



* On Arts of Participation *
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Creating Artful Representations in Co-Respondence with the More-Than-Ordinary

Some thoughts are offered here about artistic expression as a departure from more ordinary ways of knowing and interpreting. In this sense, it is approached as an epistemic exploration of how self, other, and world can be known differently and thus variously. As such, it cannot very well be a reiteration of the familiar, not a 'monologue of ordinary understanding and identity.' That is, what gets created or expressed in this effort seems to derive in considerable part from 'not knowing,' from seeking unexpected images and descriptions, from tracking hints, uncertainties, and intuitions of 'how it really *really* is.' Thus artful creativity is approached as a potential dialogue with unfamiliar aspects of self and world.

Artful Creativity as Dialogue with Ordinarily Alien Aspects of Self and Being

In so far as artful representation and enactment can generate forms that more overtly manifest the pluralistic status of concurrent being/becoming, these necessarily participate in the interactive complexity of that dynamism. This appears to occur in a sense of correspondence, or co-respondence, between the creative form or act and the more-than-ordinary dynamic qualities of pluralistically concurrent status. In the most general regard, this quality exists in how the form or style of artful creativity manifests an ambiguity about exactness of literal status—it tends not to re-present things, persons, thoughts, feelings in the way these are more ordinarily perceived and singularly identified or defined. Such an element of displacement of ordinary contexting can be overtly or subtly evident. But such a 'shift' is associated here with participation in radically interactive status that generates the potential for 'psycho-mythic knowing.'

Artful expression does this in part by being explicit about its creation of re-presentations that are dynamically suggestive and interpretive. That is, representation is regarded as particularly ‘art-ful’ here in so far as it is self-consciously imaginal or psychical—an explicit expression of the interpretive activity of psychical process of ‘imagining the actual.’ This intention can also be expressed as a shift from representing ‘how things are’ to re-presenting representation as of ‘how things really *really* are.’ This creative interaction with the activities of imaginal representation in human consciousness can activate overt awareness of the intrinsic role of the latter in all knowing and interpreting. The artfully creative act thusly ‘engages in a dialogue’ with the radically complex activities of perceptual and cognitive dynamics for knowing— aspects of consciousness that are typically not acknowledged in ordinary attitudes about ‘how things are’ and how they are known.

In so doing, artful expression re-presents both the ‘psychical acts of knowing and interpreting’ as well as the ‘ways certain things are’— meaning the more specific objects or phenomena being ‘figured,’ ‘gestured,’ or ‘embodied,’ but in manner that foregrounds the ‘creative acts of perception.’ This quality of ‘departure from ordinary knowing’ is expressed in how some theorists distinguish signs as representations of ordinarily known, relatively singular status, from symbols as expressions of ambiguously significant, multiply associative expressions. The term sign, in this context, indicates representations that are familiar, practical, exact— such as numbers, directional icons, and technical names. The term symbol is then posed in contrast as a form that implies much more than if ‘figures’— such as the Christian cross, an Expressionist painting, or a poetically metaphorical phrase.

Such symbolic forms suggest a polyvalence of associations and multiplicity of meaningfulness or ‘mythical dynamism.’ The very act of creating these in itself would seem to involve some submission of ordinary attitudes and assumptions to an ‘otherness’ of self and world. This notion of ‘departure’ from more ordinary contexts for knowing by engaging artfully creative activity suggests it is a form of dialogue or co-respondence with ordinarily alien aspects of self and phenomenal existence. This interactivity of more and less ordinary (or reductive and non-reductive) knowing and understanding is then ‘formalized’ in the re-presentations of ‘art.’ as particular images, gestures, sounds, or compositions of words.

This activity of engaging one’s more ordinarily defined sense of self and world with what seem relatively alien qualities or status suggests a sort of ‘following’ or ‘being led by’ that ‘unfamiliar otherness.’ That is not to say that artistic creativity does never focus upon conventional representations of selfhood and socially validated statuses of reality. Indeed, a given person might well engage extra-ordinary qualities of knowing and re-presenting selfhood without being explicitly self-conscious of the resulting

‘dialogue’ in what gets created. Such an un-self-conscious engagement can result in the sense that the “I” has done all the creating ‘on its own,’ without any co-respondence with some “Not-I” or “Not-Not-I” qualities of consciousness, and that the resulting forms are explicit representations of ordinary and literal status. Yet another person might come encounter those forms and experience the mythical dynamism of radically concurrent status. The ‘art of art’ would seem, thereby, to be more a quality of experiencing ‘dialogue with the more-than-ordinary’ (whether by artist or ‘viewer’) rather than any particular form, style, or intentionality.

Subordination of Co-Respondent Dialogue with Extra-Ordinary Otherness to Singular Status

Thus the reflexive reduction of more ordinary knowing can quite readily overwhelm an artfully induced co-respondent dialogue between of ordinary and more-than-ordinary senses of self and world. Encounters with the provocative forms of ‘art works’ are often pre-conditioned by reductive expectations and interpretations about ‘what it means.’ Thus, if a sense of otherness of self and world result from the encounter, it might not become fully conscious or articulated. From the perspective of a need to maintain a socially approved identity and reality frame, such subordination of the interactive engagement is a reasonable defense against its potentially destabilizing encounter with otherness of self and the seemingly actual, though normally invalid, statues of concurrent being and becoming. The familiar habits of knowing and interpreting experience can be reinforced by the conventions of interpretation of ‘art’ fostered by historians and critics, commercial valuations, and museum exhibition themes.

Yet the appeal of entering into this potential dialogue with more-than-ordinary complexities of being and meaning indicates the persistent importance of it as a means of precipitating some experiences of more complexly inclusive knowing and understanding. It might be that evasion of the tendency to subordinate it to more ordinary modes of knowing is most overtly confronted by engaging the dialogue ‘as artist,’ as ‘creative interlocutor’ of the alien otherness of self and world—the “Not-Not-I” and the ‘things that can only be partly re-presented’ in the radically dynamical acts of imaginal consciousness. In actually ‘doing the making’ of forms that re-present radically complex dynamics of concurrency one seems to both precipitate and participate in the mythically multiple status of ‘being concurrent becoming.’

***Further elaborations of these notions in Chapter 3 of text **Manifesting the Many in the One** on page of that title ***

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