"Rembrandt from the first steps of his activity surpasses the limits of a certain local significance and his entire creativeness has a pan-human aspect. The grim tragedy of his life loses its routine and historical meaning and becomes, like the tragedy of all great martyrs, a universal symbol. At the same time the symbolism of the art and life of Rembrandt carries a fatal character. Everything that happened to him—had to come, according to some higher laws. The horror of his life acquires a grandiose beauty precisely owing to its enormous scope. This is a true Golgotha, a cross, unbearable for average people; a test, for which only Great Ones are chosen.

"Studying his tragedy, which is so logical in all its details, one realizes its inner harmony. Witnessing the awful finale of Rembrandt’s life, when one sees him as an ailing old man, forgotten by every body, indulging in wine, living in deep poverty, one shudders, but yet understands that such an end was the most majestic, the most dignified for a genius. From the point of view of Highest Justice—it was more worthy and beautiful than the plague of the centenarian Croesus or the parting of Rubens from his beautiful wife or the oversatiety of Velasquez with pompous court functions. Rembrandt was glorified by the crown of martyrs and, contrary to reason, one sees in this the highest reward."

Thus the eminent artist and art critic, Alexander Benois, describes the apotheosis of Rembrandt’s life in his essays. Alexander Benois found convincing characteristics for many artists but this criterion of the life of Rembrandt, of the martyr’s wreath, of beauty contrary to reason, proves his great understanding. "Contrary to reason"—this simple convincing expression no doubt seems to many to be out of place and ill-fitting. The weary last physical days of Rembrandt or Franz Hals (who closed his life story as a watchman in an alms-house) may appear to many average minds an unworthy end.

The knighthood of Van Dyke at the Court with its luxurious garments will no doubt seem a more befitting consummation of the life of a great artist. But behind this ephemeral apotheosis, one may distinguish something far more great, the glimmer of which is so intensely saturated that not every eye can conceive it. Precisely in the same way, an electric spark becomes imperceptible to the human eye in its greatest tension.

Also if you will try, to substitute the tragically majestic fate of Leonardo da Vinci for the gorgeous fairy-like end of Raphael, then again the highest harmony will be destroyed. Even the fact that the forgotten grave of Leonardo near the monastery of St. Florentine has forever been levelled with the ground, even this gesture of fate remained in the style of the great artist.

Beethoven in his symphony "Eroica" deplored the fate of the consul Napoleon, but if instead of the tragical end, one would imagine the picture of a gradual decay of the Emperor, then the symphony would have lost all its grandeur.

And the great Boehme!—A shoemaker!

During a discussion of the fate of John of Arc, someone tried to visualize what final chord would have been the most glorious finale for the triumphant warrior virgin. Many suggestions were advanced and one even
Joan of Arc could have “peacefully” remained in her village as an esteemed prophetess and healer. She could have concluded her life as venerated abbess or just as a respectable citizen. To everything the path was open. But the Great Law expressed through her one more testimony of truth. The flame of her heart, the fire of the pyre—this flaming crown was far above all common laws. It was quite beyond human imagination.

People speak much about fate. But from what links is so-called fate forged? From a peaceful herd to a devouring fire. From the highest welfare to the greatest test by poverty. And by what human definitions can this Highest Plan be expressed? One cannot find words to express them, but one can feel them with one’s heart. And one must acquaint oneself with such subtle feelings because through them the new world is perceived.

Confucius, who was misunderstood and persecuted ordained: “When we study manifestations, we can achieve knowledge; when we reach knowledge, we acquire goodwill; when we reach goodwill the heart is purified and man becomes cultural, order reigns in his home; order reigns in his country; when order reigns in every country, then peace will be attained in the whole world.”

This also looks like an easy path. From everyday routine to the peace of the whole world. In this path, which looks so easy and obvious is expressed the highest universal Law, which is not accessible to many. This law hints by some superhuman language at predestined fate. Every man, every member of the human family carries the responsibility for the peace of the whole world. No one has the right to refuse the duty of the goodwill. No one has the right to burn Joan of Arc at the stake? Who has the right to demean Rembrandt? In fatee, which seem complicated to the earthly eye,