fascinating subject may be developed further in another study.

59. We can still witness ubiquitous divinity-consciousness in modern ashramic life - as well as in many monastic communities, Buddhist or Catholic - today. In the ashrams, for example, this is most prominent: there are, as in Minoan settlements where large groups of lay people live and work for months and often years at a time. Places for the creation of crafts and land for agriculture are all tended by a few clerics together with many lay people, working and worshipping in a communal way. Group meditation and prayer at certain times of day aside, individuals or groups go off to till the land, work the fields, press the grapes, turn the lathe, etc., being at the same time ever-mindful of their prayers or meditation. The communities subsist by trading, selling their produce or crafts. They also engage in charitable works such as setting up hospitals, or dispatching mobile clinics to isolated rural areas. While community members come from disparate social and economic backgrounds, in the ashram they are equal, and united in their common spiritual journey. Buddhist and Christian monastic communities, while perhaps not so large, conform on the whole to the same spirit.
60. In the century since the first excavations, no single tomb has come to light of a powerful king or ruler such as that of China's First Emperor, Qinshihuang, or even of powerful imperial relatives such as the rock-cut mausolea of the "jade suits" belonging to the Prince Liu Sheng and his consort Dou Wan uncovered at Mancheng in Hebei Province. Minoan burials were simple and without ostentation in crypts, mountain sanctuaries or in rounded *tholos* tombs with ritual areas attached. This indicates that there was, as in China, worship of the dead, but the Minoans would later gather the bones for cleaning and final rest, collectively, in communal earthen *larnakes* lidded tub-like sarcophagi.
61. See Doumas (1992) for the most recent and large-scale reproductions from Thera; Marinatos (1993) and Morgan (1988). For Knossos, the several articles (eg 1968) and unpublished thesis of Cameron can be mined. Aegean-wide considerations on the subject will include Immerwahr (1990).
62. See Doumas (1992), and the many books on the Palace of Knossos.
63. See Doumas (1992).
64. For example: Amnissos (room 7) - Immerwahr (1990) 179 ff; Aghia Triadha (room 14) - *ibid.* 180; and Knossos, House of Frescoes (rooms D-F) - *ibid.* 170.
65. Believed to have been obtained from trade or gift-exchange with Egypt.
66. Marinatos (1993) 5 ff for equipment and *passim*; and 193 ff for something on the ubiquitous crocus. One of the chief properties of saffron pollen is the easing of menstrual pain.
67. See the megalithic tumuli of the Kofun period, typified with golden crowns, bronze swords and mirrors, marking the arrival of peoples who ruled with concentrated power and wealth.
68. EG. As on the Chieftain cup from Aghia Triadha, Hood (1978) 144, fig. 137; or the Master impression sealing from Chania, Hallager (1985) - both males.
69. On Kamares ware, see Walberg (1976); and generally on Minoan pottery Betancourt (1985).
70. Discussing the tendency of dividing into separate registers the painted decor on vessels, Higgins remarks, "The Mycenaean love of zoning was probably never really sympathetic to the more exuberant and less disciplined Cretan spirit." (Higgins, 1981, 117)
71. My argument is that it takes flexibility, adaptability, resilience (water-like), to bend over 90-degree angles.
72. It is not possible to discuss colours as they were at the time, and we must take into account the deterioration and general fading of most colours, whilst the Thera frescoes may be considered more reliable. On the whole they confirm impressions highlighted by Evans in the early century, although his restorations had tended to give the colours more dramatic contrast, when Thera frescoes indicate a far closer

colour-harmony, commensurate with my definition of the *yin* or feminine aspect of consciousness.

73. See note 59.

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