

# CREATIVITY AND TAOISM

MONIQUE KUFFER | MINNEAPOLIS | APRIL 15, 1981

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPOSE A FEW IDEAS ABOUT CREATIVITY AND TAOISM. THE MORE I READ, UNDERSTAND, PRACTICE THE EASTERN THOUGHTS (MACROBIOTICS, HOLISTIC HEALTH, YOGA), THE MORE I SEE THEM AS COMPLETE, ALL EMBRACING, UNIVERSAL, AND ALSO THE MORE I UNDERSTAND MY CULTURAL HERITAGE, ITS COMPLEXITY, OBSCURITY, CONTRADICTIONS. TO GET AWAY FROM ONE'S CULTURE IS ALSO TO UNDERSTAND IT BETTER.

CHANG CHUNG-YUAN PRESENTS IN HIS BOOK " CREATIVITY AND TAOISM " A CLEAR DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TAOISM. HE CONFIRMS THE IDEA OF A HIGHER PURPOSE OF ART. THE ARTIST SEARCHES FOR THE NONBEING OR REALITY WHICH WILL BENEFIT HIM/HER AS WOULD MEDITATION IF HE/SHE SUCCEEDS.

IT IS IN THIS SEARCH (IN TAO, OR HOWEVER DEFINED IN THE WEST) THAT I FIND THE VALIDITY OF ART.

TAO IS INVISIBLE AND UNFATHOMABLE, BUT IT IS THROUGH ITS MANIFESTATIONS THAT ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED. THIS ULTIMATE IS CREATIVITY, CREATIVITY IS TAO; AND SO TO EXPLAIN CREATIVITY IS A VERBAL INCONVENIENCE. ACTUAL CREATIVITY REQUIRES NO INTELLECTUAL EXPLANATION IN TERMS OF PROCESS; IT IS, RATHER, A MERE INTUITIVE REFLECTION OF THINGS.

DUCHAMP SPEAKS OF THE ARTIST BEING THE MEDIA; ALL HIS/HER DECISIONS IN THE ARTISTIC EXECUTION OF THE

WORK REST WITH PURE INTUITION. -NO-METHOD-

JACQUES MARITAIN POINTS OUT THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORIENTAL AND OCCIDENTAL ART: THE FORMER BEING INTENT ON OBJECTIVITY, THE LATTER ON SUBJECTIVITY. HOWEVER, AT THE ROOT OF THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY, THERE IS A COMMON EXPERIENCE, WITHOUT PARALLEL IN LOGICAL REASON, BY MEANS OF WHICH OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY ARE OBSCURELY GRASPED TOGETHER.

DUCHAMP'S ATTITUDE SEEMS VERY EXTREME; IN SUCH VIEW POINT, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR LEARNING METHODS, SCHOOLS OF ART. IS THERE EVEN A PLACE FOR CERTAIN FORMS OF ART SUCH AS SELF-PORTRAITS?

THE DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE ART IS OF IMPORTANCE. OUR CULTURE'S EMPHASIS IS ON INDIVIDUALITY; LITTLE CARE IS GIVEN TO THE WHOLE OR CONTEXT. IT IS A PERSON'S EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, UNAFFECTED BY THE EXTERNAL WORLD, WHICH GOVERN.

FREUD HAS AMPLIFIED THIS SEPARATION, WHICH IS A SEPARATION FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS, WHICH HE REGARDS AS A MONSTER, A WORLD OF INSTINCTS. HIS CONCEPT OF SUBLIMATION IS A PROCESS THAT FREES MAN FROM THE MONSTRUOSITIES OF THE UNCONSCIOUS. WITH HIS SEXUAL FIXATION (?), HE EXPLAINS CREATIVITY, SUBLIMATION AS HE CHANGE OF THE INSTINCT, LIBIDO, WHICH FROM SEXUAL BECOMES CULTURALLY CREATIVE.

JUNG HAS GIVEN ALL ITS VALUE TO THE UNCONSCIOUS. PSYCHOLOGICALLY SPEAKING IT REFERS TO REALITY AS SPIRITUAL COURT. TO REACH THE DEPTH OF THE UNCONSCIOUS MEANS TO REVEAL THE POTENTIALITIES OF

## THE SPIRITUAL COURT.

THE TAOIST SEES THE EGO AS A HARD CORE, WHICH CAN BE BROKEN ONLY BY THE ENERGY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS, WHICH PENETRATES IT, TURNS IT INSIDE OUT. FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS OR LIGHT EMANATES. THIS DERIVATION OF LIGHT FROM THE DEPTH OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IS NOT AN ANALYTICAL PROCESS. LOGICAL UNDERSTANDING IS FOREIGN TO IT.

TAO IS THE ONTOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE BY WHICH SUBJECTIVE REALITY ARE FUSED INTO ONE.

ACCORDING TO TAOISM, THERE ARE TWO ROUTES LEADING TO ENLIGHTENMENT: MING OR ONTOLOGICAL INSIGHT, CHING OR QUIESCENCE. SYMPATHY, CREATIVITY AND PEACE DEAL WITH MING. ONE CONCEPT OF SYMPATHY WAS THE CONFUCIANIST IDEAL OF FELLOW-FEELING, PROCEEDING FROM THE SELF TO THE SELVES OF OTHERS. IT IS THE PROCESS OF EXPENSION FROM THE EGOCENTRIC CONSCIOUSNESS TO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ONE'S FELLOW MEN. THE INDIVIDUAL EXPANDED HIS LOVE IN GRADATED QUANTITIES, ULTIMATELY EMBRACING THE "TEN THOUSAND THINGS". THIS SYMPATHY IS BASED ON RATIONAL DISCRIMINATION AND DIFFERENTIATION. IT IS A CONCEPT OF DUTY, "OUGHT TO", MORALS. THE NATURE OF THE GREAT SYMPATHY ACCORDING TO TAOISM, IS AN INTUITIVE AND IMMEDIATE PATH BY MEANS OF NONDIFFERENTIATION AND NONDISCRIMINATION. THE UNIFICATION OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT, THE KNOWER AND THE KNOWN IS ACHIEVED BY IMMEDIATE INTERACTION. THIS PATH INTO THE REALM OF NONBEING STRESSES INTUITION, PRAJNA OR SUDDEN ENLIGHTENMENT. INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE IS A PRIVATE AWARENESS OF ONE'S INNERMOST BEING. IT IS PURE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH DIRECT, PRIMITIVE

PENETRATION.

IT MANIFESTS ITSELF BY THE INTERFUSION AND INTERPENETRATION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSE AND ALL THINGS.

CREATIVITY IS SAID TO BE TAO. IT IS AN INTUITIVE REFLECTION OF THINGS. THE CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY IS OF SELF-REALIZATION, IT REQUIRES NO INSTRUMENTALITY TO EFFECT ITS PROCESSES. SYMPATHY AND CREATIVITY MOVE TOGETHER. SYMPATHY MOVES FROM ALL TO ONE, CREATIVITY MOVES FROM ONE TO ALL. WITHOUT SYMPATHY THERE IS NO GROUND OF POTENTIALITY TO SUPPORT CREATIVITY. WITHOUT CREATIVITY THERE IS NO MEANS OF ACTUALITY TO REVEAL SYMPATHY.

PEACE-ONLY WHEN THE ABSOLUTE REALITY IMPRESSES ITSELF UPON OUR DAILY LIFE IN A LIVELY MANNER - THAT IS, THROUGH OUR ACTIVITIES - THAT OUR DAILY LIFE GAINS ITS REAL VALUE.

THE ARTIST REPRODUCE AN ATMOSPHERE FROM WITHIN, HE/SHE IS SAID TO HAVE LIBERATED HIM/HER BY ENTERING INTO THIS RARER ATMOSPHERE. SO IT IS TRUE OF THE GENUINE ADMIRER OF THE WORK.

THE HIGHEST QUALITY WORKS ARE PRODUCED WITH THE PERSONAL ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE AND THE ONTOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE. SUCH WORK IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE UNDERLYING HARMONY, TAO. THIS EXPERIENCE OF NO-THOUGHT LEADS TO THE INTERFUSION OF SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE REALITY. THE ARTIST WHO HAS REACHED THIS STATE OF ONENESS CAN PRODUCE BUT A BYPRODUCT OF THIS STATE.

THE TRUE ARTIST IS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE LIKENESS OF FORM, BUT AIMS AT BRINGING FORTH THE RYTHM THAT PULSATE WITHIN IT, THEN THAT IS CARRIED BEYOND TO THE BEHOLDER.

PLATO TALKS OF THE " ARTIST " AS AN IMITATOR, SOMEONE WHO PRETENDS TO KNOW ALL THINGS WHEN HE/SHE IS UNABLE TO ANALYZE THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE AND IMITATION. THE REAL ARTIST WOULD BE INTERESTED IN REALITIES AND NOT IN IMITATIONS.

ART IS NOT MERE TECHNIQUE OR CRAFT. COLLINGWOOD HAS DEFINED ART AS THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION; HE DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN ART AND CRAFT. CRAFT HAS AN AIM; IT IS ALWAYS CONCEIVED IN GENERAL TERMS WITH CHARACTERISTICS THAT COULD BE SHARED AND REPEATED. CRAFT IMPLIES A MEAN TO AN END; IT IS A PLANNED ACTIVITY WHICH PRODUCES A WORK OF A CERTAIN KIND AND OF NO OTHER; IT IS THE GENERALIZATION OF AN OBJECT, A TYPICAL REPRESENTATION.

AN ART WORK HAS A CONTENT; ITS REALITY IS SELF-DISCOVERY, GROWTH. THERE IS MUCH CONFUSION BETWEEN ART AND CRAFT, TECHNIQUE, DISCHARGE OF NEGATIVE ENERGIES, THERAPY, ENTERTAINMENT.

THE PURPOSE OF ART MAKING IS THE REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT. WHEN THE SPIRIT IS NOT REVEALED IN THE FORM, WHAT IS CARRIED BY THE FORM IS NOT IN ACTION. WHAT IS IN MOTION IS REVEALED THROUGH FORM, BUT IS ITSELF NOT THE FORM. WHEN SPIRIT IS NOT IN MOTION, IT IS THE UNREVEALED REALITY IN THE FORM; WHEN IN MOTION, IT VIBRATES IN THE VISION OF THE BEHOLDER. IN A WORK OF ART, THE SPIRIT IS THAT WHICH IS IN THE FORM, WHICH GOES BEYOND IT TO THE BEHOLDER.

IT IS WITH THE REALIZATION OF SPIRITUAL REALITY THAT EXPRESSION IS REALIZED. WITH THIS REALIZATION THE ART MEDIA IS NOT ANYMORE LIMITED, IT DOES NOT IMPOSES ANY CONSCIOUS LIMITATION. ALL MEASUREMENTS AND RULES ARE TRANSCENDED WHEN THE ARTIST HAS GAINED INNER, DEEP FREEDOM. THE MEDIA BECOMES THE CREATIVE AGENT FOR ALL FORMS. - NO-METHOD -

OUR INSISTENCE ON LEARNING TECHNIQUES, METHODS SEEMS PARADOXICAL. EVEN THOUGH THE TECHNICAL ABILITY IS IMPORTANT, IT WILL NOT TRANSCEND ITSELF WITHOUT AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSE OF THE ART AND A SEARCH FOR SUCH REALITY.

CHWANG TZU SAID: " HEAVEN AND EARTH AND I LIVE TOGETHER, AND ALL THINGS AND I ARE ONE ". THIS UNITY IN MULTIPLICITY IS INVISIBLE AND ITS EMERGENCE IS NOT INTENTIONAL BUT NATURAL AND SPONTANEOUS. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNITY RESTS UPON THE FACT THAT INFINITE POTENTIALITY IS MANIFEST IN PARTICULARITY. THIS POTENTIALITY OF UNIVERSALITY ARE BEYOND THE CAPACITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL CREATING. THE UNITY WITHIN PARTICULARITIES ARE ONE AND THE SAME. CHANGELESS WITHIN THE EVER-CHANGING. ALSO NAMED NONBEING AND REALITY.