

ART, SCIENCE, AND PEACE: THE PROPOSED 'WORLD MAN CENTER' PROJECT ON CYPRUS

Florence Hetzler*

Abstract—*There is a metaphysics of art that is based in the transnational nature of art. It is small wonder, then, that artists seeking a creative center devoted to world peace might look for a location that was likewise transnational. The World Man Center on Cyprus was proposed in the 1960s and was envisioned as an artwork containing works of art, enclosed by a work of art, and in large part funded by works of art. As an aesthetic object, it was to be a symbol of transnational poetic creativity endeavoring to transform the everyday, to disclose more of the world, and to bring creative possibility to fruition. This project, although not realized, integrated the architectural design and the land of the site and transformed those involved in its making, who continue to interpret what is real and possible. This has not been accomplished by reason alone.*

ART TRANSFORMS REASON

Speech often goes only as far as thought and reason can reach. It is then that logic and reason must allow art, poetry, myth, imagination and mystery to take over. Plato recognized this when he progressed from argument to myth to elucidate his teachings.

These myths are not allegories; they are not symbolic paraphrases of demonstration. They are poetic creations which give in the immediacy of an imaginative picture a sense of the atmosphere, the beauty, the validity of some human aspiration, some human faith, some human vision which the senses cannot touch nor the methods of dialectic prove [1].

Man must invent; he has an urgency to create. In the *Phaedo* Socrates says that "a poet, if he is really to be a poet, should not only put together words, but should invent stories" [2].

There is a metaphysics of artworks as entities. There is also a metaphysics of the creative process. And there is a metaphysics of the appreciation of works of art. All three of these kinds of metaphysics involve human creativity, which knows no race or nation, but is transnational. It is natural, then, that artists searching for a place to study peace would look for land that was also transnational. Such a place was proposed in Bellapaïa, Cyprus (Fig. 1) in the 1960s.

Those individuals involved in the World Man Center project included R. Buckminster Fuller and his architectural associate Shoji Sadao; Caresse Crosby, philanthropist and patron of the arts; Xenon Rossides, ambassador from Cyprus to the United States; Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus; and Patroclus Stavrou, secretary to the archbishop. Artists who sold their art to benefit the project included Robert Motherwell, Isamu Noguchi, Henry Moore, Michael Lekakis and Salvador Dali. United Nations Secretary General U Thant raised funds at dinners for ambassadors. The project was to have been under the trusteeship of the World Academy of Art and Science.

Although the project was not realized because of the war between the Turks and the Greek Cypriots, it should not go unheralded and unexamined. Neither should the ideals it represented be abandoned. The project remains a symbol both of the power of the metaphysics of art and of art as a transnational magnet of creativity. Art forces man to reevaluate what he has or has not accomplished by reason. There are powers in art that go beyond philosophy [3]. Art discloses what cannot be disclosed through the tools of philosophy. Art must be at least complementary to philosophy in the penetration of

the meaning of man [4]. In philosophy and art we see the difference between creation in the "sense of discovering something and creation in the sense of transforming and supplementing the existing world" [5]. One needs myth and imagination to attain coherence. As Guy Davenport wrote, "It is rather the inner voice of the novel, the poetic voice of the symbols, that gives the work its coherence and its profoundest meaning [6]. In creativity, opposites meet and humanity evolves in an optimum fashion. The Cyprus project was an issue of both noetic and poetic creativity. In poetic creativity man not only transforms the matter or medium of the art; the aesthetic experience involved in making art and in contemplating and experiencing it transforms man. The artistic transformation of matter and of man is an achievement or event beyond reason and planning. Art rises, as Kandinsky describes in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, from a bottomless well of creativity [7].

The Cyprus project was an odyssey made by creative people. In 1969 Caresse Crosby sent a copy of her "Manifesto for Individual Secession into World Community" to Secretary of State James Forrestal [8]. At that time she had an art gallery called The World Gallery of Art.

Buckminster Fuller wrote about his association with Crosby:

I first met Crosby in 1935 when she drove with me in the Dymaxion car. I saw her in 1943 when she opened an art gallery in Washington, D.C., during World War II. After the war she bought the Italian castle Rochasinabaldi at Rieti, Italy, where I and my wife Anne accepted her invitation to visit her on several occasions. She hoped to make it a supranational peace headquarters and developed a flag to represent that concept. She flew the flag above the castle...

While at Rochasinabaldi, Caresse told me of a piece of land she hoped to buy in Cyprus from Archbishop Makarios, intending to establish a transnational peace center there. She asked me if I would be the architect for her peace center there. She had also bought a piece of land in Delphi, Greece, for which she also hoped I might design a peace center. Over all three centers she hoped to fly her transnational flag [9].

Crosby was introduced by Michael Lekakis to Ambassador Rossides of Cyprus. Rossides later introduced both Crosby and R. Buckminster Fuller to Archbishop Makarios at the presidential residence in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Fuller also wrote about his meeting with the archbishop. He found Makarios eager to establish a peace center close to the famous Gothic abbey at Bellapaïa, near Kyrenia on the north coast of Cyprus. Makarios and Fuller flew in the archbishop's helicopter to see and measure the site. Fuller persuaded Makarios to call in the world press and make an official announcement about desovereignizing this special piece of land and its buildings. The site included a villa built by an English

*Philosopher and teacher, Fordham University, New York, NY 10458, U.S.A. (Received 12 July 1983)

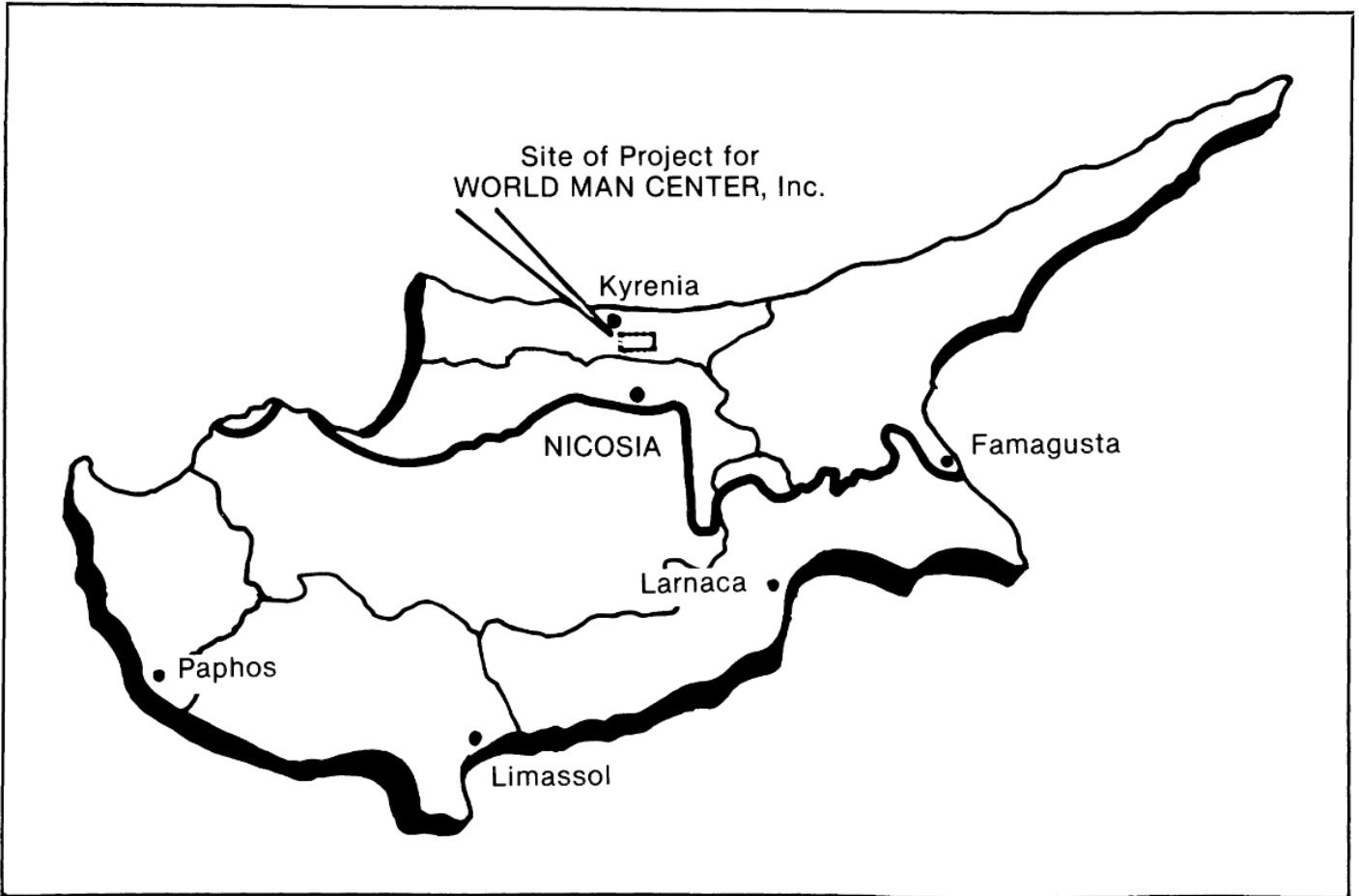


Fig. 1. Map of Cyprus indicating proposed site of World Man Center, Inc.

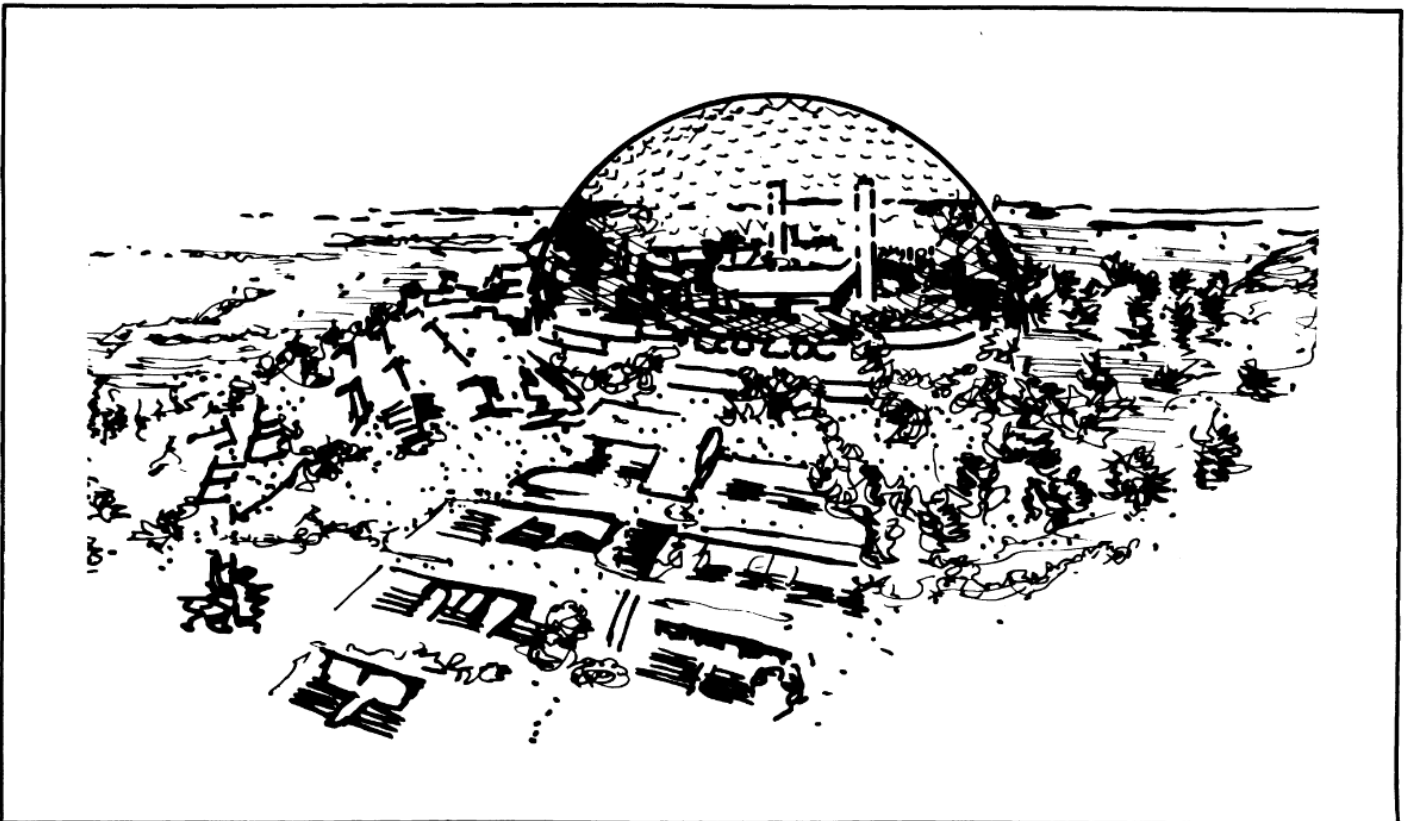


Fig. 2. A structure of the World Man Center in Cyprus by Fuller and Sadao. Fuller provided the design for a central structure to house world congresses of scientists, artists, scholars, and peace organizations on a piece of land in Kyrenia, Cyprus. President Makarios of Cyprus announced his willingness to cede, at the earliest possible moment, the 200-acre property to world authority. Sketch courtesy of the Buckminster Fuller Institute, 1743 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035, U.S.A.

woman just after World War I. This, along with more land owned by Makarios, was given for the project.

Fuller and Sadao designed a large geodesic dome to enclose not only the villa but a section of the hillside large enough for an amphitheater [10] (Fig. 2). Two hundred thousand Cyprus pounds were collected from Makarios, Crosby, U Thant and friends around the world, according to Stavrou and Rossides. The project seemed to magnetize those involved. The universal appeal of creativity, peace and community housed in a center of artistic creativity on desovereignized land attracted the support of people who valued man, art and peace.

The Cyprus project, although not achieved, raises the question of whether it might be considered concept art or process art that is still processing. The architectural design by Fuller and Sadao is now in Fuller's office in Philadelphia. It is a work of art, as defined by Arthur Danto, since it is subject to

interpretation as an artwork [11], and as defined by Mikel Dufrenne, since it was a "work which is creative, which deploys a genesis. But this singular work tells us something of the world: It actualizes a possibility of the real" [12].

If one attempts to interpret the project in Cyprus as a continuing creativity, one might do well to consider its intended location. The Stoic philosopher Xenon came from Kition in Cyprus, a place influenced by the world community of Stoics there. St Thomas Aquinas wrote his *De Regimine Principum* in the Hagia Sophia Cathedral, now a mosque in Nicosia. Cyprus is a milieu of ruins, and ruins are artworks. Cyprus holds the neolithic ruins of Khirokitia, a village of 5000 B.C.; the late Bronze Age ruins of Enkomi and Kition; and the famous ruins of Salamis, which was founded in 1100 B.C. by the son of Telamon, king of the Greek island Salamis. Jews, Christians, Arabs, Persians, Greeks and Phoenicians lived, fought and died

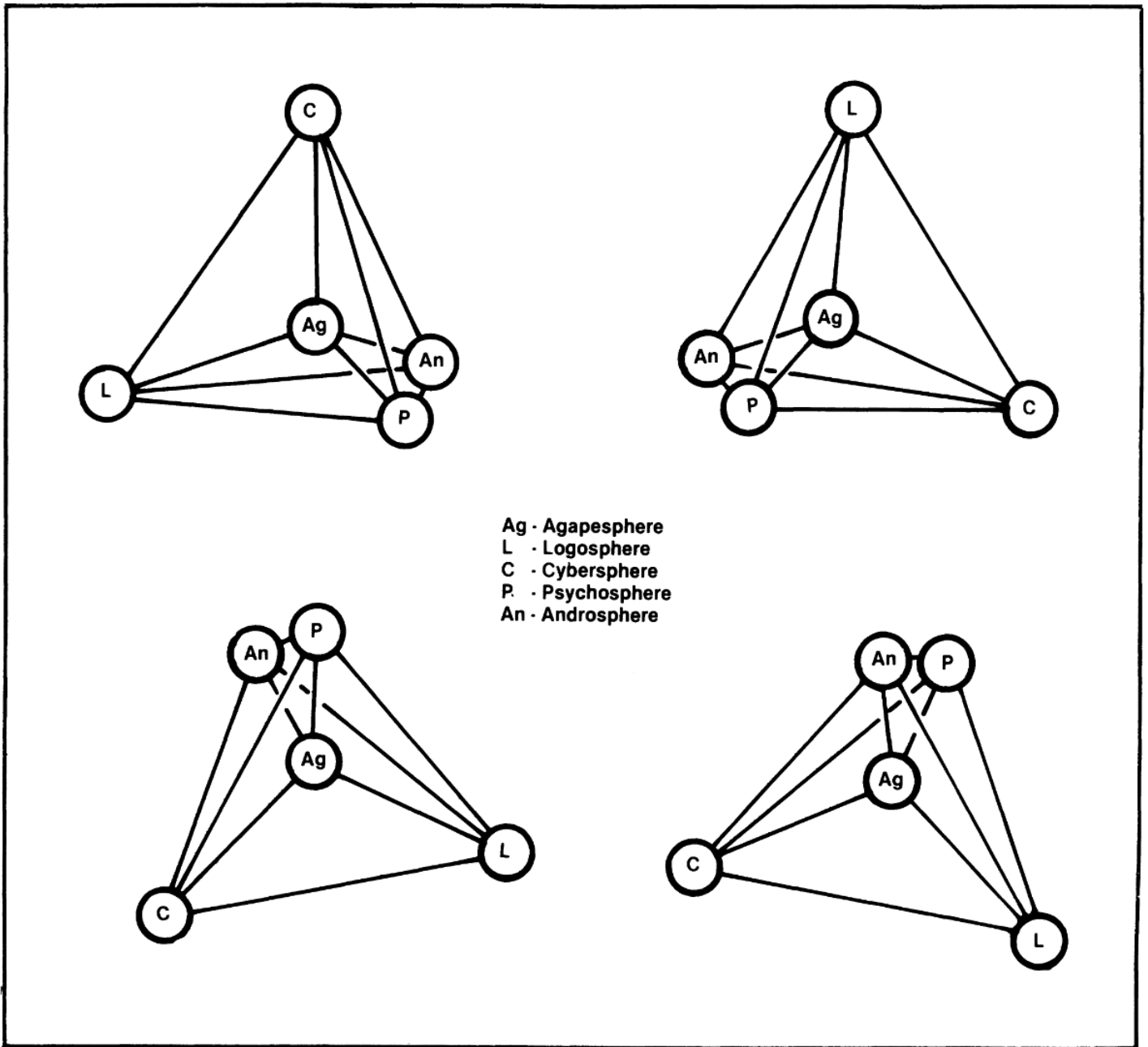


Fig. 3. The five spheres were established to represent the disciplines that include all areas of knowledge. The five spheres are born, are nurtured, and overlap in the vague arena of myth, where all potential communication lies. As depicted in the four views here, no single discipline is hierarchically first. The people representing the agapesphere would bring together the knowledge of the other spheres or the people representing the other spheres. The World Man Center would be an ideal locus for this encounter. Model by John F. Yardley.

in Cyprus. This soil of wars was the locus of a project for world community and world man.

Fuller, who named The World Man Center, said that his efforts to have the land desovereignized brought U Thant and the U.N. ambassador's support and Indira Gandhi's commitment to have India recognize the passport of the World Man—later Planetary Man [9].

In *Time of Need*, William Barrett says that myth, though it may not be specific and detailed, gives a deep truth to all men. "Art is quite literally, repeat literally, an expression of the collective soul of its time. The forms of imagination that any epoch produces are an ultimate datum on what that epoch is" [13]. The project on Cyprus exists as art. It can be interpreted by reason and by the imagination. It can be seen as part of the vast myth that discloses the world's reality and its potential. The press release from the presidential palace in 1966 exists as concept art. It stated Makarios' requirement that the "World Man Center, Inc." be operated for 50 years under a trusteeship of the highest order of intellectual and scientific capability, "for instance, by the World Academy of Art and Science which includes among its governing body a number of Nobel Prize winners. The World Academy of Art and Science has signified its interest in the Cyprus event," according to that statement. The release refers to the manifesto of the World Academy that it will function as an informal "'world university' at the highest scientific and ethical level, in which deep human understanding and the fullest sense of responsibility will meet... and this forum is international, or more truly transnational" [14].

PROPOSAL FOR A FUTURE CENTER FOR ART AND PEACE

What can be proposed for the implementation of peace? The vision that was to have been realized at Cyprus should not die. A transnational region where artists and scientists meet to discuss the meaning of the individual and community is an excellent goal. Such a place might house an interdisciplinary council with five persons heading five spheres of meaning. These spheres would overlap and would rank equally (Fig. 3).

The *logosphere* would be concerned with information input. The *cybersphere*, the processing of the logosphere, would be directed by those expert in the sciences. The *psychosphere*, that of the study of the expansion of consciousness and the unconscious, would involve people interested in psychology and myth. The *androsphere* would involve the space theorists and futurists. Those in this sphere would study the effect of man's going into space, which has given us another option for habitation and thus has made earth our 'home' for the first time. The *agapesphere*, the sphere of humanists and philosophers, would bring together what belongs together—the work of the other four groups. Artists would be represented in all spheres.

The prime questions these people should address would encompass the meaning of man, community, peace, freedom

and becoming. Their studies should be communicated to the world's nations in language that is nonscientific and understandable to those not of a particular discipline. The artists and scientists meeting on this desovereignized land should have a tenure of no more than 5 years. All should receive the same financial remuneration.

Fuller made room for a theater in his design for the Cyprus Center (Fig. 2). In such a theater artists could present plays, read poetry, exhibit paintings and sculpture, dance, and discuss relationships among the arts. Philosophers and artists would discuss with one another. Metaphor would meet fact. In such a center for art and peace we may find implementations for human becoming never dreamed by philosophers and artists working separately and never suspected by philosophers and artists working together. All the spheres of meaning become clearer when seen against a backdrop of myth in which all are related. This vast myth makes more clear the meaning of man and human creativity. Sharing this myth through knowledge and art may help man see the urgency of peace, the urgency of letting you be you so that I can be me [15].

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12. M. Dufrenne Aujourd'hui encore, la création, in J. Aler and M. Damjanovic, eds., *The Problem of Creativity in Aesthetics* (Belgrade: University of Belgrade, 1983) p. 27. Translated by F. Hetzler.
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