RUNNING AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A PAINTER

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis deals with an examination of different forces which have had both a positive and a negative effect on the evolution of my art. It is based on my experience, on my seeing and my understanding of these forces.

In the first part I present a description of my personal development as a painter. It is an attempt to grasp my roots, to grasp the significance that different experiences had on my personal growth. I describe my first visual impressions in childhood, my first attempts to paint, the dilemma between my inner needs and the outher requirements imposed by school systems and society; the absurdity of political justification; the origins of visual expression of content, of meaning; the psychological implication of immigration, the constant conflict between myself and the institutions, between new rules and creativity; and the connection between athletic training and painting.

In the second part I examine Jackson Pollock's painting "Autumn Rhythm" and his philosophy of art.

The third part deals with important turning points during my studies: becoming acquainted with the use of willpower by shammans and sorcerers, and discovering the unconscious as presented by alchemy and ESP research. I also describe my discovery of the unconscious through reading of Freud and Jung and its implications for my work. In the end I investigate the problems of personality as seen by Jung, and the theory of human motivation of Maslow with his special emphasis on self-actualization and "peak experiences."

In the conclusion I examine cultural implications in conflict with creativity in different cultural settings, the functioning of cultural change as a driving force in creativity and the role of unconscious.

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Chapter I

Running as Seen Through the Eyes of a Painter

This thesis is autobiographical in nature. It tells the story of my becoming an artist, a task at once easy and difficult; easy because I was able to draw on my own experience, and difficult, because to survey one's own life objectively is a very hard thing to do. A lot of reading had to be done to enable me to try to understand who I am and why I am that way. Writings of psychologists, anthropologists, and philosophers helped me gain insight into the workings of creative minds, but perhaps the most illuminating accounts came from the artists themselves.

What I am offering to the reader on the following pages is an attempt to describe how culture may both help an artist to grow or to stifle his growth. This is not a full answer to the riddle, which every creative personality is. Culture is just one of many facts of life that has to do with an artist's growth, with his becoming.

I was born and raised in Czechoslovakia, in a small town, Mutěnice, which is a center of a wine growing region bordering with south-western Slovakia, and is for that reason called "Slovácko." It is a region where the two Czechoslovakian languages blend, where spirited gipsy tunes make a great part of folk music and where rich folk ornamentation enhances many products of material culture. The people in Southern Moravia preserved and

developed ancient cultural heritage, and the esthetic effect of its values reached incomparable heights.

I grew up in a small house whose walls had to be whitewashed every year or two to do away with the effects of a wood and coal burning stove that was used for cooking and heating. This was my mother's work, and she not only white-washed the walls but, with the help of a special roller, covered them with colored pattern, as was the custom in that region.

She had a great love for colors and would do more than was necessary. Above the lines drawn on all four walls about a foot from the ceiling, she would paint bright floral patterns that were of a greater scale than the overall pattern covering the walls. They would stand out nicely against the white background. The colors never clashed, my mother had a natural feeling for color value and color hue. And I have to add that the floor was made of tiles of the color of red burnt bricks. The whole place breathed with the spirit of the region, renown for its brightness of color.

And this was not my only encounter with colors that had a great effect on me as a child. I remember the religious festivities, when young and old would dress up in their national garb of bright color designs on white cotton or muslin. Add to it the fresh green of the large church garden where people would gather for a little talk after the mass or merely to show off a new piece of clothing they themselves had embroidered. Picture it all bathed in a bright sunshine of a summer aftrnoon when the sky is high and azure blue and you have got an image full of life and joy. Once, as a child, I got literally sick on such an occasion; that is, my eyes hurt from all that brightness.

In my native town lived a realist painter who painted outdoors. He was always surrounded by a group of kids from the vicinity who watched

in awe how the white canvas was gradually transformed into a picture.

I used to spend hours at a time watching the scene in front of me appear in duplicate on the canvas. It was like watching a magic show where one was shown all the tricks in slow motion. By the time I reached Grade Five, I was determined to paint by myself. I reasoned that if he could paint what he saw in front of him, I should be able to do the same.

My savings were enough to buy me a set of tempera colors and a few small canvases stretched on cardboard. Then I set out to paint. I still remember my frustrations at the beginning; painting was not as easy as it seemed while watching somebody else doing it. I was never satisfied with my own pictures, they never seemed to look quite like the real thing. However, I did not give up, I kept at it and made a number of paintings.

About a year later, a friend of my father was visiting us and I showed him my creations. I do not think he found them so impressive but rather wanted to encourage me to continue and he gave me a one hundred crown bill to buy myself more materials for painting. Of course I knew right away how to spend it and in a few days I was pedaling to Brno City, a 60 kilometre distance, to buy myself oil colors just like real painters have. My cousin, living in that city, helped me to choose the merchandise. He generously dipped into his own pocket so that I would not have to return some of the goods that I rather greedily clutched in my hands. It was also his money that paid for the train ticket back home because I was so exhausted I could not use my bike.

From then on I worked very hard, I learned how to make gesso, how to stretch a canvas, and many a day I could be seen outdoors painting. People who passed by would stop and talk to me, and I learned that each of them saw things differently. These were my first encounters with criticism.

These differing views helped me to feel free to manipulate objects somewhat, to put them in places where, I felt, they fit better rather than where they were in reality.

As the months and years went by, my interest in art grew. In the nearest city, Hodonín, close to the railway station, was a gallery, the first one I went to visit as a young boy. It harbored a permanent exhibition of paintings by an impressionist painter Jože Úprka whose colors were so typical of that region. I fell in love with that place and every time I went to Hodonín I would make another round of the gallery.

The waiting room was a somber place with wooden walls and black wooden floor and one would not want to stay inside if it were not for the few paintings decorating the walls. One of them I especially loved, "Early Morning in the Woods" by Julius Mařák, a 19th century Czech romantic painter.

It spoke to me in a special way, for many-a-time I rode through the woods with my father early in the morning when the sun was just rising and the dew glistened on the leaves and in the grass.

A few times I tried to paint from memory a similar picture, not summer, but early autumn. The sun's rays, no longer warm, were finding their way through a shroud of fog, and the darkened green, with the dark color of the soil seemed eternally damp. The pregnant restfulness of summer gave way to a melancholic feeling, which, as a teenager, touched me most deeply.

I think part of the reason I was not successful in capturing this gloomy side of autumn in spite of its appeal to me, was my tendency to use bright colors. I was too much a son of my mother, too much a son of my culture.

I remember being much more successful with my pictures of vineyards, which, in autumn turn into a mixture of red, bright yellow, and darkened

green against the ochre color of the soil. I have to confess, however, that sometimes my brushes lay idle because I was overexcited by all that color and light (the vineyards are growing on the southern slopes of hills so as to be exposed to the sun for the better part of day). All I could do was to walk around and just enjoy the spectacle like an intoxicated man who is content to be and has no desire to do anything.

When I reached the age of fifteen, I went to study at the School of Industrial Arts (it was a school of Applied Arts--a type of Bauhaus) for four years. We studied drawing, painting, and hand lettering. We also attended metal, paper, and wood workshops. The last two years the studies were more geared to our specialization and subjects such as Professional Design, Window Dressing, Display, Technology of Materials, and Photography were added.

Education is a tool that is used by the government to spread and to foster its ideology and so both the subject matter and the teaching methods serve this same purpose. Since the socialist ideals are ideals of distant future and do not offer instant gratification, the socialist system needs to bring up people who would popularize these ideals--people capable of thinking of the good of others before themselves, servants of socialism. Individualism is considered a sin. Creative people who are by nature rebels against an established order are not desirable.

The first two years of the four-year program were especially difficult. One and only one way of seeing and thinking was almost entirely controlled from the outside, manipulated by the teachers who had no other choice but to teach what the curriculum, set forth by the government, required. No room was allowed for freedom to experiment, create, imagine. I remember drawing the same thing over and over again for a full half

a year. We were slowly being convinced, through hours of drill, that faithfullness to reality is a quality superior to any other.

Some students soon became experts in the realistic method of drawing and painting. I used to be constantly reminded of fantasizing too much and was eternally beginning a-fresh. What I learned above all was to doubt my own judgment.

Loss of self-confidence was a general phenomenon and it became apparent during the second part of the program. Twice a year we were then assigned an independent project in all our studio classes to evaluate the past semester. Except for a few suggestions of themes, that we could but were not obliged to use, we were given no other specifications. Those same students who excelled in regular drawing and painting classes were completely helpless in front of such a task, so used were they to merely following instructions or copying from reality.

These assignments were a welcome opportunity for me to give a free reign to my fantasizing for which I had been constanly chastized. Luckily they were judged by a special committee to whom the author remained anonymous and so there was no room for prejudice.

Socialist Realism was the only style we were exposed to. Anything else we were shown was carefully chosen to somehow fit the definition of this style. The word socialist describes the content of such an art. Socialist reality is not necessarily what is true; it has more to do with ideal future. The subject matter of Socialist Realism is "workers," preferably with happy, smiling faces, since, supposedly, in socialism work is a source of joy and happiness. I suspect a lot of optimism in pictures is needed to compensate for the dreary reality and sustain hope for better times to come.

Socialist Realism was also stressed in our Art History classes. In-

depth study of individual paintings was out of the question. Many-a-time there was nothing profound about paintings depicting battlefields, communist meetings, or leaders such as Lenin, Stalin, Marx, etc. A lot of it was kitch—a gimmicky kind of art, such as the Nazis used to use in Hitler's time for propaganda purposes because it was easily understood by large masses.

Besides Socialist Realism, art of the distant past and the Middle Ages was stressed; the recent past was studied less. Russian realist artists such as Repin, Shishkin, etc. were pointed out but their art was superficially understood.

Our Art History classes ended with the Impressionists. The word "expressionism" was avoided. To describe, for example, Vincent Van Gogh's paintings, the words "special kind of Impressionism" were used.

Our books offered a very superficial overview of art through history. It seems the only criterion for selection was the content of the pictures. Realist dipictions of landscapes, pictures with themes taken out life of poor, pictures in some way critical of the ruler, all of these were described in superlatives while the attitude towards religious art was condescending.

Contemporary modern art was denounced as decadent, mainly because it was associated with the West. Some names were mentioned but that was as far as the book would go. For example, Picasso was mentioned for his Guernica and his picture of a white dove--symbol of peace. Otherwise contemporary art was considered art for art's sake, art addressed to a chosen few who could understand it, rather than the masses. And that was reason enough for not studying it.

I particularly remember Vassily Kandinsky whom our lecturer dismissed

as an eccentric for his attempt to associate colors with sound. I could not get this idea out of my head, and wanting to find out more about such an interesting theory, I went to the library to look him up.

My search did not bring much fruit; all I could find were a few colored reproductions of his work. These were better than the black and white ones we were shown at school but they did not bring me any closer to understanding how color and sound work. Nevertheless, I enjoyed his colors.

Only a little more than a year later I had an experience which, I think, was very valuable in helping me understand Kandinsky's ideas when I got to read them years later. Every city, town, and village in Czechoslovakia has loudspeakers which are used to broadcast local news and sometimes music. In my town, classical music was often broadcast for several hours. I especially liked to hear it when I painted outdoors. Once I was thus working outside while music was being played. I do not remember what it was, probably one of my favourites: a piece by Handel, or Mozart, or a piece of Baroque music.

The music sounded distorted and far away. It felt as if it were part of nature—like the wind that sometimes played gently with my hair or fought for possession of my canvas at other times. It helped to put me in a special state of mind when I no longer felt as an outsider. There was a feeling of immediacy, I and my palette merged with the landscape. I saw colors as I had never seen them before; they were inseparable, all blended together. It was not just a dark brown trunk of a tree but also ochre with a bit of the blue of the sky, orange and red of the sun. Even green was not a completely local color; it was cool bluish and purple green mixed with dark earthy colors which I always liked for their modesty. I had great difficulty mixing it. And there was also the radiant white of lime painted houses mixed with

hundreds of hues of red of their tilted roofs.

It was an experience no classroom or studio can ever offer. Nature taught me more about colors than school had done. When the weather or seasons changed, it was as if Nature was bidding me to change and experiment with her.

Up till now I have been saying a lot of negative things about my high school years. However, I think any experience in life is worth having. Although our art experience was limited by our being exposed to a realistic style of painting only, it was, nevertheless, some basis to build on. And the great workload with its repetitious character taught me discipline, a quality indispensable to an artist.

I had always felt I was not told enough. I kept wondering about Kandinsky and others whose pictures I was shown in the classes or looked up in the library, and I wished I could understand them. How much faster could an individual grow if he were not caught up in a system! But these things cannot be helped; they are a fact of life. And a lot depends on the strength of the individual and his ability to move beyond his own culture to free himself from its constricting clutches.

School is there mainly to prepare one to function in a given society. The spiritual growth of a person is just its minor role, a lot of growing has to be done on one's own. And that is true in any culture, any society.

Some time soon after I finished school, I went to visit galleries in Prague, the capital city. And it was not only the paintings I saw there that made a deep impression on me. Prague itself is a jewel: it is a synthesis of natural beauty and human creativity. On every yard of its terrain, chiseled for thousands of years, the erosion of Moldau's waters, one can find a building of great architectural value. Centuries old buildings in

Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles inspire reverence and play on imagination.

Prague's galleries taught me a lesson in Art History that was more powerful than any lesson I had heard at school. It was as if Art History came to life, and life is so much richer than any reproduction. I still remember the works of a Gothic painter's Vyšebrodsky biblical landscapes, Rembrandt's "Woman Scaling Gold," and others.

In the gallery of Modern Art I saw French Impressionists: Pissaro, Monet, Lautrec, Gauguin. Somebody said to me that if I saw Van Gogh's paintings once, they would change my life. There must be some truth in this statement. I think I spent more time in front of his paintings than anybody else's, studying his colors, his style. Even Cézanne's paintings, about whose importance in the history of art I knew a little, did not make quite as powerful an impression on me. I would probably have been more appreciative if I knew then where his importance lie.

Hundreds of paintings communicated to me then that there is more to painting than simple craftsmanship, that, in fact, craftsmanship might not be important at all. For a long time I could not quite put my finger on what I had learned but every time I remembered my visit to Prague, I felt a strong desire to go and to search. What was I to search for? Today I know it is something inside me that is unique, something unrepeatable that gives life to pictures.

I served part of my term in the military army some 25 miles from Prague, and this enabled me to repeat my visits to that city. I would then go and see either a play, a movie, or visit some galleries.

Prague experiences helped me to free myself from the constricting effects of my owen education and this could soon be felt in my paintings.

I had very little time to paint then. Often I passed by a certain place several times imagining what it would look like on the canvas. Only much later I actually did get time enough to go and paint. And when I did, it was as if painting from memory rather than reality, for in my mind I rehearsed the picture many times. My preparations were usually frantic, I quickly squeezed colors out of the tubes as if afraid this activity might distract me and I would forget the picture in my mind. Then, in a few minutes, I would set up a basic composition but, as the painting progressed, I would hardly look at the landscape. I did not need to; the landscape was my source of inspiration rather than information. The canvas became the only reality.

This was a very important psychological breakthrough for me. Since then I have no longer been afraid to ignore reality and concentrate on the canvas. I still worked outdoors but I greatly departed from reality, especially in the way I used colors.

It was not until the late sixties that I had a chance to see a retrospective show of a Czech Impressionist painter, Antonín Slavíček. His paintings spoke to me in a familiar language: their spiritual quality was so typically Czech. His painting "U nás v Kameničkách" still stands out in my memory as fresh as if I only saw it yesterday. Although it was just a scene from the Czech countryside, it communicated far more than that; the garden-like ornamental quality of his colors suggested the atmosphere of Czech folk festivities with their dance and music and national garbs.

Around the same time I also saw an exhibition of works by František Kupka, a Czech modern artist. Throughout the communist regime, the Czech public had not been exposed to his or any such modern art and so many were quite shocked. Mine was the same reaction, I could recognize but very few elements of reality. In spite of that, I liked his works: in many of them

I could feel the spiritual presence of nature. For a long time after the show, my mind was still preoccupied with it. It had been such an unusual artistic expression.

Then came the Prague Spring of 1968. This name designates only a certain culmination of a process that started, in fact, much earlier and lasted until the end of summer of the same year. It was a period notable for its freedom of expression. Books by authors such as Solzhenitsyn, Kafka, Masaryk, and others, till then forbidden, were published. Theatre programs were enriched with new plays, and newspapers made the public aware of the existing problems of our economic and social life. Injustices commited by the Communist Party were brought to light, especially those of the Stalinist era, in the early fifties. In cinema, the New Wave movies drew large crowds to the movie houses and quickly established a reputation for Czech cinematography in the West. Every facet of our cultural life was marked by frantic activity as if the whole nation sensed that this release of creative energies would not be long lived.

In the early hours of August 21, 1968, Russian tanks rolled into the country to "normalize the situation," as it was explained to the nation. It sounded very cynical indeed. However, we remained optimistic, hoping this was a misunderstanding that would soon be cleared out. But little by little, we came to understand that our all-powerful brotherly nation wished us to go back to the old times.

This was a very hard thing to accept for a young man as I was then--a young man who only just tasted freedom and craved for more. Many people stayed in the West and their numbers grew each day. I decided to do the same, to leave for Canada.

With that decision firmly established, I boarded a sports tourist bus

the following summer to go to visit Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Italy. It was my first trip abroad and I found it very exciting. I knew if I should return to Czechoslovakia, I would hardly have much chance to travel again. So, when we finished touring the first Italian city, Venice, without hesitation I parted from the group and hitchhiked to Florence.

When I passed through its narrow streets, they were almost deserted, only the imposing medieval mansions bore silent witness of its once buzzing life. Like other tourists, I also hastened to escape the glare of semi-tropical sun and meditate in the coolness of a gallery over Botticelli's "Birth of Venus," a sample of perfection, or over Michaelangello's statues in Academia di Belle Arti. Although for the most part unfinished, they, nevertheless, let the viewer anticipate that it was a master's hand that chiseled them, a hand that could divine the figures inside a block of marble with absolute precision.

The climax of my visual experience came when I visited the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. I marveled over the amount of work that was done within a few years, while contemplating the hundreds of figures on the walls and ceiling. It was a rare spectacle.

Time did not run out but money did and so, I had to proceed with the next stage of my life in exile. In Rome I applied for and was granted asylum. With hundreds of other refugees I found a temporary home in Latina, about 80 km south-west of Rome. The spiritual nourishment I received in Italy's galleries was further enriched through my wanderings around the Italian countryside. The aura of history, felt everywhere, put me at ease for it reminded me of my home. Its picturesque quality appealed to me as an artist. I would often sit down to sketch or paint in watercolors, a landscape with a narrow winding road, a romanesque city crouching on top of

a hill as if trying to hatch some centuries old secret, or just a few olive trees on a hill-side, whose crooked trunks looked like bodies of old men bent with age. My last Italian painting was a landscape with orange trees near Naples. And only two days after I tasted some of these fruits, I found myself at Dorval, Montreal, (temperature -15C).

From the warmth of Italy to the cold of Canada; this was true not only in physical terms but emotional as well. Even after 12 years, Canada still feels cold to me.

Everything in this new country felt strange and distant. People I met in the snow-covered streets hurried silently by, or if they talked, it was in low voices without gesticulation, and I did not understand a word. The streets, too, seemed without personality, no special landmarks to distinguish them from each other. It was difficult for me to orient myself.

The first 18 months in Canada I lived in Ottawa, where I attended an English course and later found work in display in a downtown department store. My growing vocabulary did not help me to feel more at ease in the new country. If anything, I became more confused. It was like living in a greenhouse with the real life outside of it. The longer I stayed, the more enigmatic this new country looked.

My work was not a source of much comfort to me either. It had all the characteristics of an assembly line, where speed and effectiveness are the two major factors. Nobody asked us for a suggestion or an opinion, and nobody would venture one on his own so as not to offend the boss. We were there merely to execute somebody else's idea. I have rarely seen any enjoyment over a finished job. People worked without interest, mechanically, fast. Often they would not even manage a simple "hello" in the morning as they headed straight for the job.

In Czechoslovakia I worked in display as well and, I must say, compared to North American, it is a highly individual and creative job. The ideas and their execution were entirely mine.

The East-European craftsman has quite a different attitude toward his job. On his coming he looks around the shop, as if getting himself mentally ready for a new day, exchanges a few words with his fellow workers, and only then settles slowly down to work. He works at a slower pace, often stopping and thinking. He is willing to put in extra time in order to have the work done the way he likes.

When, after some time, I found out that it was relatively easy to study in Canada, I gave it a lot of thought. There again seemed to exist the alluring idea of freedom; one could choose the area of concentration and even the individual courses. Here an opportunity presented itself to study Fine Arts, a thing I always wanted to do.

The promise that university studies held for me outweighed losses incured by leaving my job. I had nothing to lose but money. And within a few months, I did become a student at Sir George Williams University, Montreal.

Things, however, did not go according to my expectations. The only course in Fine Arts I got was Moving Pictures; I did not get the studio course I had picked. It was a computer mistake but nothing could have been done because all sections were already full.

With an uncomfortable feeling that I was manipulated again, I went to the University Hall Building. Sadly I walked through the empty studios and gazed at the walls covered by streaks and drips of different colors. The benches, not less colorful than the walls, were strewn with easels, jars, and other things. "What a mess," I seemed to have heard one of my

former teacher's voice say. I smiled a little triumphant smile. I never liked the neatness into which he was constantly forcing me. This was a working place of people who were not afraid to drip, and smear, and splash.

The academic year was already two weeks in progress when I won the battle with the authorities and was able to join a studio course. The students were drawing from a model who was often shifting into new positions. Having been taught to draw slowly and carefully, to measure all proportions, I did not manage to finish any of the pictures. It was all very frustrating.

Next time the model remined in the same position throughout the class. I worked in oil and we were to include the surroundings as well. I was in the middle of my frantic effort to finish all in time when I heard the teacher say: "Yes but look, the model and the background are two different things." I barely sensed from his further explanation what he meant. Only after being shown slides of Cézanne, Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, Braque, and Picasso, later on, could I say that I understood somewhat what was meant by the unity of a picture.

I had always been vaguely aware of the importance of every part of the picture. When I sometimes shuffled things around on the canvas a little to make a visually more interesting picture, or chose a different color for the same reason, that was due to my craving for unity.

Since this lesson I became obsessed with the canvas. I analyzed almost every brushstroke, thought about every color I was about to dip in. Painting became a very slow and painful process for me, which left me mentally and physically drained. My struggle for perfection resulted in pictures that looked very constructive, mechanical, without life.

These were the first signs of my inner confusion which rapidly increased as the year progressed. I especially found Late Modern Art hard to

understand. For the first time in my life I heard of such innovative techniques as Jackson Pollock's drips. It took me a great deal of time to overcome a notion that the only proper way to paint is with a brush.

As I was continuously bombarded with new pieces of information, I arrived practically at a stand-still in my own work. Figuratively was the only way I knew how to paint, but that made me feel behind the times. Almost nobody painted that way any more; all the students around me worked in hard edge or some other non-figurative style. The fact that they merely imitated somebody else's work, without any deeper understanding, did not make me feel any better about my own work.

Nobody seemed to understand what was happening to me (which was partly because I did not know how to make myself understood) and I, therefore, could get no guidance. I kept hearing that an artist has to find his own way, and slides showing developmental stages of different artists were shown to us. Of these, Mondrian felt most familiar to me. There I could see how he gradually simplified trees until his pictures became a mere play of colors, lines, and space. His latest pictures reminded me of my work in display in Czechoslovakia, when I used to make posters and graphic panels. Although in Mondrian's work I found similarities with my own, I knew I could not go his way.

I would merely end up doing what I had been doing till then. Painting in a style would give me a sense of direction but I would not be entirely comfortable with it just as I was not with the realistic style for the meticulousness it requires. But how does one go about finding one's own way? I was left groping in a total darkness. My pictures became gradually filled with chaotic life; they were full of tensions and broken lines.

I decided after some time that the best way might be to go back to

landscapes, where I felt I was on a firm footing, to see whether I would not fare better from there. So I once rode to the Laurentians and installed myself near a highway to paint a scene. This was my first encounter with Canadian landscape; till then I had only known the city streets and the little apartments I had lived in.

My painting did not fare well then. I was more concerned with how to get the ideas in my head on the canvas than trying to capture the virginal quality of the landscape. My painting ended up looking like a multitude of adjacent patches of color, a color exercise. Even a few additional hours of work at home did not help to improve it. It remained a dry, intellectual work.

In the spring of 1973, the Faculty of Fine Arts of Sir George Williams University organized a trip to New York, the city in whose galleries so many famous originals can be found. I was one of the travellers on the midnight bus. Most people fell asleep soon after we crossed the borders but I was too excited about the prospect of seeing the city whose population equals that of Czechoslovakia. I was soon to walk its streets, overcrowded with pedestrians, hear the hubbub of traffic, be blinded by the glass-reflected light, see the graffiti on the walls and in the subways, and millions of lights breaking the night.

The sun was just rising when the greyish skyline of Manhattan appeared in front of us. When we arrived, the streets were still deserted but soon the New Yorkers filled them with chaotic activity during the morning rush hour. No matter where one looked, whether in the streets teeming with life, or at the glass-walled skyscrapers on Avenue of the Americas, one felt dizzy. The tall buildings, billboards, and signs competing with each other in size were mesmerizing.

There was no escaping from the larger-than-human size of things. At the Guggenheim Museum, where there was a show of late modern paintings, I saw Morris Louis's works. After coming from the hustle and bustle of New York streets into a quiet room where one may stand and meditate, the solid, tall buildings feel merely like veils descending from the skies, letting one suspect the space behind them, and the commotion of the streets, now distant, seems to be floating. I could just as well be walking through an autumnal forest early in the morning. There is nothing specific represented in Louis's paintings but it did not seem to bother me. The large size of his "veils" had quite a mysterious flow--a lightness. All art theories seemed to be artificial and awkward when confronting this work. It did not seem to need any explanation or justification.

Robert Raushenberg confronted me with the ready-made world. His assemblages were made of products of our technological society: car tires, stop signs, light bulbs, folded canvases, etc. It was so different compared to what I had seen in the past.

Kandinsky's canvases from around the 1914 period seemed to be singing harmonious melodies, while in de Kooning's landscapes one could distinctly hear Stravinsky's music.

I spent the last two hours in The Museum of Modern Art, where I saw originals of Jackson Pollock, all vibrating electrically, full of energy, magnetic. It was as if Pollock painted in the middle of a New York street and transfered its electricity on the canvas. Without visiting New York I could never fully have understood the spirit of his paintings.

The New York trip was deeply satisfying for me; it brought peace to my mind. Seeing paintings, so entirely different from each other, displayed side by side for the viewer to appreciate, made me realize that good art

is good regardless of a particular style. It made me feel good about the way I painted and gave me confidence to try new ways of expressing myself.

This understanding of the essence of art became even better defined when, a few months later, I visited galleries in Washington, D.C. There I saw many of Rembrandt's portraits and one of Barnett Newman's monochromatic pictures in close seclusion. When I stood in front of Rembrandt's pictures, I felt it was more than the virtuosity of the objective representation that made them unique pieces of art. And that special something was present in Newman's picture as well, in spite of the utter simplicity of shapes and minimal choice of colors which made it seem so different from Rembrandt's works. There and then I came very close to understanding the relationship between objective and non-objective art.

Coming back home, I tried the technique of staining on canvas. After washing the glue off its surface, I spread colors on it. This seemed very similar to working with watercolors, which I used to do a number of years ago. The staining technique was not difficult for me to learn but I was not merely after a technique. I wanted to make paintings which had something to say. Little by little I learned how different colors interact, how to use their fluidity. My subject matter became color only. I found this kind of painting as exciting as painting outdoors. However, I could never gain the control over the whole process that I had been used to. When the canvas dried, colors lost their brilliance; some even changed, they crystalized. The final outcome was unpredictable to a great degree and that is why I did not want to continue working in this way.

I left staining and turned to oil colors. In one of my classes I made a number of small very fresh-looking water color sketches. And it was this quality of freshness I now wanted to capture on a larger scale, through

a different medium.

The new painting was, I felt, quite successful, but I saw it as copying and thus mostly a question of skill rather than discovery. The difference in scale contained a certain amount of surprise for me but it was not satisfying enough. I missed the spontaneity, the possibility to pour my feelings out, which the staining technique allowed me to do. Oil painting released my feelings in trickles only.

Upon taking the enlargement to school, I received a lot of feedback from my teacher. He literally took the painting apart from the formalistic point of view. But as he went from one student to another, I detected a certain formula being applied to each work. It all seemed very dry, impersonal, and on the top of it only negative things were mentioned. Was there nothing of my own worth mentioning in this painting? I wanted to hear other opinions. But I was to be disappointed. Some did not believe this was my work. Even after being shown the sketch, they were not quite convinced. Others had cliché-like comments: "It looks like so and so!" This made me very unhappy indeed.

Only I knew how I had struggled before I arrived to the present painting. Only I knew it was entirely mine, but I was not able to make anybody understand how this work had grown out of my experience.

I then decided to rely more on my own intuition and the little understanding of art I achieved through formal education. By then I was mature enough to realize that too much rationalizing would be crippling to me. To free myself from the tendency to think too much while working, I started simply throwing colors with huge brushes on paper or canvas. This of course would lead nowhere if the painting remained only a sum total of automatic gestures. I had to stop and overlook the work from time to time, to justify

in some way my next move. Although these creations bore the trademark of a beginner, I was, nevertheless, happy with them. I felt there was something of mine in them--something that felt right.

Often when I finished a painting, I would find interesting parts in it and use them with some changes in my next work. It was as if these details triggered off emotions which then dictated my next painting. The process was very spontaneous.

Most of these pictures were not very good but I knew from athletic training that it takes years of practice to get somewhere. I knew it would take me a very long time to find my own language.

After some time I noticed that my paintings reminded me of some experiences and I would try to talk about the psychological aspect of my work but I met with evasive reactions on the part of teachers. It seems that in North American culture on the whole, feeling is an embarrassing topic, a topic to be avoided.

My last year of undergraduate studies was unusually busy; my workload consisted entirely of studio courses. Apart from my regular classes in etching, lithography, silk screen printing, painting, and sculpture, I used to visit drawing classes as well. Exploring so many new techniques at the same time was quite confusing to me. I would often be taken so much with a certain assignment that I would end up doing a whole series. After a short time I was no longer sure which technique I wanted to concentrate on.

But in spite of all the digression, my work in all these classes started showing elements of synthesis. The kind of line I used in my drawing classes appeared also in etching and lithography, and also in sculpture, where I was making light structures of welded rods. Thinking three-dimensionally in this class gradually affected my painting. The shapes there

acquired a three-dimensional look.

In silk screen printing I made a whole series where I combined printing with painting. I would make prints of my own enlarged photographs in different colors on canvas or paper, sometimes covered already with a contrasting color. After that I worked on it, as I would on a painting, with brushes and oil colors. On paper prints I worked with pencils and watercolors.

This was a technique I would have most liked to explore; it enabled me to use painting, my favored means of expression, and I saw an "unlimited" number of possibilities. But the works I made, especially the printed images, resembled pop art too much and that was not appealing to me. I did not want to be a pop artist.

This last year I worked to my fullest capacity. I poured out paintings, sculptures, prints, one after another. The fact that I was able to endure this fast pace had to do, I believe, with my being involved actively in sports for a number of years. My approach to studies was parallel to that in sports. In the sixties, sport was the priority number one in my life. I started with bicycling and, during the compulsory military service, I switched to light athletics--ie. running. I later became a member of a light athletics club, where I trained together with some top national athletes.

We were involved in the scientific training program practised in most East European countries and also by some top world class athletes. This training system, called "interval training," is based on a belief that strong healthy legs alone do not make a fast runner, that fitness of the whole cardiovascular system has to be worked on. "Interval training" consist of relatively fast runs over relatively short distances repeated a number of

times. This increases the heart stroke and thus the heart's ability to deliver blood and oxygen to legs. The name of the system comes from the "interval" or rest period between the fast runs.

The whole year was divided into three training periods. In November we began a three-month-cross country training, 10 to 25km per day. Next came two months of quantity intervals which ranged from 10 X 600m to 4 X 3km. Quantity intervals were run up to three quarters of the racing effort. The last two months, before the competitive season involved quality intervals such as 12 X 200m to 4 X 1000m. As the speed of training increased, the daily distance decreased. Gradually we moved from cross country to track.

During the racing season I would run 10 to 15km a day, this being geared to a particular race. If the distance was 1km, I would run 15 X 200m in the speed of the race. For 5km I would run repeatedly 200m to 800m, in the speed of the race, for a total of 8km. The longer the race, the slower the pace. The quality training would take place twice a week. Sometimes, on top of the regular training, I would run 100m sprints because I felt the steady training tempo was not enough to increase my maximum speed.

I kept daily notes about my time and distances which I used to compare with those kept from the previous year. This helped me to improve my time and avoid overtraining.

When I came to Canada, I tried to win some runners over to this kind of training, but none kept at it long enough. They found it too punishing and many who had never even tried it said it was a system sure to "burn out" the runner. I personally found it more beneficial than damaging. Pushing oneself to the limits hundreds or thousands of times helps one to develop in more ways than physical. Running becomes no longer merely a question of physical ability but also that of spirit and determination. Rain or fatigue no longer

matter; willpower is no longer a problem. One wins because one is unwilling to acknowledge boundries. It may be seen as drudgery by some but to me it is a daily experiment raised to the level of art.

After I finished my undergraduate studies I concentrated on painting only, but continued working just as hard. Just like one has to train every day when involved in sports, I had to do a painting almost every day. Like a runner looking for the right shoes and terrain to train, I had to find a suitable medium of expression which I soon did in watercolors. Choosing paper that was made specifically for my needs was part of the searching process. I like to have paper stretched like a drum but since I use a lot of water during painting, it has to be a paper that does not fall apart when drying. Some papers create mountains which do not allow one to control the shapes, other papers absorb the colors and that causes loss of luminosity and brilliance.

Lately I have been using large sheets of rag paper that I glue on canvas stretched on a board. This is done when the paper is wet and thus flexible. It is quickly rolled on canvas like wallpaper. When the paper dries, it stays stretched.

Before I start painting I get all the necessary materials ready to use and then go for a short run of 6 to 8km at a slow pace. This distance is just right. It does not make me tired but helps my whole body to relax completely. My head is clear and my senses are in a state of acute awareness. Nothing stands between me and my painting; my daily troubles do not seem to exist.

When I paint, I keep all colors available, some of which are already mixed in small containers, around me because I never know beforehand which ones I might use. Each color has its special qualities; one may be more

transparent than the other, or it crystalizes in a particular way in its pure state or when mixed with other colors. This medium has more fluidity, freshness, and brilliance than any other. The whiteness of paper gives luminosity to transparent and semi-transparent colors which reminds me of the lime painted houses right after the rain when the walls are still wet and the old colors of blue, red, or green show through the chipped off pieces of lime.

I like to approach the canvas without any clear idea of what my painting is going to be like, without any preconceived ideas to hinder my work. With a set of brushes ranging from 1 to 5cm in size, I apply a few colors. Sometimes I pour color directly on paper and let it find its own way, or help it a little with a brush. A few color shapes agitate my senses and from then on, like in a hypnoyic state, I feel my way through. I let the colors spread and grow on the wet surface, I watch them take their own life. So many unpredictable combinations appear in front of me, I only have to give them some structure. And in all this not only my hand is involved but my whole body. I pace my time as if running.

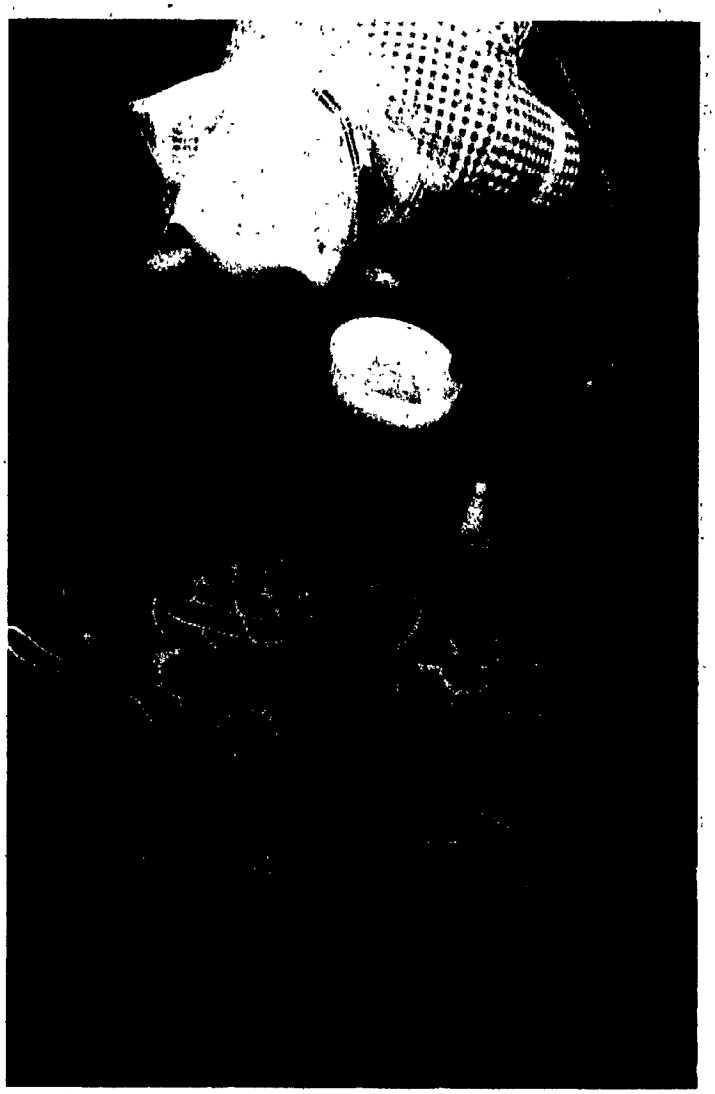
It is a process of metamorphosis where past experiences merge from my subconscious and come to life on the canvas. At the beginning my paintings were vaguely allusive to things that I experienced, but, as I continued working, the allusions grew stronger. After some time a horizontal line appeared in my works and kept repeatedly reappearing. Was it the line my mother used to paint on the walls or the finishing line I imagined crossing ahead of others in a race? There are so many things to see around the road while I am running, some of which strike me quite powerfully: others come to me only in distant glimpses. The changing temperature, the changing seasons, the different times of day--all of these put me in a mood that

helps to bring out long forgotten memories.

An artist struggles to discover the hidden wonders of life. He lives with the rest of mankind in a countryside covered with the thick fog that culture is. While others wander aimlessly about, oblivious to the foggy shroud, he is painfully aware of its existence. And if he should come from a different culture, he recognizes it all the more clearly and feels the need to see through. He alone listens to his inner voice telling him how to make the passage, until one day the fog lifts up for him and he gets a panoramic view of the landscape. He tells the others about its wondrous beauty but they do not understand for they have never seen. He is a foreigner; he stands apart. He is a long distance runner.

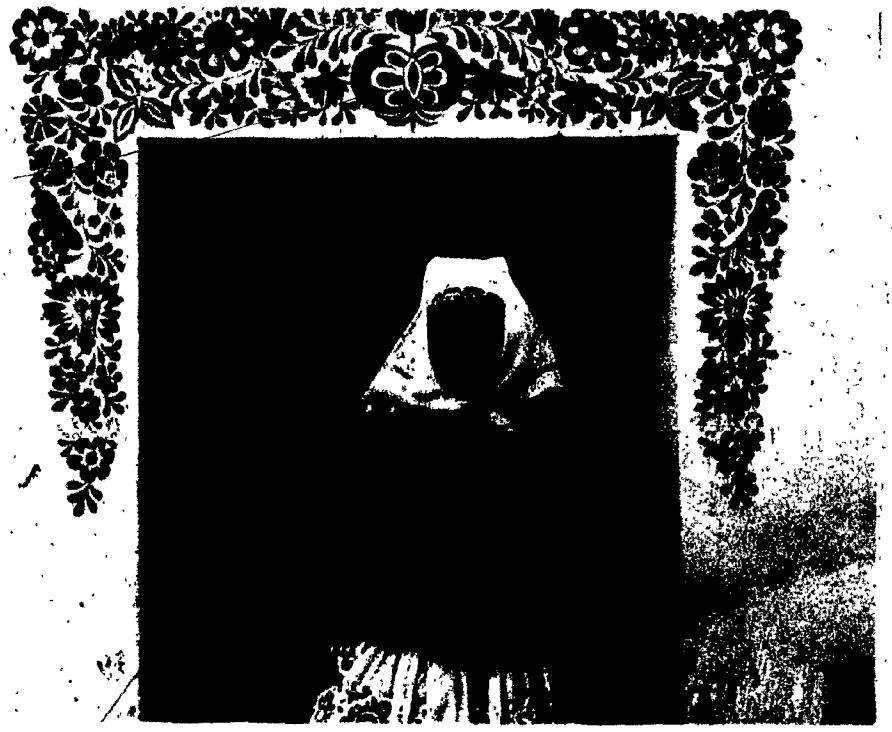
1 Frontal part of a wedding procession with bridegroom and a bridesmaid, Dolní Bojanovice, Hodonín Region, Czechoslovakia.

COLOURED PICTURES
Images en couleur



2 Feast customs at Hovorany, Hodonín Region, Czechoslovakia.

COLOURED PICTURES
Images en couleur



3 Married woman from Hovorany in traditional garments in front of a wine cellar with ornamental decoration, Hodonín Region, Czechoslovakia.

COLOURED PICTURES
Images en couleur

Chapter II

"Autumn Rhythm" as I See It

The twentieth century belong to science, especially with the results of research in nuclear physics. With the splitting of the atom, releasing a new dimension of energy, there followed a revolutionary change in the concept of reality: a new and irrational outlook of our natural world, ruled by the laws of classical physics.

Paralleling the new visions of science, man started looking inside himself as exemplified by Freud's psychoanalysis and the discovery (or rediscovery) of the unconscious at the beginning of this century. Artists like Kandinsky, Klee, and many others have been influenced by these discoveries. For them the collapse of the atom was the collapse of the whole world. They started to withdraw from nature, and their art became more and more abstract. Mondrian turned his back on nature completely and worked with no identifiable objects; he called them "pure form."

A completely different and original expression of the hidden unconscious spirit can be found in the paintings of an American artist, Jackson Pollock, whose work can be seen as an ideological reaction to the rationalist purism of the neoplasticism that was brought to the U.S.A. In 1944 Pollock made a statement in which he talked about his interest in the un-

conscious and in the importance of European artists.

> I accept the fact that the important painting of the last hundred years was done in France. American painters have generally missed the point of modern painting from beginning to end. (The only American master who interests me is Ryder). Thus the fact that good European moderns are now here is very important, for they bring with them an understanding of the problems of modern painting. I am particularly impressed with their concept of the source of art being the Unconscious. This idea interests me more than these specific painters do, for the two artists I admire most, Picasso and Miro, are still abroad. ...[1]

In 1951, Pollock was interviewed for station WERI in Westerly, R.I., by William Wright, who lived across the road from Pollock.

> The thing that interests me is that today painters do not have to go to a subject matter outside of themselves. Most modern painters work from a different source. They work from within.
>
> ... It seems to me that the modern painter cannot express his age, the airplane, the atom bomb, the radio, in the old forms of the Renaissance or of any other past culture. Each age finds its own technique... the strangeness will wear off and I think we will discover the deeper meaning in modern art... (Laymen looking at a Pollock or other modern painting) should not look for, but look passively--and try to receive what the painting has to offer and not to bring a subject matter or preconceived idea of what they are to be looking for...
>
> The unconscious is a very important side of modern art and I think the unconscious drives do mean a lot in looking at paintings... (Abstract art) should be enjoyed just as music is enjoyed--after a while you may like it or you may not... I like some flowers and others, other flowers I don't like... I think at least give it a chance.
>
> ... the modern artist is living in a mechanical age and we have... mechanical means of representing objects in nature such as the camera and photograph. The modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing an inner world--in other words, expressing the energy, the motion, and other inner forces... the modern artist is working with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating...[2]

[1]Bryan Robertson, Jackson Pollock (London: Thames and Hudson, 1960), p. 193.

[2]B. H. Friedman, Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1972), pp. 175-76.

Pollock's short statements are revealing of the nature of his work. However, it took me several years to comprehensively understand his art.

I first saw Pollock's paintings as slides when I was a painting student in 1971. Our class did not talk much about his work but rather about his working process, ie., the dripping technique, and also about his interest in the unconscious. That was a very important turning point for me because during all of my studies most of my teachers seemed to be ignoring process, or rather I used to hear mostly logical reasoning about the painting process due mainly to the influence of the formalistic approach that prevailed at the University at the time. "Think! Feeling, leave at home!" This caused in me a strong reaction. In time this strong opposition proved good; it helped to strengthen my conviction and the style which became reflected in my work.

Pollock's work was shocking for me; I did not like it visually. However, I found the approach to his work with his dripping technique interesting. After several weeks of thinking, I, in a way, accepted it; later, I would even say that I loved it.

I was completely "turned on" when I saw the Pollock originals in New York a year later. His "Autumn Rhythm" (1950) was electric, alive! There is nothing representational or concrete in this painting and it did not bother me. I sensed unusual authenticity. There was joy of life in the painting, given through the gesture expressed in lines, planes, and drips reinforced by texture. The work is without color but somehow the richness of line replaces color. Frank O'Hara wrote in this context: "There has never been enough said about Pollock's draftsmanship, that amazing ability to quicken a line by thinning it, to slow it by flooding, to elaborate that simplest of elements, the line--to change to reinvigorate, to extend, to

build up an embarrassment of riches in the mass by drawing alone. And each change in the individual line is what every draftsman has always dreamed of: color."[3]

This line makes the whole surface so active your eyes are forced to travel all over it, stopping at some places for a few seconds to study a detail. It may lead you slowly to another place of the painting or your eyes just jump to another detail. This travelling does not seem to have any end and you may go on for a long time discovering new combinations of lines and somehow you will merge with the painting and feel the connection with the whole universe—the infinite type of space created by the overlapping of the lines. They also suggest the molecular structure of organic and inorganic elements of nature, and of culture, such as jazz.

I could not find any focal point in this painting; paint is equally distributed all over the surface, and pushed towards the edges (which seem relatively passive compared to the middle active part). It gave an interesting contrast between quiet and active aspects of the painting. Some lines went beyond the painting and thus incorporated the space outside the canvas. When I came back to the painting my eyes had a tendency to look more toward the middle of the work.

The size of the painting seemed very important; there was no comparison to slide projection. It seemed to communicate not only with my eyes but also with my entire body. I was drawn in and I felt as if I could literally walk into the painting. The title "Autumn Rhythm" suggested a landscape painting. The somber colors, (which were actually invented by Pollock) had for me references to the late fall misty type of weather. The stained

[3]Frank O'Hara, Jackson Pollock, Great American Artists Series (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1959), p. 26.

patches of grey color gave another contrast to very defined lines, soothing the whole painting and giving lyricism to the whole work. But because of the method in which Pollock worked, his dripping technique on the horizontal surface, I felt that it reflected human physical activity more than a landscape.

In "My Painting" which Jackson Pollock wrote and which was published in Possibilities I, New York, Winter 1947-48 he said:

> My painting does not come from the easel. I hardly ever stretch my canvas before painting. I prefer to tack the unstretched canvas to the hard wall floor. I need the resistance of a hard surface. On the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk round it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting. This is akin to the method of the Indian sand painters of the West.[4]
>
> Most of the paint I use is a liquid, flowing kind of paint. The brushes I use are used more as sticks... than (as) brushes—the brush doesn't touch the surface of the canvas, it's just above... I'm able to be more free and to have greater freedom and move about the canvas with greater ease... with experience it seems to be possible to control the flow of the paint to a great extent, and I don't use... the accident... I deny the accident.[5]

Thus the canvas was no longer a traditional picture, but an event. I have seen this painting several times in the span of ten years and I have never tired of looking at it. I have always found something new in it; I see his work as very pure and as an example of freedom.

I must also mention the name of Hans Hofmann who had a direct or indirect influence as a teacher on the American scene in the forties. Lee Krasner, Pollock's wife was a former student of Hans Hofmann.

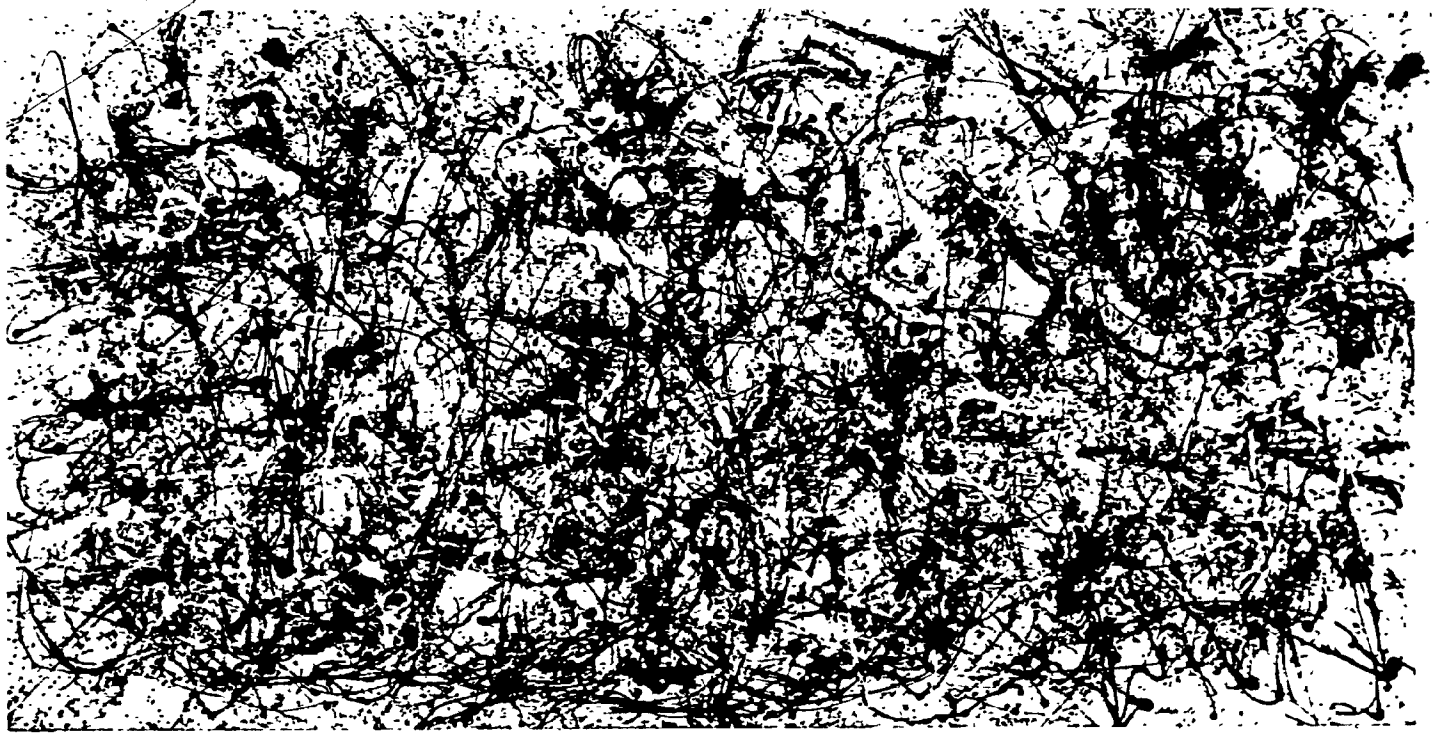
[4]Bryan Robertson, Jackson Pollock (London: Thames and Hudson, 1960), p. 193.

[5]B. H. Friedman, Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visable (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, p. 146-47.

Hofmann's theory of pictorial structure as a painter and as a teacher is rooted in early Cubism. However, he did a number of free experiments—a kind of automatic paintings. "Spring" an early work dated 1940 predated Pollock's drips by several years. Instead of painting a whole series, Hofmann had a tendency to solve a problem in one painting and then to move to another one.

His complex theory, which later became part of new academy, seemed central to his work. I saw several of his paintings in New York and I sensed that in spite of a joy of colors and of the painting process itself, he never completely transcended his theoretical reasoning. I believe that he would have needed a few more years in order to achieve that leap.

In 1980 I saw de Kooning's latest abstract landscape paintings. I experienced something very direct, something just "grabbing my soul." The works were completely free of any need for theoretical justification. I found as great purity in them as in Pollock's.



4 Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm, 1950, oil on canvas 103" x 207" (262 x 550cm).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Chapter III

Some Sources of Turning Points

There have been several events in my life crucial to the development of my personality: active involvement in light athletics, invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Russians in 1968, emigration to Canada a year later, learning a new language and culture, university studies and my decision to become a painter. These events happened like a chain reaction; one triggered off the next. Simultaneously I was led to examine the role different cultures played in shaping my personality and my development as an artist. I was led to study the human mind and was alerted to the unconscious.

Being an immigrant suddenly confronted with the North American culture, I was forced almost daily to seek answers to my problems. Some answers were provided by the subjects I chose as a university student. Among these, anthropology was very helpful to me, not only the content of this course but also its structure, the professor's personality and his keen interest in his subject. In this course I found the witch doctors,' shamans,' and sorcerers' knowledge of willpower especially fascinating. Carlos Castaneda's books offered me very important pieces of information about peyote, jimson weed, and other hallucinogenic plants used in achieving awareness and mastery of the world of "nonordinary reality." The author spent five years of

apprenticeship with a Yaqui Indian from Mexico known to be a brujo--"a medicine man, a sorcerer."

In this book I saw a connection with whatever I had read or heard about alchemy and the ancient alchemists who had lived in the "Golden Lane" houses of Prague's Hradčany during the Renaissance, under the reign of the Emperor Rudolf II.

Their experimenting was generally misunderstood in the West as a desire to produce gold out of base metals. But to gain power over matter and energy, to find a universal cure for all illnesses and the secret of prolonging life were only a part of the process.

> The real aim of the alchemist's activities (which some think stem from the ancient science of a long-extinct civilization) is the transformation of the alchemist himself, his accession to a higher state of consciousness. Everything is oriented toward the transmutation of the man himself, toward his spiritual liberation and his fusion with 'divine energy.' [A very important aspect of alchemy was the necessity to know a precise planetary constellation even before any scientific experiments.] One of the greatest psychiatrists of our time, Dr. C. G. Jung, felt alchemy might be one of the keys to understanding the strange workings of the mind.[6]

The psychic traditions of the past are deeply rooted in the Czech culture and at the beginning of this century became part of the science of parapsychology. One of the most popular weekly magazines published a regular article on scientific research in parapsychology. "The Czech military published a handbook on ESP for the army in 1925 called 'Clairvoyance, Hypnotism, and Magnetism' by Karel Hejbalik."[7]

One of the most important psychic explorers in Czechoslovakia was Břetislav Kafka. In his book about experimental parapsychology he describes

[6]Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain (1970; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1973), p. 315.

[7]Ibid., p. 321.

many ESP tests done with psychics. He argues that the mind may accomplish miracles when there is a combination of the conscious with the unconscious.

"During World War II, Kafka used his well-trained psychics to follow the progress of the war, the decisions of the generals, and the changes on the front lines. Kafka would put a psychic into trance and command him to tell what he saw on the front. Then another psychic with no knowledge of the first psychic's report would be clairvoyantly dispatched to the same area. Usually the reports of all the psychics jibed, and Kafka had an overall picture of what was happening hundreds of miles away."[8]

Dr. Karel Kuchyňka, one of Czechoslovakia's pioneers in parapsychology sums up very well the main reasons for interest in parapsychology. He says: "I think the importance of parapsychology for us lies precisely in its possibility of elucidating by its discoveries the true nature of man and of showing that man is linked to the cosmos more closely than he'd ever supposed."[9] The importance of ESP research is recognized, even by today's communist government.

I found the experiments with mind very exciting. They made me wonder whether there might be an answer to the riddle of creativity. While going through some of Freud's writings, I discovered that most of his theories are drawn from his experience with mentally disturbed patients. This answered questions only partially. "Freud's work has shown that the functional neuroses are causally based on unconscious contents whose nature, when understood, allows us to see how the disease came about."[10] He did

[8]Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain (1970; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1973), p. 329.

[9]Ibid., p. 320.

[10]C. G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 68.

not discover the unconscious but his method of dream analysis put him in touch with it.

"The discovery that dreams have a meaning, and that there is a way to an understanding of them, is perhaps the most significant and most valuable part of this remarkable edifice called psychoanalysis."[11]

In the writings of C. G. Jung I was able to find a more in-depth and detailed explanation of symbolic images which arise spontaneously from the unconscious in the forms of dreams. Dreaming is something we all do and it interests me very much. We tend to forget most of our dreams and those we remember, we usually discard as unimportant. We do not question them because we do not understand their proper nature. Dreams are just another form of existence opposed in character to our wakeful life when we are active, rational, effective but somewhat dull and unimaginative.

"Dreams are neither deliberate nor arbitrary fabrications; they are natural phenomena which are nothing other than what they pretend to be. They do not deceive, they do not lie, they do not distort or disguise, but naively announce what they are and what they mean. They are irritating and misleading only because we do not understand them."[12] But whatever the role we play in the dream, we are the author, we have written the script.

In order to understand the meaning of our dreams, we have to know the symbolic language--symbols common for all cultures developed throughout history. "Dream images are many-faceted and one can never be sure that they have the same meaning in another dream or in another dreamer. A relative constancy of meaning is exhibited only by the so-called archetypal images."[13]

[11]C. G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 68.

[12]Ibid., p. 103.

[13]Ibid., p. 106.

They have the language with its own grammar and meaning, which can be found in fairy tales and myths.

"Although dreams in which these mythological parallels appear are not uncommon, the emergence of the collective unconscious, as I have called this myth-like layer is an unusual event which only takes place under special conditions. It appears in the dreams dreamt at important junctures of life. The earliest dreams of childhood, if we can still remember them, often contain the most astonishing mythologems; we also find the primordial images in poetry and in art generally, while religious experience and dogma are a mine of archetypal lore."[14]

E. Fromm believes that symbolic language is just another foreign language that each of us must learn. It brings us to understand the myth-source of wisdom and the deeper layers of our personalities.

"Anything may be, or become, unconscious. Anything you forget, or anything from which you divert your attention until it is forgotten, falls into the unconscious."[15] Each experience, place or object leaves a particular impression in us. They appear in a dream to tell us something they stand for as a symbol of individual experience. They are called accidental symbols. "The personal unconscious contains everything forgotten or repressed or otherwise subliminal that has been acquired by the individual consciously or unconsciously. This material has an unmistakably personal stamp."[16]

What is the meaning of our dreams? Freud saw dreams as the fulfilment

[14]Carl G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954: rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 119.

[15]Ibid., p. 108.

[16]Ibid., p. 116.

of irrational passions repressed during our waking life. "They are psychical phenomena of complete validity--fulfilments of wishes: they can be inserted into the chain of intelligible waking mental acts: they are constructed by a highly complicated activity of the mind."[17]

Freud believed that these irrational desires originated in our childhood. They were alive when we were children and were later stored in our unconscious. Later, stimulated by a current event that usually happened the day before, they emerged in our dreams distorted or wrapped in a symbolic language, which permits us to go on sleeping undisturbed. This assumption of Freud's is drawn on the irratonality of childhood.

Freud uses "reductive method" for dream interpretation. According to it, a dream has to be dismanteled into several pieces in order to rid it of its semilogical sequence. The parts that appeared in our dream are gradually substituted by thoughts that come freely to one's mind. When we put together the thoughts arrived at by free association, we come up with a new plot which gives us the true meaning of our dream.

There are two factors which contribute to the distortion of the dream and make it thus more difficult to understand. The first one is the element which stands for the very opposite. To be rich--stands for poor: to be clothed may symbolize nakedness, etc. The second factor is the lack of logical relations between the various elements of a dream. It may not express such logical relations as "but," "therefore," "because," "if." These,though, may be expressed through the relation between the pictorial images. For example, a strong man in a dream turns suddenly into a chicken.

Freud's interpretation of dreams as representing wishes of the past

[17]Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams (London: George Allen and Unwin LTD., 1954), p. 122.

assumed conscious and unconscious development of the mind. Freud thus called attention to the unconscious mind and its influence on behavior. Jung, who also was greatly interested in dreams, developed a "constructive method" which was more optimistic: ie., oriented towards the future. According to him, dreams function as indicators of the goals and aims of the dreamer.

In dreams, the wisdom of the unconscious is manifested. "Yet there is something independent of desire and fear, something as impersonal as a product of nature, that enables us to know the truth about ourselves. This objective statement is to be found in a product of psychic activity which is the very last thing we would credit with such a meaning, namely the dream."[18]

I dream a lot and my dreams are mostly in color. Every morning I try to remember my dreams and also try to unravel their meaning. People, objects, places, and actions in the dreams usually have some connection with my past experiences. They may symbolize something positive or negative. It takes long practice and observation and much insight to figure out a specific meaning.

Most of my dreams have connection with my interests and wishes in relation to the near future. They give me advice or warning. For example, when I dreamt about working with stone or in a coal mine, there followed a long period of personal struggle with little or no progress in my work. On the other hand, when I planted potatoes, picked fruits, or saw a beautiful wheat being harvested, my work turned out to be unusually successful. I remember that my best painting of the past year was done when I dreamt about the Czechoslovakian hockey team beating Canadian professionals 10:0.

[18]C. G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 59.

I also observed that if I waited for two or more days after such a favourable dream, I would somehow lose my chances. This would turn out in a practical way or it would come out symbolically in a dream. I believe in a positive conscious attitude which sets new ideas in motion. One, though, cannot rely on dreams for all answers. The unconscious cannot give advice on something it has no knowledge about. The unconsious functions best when one pushes oneself consciously to the very limit.

Creative personalities rely on the strength of the creative urge arising from the unconscious. "There are two distinct ways in which consciousness arises. The one is a moment of high emotional tension, . . . The other way is a state of contemplation, in which ideas pass before the mind like dream-images. Suddenly there is a flash of association between two apparently disconnected and widely separated ideas, and this has the effect of releasing a latent tension. Such a moment often works like a revelation."[19]

Such a thing has happened to me quite often while lying in bed before falling asleep. Suddenly I have seen one of my paintings, like in a movie, changing into hundreds of possible variations in my mind. This has sometimes happened during the painting process as well. Some shapes or colors have triggered off the working of my imagination. Scenes from nature seem to work in the same way. The wealth of the unconscious seems to be inexhaustible. "The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of archetypal image, and in elaborating this image into the finished work."[20]

[19]C. G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 115-116.

[20]C. G. Jung, The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature, Bollingen Series XX (1966; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 82.

Many modern psychologists, trying to come to some understanding of creativity investigated the problem of artist and his art. In my readings I have not come across a better analysis than that of C. G. Jung.

> The creative personality [he writes] is a riddle we may try to answer in various ways but always in vain.[21]
> [Man as an artist] is in the highest degree objective, impersonal, and even inhuman--or suprahuman--for as an artist he is nothing but his work, and not a human being... Every creative person is a duality or synthesis of contradictory qualities. On the one side he is a human being with a personal life, while on the other he is an impersonal process. As a human being he may be sound or morbid, and his personal psychology can and should be explained in personal terms. But he can be understood as an artist only in terms of his creative achievement... a specifically artistic psychology is more collective than personal in character. Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument. The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. As a human being he may have moods and a will and personal aims, but as an artist he is "man" in a higher sense--he is "collective man," a vehicle and molder of the unconscious psychic life of mankind. That is his office and it is sometimes so heavy a burden that he is fated to sacrifice happiness and everything that makes life worth living for the ordinary human being.[22]

Can the creative personality and personality in general be developed in schools? While explaining the impossibility of the task modern educators give themselves, to foster the development of personality through education, Jung writes: "No one develops his personality because someone tells him that it would be useful or advisable to do so. Nature has never yet been taken in by a well-meaning advice. The only thing that moves nature is a casual necessity, and that goes for human nature too. Without necessity nothing budges, the human personality least of all. It is tremendously conservative, not to say torpid. Only acute necessity is able to rouse it. The developing personality obeys no caprice, no command, no

[21]C. G. Jung, The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature, Bollingen Series XX (1966; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 100.

[22]Ibid., p. 101.

insight, only brute necessity; it needs the motivating force of inner or outer fatalities."[23]

Here I cannet use a better example than that of the Russian writer Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn. His experience, as he describes it, seems to corroborate the above statements. He sees his harsh ordeal in Russian concentration camps as a turning point in his becoming a writer. He is one of the rare examples of those who show how through suffering and injustice, one comes to "grips" with the essence of one's existence in a given culture.

> Looking back,I saw that for my whole conscious life I had not understood either myself or my strivings. What had seemed for so long to be beneficial now turned out in actuality to be fatal, and I had been striving to go in the opposite direction to that which was truly necessary to me. But just as the waves of the sea knock the inexperienced swimmer off his feet and keep tossing him back onto the shore, so also was I painfully tossed on dry land by the blows of misfortune. And it was only because of this that I was able to travel the path which I had always really wanted to travel.[24]

Most of Russian literature, music, and culture in general reflects centuries of suffering and injustice. Russian music expresses no joy, it is very serious, even gloomy. Hard life, though, is taken for granted by Russian people; they even seem to find a kind of enjoyment in it. So it comes as no surprise that some of the best known artists like Dostoyevsky or Tolstoi see punishment as the driving creative force. Dostoyevsky was sent to hard labor and this experience caused a drastic change in his writing. His best books were written after the imprisonment.

A Russian proverb says: "Freedom spoils, and lack of freedom teaches."[25]

[23]C. G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.173.

[24]Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 615.

[25]Ibid., p. 605.

"Lev Tolstoi was right when he dreamed of being put in prison. At a certain moment that giant began to dry up. He actually needed prison as a drought needs a shower of rain."[26]

Solzhenitsyn sees himself as part of Dostoyevsky's tradition when he writes: "Only now could an educated Russian write about an inserfed peasant from the inside--because he himself had become a serf."[27] And later on: "I nourished my soul there, and say without hesitation: 'Bless you prison for having been in my life."[28]

It is very difficult for us to understand such an attitude since most of us have lived in a free, democratic society. We are taught to make choices and we tend to think that free time, access to education and training give a guarantee of the mastery of artistic techniques and discipline of thought. But here I feel we are wrong; contentment is not conducive to spiritual striving. This is why we have so many distorted and sterile schools which do not seem to enlighten communication.

There is a twentieth-century major theory, to which origins of numerous splinter theories could be traced; it is that of John B. Watson, a founder of Behaviorism. Freud was influenced by Darwin; Behaviorists saw man as an animal who differs from other animals only in the nature of behaviors he displays. Both Freud and Watson sought to reduce man's behavior to chemical and physical terms. While Freud developed his theory primarily from his observation of the mentally disturbed, Behaviorists, seeking to make the study of man as objective as possible, emphasized

[26]Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investgation (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975), p. 616.

[27]Ibid., p. 491.

[28]Ibid., p. 617.

carefully controlled laboratory experiments with animals, especially with rats. Freud believed that human behavior was motivated by deep inner drives and urges which were anti-social in nature. Behaviorists, on the other hand, did not believe in the existence of anything subjective; they explained human behavior as learned response to an external stimulus. Ethics, morals, and values are to them merely a result of associative learning. Both schools agreed on the importance of the early years of life to which adult neurosis could be traced.

Abraham Maslow refused to subscribe to any one of these major schools of psychology; he decided to seek a more comprehensive theory of human behavior which would consider "all the problems that non-scientists have been handling—religion, poetry, values, philosophy, art."[29]

"Maslow's work is not a total rejection of Freud or Watson and the other Behaviorists, but rather an attempt to assess what is useful, meaningful, and applicable to mankind in both psychologies, and to go on from there."[30] He felt that behavior was determined not only by internal factors but also by external ones.

Both of these psychologies presented to Maslow a very negative image of man because they were not based on the observation of mentally healthy people. What makes Maslow's theory unique is precisely the fact that it was based on the concept that human beings have full potential.

Maslow's interest in mentally healthy poeple resulted from his curiosity when he was a student. He started to analyze two of his professors who seemed different from other people. He discovered there were characteristics which

[29]Frank Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 13.

[30]Ibid., p. 14.

were common to both of these outstanding people. Among those he later chose for his studies were: Leonardo da Vinci, Plato, Abraham Lincoln, etc. On the basis of his studies he came up with a definition of mental health and with his theory of human motivation. Maslow calls the mentally healthy person a self-actualized person. By self-actualization is meant "the full use and exploitation of talent, capacities, potentialities--etc. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and doing the best that they are capable of doing."[31]

The self-actualized person is usually 60 years old, is aware of his abilities, sees life clearly and realistically with more precise prediction of future events. Such people have very broad interests and knowledge in art, music, politics, and philosophy. They are very modest people who admit that they do not know everything; they work hard with pleasure and excitement and know what they are doing. They are open, courageous, not afraid of making mistakes. Mature individuals are independent and have a great respect for themselves. They need privacy because of their interest in hard work but they enjoy people's company as well. They seek friendship with people of similar character, usually very deep personal friendship. They are honest to themselves and to others. Because of their broad knowledge they are more aware of beauty in the world. Like everybody else they are not without problems. They have moments of anxiety, self-doubt, and guilt.

Maslow's theory of human motivation is applicable to almost every aspect of individual and social life. "The whole person is motivated, not just a part of him."[32] And further Maslow says: "The human being is moti-

[31]Frank Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 24.

[32]Ibid., p. 37.

vated by a number of basic needs [needs concerning his survival] which are species-wide, apparently unchanging, and genetic. The needs are also psychological rather than purely physiological."[33] A hungry man thinks only about food but his desire for food may be accompanied by a feeling of lack of love or security.

When man's hunger is satisfied, another desire emerges: desire for safety. The safety needs have as great importance for children as they do for adults. Insecure children may have anxieties that may result in later neurosis. Next in the hierarchy of needs are belongingness and love needs. By "love" Maslow means "being deeply understood and deeply accepted."[34] (He is using Carl Rogers' definition of love.) A loving relationship between two people is very important. It helps to eliminate fear, brings mutual support, understanding in both strong points and weaknesses and thus it helps to attain self-actualization.

Maslow divided people into two categories of esteem needs. "1. Self-esteem includes such needs as desire for confidence, competence, mastery, adequacy, achievement, independence, and freedom. 2. Respect from others includes such concepts as prestige, recognition, acceptance, attention, status, reputation, and appreciation."[35] A person with good self-esteem has more self-confidence and is more productive. Inadequate self-esteem results in helplessness and later in neurotic behavior.

The most important aspect of Maslow's theory of human behavior is the self-actualization need which can only emerge after satisfaction of love

[33]Frank Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 38.

[34]Ibid., p. 40.

[35]Ibid., p. 42.

and esteem needs. He describes self-actualization as "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming."[36]

The environmental or social conditions are closely related to individual motivation. Such conditions are: freedom to speak, freedom to do what one wishes as long as no harm is done to others, justice, honesty, freedom to defend oneself, etc. Such conditions are important not only for healthy growth of individuals but also for healthy growth of society. If society is sick and corrupted one has to look into the problems of individuals or vice versa.

When basic needs are satisfied, man reaches the level of higher needs, or growth-needs, and becomes motivated by them. There is a whole list of values that cannot be fully separated from one another: "TRUTH, GOODNESS, BEAUTY, ALIVENESS, INDIVIDUALITY, PERFECTION, NECESSITY, COMPLETION, JUSTICE, ORDER, SIMPLICITY, RICHNESS, PLAYFULNESS, EFFORTLESSNESS, SELF SUFFICIENCY, MEANINGFULNESS."[37]

Most people are creative, have curiosity, ability to learn, and other characteristics of self-actualized people. Maslow says that almost all babies are born with the potential and the need to grow psychologically but only a small number of them achieve their full potential. The average individual uses only a small part of it. Maslow warns us that we must not be unrealistic about human potential. "There is a trend toward growth in human nature, but we must also recognize a counter trend, a tend-

[36]Frank Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 42.

[37]Ibid., p. 52.

ency to regress, to fear growth, to fail to self-actualize."[38]

One very important factor about self-actualizing individuals is what Maslow calls "peak experience," a moment in one's life when one feels strong, sure of oneself, and that everything is under control. I experienced such moments when involved in light athletics--running. Most people see the hard work involved in training as a mere drudgery but they are not aware of the strong feeling of hightened awareness which comes after finishing a race in 'peak' time.

At that time one feels one can surmount any obstacle without encountering problems, fear, or doubt. Such a "peak experience" brings one more courage in life. One is looking forward to certain things like a child and feels confident while working. Everything seems easier; even people seem closer. One can experience such a moment of supreme happiness while listening to music, seeing a good movie, reading a book or meeting people whose presence is touching.

In the spring of 1982 there was a special CBC program on television. Three of the American astronauts held a talk about their fascinating experiences on the moon. Each of them had personal responses to an adventure that only 12 men have ever had: an adventure that humanity has always dreamed of experiencing and one that may well in the future be available to all. One of the men was Ed Mitchel, Apollo 14 astronaut.

> Why should going to the moon, why should looking at planet Earth cause the shift in consciousness? I spent a number of years after I came back from Apollo 14 discussing this question with scholars, and mystics, and philosophers, and scientists the world over.
>
> What was happening on the flight is . . . described as peak experience, a religious experience, the kind of experience that people have been having for thousands of years when they saw the

[38] Frank Goble, The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow (New York: Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, 1972), p. 56.

greater picture. . . .

[Ed Mitchel's glimpses of the greater picture were seen on January 31, 1971. He comes from a Fundamantalist Baptist Christian background, a faith which, by the time he talks of the flight, he had long since rejected.]

I had the experience on the flight of having a sudden expansion of awareness as I looked on the planet Earth, as I saw this magnificient fragile little planet floating in front of us out the window from the vicinity of the moon and the utter unimaginable beauty of that little planet sitting in the cosmos with the backdrop of billions of stars. . . .

My awareness was expanded with pretty flashes of insight. It was a great joy, a great sense of well-being as I felt that: "The Universe is OK," it is purposeful; it is harmonious; it is creative; it is a process; it is not strictly that mechanistic material universe that we in science are tempted to describe it. . . .!

I was very perplexed by the experience of the flight (psychological implications of, and study). I had dialogue with people as I had opportunity to, around the world, with learned people, trying to understand exactly what went on on the psychological ground. I was very enthralled with the idea of finding a consistent body of thinking that would bring our findings in science and our subjective experience into a common explanation. . . .

Science is a methodology. As a belief system it's a disaster and we need to put this much effort into gaining the knowledge about human capability, what we can become and in a constructive positive value system as we have into constructing a mechanical world.[39]

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[39] TV program "Man Alive," CBC, spring, 1982.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

In anthropological terms culture is defined as "the way of life of people . . . the sum of their behavior patterns, attitudes, and material things."[40] In the minds of laymen, anthropology and culture have been associated with subject matter and individuals who are far removed from the realities of everyday life. "The idea of culture is a strange one even to the informed citizen."[41] Yet culture is a very real thing. It controls the behavior of whole groups and whole nations.

Being a small country, Czechoslovakia has in the past been dominated by other, bigger nations. The Austria-Hungarian Empire alone that ceased in 1918, lasted for 300 years. Under such conditions, struggle for national identity became a tradition. To this day children at schools are exposed to works of national revivalists of that period: writers Havlíček, Jungmann, Kolár, Palacký, the composer B. Smetana, and others. And it is not only for the sake of faithfulness to the history that this period is stressed in schools but also to make the young students thus indirectly

[40]Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (1959; rpt. New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 20.

[41]Ibid., p. 21.

aware of the analogy of the present situation.

Today Czechs are bombarded by Russian propaganda. Plays, movies, and music are exported from the U.S.S.R. to the other Soviet satellite countries. To offset the effect of these, Czechs listen to and watch, although they won't publically acknowledge it, other-than-officially-approved programs. For example, where I come from, people are able to watch Austrian television because my hometown is situated about twenty-five miles away from the Austrian border. In similar fashion, nearly two thirds of the people are able to follow Western news and programs. An average Czechoslovakian today, compared to a North American, is much more inclined to read between lines, to fill in missing parts, to distrust what is put before him.

Having other cultures imposed upon them was probably the best way to make the Czechoslovakians aware of the existence of their own culture. The forbidden fruit tastes best, the unlived life of a nation is the most desirable. I would like to stress, though, that it is only when one moves into a country culturally and languagewise very different from home and lives there for a few years, which is what I have done, that one becomes truly aware of the existence of a value system operating in one's homeland.

"Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants."[42]

I had done a great deal of travelling while living in Czechoslovakia but I still mistakenly assumed that learning to speak English would enable me to function well in the North American society. But, on the contra-

[42]Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (1959; New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 30.

ry, better knowledge of English helped me only to become aware of the problems I had not seen before.

"Culture is more than a mere custom that can be shed or changed like a suit of clothes. . . . [It is a] way of organizing life, of thinking, and conceiving the underlying assumptions about the family and the state, the economic system, and even of man himself."[43]

I was put in a position that was very painful. The old value system was falling apart and the new one I had not yet learned. Anthropologists and social scientists use the term "culture shock" to describe the condition suffered by someone who changes cultures. "Culture shock is simply a removal or distortion of many of the familiar cues one encounters at home and substitution for them of other cues, which are strange."[44]

It was not only in the area of human relations that I felt on a strange ground but also in the area of material culture, art. The first year when I stayed in Ottawa, I went to see paintings by the Group of Seven. The atmosphere of Canadian landscape seemed so very different from the European one; no trace of human touch could be felt there.

I had already studied for some time when my confusion reached its peak. I was seeing works of many different artists, works from different periods and from different countries. Late American art, which was given prominence, was quite shocking to me. All of this and the fact that students' works were looked at from the formal point of view by most teachers, caused me a great anxiety. These teachers were trying to derive some rules and regulations from known works of art and I felt that there was much

[43]Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (1959; rpt. New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 23.

[44]Ibid., p. 174.

more to creativity than these. But it was only a crude feeling against the intellectual certainty of the teachers. I also did not know how to communicate this feeling. I felt tied down, unable to paint. At one point I stopped painting completely. This encounter of cultures, although crushing, was crucial for my further development; from this complete confusion the most creative soil had been established. I started experimenting.

Coming to Canada and not having a gift for languages, I turned away from people, from the frustrating experiences of not being understood by others and not being at the same time able to make them really understand; I turned to myself, my inner experiences became the only source of my art. I would say that it was fortunate for me that I did not speak English when I came. For some time I was forced to live in a vacuum, so to 'speak.' This could have destroyed me but fortunately it molded me in a certain beneficial way. It sent me in a certain direction which feels right to me. It is possible I would have taken that road even without emigrating but I think it would be a slower travel with many detours. I am safe on my way now and there is nothing that will distract me.

> The normal man can follow the general trend without injury to himself; but the man who takes to the back streets and alleys because he cannot endure the broad highway will be the first to discover the psychic elements that are waiting to play their part in the life of the collective. Here the artist's relative lack of adaptation turns out to his advantage; it enables him to follow his own yearnings far from the beaten path, and to discover what it is that would meet the unconscious needs of his age. Thus just as the one-sidedness of the individual's conscious attitude is corrected by reactions from the unconscious, so art represents a process of self-regulation in the life of nations and epochs.[45]

Any given culture seems to offer a limited type of space or freedom for artistic expression. This freedom is dictated by the state organization,

[45]Carl C. Jung, The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature, Bollingen Series XX (1966; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 83.

politics, profit organizations such as banks, people themselves. In the Soviet Union and all Eastern Europe the predominate view about art is directed by the Central Committee which decides what is right.

"Among the many burdens which the young Soviet Republic inherited a quarter of a century ago from old landlord--bourgeois Russia, was the decadent formalistic art of that time. All these 'original' tricks which the formalists of Europe and America take such pride in, were ousted by the Soviet artists long ago as ridiculous anachronisms."[46]

The new system creates new rules as to what art is supposed to be like in the new and better society. There is only one type of art, Socialist Realism. "Realism means giving a picture not only of the decay of capitalism and withering away of its culture but also of the birth of that class, of that force which is capable of creating a new society and a new culture."[47]

If one wants to be an artist in Russia, Czechoslovakia, or any other communist country, one has to be a member of the Communist Party and a member of an appropriate union (artists, writers, poets, painters, etc.) This creates bureaucratic practices.

> Excellent manuscripts by young authors, as yet entirely unknown, are nowadays rejected by editors solely on the ground that they won't get through. Many members of the Union, . . . know how they themselves have bowed to the pressures of the censorship and made concessions affecting the structure and message of their books--changing chapters, pages, paragraphs or sentences, giving them innocuous titles--just for the sake of seeing them finally in print, and by doing so have done irreparable damage to the content and to their artistic proce-

[46]Herschel B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics, Fourth Paperback Printing (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 495.

[47]Herbert Read, Art and Society (1966: rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 129.

> dures . . . Even Dostoyevsky, the pride of world literature was at one time not published in our country [the U.S.S.R.] (and his works are still not published in full); he was excluded from the school curriculum, made inaccessible to readers and reviled."[48]

These practices are not new for the Soviets; they inherited them from the Tsarist regime. Then, like today, all forms of artistic expression were censored and many artists critical of the system could not publish their works; some were even sent to Siberia. The Soviet system removed the Tsar, but did not get rid of Tsarism. The bureaucratic system carrying on the practices of the past got only stronger and more efficient. In fact it is so strong it can control other countries, including Czechoslovakia, as well. These institutions have one enduring characteristic; once they obtain power they use all their energy to stay there and fight any kind of opposition. There is no room or energy for change, a basic characteristic that is so necessary for creativity.

An ordinary citizen too can have his 'say' about the amount and type of freedom allowed to an artist. As an example I can point out reactions to 'Loves of a Blond,' a movie by the Czech film director Miloš Forman who established himself as a leader of the New Wave in Czechoslovakia in the mid-sixties.

"Loves of a Blond, according to many, adversely affected the morale of the young, because in one scene it revealed to them the state secret that during love-making people usually undress. At that time Miloš received scores of anonymous letters. In one of them the writer threatened to kill him and 'all the other kikes, when we'll once again start doing

[48]Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Oak and the Calf: Sketches of Literary Life in the Soviet Union (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1981), p. 459.

things the right way."[49]

In 1976, in Montreal, just a few days before the Olympic Games, an exhibition was installed showing the past and the future of Montreal, known as "Corridor Art." It was torn down overnight by the order of the City Hall and no official explanation was given.

In Canadian schools and universities students are using textbooks printed in the U.S.A. Also most of art books are written by Americans, reflecting thus the American point of view. Canadians seem to overlook these facts. Maybe they are so used to American culture products that they have hard time distinguishing between Canadian and American. It would not have to be detrimental if American was synonymous with good.

"We have radio, television, movies, a newspaper a day for everybody. But instead of giving us the best of past and present literature and music, these media of communication, supplemented by advertising, fill the minds of men with the cheapest trash, lacking in any sense of reality with sadistic phantasies a half-way cultured person would be embarrassed to entertain even once in a while."[50]

As a rule movies whether on the TV or in movie houses have very little to do with everyday life. They aim to amuse, to entertain the viewer. The movie hero, or should we say the Hollywood hero, is a man capable of super-human action bringing fame, eventually financial success at the end.

"Today even Americans on the lowest cultural plane have been continually and systematically subjected to verbal indoctrination, if by nothing else

[49]Josef Škvorecký, All the Bright Young Men and Women: A Personal History of the Czech Cinema (Toronto, Ont.: Peter Martin Associates Limited in assoc. with 'Take One' Magazine, 1971), pp. 84-85.

[50]Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1955), pp. 14-15.

than by radio, TV, motion pictures, comic books, mail-order catalogues, and direct-sales letters-agencies that have identified them as objects of their interest and have studied them with the aim of directing their thoughts and their taste."[51]

Russian movies differ very little from the American ones as far as their reason for being goes. Their aim is political indoctrination. Thus the Russian movie hero is not a superman but an ordinary man (who every viewer can identify with) capable of great deeds of courage in the service of his fatherland.

"Only when society has satisfied its material needs can it 'afford' a free, that is, non-utilitarian, art. Hypnotized by the ideological function of art in earlier societies, Marxist totalitarianism is blind to the influence of art in democratic societies upon the dynamics of production and upon innovation in science and technology. To the commisar, the free artist is guilty of wasting materials and units of energy on the vanity of 'self-expression."[52]

The primary concern of a movie producer should be art, the esthetic value, since film is a form of artistic expression. Yet it is not so in either North America or in Russia. In both cases the movie production is in 'wrong' hands. In the former it is in the hands of a small group whose interest is how much the box office is making, in the latter case it is in hands of the state whose interests are political--an indirect exploitation of people in their everyday life.

Similarly in the sport scene in North America we encounter a superman,

[51]Harold Rosenberg, Discovering the Present: Three Decades in Art, Culture, and Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973) p. 126.

[52]Ibid., p. 98.

a super hero. Very little attention is given to an amateur top world athlete, except at the time of Olympic Games. And there he has to be the 'first' and the 'best.' A professional athlete does not have to be any better than the amateur to get attention. The difference is that he is signing a multi-million dollar contract that makes big news. The professional athlete gets interviews, publicity; he is shown how much he is worth in dollars. If one is not making money, one is a nobody in the North American society.

This promotional trend dictated by mass media is also influencing the art scene. There too we are looking for a sensation. Today you are a success because you came with something new in response to the endless need for change that is a life blood of the art scene. Tomorrow you will have to produce something different again and better than yesterday. I have heard so many times people declare that such-and-such art is dead--for example, painting. It is nothing but a cry for change. It is just another artificial statement looking for a sensational reaction. Some artists that I know got caught by this. Who should decide what an artist should do, the public, the art critic, or the artist himself? How misguided is culture here with its fashions! Does it really differ otherwise than in subtlety from the totalitarian dictatorship?

"If creation is an issue, it is one in which only negative behavior is publically feasible, that is, persistent attack on institutions, ideas, and personalities that are obstacles to creation. But society as a whole produces and reproduces these obstacles. Even what is begun with the best intentions turns out to be detrimental--support of art by banks promotes a bank-type art and so on."[53]

[53]Harold Rosenberg, Discovering the Present: Three Decades in Art, Culture, and Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 12.

Learning about one's own culture takes about one third of man's life, and it usually requires an enormous effort to accomplish. Around the age of twenty-five man finishes his studies, starts a new job, gets married and has children. His brain stops to be actively involved in learning; he seems to be satisfied with his accomplishments.

> Yet man's tremendous brain has endowed him with a drive and capacity for learning which appear to be as strong as the drive for food or sex. This means that when a middle-aged man stops learning he is often left with a great drive and highly developed capacities. If he goes to live in another culture, the learning process is often reactivated.[54]
>
> At present we educate people only up to the point where they can earn a living and marry; then education ceases altogether, as though a complete mental outfit had been acquired. The solution of all the remaining complicated problems of life is left to the discretion--and ignorance--of the individual.[55]

Coming to live in another culture automaticly triggers off an enormous acceleration in learning. The immigrant is forced to learn because his survival depends on it. He usually has to do better than the average citizen of the new country. He has to master a new language and a new culture. He has to be willing to change and this works to his advantage because the majority of people around him like to be conservative. "The disturbing fact is that the vast majority of people, including educated and otherwise sophisticated people, find the idea of change so threatening that they attempt to deny its existence."[56]

"It may be that men have developed their conservatism as a necessary guard against the dispersal of the order they live by. Whatever the cause,

[54]Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (1959; rpt. New York: Anchor Books, 1973), p. 30.

[55]Carl G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 57.

[56]Alvin Toffler, The Future Shock (New York: Random House, Inc., 1970), p. 21.

the tendency to distrust the widest and freest ranging of the mind is so strong that the changes necessary for the development of human life could not be attained without the effort of the more daring and ingenious of mankind."[57]

There are two groups into which all immigrants can be divided. The first group is going to be unusually successful in whatever area of business, politics, or science they will decide to work. In many instances some of these people become leaders in their fields.

The second group consists of losers. They will never adapt to the new culture. They only talk about their dreams and generally do far below the level of an average citizen. They would do better if they stayed at home since in the new place they merely vegetate or become cynical throughout the rest of their lives.

Emigration brings about many changes which reinforce creativity since change is one of its characteristics. "The creative process is the process of change, of development, of evolution in the organization of subjective life."[58] And it is unavoidable that the unconscious will play an important role in the creative process since "the unconscious is never at rest, never stagnant. It lives and works in a state of perpetual interaction with the conscious. Conscious contents that have lost their intensity, or their actuality, sink into the unconscious, and this we call forgetting. Conversely, out of the unconscious, there rise up new ideas and tendencies which, as they emerge into consciousness, are known to us as fantasies and impulses. The unconscious is the matrix out of which con-

[57]Brewster Ghiselin, The Creative Process: A Symposium (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1952), pp. 23-24.

[58]Ibid., p. 12.

sciousness grows; . . ."[59]

In the depths of the mind, in the unconscious "all experience of the organism is in some way retained, even the incalculable multitude of experiences that never reach the threshold of awareness at all."[60]

When a man changes cultures he learns a new system while the old cultural system, or at least parts of it become part of the unconscious or remain on the fringes of consciousness and become thus easily manipulable.

"This great psychic reservoir [that unconscious is] is not static like a letter file, or still like a pond. Certain changes evidently go on in it continually. . . . in the unconscious psyche and on the fringes of consciousness, change is easier because there the compulsive and inhibiting effect of system sustained by will and attention is decreased or ceases altogether. Though the system does not dissolve into nothing, it decreases in importance, becomes only an element in the unconscious psychic life, . . ."[61]

Each one of us was molded by at least one culture and during the creative process some cultural aspects will surface. As an example we can look at Jackson Pollock, whose approach to canvas, his dripping technique is reminiscent of the Indian sand painters of the West.

The Russian painter Vassily Kandinsky went to Germany where he was exposed to Expressionism. The influence of this in combination with Russian folk colors helped him to arrive at a very expressive personal

[59]Carl G. Jung, The Development of Personality, Bollingen Series XX (1954; rpt. U.S.A.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 52.

[60]Brewster Ghiselin, The Creative Process: A Symposium (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1952), p. 22.

[61]Ibid., p. 22.

style. The Armenian A. Gorky had emigrated to the U.S.A. and from his unconscious emerged the "Garden in Sochi." In Hofmann's work a strong presence of German colors can be felt. And in the case of de Kooning, it is the ambiguity of his work--academic training and free experimenting; control and chaos. It seems in retrospect that it was the immigrants who were responsible for the creation of the modern American art scene. These artists were bringing their past experiences and with the onrush of a new culture they created original works of art.

This process does not happen overnight. New configurations appear on the fringes of consciousness as new knowledge is being gradually acquired and since new knowledge is daily forced upon the artist, he keeps struggling. He has to, for he has to translate the new system into his own language. Thus change of culture may be viewed as a driving force, and unconscious plays a key role in this process.

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