

The Process of Coming Into Being

We are each a picture of the complete universe: all that exists is already within us, yet each picture is a work in progress. We are artist and canvas, for each brush stroke the brush is dipped into the universal palette and, in keeping with the image for where this stroke needs to be applied, the brush is brought to the canvas.

In the psychological model this begins as an inkling within us that some aspect of being is desirable. We then begin to be drawn to those who have this aspect and through this we learn to recognise it in ourselves. Then through watching ourselves apply it in the world, we strengthen it within.

In the Christian esoteric tradition this is called fashioning the clay. This tradition emphasises the celestial spirit at the expense of the earthly spirit, I prefer to see it this way: Through the body we are already created, we are not raw material; Any re-creation we seek is working with formed material. In this sense we are more like sculptor and sculpture in wood than potter and clay or artist and canvas.

As a designer craftsman I see this in my workshop. Out of a universal possibility I lean toward making this design or that, discarding myriad variations as I go. Now the work begins: Can I create in the hardness of wood this softness of shape, this perfect sculpture of my dreams.

Skill becomes the limiting factor. With the sharp edge of steel and the smooth spin of the lathe I have all the technology I need; do I have the relationship of hand and eye that the shape I dream of can appear before me? It never does, not quite.

Thus each new attempt becomes the fabric of creation, seeing potential, identifying the desirable, holding the image, fashioning the wood, accepting imperfection.

It is that last that causes most pain; accepting imperfection. I see it again and again in myself and in those I travel with: the desire to be at one with perfection.

In its high form perfectionism is the attempt to tune what we do until the spirit flows through; until light can shine through what we do into hearts and minds.

In its shadow form perfectionism is the desire to be beyond criticism, to do things so correctly that no-one will pick holes. Then we become stuck on the in-breath; and through such hardness we begin to wound those around us and to wound ourselves more than our critics ever could.

In the ultimate perfection is death and only through imperfection can change, development, beauty and Love really find their way into our daily lives.

In seeking to heal these wounds we can turn our backs on perfectionism entirely, trying instead to be relaxed in average achievement. Then we become fixated on the out-breath; too relaxed; too accepting.

Thus as an artist-craftsman I must make what I feel called to make, bring down from the sky my dreams, raise up from the earth my fears and weave them into the wood, accepting that creation is a process of coming into being from which a new coming-into-being will result, not something that I can claim as my God-Like gift to the world.