

## Art, Archetypes and the Broader Field of Mind

It can sometimes come as a surprise to discover that Rupert, Francis and Jean Klein all emphasise the role of art in expressing and communicating the non-dual teaching. Music often features in Rupert's retreats, and the penultimate evening of a retreat is always a celebration evening in which music, poems and other forms of art are shared. The role of sacred art in conventional religion is to take us to God, to induce a sense of the Divine. But what is the role of art in the Direct Path? Isn't art about objects, about the illusory world? Here is an explanation from Jean Klein.

When talking of works of art, we must first of all distinguish between true works of art and what we might call artistic works. A work of art always arises from the background: consciousness. Be it music, painting, architecture, poetry or sculpture, it is always seen by the artist in an instant, like a flash of lightning, as it surges forth from deep within him. Afterwards he elaborates it, gives it body and form, in time and space. The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci was undoubtedly conceived in perfect simultaneity. We can say the same of the Art of the Fugue by Bach and of certain of Mozart's compositions. An artist worthy of this name is never preoccupied by the material he uses, nor even by the subject matter or the anecdotal side of his work. His only interest is to arrange the different elements in perfect harmony so that they all fuse together and no longer impress the viewer as separate objects. The objective side of his work is thus eliminated. Tagore said that the aim of a true work of art is to give a form to what escapes definition. Then the viewer will no longer be seduced by the material used nor even by the anecdotal content; instead he will be immediately plunged into a non-state which is the aesthetic experience. Later he will qualify the object as beautiful because it stimulated awareness of his own beauty. We can thus see that a work of art is really but a vehicle, a means by which we are led towards the experience. It is truly creative. We feel what the artist himself felt at the time of creation: a spontaneous offering free from all desire for approval.

All objects point to the Ultimate, but the difference between an ordinary object and a work of art is that the ordinary object is passive in its pointing towards the Ultimate whereas the work of art is active. ...

Only a work of art born from beauty, in simultaneity, can point to beauty. Beauty is the same in all. When the artist spontaneously offers his most profound nature and through his talent finds its nearest expression, it awakens in the viewer, the listener, his own profundity. But when you live in beauty and look from beauty, everything points in different ways to your wholeness. Living is no longer from the divided mind. All belongs to your fullness.

[Jean Klein, *I Am*]

Rupert worked for many years as a ceramic artist. Examples of his work can be found in museums and galleries around the world. In the following transcript, he explains, using painting as an example, how trained artists might use their artistic skills to express and share their non-dual understanding:

Some objects are made from the understanding that we are discussing here, or at least from a partial understanding of it. So that object has the capacity to convey the understanding with which it is made. So let's say someone is painting the world, but they are not painting thinking 'I'm going to depict a series of objects as accurately as I can'. What they could say is 'I'm going to paint just light. I'm going to do a landscape painting from the window here, but I'm not going to paint fields and trees and walls and sky. I'm just going to paint light so that my painting has a feeling that all that is being seen is one thing, light.' So if you do that as a painter, even if you just

have the intention to do that, your painting will somehow reflect back the attitude with which it was painted.

And then you can go even further as a painter. You can say 'instead of painting light, I'm going to try to paint the fact that all I know is the knowing of my experience. All that is being experienced is knowing. And I'm going to try to paint what I see in such a way that it sends the message to the viewer that what you are seeing is made out of pure knowing – it's not a depiction of objects.' So such an object, when you see it, ... has the power to take you to the experience with which it was painted. That's the power of art. It has this power in it to deliver the experience from which it was made. That's what a work of art is. That's why we have art in our culture. So there are certain objects whose purpose in life is to reveal this understanding that we're talking about. And it's relatively easy, in the presence of such an object, if you are sensitive and receptive, to be taken to where the painting, in this case, is trying to take you.

[Rupert Spira, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012, [Art](#)]

Of course, many of us are not trained artists and don't have the technical skills needed to communicate our understanding in this way. But all of us have the ability to appreciate art, and to use it to help bring us back to abiding as our true nature. This is Rupert's description of how that process works:

The way we normally perceive the world is through the subject-object relationship. We believe and more importantly feel that 'I am the separate subject of experience, located in my body, and the object or world that I am viewing or experiencing is outside of myself and separate from myself. So this is the normal dualistic, subject-object relationship that characterises most people's experience. If we stay very close to experience itself, there aren't these two ingredients, mind and matter in experience. Experience is always one seamless whole. In other words, there is no inherent duality in experience. The separate inside self and the corresponding outside world have artificially crystallised out of experience, out of consciousness and seem to have assumed their own independent existence as separate entities – subject and object. And this is the way we have been educated by our culture to believe and feel. And as a result, almost all our thinking, feeling, activities and relationships contain this original perspective at their origin.

So certain objects, certain works of art – be they meditations, books, paintings, dances, symphonies, sonatas – have the power to either cut through or dissolve this apparent duality, this apparent distinction between the subject that sees or hears, and the object that is seen or heard. ... Objects that have this power within them to lead the apparently separate subject of experience, the viewer or the hearer to the core or the heart or the reality of their experience. And different artists use different means – there are many different ways of doing this. Take for instance Cézanne who dispensed with conventional perspective. In conventional perspective, our view is led by a series of diagonal lines to a point or an object which is usually the focal point of the painting. Our view is led outwards, away from ourselves towards the object, and in doing so, ourself, as the separate subject of that object is emphasised. So in asserting the object, the subject is subliminally emphasised. So Cézanne, for instance, did away with that mechanism. So particularly in those days, someone would have looked at his paintings and would have expected their attention to be led into the picture frame in order to finally come to rest on an object. But it would not have found an object to rest on because there were no pathways, no diagonal lines taking you to the object. So the mind would have vacillated for a while, expecting to rest on an object, but never finding anything to rest on. And in this way, the mind would have at first been frustrated because it doesn't find the object to rest on or focus on. But in time, someone who

stayed with the experience would have found their attention slowly being drawn back to the perceiver, in other words, back to its source. So this was just an example of a very skilful device that Cézanne used to bring the mind of the viewer back to its essence.

[Rupert Spira 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017 [The Dissolving Power of Art](#)]

We often describe great works of art as being timeless. Their appeal and transformative power are not limited to a particular time or culture. They have an impersonal quality that seems to transcend the limitations of the mind through which they were born. Rupert has sometimes described such art as coming from the broader field of mind – beyond the personal or the ‘personal unconscious’. In the following transcript, Rupert describes the various ‘layers’ that make up this broader field of mind, and the role of art in bringing material from the deeper, shared layers of mind into the waking state mind.

Think of awareness as a wide open field of infinite potential in which there is no form. It’s just an aware field in which all experience lies in potential, but nothing is yet actualised. And then consider that it is the focusing of awareness that brings form into apparent existence – in just the same way that if you take a camera, you point the camera at a scene in nature, you defocus the camera completely, you won’t see anything. The completely unfocused camera shows no image. It’s just a white space. You are pointing the camera at the landscape but all you see is a white space. It’s only when you start to focus the camera, that nebulous forms begin. Just areas of faint colour, the slightest degree of form begins to emerge out of this colourlessness. And the more you focus the camera, the more the forms are delineated. Until when you get it in focus, you see the objects distinguished one from another. ...

Now go back in the opposite direction. Consciousness, instead of contracting or focusing, does the opposite. The mind – which is what I call the activity of this focusing or contracting – now does the opposite. It begins to expand or relax. So the forms of the waking state begin to disintegrate. Everything gets vaguer and looser. Sooner or later we enter something called the dream state. In fact we don’t enter – there’s no person that enters this state. All these states are appearing in or on consciousness. So it is as the activity of consciousness, mind, relaxes, consciousness is defocusing. That’s why the forms in the dream state are much looser than they are in the waking state. That’s why the laws of physics in the dream state are much looser than they are in the waking state. You can fly in your dreams, but you can’t in the waking state.

So as the mind expands and relaxes, it goes back through layers: first of all the waking state, then the dream state, then what’s called the ‘personal unconscious’ which is outside the waking and dreaming states but still inside consciousness. It’s still a realm inside consciousness, but it’s not normally available in the waking and dreaming states. And then as the mind relaxes and expands more, we go through the collective unconscious, and then back further through the realm of Plato’s archetypal ideas and then go back to pure consciousness. ...

Sometimes this material [*from the personal unconscious*] filters all the way through into the waking state. Many artists tap into the personal unconscious in order to find material for their work.

Material from a region of mind that is *outside* any personal mind, part of a field which informs *all* of our minds, is part of a shared field in which each of our minds is precipitated. This material finds its way into our dreams, and sometimes into our waking state. ... The archetypal forms and images that are shared by all minds, beyond any individual mind, this material sometimes filters into our dreams and we wake up and we know we have had a dream that is powerful and

significant and spoke of something that is way beyond and way bigger than ourselves. And sometimes this filters through into the waking state and becomes the material that great artists manifest. In fact, one of the purposes of art is to bring this material into the waking state, in service of humanity.

And then it is also possible for the pure, formless realm of consciousness to filter through all these layers, manifest in the waking state, and express itself in spiritual teachings or works of art. So the really sacred works of art, are the works that are informed either by the collective unconscious or by the presence of pure consciousness, just beyond that, or just behind that. You see some paintings or some buildings you go into and you feel 'what impulse in the architect's mind led to this?' Some personal thought or feeling? No, it comes from way further back in the mind. That impersonal impulse has been channelled through the personal limitations of a particular mind – of the architect, the painter or the musician. But the impulse, the knowledge which is expressed in the form – the architecture, the music, the painting – it comes from much further back. It's a kind of impersonal intelligence that informs a sacred work of art or a true teaching or a poem.

[Rupert Spira, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018, Mercy Center, *Rest in Your Being*]

In the following transcript, Rupert speaks further about the realm of shared imagery or archetypes which constitutes the contents of the deepest level of mind, just above pure awareness:

RS: Archetypes are the forms in which truth or reality is expressed that are shared across all minds, irrespective of their local, temporal conditioning. It's unlikely that someone brought up in a tribe in the Amazon would think and act in the same way that you and I would having been brought up in Western Europe. So there's not much in common at the surface of our minds – our thoughts would be entirely different, our activities different, the types of relationship we have. But the deeper each of us goes into our own mind, the more and more common ground there is. The ultimate common ground is pure being, which is identical in you and I and in the person brought up in the Amazon. But just above, so to speak, that level of pure and unmanifest being, there is a realm of shared imagery. You could say they are the first forms that truth has taken before they have been diversified by each of our specific cultures.

This realm of shared images is not only the place from which myths come, it is also the realm which the artist visits. The artist is one whose mind has the capacity to sink down below the threshold of waking state consciousness into this realm of shared imagery. And to bring forth from that realm, something that is tailored to his or her culture. So although the work of art may be culture-specific, nevertheless it has a potency that will be recognised by people from other cultures who have this sensitivity. That is why a *great* work of art has universal appeal. It speaks below the threshold of our local, temporal conditioning.

[Rupert Spira. 25<sup>th</sup> August 2017 *The Truth in the Heart of Yourself*]

## Contemplation

*The role of the artist is to transmit to humanity the deepest experience of reality. Art is remembrance. It is love. It is like a sword that distinguishes between appearances and reality, or a cradle that reminds us of home.*

[Rupert Spira]

## Annex: Jean Catoire

*The subject for this paper was chosen by one of our local group members, James D'Angelo, who is a professional musician and composer. In the local meeting, James gave a short talk about the minimalist composer, Jean Catoire. He also played one of Jean Catoire's piano sonatas. This Annex contains the notes from his talk. There are also earlier recordings of James playing piano sonatas by Jean Catoire available on YouTube: [Piano Sonata No. 11](#) and [Piano Sonata No. 15](#).*

### JEAN CATOIRE AND ARCHETYPES

Jean Catoire was born in Paris in 1923 and died there in 2005. I met him through his uncle Nicolai Rabeneck, a disciple of PD Ouspensky. I was a member of a New York group of which he was the guide of the Fourth Way teaching. When he introduced me to Catoire's music I was baffled. It was like nothing else I had ever heard. It was minimalistic but unlike any form of minimalism with which I had contact. I kept an open mind about this music and eventually met him in Paris. His presence impressed me and gradually I was drawn into his sound world. He has transcribed just over 600 opuses with some works lasting up to 12 hours in duration.

The reason his works are relevant to this paper is that he has written about what he has transcribed in terms of archetypes. I've used the word "transcribed" because he called himself a transcriber of archetypes and not a composer. This ability to transcribe he described as "auditive vision." He stated that it is not a "sense" but an ambivalent faculty. Quote: "What is required is that transcribers adapt themselves to the limited faculties of the mental function.. In other words, they have to realize within themselves the state of a conscious medium in order to transcribe for others what is shown to them on the archetypal level."

He has written that there are two types of archetypes: 1) the first, absolute and previous to all relations in manifestation and 2) the second, also absolute but possessing in itself the plan of the subsequent realizations in latent form and in their totality. He goes on to write that the archetype is a concentration of Energy towards a possible aspect of manifestation and that it is a partial structuring of that primordial Energy.

He experienced the process of transcription in three levels:

1. At the level of the archetypes the tones are conceived as hieroglyphs, pure abstract values. They are neither heard nor read but inwardly realized.
2. At the level of pre-sound, the abstract values, expressed by the notes, are read but not yet heard.
3. When the structures are satisfactorily accomplished on the two preceding levels, the level of sound, in turn, can be realized.

If the three levels are fully integrated, the groupings of tones cannot be considered as music but as groupings that are the result of structures prior to them and superior in expressive force.

In summation and quoting Catoire: "Concrete sound originates in archetypal sound. An abstract reality that might be limited to one note, a group of notes or a work. This archetype is seen in the absolute, in its non-musical element and its structures beyond time and space. There a work is seen all at once in its totality, free of emotion, even of expression. The true composer is one who thus sees the work in its entirety, finds the sound material adequate for its transcription and realizes what he has seen in images of sound."

Now, a few words about the sonata for piano by Catoire I am about to play. First of all it is recognizable as musical language in that the whole piece consists of nothing but major and minor triads or chords. I've tried analysing it using my rational mind to see if I can detect some overall form. I failed in this respect. Somehow it feels like a kind of sacred geometry. That there is a deeper structure that can be experienced only by one's universal, psychic mind.

It is devoid of melody and dynamics, and the slow rhythm is in a rudimentary, steady state. Thus it has nothing to do with human emotions and expressiveness. So it is truly "impersonal." Seemingly, its only purpose is to draw the listener to the source where art emerges.

This impersonal, stripped down quality of Catoire is what separates him from composers like Mozart. It's not that Mozart hasn't got archetypal forces imbedded in his music. It is just that his music is clothed in the personality of the musical style of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. That clothing is what tends to make Mozart accessible and pleasing to listeners.

In my view one cannot be indifferent to these sounds. Either you will feel uncomfortable or irritated through some form of resistance, or you will be absorbed by the sounds into a state of equilibrium and a fullness of awareness.

*James D'Angelo*

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