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Self-conscious reasoning

On the subject of creativity per se: The great difficulty which I observe in discussing this subject is that most people lack a conscious referent for it. I have discussed many aspects of the creative experience, that is, an empirical experience against which these kinds of concepts can be contrasted, as were it an experimental method of approach to the subject.

If you describe *agapē*, the kind of emotion involved, and recognize it in some sense, but only as a member of a listening audience to music, not as a performer or composer of music, the focus is on trying to experience the feeling, a focus which may lead sometimes to manic excursions, trying to intensify the erotic, trying to turn a surfeit of profane love into sacred love. It is quite something to watch, something I prefer not to watch.

But the obvious point is that one must set up experiments, which define the difference between the two states. I can



In Shakespeare's "Hamlet," the protagonist considers killing his treacherous uncle, but pulls back. "Using the knowledge that you have, as being yourself, and therefore having access empirically to everything that is happening to the Hamlet inside of you, you can look at some of the assumptions Hamlet is making. . . You can then see how you might change Hamlet's assumptions to cause him to behave differently."



Self-portrait, by Carel Fabritius, ca. 1649-50: "The essence of the creative method essentially is nonlinear. You conceptualize your own state of mind . . . in a Socratic way. You look at it critically. See your own follies. . . ."

indicate from experience some of the correlatives, the pre-conditions, the circumstances, the conditions which one must more or less consciously, explicitly, impose upon oneself in order to generate creative thinking. That is, generally creative thinking, as distinct from the deductive, and other banal types.

To actually experience it, however, and to be able to look at it self-consciously, as I shall indicate, is another thing than to describe it. Before one really knows what it is about, one should experience it wittingly, consciously, rather than merely attempt to describe it as in a faithful classroom academic exercise, describing accurately something one does not really know: typical university occupation, even in my days, and more abundantly so since.

There are several things to be considered. Let me address the emotion, the sacred love, the intense feeling of sacred love, which is always associated with the creative act. It is, as a matter of fact, the emotional state one must muster, or must be found to have mustered, before one is going to go any place with creative insight. It comes sort of intensely; it

is sometimes described as a light turning on in one's head—the sort of emotion that goes with that.

People will sometimes attribute that mistakenly to different kinds of experience; but that is a fair picture of this agapic emotional state, sacred love, as distinct from profane: the most intense experience in music, the non-erotic, the non-Wagnerian, non-romantic experiencing of music.

The other thing to bear in mind is, this doesn't work without *self-consciousness*. As some will recall, a couple of decades ago and earlier, I placed great emphasis on this business of self-consciousness. I addressed how this self-consciousness might be achieved, how one could enforce it; some of us conducted experiments in group discussions, as part of our effort, to try to understand these matters, and there was some comprehension realized in this way.

The essence of the creative method essentially is nonlinear.

You conceptualize your own state of mind, and you conceptualize it in a Socratic way, such that you don't simply admire, accept, the state of mind of yourself that you are observing, as if it were a hero in a drama, some silly soap opera or something.

You look at it critically. See your own follies; see the assumptions you make, as in tragedy. One might say, "Have consciousness of your ordinary conscious states, as you would of the progress of a tragedy; looking at your everyday self, your ordinary self of the classroom, or whatever, as you would look at Hamlet, for example." Then you are trying to be conscious, to have insight into Hamlet's mind, as you are observing it. You, being Hamlet. And using the knowledge that you have, as being yourself, and therefore having access empirically to everything that is happening to the Hamlet inside you, the one who ordinarily speaks, you can look at some of the assumptions that Hamlet is making, in order to behave the way he does, or to justify, or to perpetuate the way he behaves as he does. You can look then and see what the alternatives are, as to how you might change Hamlet's assumptions to cause him to behave differently.

In that kind of simple self-consciousness, two things happen.

The location of consciousness shifts from ordinary consciousness, the reacting, as the student in the university classroom, for example, reacts in answering an examination. Usually, the student is reacting, is generally not thinking, is reacting at a lower level. Now, put yourself up to a higher level, and look down upon yourself being that student, and describe to me what is going on in that student's mind, why the student is reacting the way he is, and what would cause his mind to behave differently.

Simple, very simple kind of thing. The important thing is not to get completely distant from the subject, the student as the subject of the examination; the important thing is to change the subject, into becoming us, the conscious self that is looking at the student's conscious self. The important

thing, then, is to place the importance upon achieving the corrections to be made: *simple self-consciousness*.

It is only in that state that any creative work can be done.

For example, to look at this experimentally: Reference my *In Defense of Common Sense*, the way I structure the argument there. If you can look at the student's mind as the mind of Kant, as I do, in *In Defense of Common Sense*, now you are criticizing the fallacy of Kant, you are criticizing the fallacies of the student. In that way, you shift the "I" from the student to the one who is looking at the student, looking at the Kantian; and what I described in *In Defense of Common Sense* as the problem to be solved, to be addressed there, is exactly what you must do in self-consciousness.

Now, with a certain quality of zeal, and a determination to persist, without losing track of what one is doing, the result is a movement toward the kind of concentration, which, extended over days, weeks, whatever, leads to creative discoveries.

I rather think that people have not only to do creative things, but have to accomplish them with aid of the viewpoint that I have just indicated, before they really know and understand what I reference as the creative processes. That one

sees, or you should be able to see, from what I have said so far, if you meet all the conditions that I have indicated, that you have an experimental setup, so to speak, in which you can begin to isolate the critter, with which you can begin to look at the creative process.

You also can see, for reasons already given in *In Defense of Common Sense*, and re-emphasized from a different, fresh standpoint here, that creative thinking is intrinsically nonlinear, as I have described nonlinearity, in describing the laws of the universe, here; that this indicates that the self-consciousness involved is nonlinear. And since it is only from this standpoint that the laws of the universe can be comprehended, for reasons already given, then the laws of the universe are elementarily not simple, but nonlinear of this neg-entropic form.

You have essentially, therefore, a universe which is not entirely dissimilar from Kepler's; in which the characteristic of the universe, as Kepler's model implicitly states, is negentropy, rather than entropy, and in which the Second Law of Thermodynamics is not tolerated, except in the loony bins of society.