

## The Desire for Form

"Compared to life, art is always an "in spite of". Creating forms is the deepest recognition of the existence of dissonance that may be imagined." (Georg Lukács)

Exposing the desire for form. For order that lets us speak of chaos and silence, about ourselves who are still nothing. A form that causes surfaces to create patterns, that gives a direction to the lines, that allows the colours to give us a space where we may enter.

The wish for a face of one's own. An expression of one's own, a voice of one's own. But the personal is only realized in that which is alien, in an external order that gives the joy and the objects contours. An order that makes sound into something other than noise, the line into something other than the imprint of a body. We let the voice and the lines play along with the patterns that are already there. Patterns that divide and join together, turning the line and the sound into signs that "signify". Signs that may give shape to our thoughts. That open us up towards one another. A materiality that embodies history and experience. We have to surrender to the external in order to form an inner being.

Loans from alien forms. But historicity causes them to break down. The techniques of reproduction drain them of experience. We look for ourselves in forms that do no longer or not yet mean. The so-called "modern" as this homelessness in the forms. Order is not something eternal, given out there. It is recognized as something that humans create. We have to give us the law ourselves. And yet we are not free. The coincidental law is compulsive. External rules we have to follow. Patterns. But without totality. Without coherence. – As if it were possible to choose between the forms. As if it were not the creation of forms itself that we desire? How to create form?

The pain of autonomy: the very act of creating form. Creating language. Suspending pleasure and finding the limitations through work. What is it that gives form the power to shape? To limit diversity, the innumerable ways in which to cover a surface? How to make a form that embodies infinity but still remains form? Which rule is at work when making rules?

Creating form is a work of grief. A reflection on the absence of immediacy, totality, meaning. On the fact that the world does not appear as already formed. To acknowledge the dissonance by showing the pain of constructing an order. For the particular realized form is always also a loss. Why this form and not another? What does it exclude? Only what is ordered appears in the experience. What cannot be ordered is left behind. Outside. What is it that eludes our understanding? Form as violence. Form as loss. Form as the production of substitutes for an imagined lost totality for which the construction may never compensate.

But form is also possibility, pleasure. The desire to make it signify. To make matter and thought become fused somewhere out there. Without an outer surface to mirror us we are ourselves invisible. The lines are not a supplement to the body; they provide us with a body. The words are not a supplement to the thought; they provide us with thoughts. Work is necessary. Giving shape to the outer surface. Becoming aware of oneself as the one who sees, the one who draws. The one who has drawn the line. Autonomy and becoming a person are inextricably linked together. While working to create form, we become subjects – suspending, meeting resistance, acquiring. To rule and to restrain oneself. To us meaning is no longer a matter of course, and we want to construct it as a necessity. To save ourselves. To form ourselves.

The resistance of the image: the necessity of repeating the work. Taking part. Seeing is doing the construction over again. To give the body a space in which to experience. To give the thought a body. *Figur* and *Metamorfoser*: rooms that we may enter to meet ourselves.

And to meet something alien. Something which is not the subject's draft. The form is not "pure" form, in nothing. The construction meets a limit and here there is something we see. We see something else through lines that have been drawn. An order in something that offers resistance. A figure that appears, a possibility in space, a light. The form as opening. Choosing colour but not impact. Choosing line but not effect.

The two series hold the pattern still long enough to allow it to explore. To let itself be explored. To expose the doubleness in the make-up of a language: the rule and the example, the word and its use. The meaning is created in the play of different usages of the same sign. In the same way form becomes form only when it points beyond itself, drawing up a rule by indicating patterns that may vary, communicating with other forms by delimiting itself, negating, pointing to. Sedimentation of experience that makes it signify. The basic figure causes the images to play through the process between themselves. Exposes the creation of form as something that happens between forms, in a context. Always as a part of a greater structure. Tradition and breach. The new as unredeemed promises in the old. When tradition becomes fragmented because it is no longer sustained by a single time-axis, the images have to take on the task of being one another's otherness. Like laying out time in space.

Pattern. But not as a code, a riddle. Just as we do not know the tales even if we know a language, we do not master the images by recognizing the figure. The form is given as rules for changes, for new surfaces, for new rules. Does not enclose, but gives limitations that set the movement free from the decision. Establish the rule and then allow oneself to be led along by the lines, to offer a room to investigate what it hides. The work of execution is endless.

The desire for form, for an order that makes it possible to experience. A need for language, for the possibility to say or find, for patterns to appear in the diversity, for it to be possible to create patterns. For the alien not to be entirely alien. Catching it and becoming caught oneself. Laying oneself down in the image and letting oneself be explored, letting oneself be cut through and divided, coloured, letting oneself be crossed by lines, to be oneself a body out there, in an alien space. The pleasure. The pain. Say and be said. See and be seen. Draw and be drawn. The violence of the construction remains in the images as the pain of seeing. As the pain of being seen. The lines cut through the body and through the eyes between colours that cannot be held together. And yet it holds together.

Ingebjørg Seip, July 2000  
Translated by Birgit Kvamme Lundheim