



National College of Art and Design
Fine Art
Sculpture

"Everyone is an Artist"
- Joseph Beuys' Theory of Social Sculpture

by David Cooke

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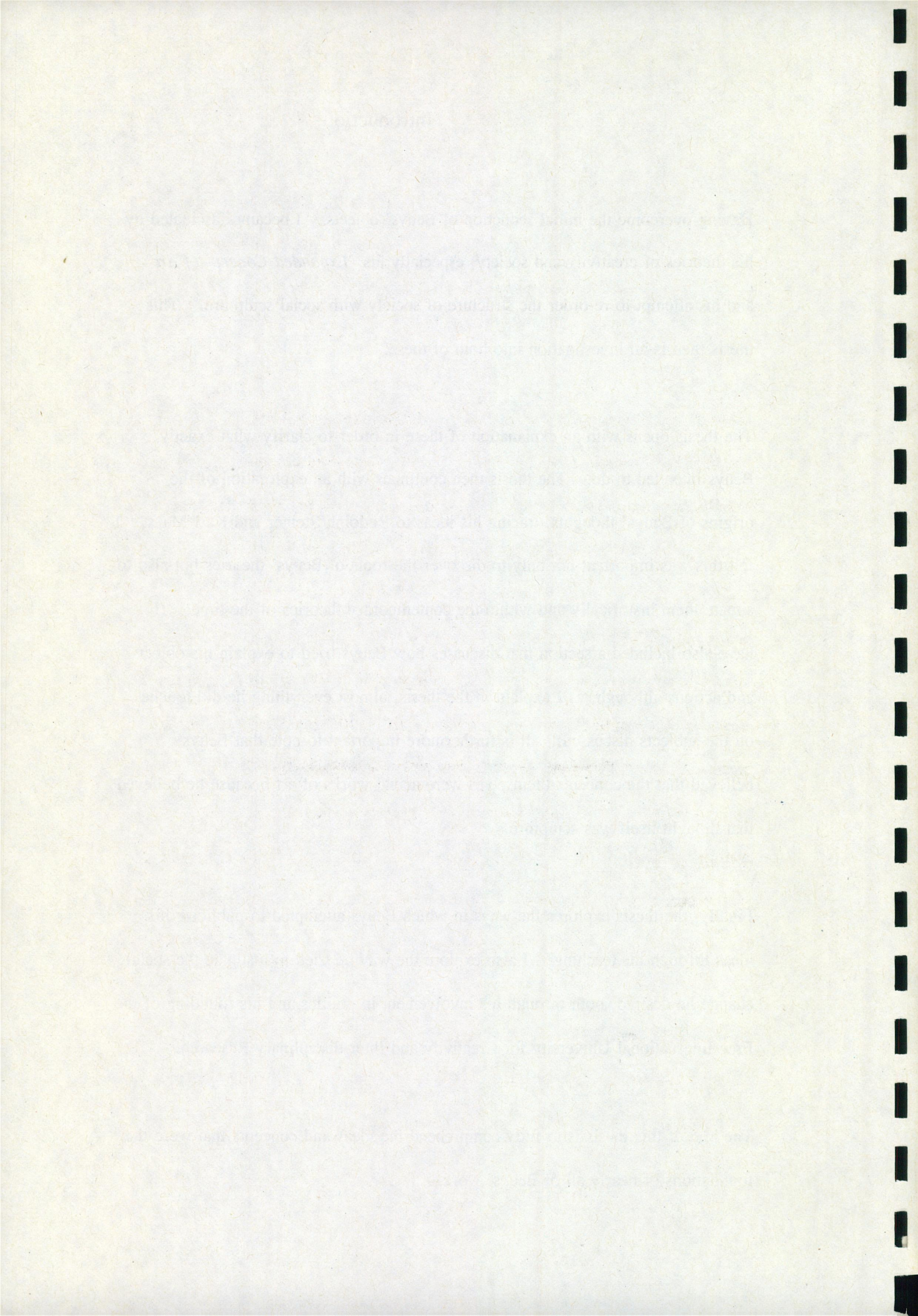
Introduction

Having overcome the initial seduction of Beuys' objects. I became fascinated by his theories of creativity and society, especially his *"Expanded Concept of Art"* and his attempt to re-order the structure of society with social sculpture. This thesis then is an investigation into both of these.

The thesis opens with an explanation of these in order to clarify what exactly Beuys intended to do. The thesis then continues with an exploration of the origins of Beuys' thoughts, tracing his ideas to Rudolph Steiner and Karl Marx. I felt this was important not only to discover the roots of Beuys' theories but also to situate them historically and within the contemporary theories of the time. (I have also included a section that discusses how Beuys tried to explain his objects and actions although, as I explain in the thesis, almost everything he did touches on the subjects discussed). It is furthermore important to note that Beuys believed that the concepts themselves were actual works of art because he believed that thought itself was sculpture.

Finally, the thesis explores the ways in which Beuys attempted to publicize his ideas through his teaching. I also explore the way he tried to instigate the social change he desired, both through his involvement in politics and his founding of the Free International University for Creativity and Inter-disciplinary Research.

The aim of this thesis is to fully comprehend the ideas and concepts that were the foundations of nearly all of Beuys' work.



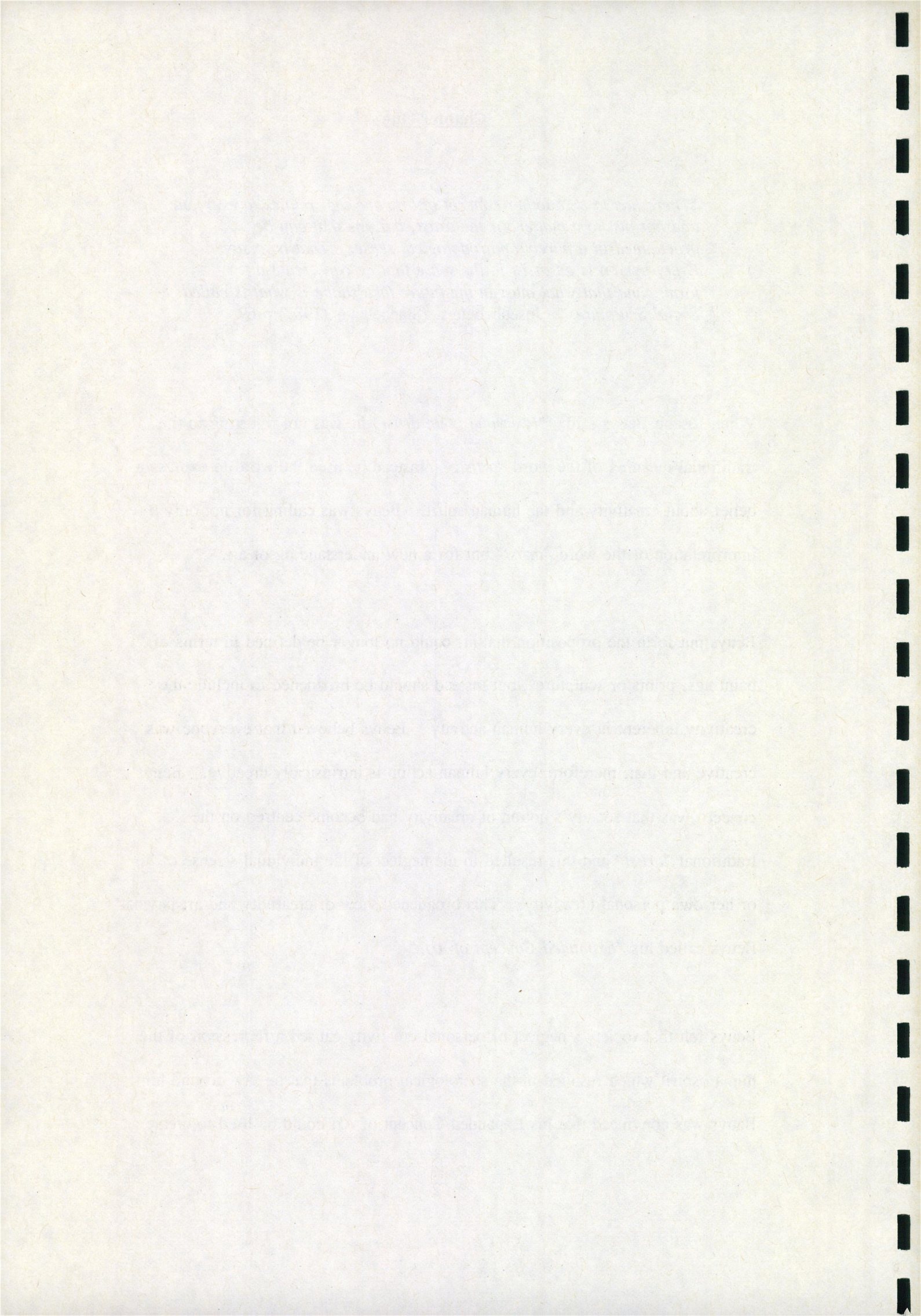
Chapter One

"There has to be another concept of art, one that relates to everyone and not just to a matter for the artist, but one that can be proclaimed in a purely anthropological sense. That is to say: Every person is an artist in the sense that he can create a form...and that what must in the future take shape is what is called Social Sculpture." Joseph Beuys (Stachelhaus (1987) p.69

When Joseph Beuys said: *"Everyone is an artist"* he was not referring to the traditional meaning of the word *"artist."* Instead he used the word to express a belief about creativity and the human spirit. Beuys was calling for not only a re-interpretation of the word *"artist"* but for a new understanding of art.

Beuys put forth the proposition that art could no longer be defined in terms of paintings, prints or sculptures, but instead should be broadened to include the creativity inherent in every human activity. Beuys believed that everyone was creative and that, therefore, every human action is intrinsically creative. Beuys' concern was that society's notion of creativity had become centred on the traditional *"artist"* and this resulted in the neglect of the individual's sense of his or her own personal creativity. This broadened view of creativity and art is what Beuys called his *"Expanded Concept of Art."*

Beuys felt that society's neglect of personal creativity caused a repression of the human spirit which resulted in the sociological problems that he saw around him. Beuys was convinced that his Expanded Concept of Art could be used to create a



new social structure that would rid society of its ills. This new structure would be one that was centred on the pursuit of releasing everyone's inherent creativity.

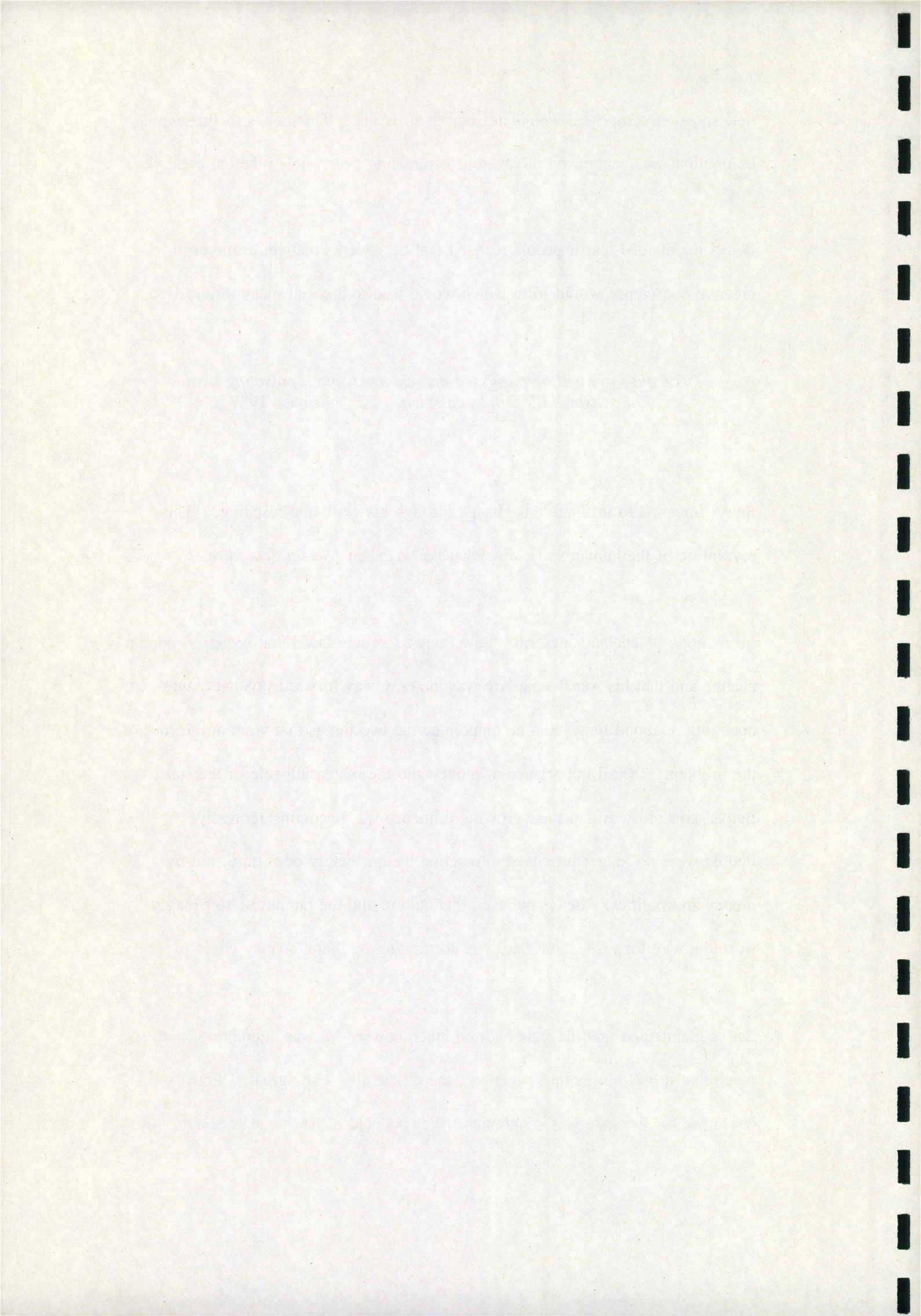
Beuys maintained that if people realized that they were creative, a universal creative conscience would form which would lead to a social metamorphosis:

"The old form will be paralysed and changed into a pulsating living force that activates life, soul and spirit." (Stachelhaus 1987 p. 64)

Beuys intended to instigate this change through his work and teaching. This revolution of the human spirit was what Beuys called *"Social Sculpture."*

In his book Stachelhaus describes how Beuys was convinced that society needed a change and that his social sculpture was the only way forward. Society was declining, claimed Beuys and he pinpointed the two things that were at the root of the problem: the all importance of money and the increasing role of the state. Beuys' concern was that their growing influence was becoming repressive. People were no longer provoked into action by spirituality or culture, but by money and politics. Beuys believed that culture and the pursuit of spirituality were the way forward; and that by concentrating on them, society could progress.

Beuys maintained that the state had too much power. It was attempting to do so much that it was not getting anything done efficiently. The greatest time consumer for the state was economics. Beuys decided that the state should not



concern itself with economic matters as they distracted the state from its true vocation.

Economic decisions were to be left to those organizations which were involved with economic practice - manufacturers, distributors, consumers. Together they should work as various councils to achieve solutions to economic problems. They were to work together as a community and they were to uphold social justice in the workplace.

And what was the state to do ? Well, their job was to ensure the safety of its citizens both from outside and inside elements. This was the job of the military, the law body and the policy. The state was to control these bodies.

Stachelhaus continues by saying that Beuys wanted the attention of the community turned away from the state, and towards the individual. It was the individual that Beuys chose as the basis for his theories and Beuys wanted the "*Social organism*" re-arranged to facilitate the needs of the individual. The development of the individual was to be the aim of the new structure. Stachelhaus explains how Beuys suggested a tripartite programme with which to meet the requirements of the individual:

"Free development of human talents and personality. The individual is an equal among equals. He seeks to give and receive solidarity."

To accommodate the needs of the individual, Beuys insisted that the traditional structure of work and income be reassessed. Beuys now defined income as a basic human right. *"In principle, any work done is work for others"* he claimed.

Beuys therefore adopted an economic strategy called the *"Integral System."* This system was devised by Eugen Lobl, an economic theorist of the Prague Spring of 1968. According to Beuys' interpretation of the Integral System, it was no longer possible *"to regard the income of the employees as equal to the value of the work they do."* Beuys explains:

"The individual's contribution to the production of a particular consumption value, or the contribution of an enterprise to the gross national product, can no longer be objectively assessed.

The most workable principle of assessment for income as a basic human right is democratic agreement on the basis of need. The quantity and kind of work, are also questions that must be settled by the democratic community in general, and by the working collective in particular, in accordance with their form of self-government."
(Stachelhaus 1987 p. 122)

Beuys was confident that his system would work and he was sure of its benefits:

"All the coercion, injustice and frustrations that result from the present anachronistic system of payment for work thus disappear; labour unions and employees' associations become superfluous. If income differential still exist, they will be clear to all and democratically determined. And the end of dependence on wages will have favourable psychological consequences. No one will buy or sell talent or work. All employees will belong, as far as income is concerned, to the democratic community of equal citizens."
(Stachelhaus 1987 p. 123).





Fig.1: Marcel Duchamp, "Nude Descending a Staircase". (1912).



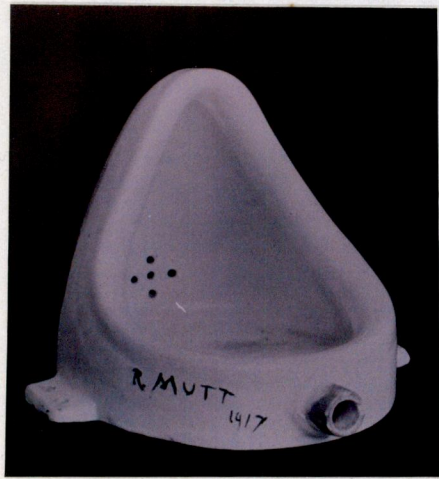


Fig.2: Marcel Duchamp "Fountain". (1917).

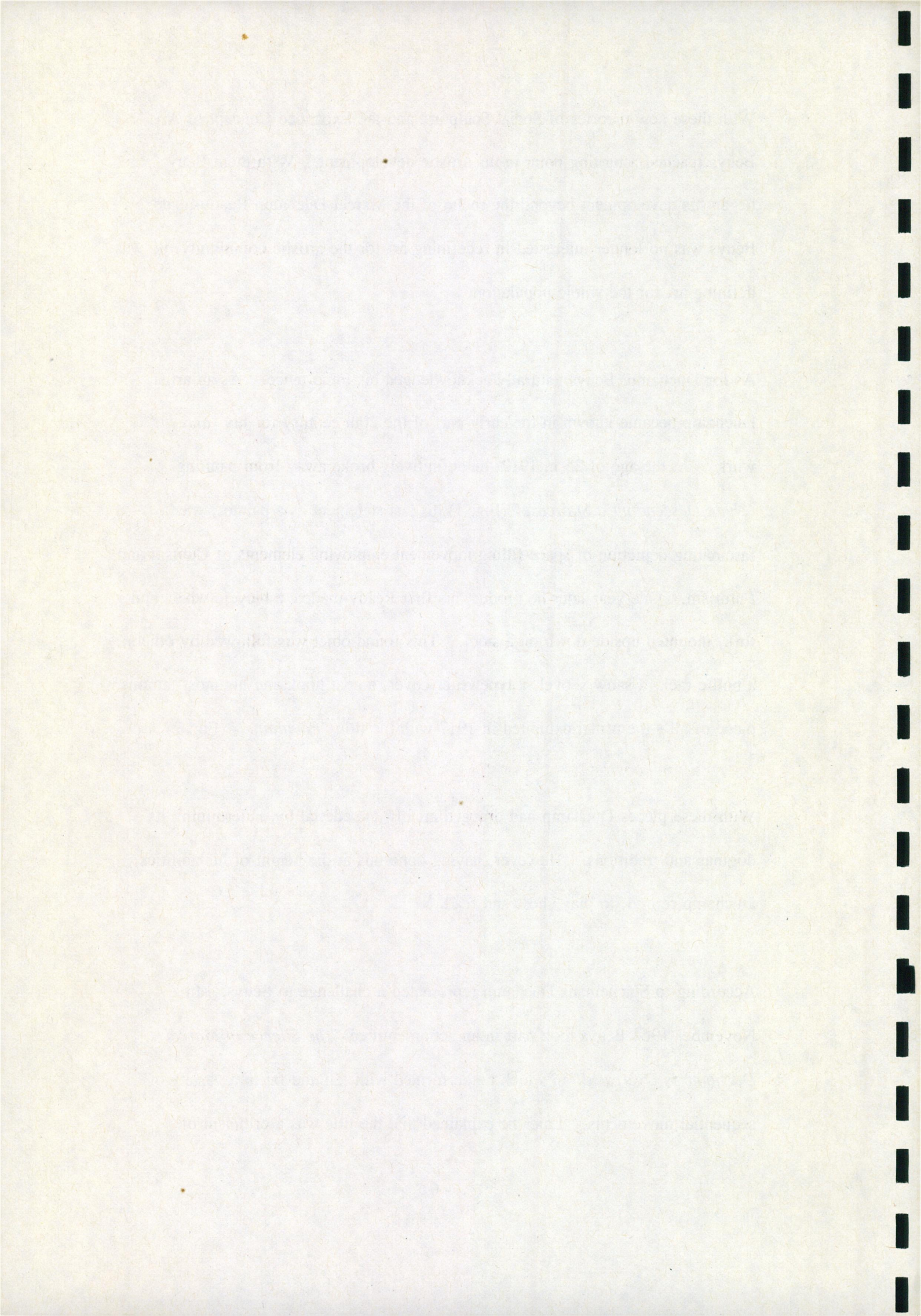
With these new theories of Social Sculpture and the Expanded Concept of Art, Beuys reached a turning point in his artistic development. With them Beuys began his development beyond the realm of the Marcel Duchamp Ready-made. Beuys was no longer interested in redefining art for the artistic community, he was defining art for the whole population.

As for Duchamp, Beuys naturally acknowledged his importance. As an artist Duchamp became known in the early part of the 20th century for his "*anti-art*" work. At the age of 25 in 1912, he definitively broke away from painting.

"*Nude Descending a Staircase*" (Fig. 1) his last statement as a painter, was a fascinating depiction of space-filling movement employing elements of Cubism and Futurism. One year later he produced his first Ready-made: a bicycle wheel and fork, mounted upside down on a stool. This found objet was followed by others: a bottle rack, a snow shovel, a typewriter cover, a coat hook and his most famous piece of all - the urinal exhibited in 1917 with the title "*Fountain.*" (Fig. 2).

With these pieces Duchamp had dragged art off its pedestal by undermining its dogmas and traditions. However, having done this at the height of his abilities, Duchamp retired, to play chess and read.

According to Stachelhaus Duchamp represented a challenge to Beuys. In November 1964 Beuys took part in an action entitled "*The Silence of Marcel Duchamp is Overrated*" in which he performed with felt and fat in a variety of sequential movements. Later he explained that the title was a criticism of



Duchamp's contempt of *"anti-art"* and of *"his attitude of how it was cultivated when he gave up art and pursued nothing but chess and literature."*

Principally, it was Duchamp's *"anti-art"* concept that Beuys was challenging. Beuys recognized Duchamp's achievements in breaking down the form-based tradition of sculpture but pointed out that Duchamp never developed any new structures for art to replace the ones he had demolished. Beuys felt that his new theories of art made Duchamp's redundant because they included both the traditional and the *"anti"* and imbued them both with equal importance.

Beuys saw his Expanded Theory of Art as his ultimate concept and so it infused everything he did. The result of this is that there are no particular objects or actions of his that specifically reflect his message. Rather, all his work can be seen as various descriptions of his ideas.

Basically, Beuys' views on creativity can be seen in everything he did. His constant use of everyday materials like walking sticks, blackboards, household medicines, felt and fat, was his technique of showing just how broad his definition of art was.

This being said, however, it would be beneficial to describe some works or materials in order to ascertain how he attempted to describe his theories:

In his Action entitled *"And in us...under us...land beneath..."* (1965) Beuys





Fig.3: Joseph Beuys, "and in us...under us...land beneath" (1965).

performed with a two-handled spade (Figure 3) which he had made. This, he explained, was a symbol of the fraternity necessary to make social sculpture work:

"First of all these two handles on one spade signify a special kind of compound action for people working the earth together. Without the spirit of co-operation, harmony and even humour, it would be impossible to work with the tool. Brotherhood and love are suggested by the heart shape of the iron blade, while the handles are like aorta or arteries. So there is a relationship to the bloodstream here and iron too is an important component of blood." (Tisdall 1979, p.84)

The best example would probably be Beuys' use of his most famous material: fat. Many incorrectly assume that his use of fat was a reference to his time spent with a primitive tribe called the Tartars. This tribe rescued Beuys after his 'plane crashed during the War. He was seriously wounded and they salved his wounds with animal fat. Beuys continually maintained however, that this was not the reason for his use of the substance and that the connection was coincidental.

Caroline Tisdall suggests that:

"Fat is an ideal material for demonstrating (Beuys') Theory, since it can exist as a physical example of extremes, as a chaotic, formless and flowing liquid when warm and as a defined and ordered solid when cold." (Tisdall 1979 p.72)

Beuys himself explained it thus:

"My initial intention in using fat was to stimulate discussion. The flexibility of the material appealed to me particularly in its reaction to temperature changes. This flexibility is psychologically effective - people instinctively feel it relates to inner processes and feelings. The discussion I wanted was about the potential of sculpture and

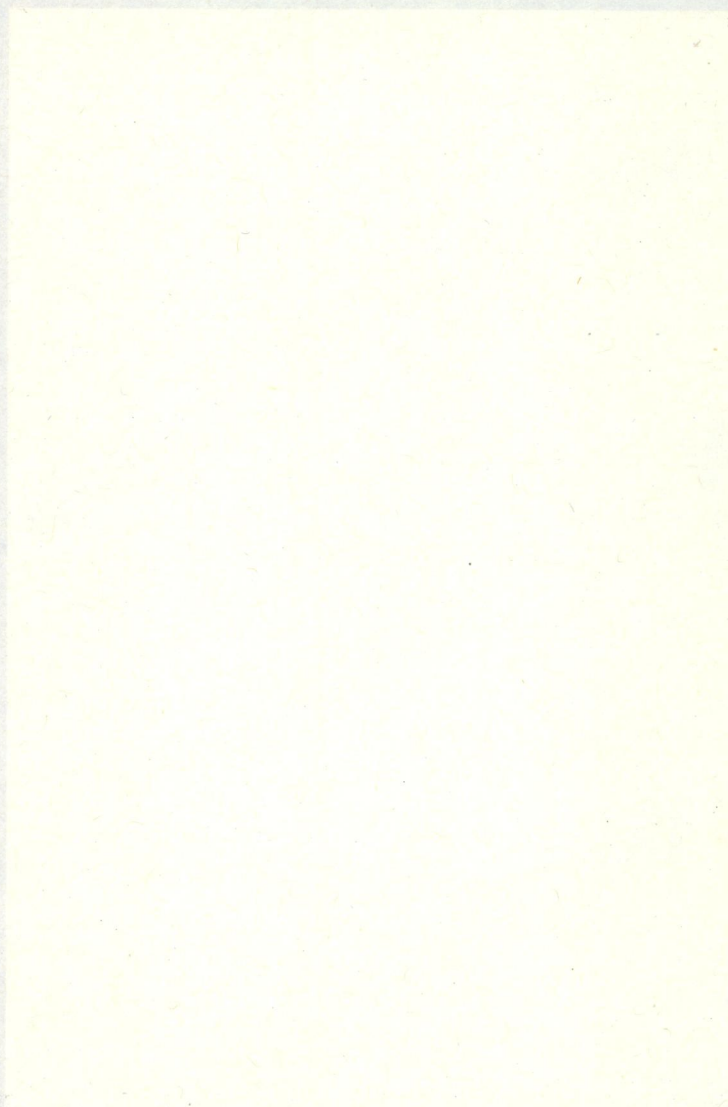




Fig.4: Joseph Beuys "Fat Chair" (1964).

culture, what they mean, what human production and creativity are about. So I took an extreme position in sculpture and a material that was very basic to life and not associated with art." (Tisdall 1977 p.72)

Beuys goes on to explain his use of fat in his sculpture *"Fat Chair"* (1964) (Figure 4):

"The fat on 'Fat Chair' is not geometric. It keeps something of its chaotic character. The ends of the wedges read like a cross section cut through the nature of fat. I placed it on a chair to emphasize this since here the chair represents a kind of human anatomy, the area of digestive and excretive warmth processes, sexual organs and interesting chemical change, relating psychologically to will power." (Tisdall 1979 p.72).

Chapter Two

Before Beuys became an artist he was a scientist. This is important to note because it was his interest in science and nature that led him to formulate his ideas concerning the structure of society. In fact it was his study of the honey bee and its beehive that led him to create his social sculpture theory.

What fascinated Beuys about the honey bee was its lifestyle. Beuys' ideals of sculpture originate from the way he observed the honey bees' technique of creation as *"organic forming from the inside out."* In an interview for the Rheinische Brennenzeitung in 1975 Beuys described their influence:-

"The bee likes to live in an environment that has a certain organic warmth. The quality of warmth is there in honey, but also in wax and also in pollen and nectar, because the bee consumes from the plant the thing that has the greatest possible quality of warmth.

The bee takes this away lets it go through its body and turns it into something higher, a higher activity in this general honey. Because you have to proceed on the assumption that there is a general honey operation in nature. The bee simply collects what is there and takes it to a higher level.

So here you have what has interested me in all my sculptures; the general quality of warmth. I later worked out a kind of theory of sculpture in which the quality of warmth - warmth sculpture - played an important part and this ultimately extends to the whole of society." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.57)

Beuys developed this theory from a lecture given by Rudolph Steiner in 1923 about the spiritual significance of the honey bee throughout history. In this

lecture Steiner attempted to explain why bees have, throughout history been held sacred:

"They were held to be sacred animals because they actually showed in their whole work, just what happens in man himself."

He then went on to explain that what the bee does in the creation of wax is the same as what the blood cells in our bodies do in the creation of bones and muscle:

"Worker bees bring that which they collect from plants home and work it into wax within their own bodies and then make the cell constructions. But the blood cells in the human head also make it. They go from the head into the entire human body. The blood which circulates in the body performs the same work that bees perform in the beehive. And when you consider a piece of bone, there are everywhere the hexagonal cells within it." (Adrianni, Konnertz, Thomas, 1979 p.289).

The similarities between Beuys and Steiner, and their respective honey bee theories are numerous. And, in fact, Steiner was to have been even greater influence on Beuys for it is Steiner's social theories on which Beuys based his social sculpture.

Rudolph Steiner was a German theorist who is most remembered for his theories of anthroposophy. It was Steiner who founded the Anthroposophical Society in 1912 which Beuys was later to join in 1973. In 1918 Steiner merged his theories of anthroposophy with his theories on society to create his central idea; the *"Threefold Commonwealth"* which was to become the basis for Beuys' social sculpture. In 1919 he wrote his *"Appeal to the German People and the Civilized*

World" in which he called for changes in society in order to set free the spiritual forces that World War I had repressed. (Stachelhaus, 1987 p.37)

When Beuys came across this manifesto years later, he read in it the following words:-

"Half a century after setting up its imperial edifice, the German Nation was confident that it would endure forever. In August 1914 it believed that the catastrophic war, then beginning, would prove that edifice to be indestructible. Today that edifice lies in ruins. After such an experience it is time to take thought. For this experience has revealed that the thinking of half a century and in particular the ideas dominant in the war years, were a tragic error. What are the causes of this fatal error ? This question must cause reflections in the souls of those who make up the German nation. Whether the strength for such reflections can be mustered today is the issue upon which the survival of the German nation hangs. Its future hangs on its ability to ask itself, in all seriousness, one question: how did I go wrong ? If the nation faces this question today, then the awareness will dawn that half a century ago it founded an empire but neglected to set that empire a task arising from the essence of German national identity." (Stachelhaus, 1987 pp. 36-37).

Steiner was calling for a re-interpretation of the role of the German empire in Europe. He felt that it was time for a metamorphoses just as Beuys was to feel years later.

It was Steiner who originated the idea that the power of the state should be confined to the defence of the country. It was Steiner who suggested keeping the state away from economic matters and it was he who suggested the formation of councils to deal with any economic problems. (Stachelhaus 1987 o.37).

Just as Beuys believed that everyone was creative, Steiner believed that everyone

had the ability to achieve awareness of other worlds. An ability, that he claimed had been repressed by the war and the over importance of money and the state.

Considering the huge similarities in thinking between Beuys and Steiner it is noteworthy that Beuys was not moved when he was first introduced to his work by his friend Rainer Lynen:

"First of all I couldn't feel very enthusiastic about it. Later, after the war, 1945 or '46, I took up the writings of Steiner again and gained from them a very strong impression from all of Steiner's fundamental knowledge of natural science questions.

I repeatedly returned to the subject of Steiner in discussions with Lynen and tried to clarify the writer. But Lynen refused to respond, or rather to agree that in Steiner's ideals there lay a start that refers directly and practically to reality." (Cox 1979 pp. 12-13).

So impressed was Beuys that he soon attempted to learn directly from Steiner himself by enrolling in his class:

"It was hard to get into the Steiner class. I had to strive hard for this because he was the kind of teacher that only took a few students. He neither worked nor taught at the Academy. He was rather private. For a studio and teaching space he had rented a small schnapps manufacturing place. He was not prepared for discussion with his students; he was too much of a mono-maniac. His strength was his spontaneity. He thought I could never become a sculptor. 'No' he said 'a sculptor you could never be; you are a painter.' Despite that, he accepted me as a student. All the botanical analysis and anatomical studies came through from different sides, where in there also plays a personal conception of mythology." (Cox 1979 p.13)

Heiner Stachelhaus pinpoints what he thinks Beuys was fascinated by in Steiner's work:

"What fascinated Beuys about Steiner's theosophy was the concept of redemption, in which the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms are seen as three stages in nature that lead upward first to man; then to the fourfold structure of physical body, etheric body, astral body and 'I' and finally to an absolute human cognitive faculty." (1987 p.39).

All this Beuys eagerly absorbed and later integrated into his own teachings. Just as Steiner linked scientific knowledge with art, culture and the humanities, so Beuys in his mature period was to adopt this as one of his essential tasks which he - like Steiner - tried to impart through countless lectures and Actions.

Although Beuys' theories are mainly derived from Steinerian philosophy, their roots go back as far as Hegel and Feuerbach. Primarily, though, they bear similarities with the writings of Karl Marx.

Marx, like Beuys believed that man was alienated from himself. Marx too, named capitalism as the culprit. And, just as the individual was crucial to social sculpture so too was it to Marxism. Marx, like Beuys, believed that the needs of the human spirit were not being satisfied by the capitalist society.

Just as Beuys defined man as a spiritual being, so too did Marx recognize him as a natural being:

"Man is first of all a natural being. As a natural being, he is endowed on the one hand with natural powers, vital powers; these powers exist in him as aptitudes and instincts. On the other hand, as an objective, natural, physical, sensitive being, he is a suffering, dependent and limited being; that is, the objects of his instincts

exist outside him, independent of him, but are the objects of his need, indispensable and essential for the realization and confirmation of his substantial powers." (Chambre 1981 p.554)

Marx stated that history is primarily the account of how man, the individual, attempts to survive; a human struggle with nature to supply man with the means of satisfying his needs; drink, food, clothing, the development of his powers and then of his intellectual and artistic abilities:

"In this undertaking, man discovers himself as a productive being who humanizes himself by his labour. Furthermore, man humanizes nature while he naturalizes himself. By his creative activity, his labour, he realizes his identity with the nature that he masters, while at the same time he admires free consciousness. Born of nature, man becomes fully human by opposing it." (Chambre 1981 p.554).

Marx readily accepted that all human activity was creative, in that it was only by labour that man could discover his true worth.

However, in a capitalist society man can no longer be fully human because he has become alienated from his work. This idea of capitalist alienation is central to Marxism just as spiritual repression is to social sculpture. In fact, an explanation of Marx's alienation theory can help us in understanding Beuys' theory.

The principle of alienation is that man can no longer value himself by his work because it is estranged from him. That which he produces is not his but is for the use of others. Also, the value of what he produces is complicated because of the

surplus value attached to it by others who appropriate value from it. Tax is an obvious example of this.

Further alienation is caused by the market's demand for specialization. This leads to man relying on one thing to provide his value. Some for example who spends his life placing tops on milk bottles could not see himself as valuable as someone who produced the milk, by manipulation of nature, to feed his family. (Chambre, 1981, p.554).

Marx points out that capitalism no longer values human labour. The obtaining of capital has become the main objective. Thus, as capitalism progresses in its search for increased capital, mechanization replaces human labour as being more efficient. The result of this is increased pauperization and unemployment. Capitalism now only uses that which is most efficient and discards anything that holds it back.

Marx then said that as capitalism grows, so too does the unrest of those whom it alienates. He believed that this unrest would culminate into a revolution that would destroy capitalism and the class system that it had created.

Marx's vision of metamorphosis was similar to Beuys later views. He too believed that the new society must be centred on the need of the individual:

"In the place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be an association in which the free

development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (Chambre 1981, p.554).

It may seem strange, considering the links between Beuys' and Marx' respective views of society, that Beuys was so adamant in denouncing any ties between social sculpture and Marxism. However, Beuys was justified, for although they both agreed on the symptoms of the problem they differed greatly when suggesting the means by which change should be implemented. Whereas Marx believed that change could only be brought about by a revolution instigated by the proletariat, Beuys felt that education and personal realization were the way. Beuys said that Marx placed too much faith in economics and class antagonism as the means of revolution.

Beuys also stated that he had reservations about whether a Marxist state would be one in which the pursuit of personal creativity would flourish. Beuys must also have questioned Marx' theory on the manipulation of nature as the means by which man discovers his own humanity. Beuys was well aware that man's manipulation of nature could no longer be justified by that.

Principally, Beuys' distrust of Marxism came from the fact that Marx never planned a structure to replace that which is destroyed by the revolution. In a lecture on social sculpture given in New York, Beuys explained that:

"Socialism means nothing, unless all the powers you find in human nature for freedom, equality and brotherhood, are included in the context of socialism. Socialism, democracy, freedom, mean nothing

alone, because freedom tends to become chaos when there are not orders established through a democratic decision.

There has to be a structure of laws, but not established from above by a minority of politicians or by economic interests. The basic law structure or the constitution has to be realized by the majority." (Kuoni 1990 p.33)

Having studied the relations between social sculpture and the works of Marx and Steiner, we can begin to see that Beuys' concepts were not unique, but were extensions of existent philosophical thought. It would seem essential therefore to understand the historical roots of social sculpture.

Beuys talked frequently of the need for art to be revalued in an "anthropological" sense. It is important to note this because his views of both art and mankind come directly from the discipline of philosophical anthropology.

Philosophical anthropology arose in the years between the wars out of a need to reinstate man as the centre for anthropological study. While study of man had traditionally been done by anthropologists, by the end of the 19th century anthropology had split into two separate disciplines. First, the study of man as a natural species (physical anthropology), and socially, the study of man as a social being influenced by historical and geographic factors (cultural anthropology).

"Philosophical anthropology arose as a remedy for this dissolution of the study of man. It attempts to regroup the specialized disciplines within a common purpose; it seeks to give a sense of order to the investigation of man, in the absence of which the human sciences neglect the essence, or humanity of man." (Gusdorf 1981, p.985).

By the 20th century man seemed to lose his sense and respect for what is basically and uniquely human. This was seen not only in the horrors of Hitlerism and Stalinism but also by many aspects of daily life in the modern world. It was becoming increasingly apparent that man was existing merely as a tool for economic and technological experimentation. (Gusdorf 1981, p.985).

The need to re-address these issues was felt by many intellectuals of the time: Jean Paul Sartre (Existentialism), Maire de Biran (Idealism), Henri Bergson (Personalism), as well as Steiner and Marx.

It is interesting that Beuys only turned to philosophical anthropology after his involvement in the war when he would have experienced first-hand the growing disregard for humanity.

Chapter Three

Beuys felt that his theories were extremely important and that social sculpture was the only way the world was likely to solve its problems. It is logical then that he should decide to take his ideas to the public.

The first thing he attempted to do was introduce his ideals into the Dusseldorf Academy where he was teaching. This is not surprising because Beuys had always seen the Academy as a small world onto itself in which he could experiment with his theories.

Just as Beuys' views on creativity were extreme so too were his ideals on the way educational systems should be structured to accommodate them. Beuys saw the art academy as a traditional place of artistic education that needed to be re-defined. (Stachelhaus 1987, pp 80-81).

What was important, Beuys said, was to bring the influence of art into every subject: there was no point in teaching art in school for two, five or even ten hours a week in isolation. A mathematics teacher for example, ought to be able to teach serial art. Beuys explained that it was essential that students realize how the introduction of art into every subject can enrich the learning process:

"We have to keep to the principle that the 'artistic' must cross over into every subject in the curriculum. Even if it's the art teacher he has to take the initiative to get the powers in gear. He needs to be trained to know how his speciality relates to other subjects. Basically, even for the young students, art should be the hardest subject. At the moment it's still the easiest subject, one in which people can often do anything they like. I believe that children really despise the art teacher because he asks too little of them."
(Stachelhaus 1987 p.85)

Beuys constantly reiterated his demand for the inclusion of art in all subjects, especially for younger students, so as to initiate them at a much more elementary level. Beuys insisted that the traditional concept of "formal creativity" be destroyed to make way for his all-encompassing art:

"It's all far too isolated. Isolated helplessness within the damned concept of 'formal creativity.' This is a term I reject utterly. During this stage, when someone has made a cliched drawing, the marvellous thing to say is 'What a darling little nose you've drawn there ! Just look at that ! Here, I'll show you an anatomical atlas so you can find out what kind of nose you've just drawn.' Then you show them all the different shapes there are. Maybe then the student takes an interest in anatomy.

It's important to expand, to get away from the unusable concept of formal creativity. It's creative when a person occupies himself with anatomy, or with geography. You can take the stupid little nose the student has drawn as a starting point and get some concepts across to him. There's no need to start going on about formal creativity. The person takes on a sculptural quality himself: he gets interested and he'll see that forms have context, that they have responsibility. You can't just tell a person to do something 'creative.' You have to think about the extended connections."
(Stachelhaus 1987 p.85).

Beuys went on to propose a new approach to teaching that would educate far more creatively:

"The schools must become places of education in a new sense, education as sculptural forming. The human being needs to be formed in the right way, and that mans being kneaded. He must be thoroughly kneaded from top to bottom. He is malleable, sculpturally mouldable. And the education that children get nowadays mostly warps them. The children don't become sculptural: they stay unbending, lifeless. They grow old before their time. They turn into egotistical philistines. And this is the cause of the unapproachable and immoral society we live in today. Defective education has unimaginable consequences." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.85).

Whenever Beuys attempted to enforce some of his unorthodox ideas in the Academy, he met with huge opposition from the academic council which governed the school. Ever since his appointment in 1961 there had been little peace at the school and he was essentially to blame. His passion for his ideas often led to a reluctance to compromise.

By the early 1970's the Academy was under great strain. The increasing number of students was becoming a massive problem due to lack of space. To combat this, the Council was forced to rule that there should be a limit on the number of students admitted.

Beuys held this decision to be in direct conflict with his own ideas. He strongly believed that anyone who wished to study should be allowed to do so. In an act of deliberate defiance, he allowed as many students to come to his class as wished. The Council informed him that he was operating in breach of the college rules and that he was to stop. This angered Beuys and prompted him to take aggressive action against the college.

On October 10th 1972, Beuys and fifty four students who had been refused admission to the Academy, occupied the administrative offices of the Academy. They were instructed to leave, but Beuys refused saying "*we will stay here for two weeks.*"

On the evening of the same day, a letter was given to Beuys from Johannes Rau (the Minister for Science and Research). The letter told Beuys that he was knowingly trespassing and as a result of his refusal to leave, he was to consider his employment in the college terminated. (Stachelhaus 1987 pp.88-89).

Beuys soon recovered from this disappointment and with this new free time he turned his energies to creating a new educational forum for his ideas.

As early as 1971 Beuys was writing papers in which he was proposing the creation of a new educational facility with which to implement his theories of creativity and social sculpture.

It was to be an experimental school: not one centred purely on the teaching of art, but one whose aim was to increase its pupils' awareness of their creativity and allow them to develop it. Beuys proposed a general syllabus including art, sociology, science and economics. He wanted a syllabus that would reach the creativity latent in all individuals and disciplines.

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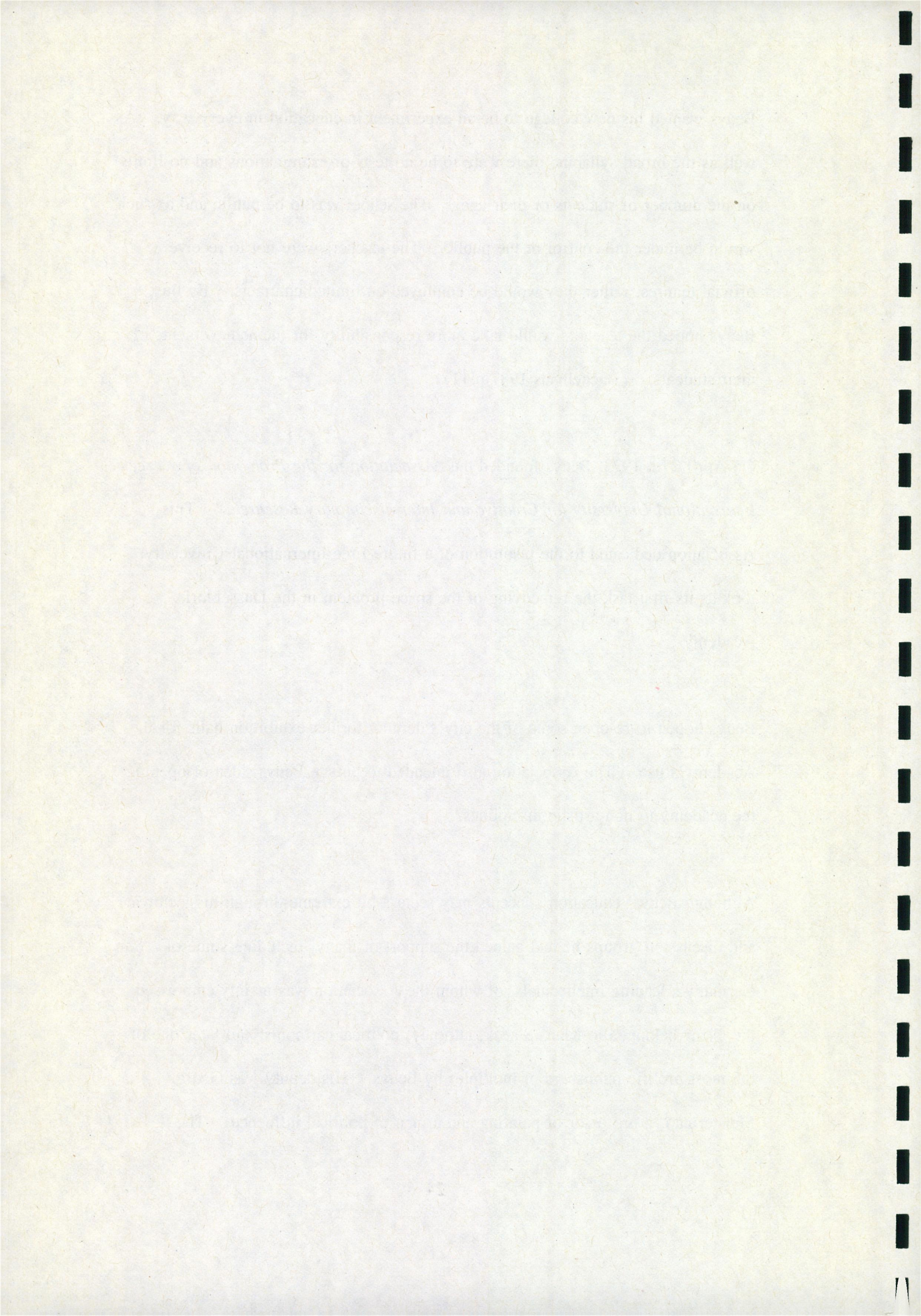
WEST INDIES

Beuys wanted his new college to be an experiment in education in every way. As well as the broad syllabus, there were to be no tests or examinations and no limits on the number of students or their ages. The school was to be public and as such would be under the control of the public. The teachers were not to receive official tenures, rather they would be employed on limited contracts. By this, Beuys hoped the teachers would take more responsibility for the achievements of their students. (Stachelhaus 1987 p.117).

On April 27th 1973, Beuys founded the "*Association for the Promotion of a Free International University for Creative and Inter-disciplinary Research.*" This Association dedicated to the institution of a future Free International University, took as its first task the remedying of the space problem in the Dusseldorf Academy.

Beuys hoped to re-open some of the city's derelict former exhibition halls for the Academy's use. The Association also intended to pursue Beuys' idea of opening the academy to non-artistic disciplines.

Although Beuys' education concepts may seem a bit extreme through his lectures and discussion groups he had gained the support of many, including some of Germany's leading intellectuals, of whom the Association was mainly comprised: the Chair belonged to Klaus Staeck, attorney, political cartoonist and later one of the most prolific publishers of multiples by Beuys. His deputy was Georg Meisterman, a professor of painting and a man of political influence. The



Secretary was the art journalist and originator of Kunstkompass magazine, Willi Bongard, a close friend of Beuys. The other board members were three of Beuys' colleagues from the Dusseldorf Academy - Eran Heerich, Gerhard Richter and Walter Warnach and two museum directors, Paul Wember of Krefeld and Eugen Thiemann of Dortmund. (Stachelhaus 1987 p. 115).

The manifesto as determined by the board, for the Free University began as follows:-

"Creativity is not limited to those who practise one of the traditional forms of art, and even for those individuals, creativity is not confined to the exercise of their art. Everyone has a creative potential which is masked by the aggressiveness of competition and pursuit of success. To recognize, explore and develop this potential is the task of this school." (Kuoni 1990 p. 149)

With the intent of developing this *"potential"* the board set out an experimental syllabus. What they offered were *"inter-medial disciplines"* such as cognitive theory, social behaviour, solidarity, criticism of art, criticism of criticism, *"literality"* theory, perceptual theory, imagery, stagecraft and performance. Classes in ecology and evolutionary science were also (to be) available. (Kuoni 1990 pp.149-152).

Beuys failed to convince the Academy to adopt his free college as a new faculty. However, it was in Dusseldorf, in February 1974 that Beuys and his friend Heinrich Boll founded a Free International University for Creativity and Inter-

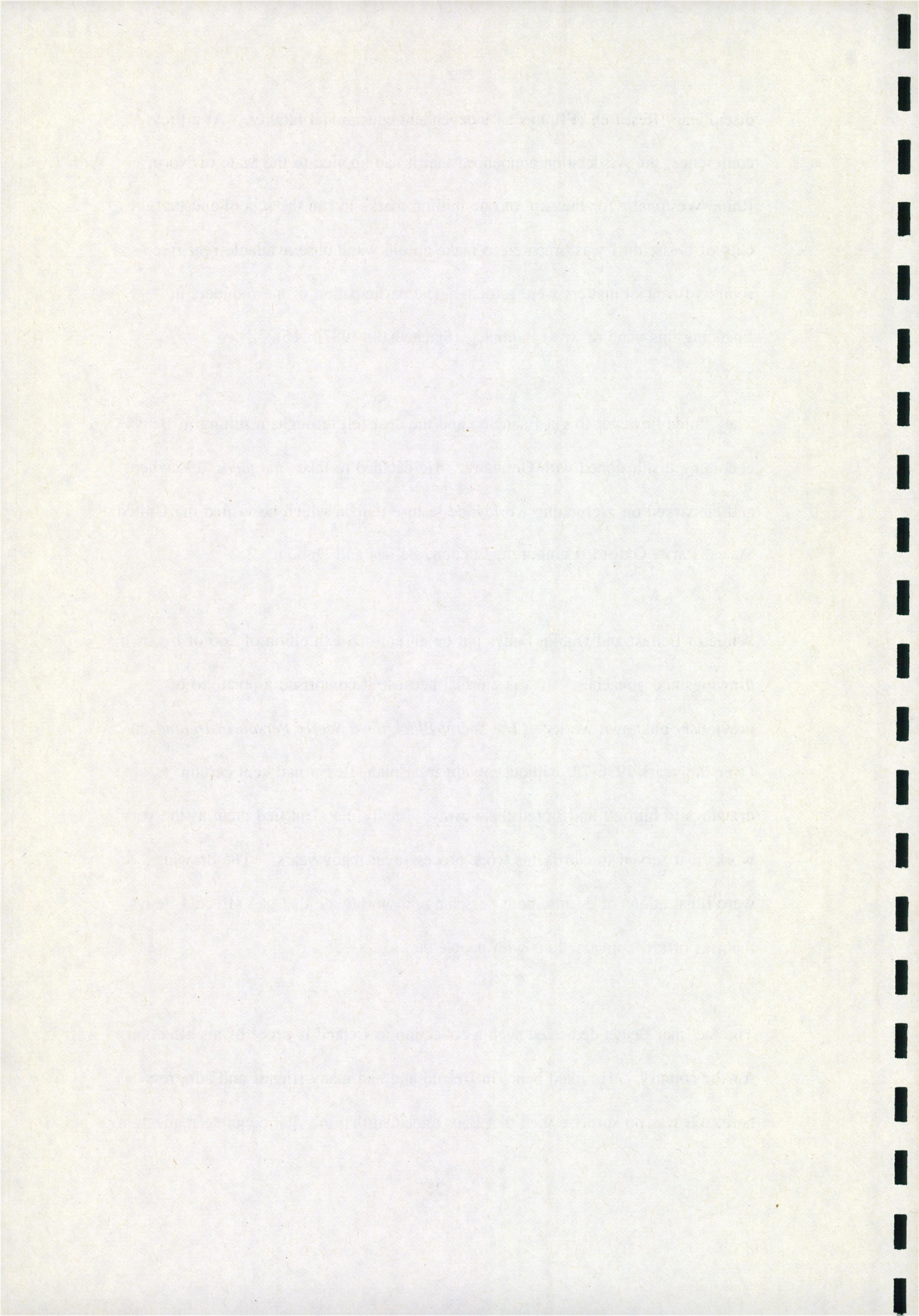
disciplinary Research (FIU) as an independent educational facility. At a press conference, the Association announced that it had applied to the State of North Rhine-Westphalia for the sum of one million marks to run the school and that the City of Dusseldorf was prepared to make an old warehouse available rent free as soon as financial matters were settled. The participation of the founders in financing this venture was essential. (Stachelhaus 1987 p.16).

They failed however to get financing and the deal fell through, resulting in Beuys becoming disillusioned with Germany. He decided to take "*his ideas*" elsewhere and embarked on a gruelling worldwide lecture tour in which he visited the United States, Paris, Oxford, Edinburgh, London, Belfast and Dublin.

While in Belfast and Dublin Beuys put on an unusual exhibition of 266 of his own drawings and gouaches. It was unusual because it comprised a portfolio of previously unknown works: "*The Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland.*"

Over the years 1936-72, without my apparent plan, Beuys had kept certain drawings to himself and stored them away; finally, he identified them as the very works that served to clarify his work process over many years. The drawings were illustrations of events, both personal and worldwide that had affected Beuys' theories of art, conversations with people etc.

The fact that Beuys dedicated such a collection to Ireland is proof of his affection for the country. He liked being in Ireland and had many friends and admirers here. It was no surprise then that Beuys decided that the first concrete realization



of the FIU should be in Ireland. Beuys had often remarked that he found that his ideas of creativity, self-determination, liberty, equality and fraternity met with far more interest in countries where economic activity and established parties had collapsed - referring particularly to Northern Ireland. Beuys told Rainer Rappermann in 1976:

"So Ireland is the first place where the whole thing ought to turn intensely political. We just might come to the conclusion that Ireland could be a model for Europe...In a sense, Ireland is still, economically, a developing country. Co-operation between (the Republic of Ireland) and Northern Ireland is very poor. Co-operation with Great Britain doesn't work at all...so Ireland satisfied some of the pre-conditions for working out a model that would make people say "they're doing it completely different !" (Stachelhaus 1987 pp.117-119).

And so work began in Northern Ireland. Beuys set up a Northern Ireland Workshop of the FIU. At Documenta 6, in 1977, Beuys was present with members of the workshop and together they gave out information about Northern Ireland; its culture, its folklore, art and industries. Their express purpose was to generate feedback to the Northern Ireland community. The first permanent base of the FIU was set up in Derry where they were surveying the dying trades of the region.

The student movement of the sixties had a deep impact on Beuys. He quickly realized that he could use political organizations as ways of developing and publicizing his artistic theories. In rapid succession, he founded many minor political organizations.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methods used.

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results obtained.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and summary of the findings.

5. The fifth part of the report is a list of references.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of figures and tables.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of appendices.

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9. The ninth part of the report is a list of errata.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of acknowledgments.

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12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of correspondence.

13. The thirteenth part of the report is a list of publications.

14. The fourteenth part of the report is a list of patents.

15. The fifteenth part of the report is a list of awards.

16. The sixteenth part of the report is a list of honors.

17. The seventeenth part of the report is a list of memberships.

18. The eighteenth part of the report is a list of societies.

19. The nineteenth part of the report is a list of organizations.

20. The twentieth part of the report is a list of institutions.

21. The twenty-first part of the report is a list of departments.

22. The twenty-second part of the report is a list of divisions.

In 1969 he founded "*The German Student Party*"; in 1970 the "*Organization of Non-Voters/Free Referendums*"; finally in 1971 the "*Organization of Direct Democracy through Referendums*." The groups were extremely marginal which on a political level, were taken seriously at most by their few members. (Grasskamp, 1991 p.136).

From 1972-1978 Beuys' interest in politics dissipated as he turned his energy and attention to creating the FIU. However, when Beuys published his "*Appeal for the Alternative*" in 1978, he attracted much attention from the Green Party (a popular German environmental political party).

"*Appeal for the Alternative*" was Beuys' version of Steiner's "*Appeal to the German People...*" in which he described his theory of creativity and called for a national realization of social sculpture. What really attracted the Greens' attention was Beuys' identification of what he called the "*symptoms of crisis*":-

- The danger of nuclear destruction of the world.
- The intensification of the bitter arms race.
- The gigantic waste of energy and raw materials and the monstrous squandering of the creative abilities of millions of people.

"Worldwide unemployment the wasting of vast quantities of valuable foodstuffs that accumulate as a result of subsidized over-production...while in other parts of the world thousands die of starvation every day." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.121)

The reasons Beuys gave for these was:

"We practise an economic system based on unlimited exploitation of natural resources...between the mine and the garbage dump, stretches the one way steed of modern industrial civilization whose expanse growth destroys more and more lifelines and the circulation within the eco-system." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.120)

Also at this time, Beuys' interest in politics was being re-kindled by his new friendship with the student leader Rudi Dutschke. Together, with the Green Party, they hoped to turn politics, social policy and cultural policy into social sculpture.

At first the co-operation between Beuys and the Greens was good. In 1979 Beuys was the Party's candidate in the European Parliament election. What Beuys hoped to do had been laid out in his *"Appeal."* He message was unity in diversity:-

"The environmental, peace and women's movements, the Proxismondelle movement the movements for democratic socialism or for humanist liberals, or for a third way, the anthroposophical movement, tendencies associated with various Christian denominations, the civil rights movements and the Third World movement, must all recognize that they are indispensable components of a single alternative movement...effective only as an alliance of many autonomous groups that define their relationships with each other and with the public at large in terms of a spirit of active tolerance." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.121)

The artistic charisma of Beuys however became too much for the Green Party. They found him strange and were reluctant to be too closely linked to him politically. This resulted in them refusing to allow Beuys to run for office in the

German Parliament as their representative. The spokesperson for the Green Party at the time, Lukas Beckmann, explained their reluctance:

"The revolutionary content of the message Beuys conveys inevitably remains inaccessible to many people. There are biographical overtones in everything he says. He sets out to strip everyday perception bare, to reveal, through the creativity of his own thought, what lies behind more perceptible reality." (Stachelhaus 1987 p.121).

Conclusion

There is little doubt that Beuys remains an artist of extreme importance. He was probably the most influential European artist of this century. Is his influence mainly to be an aesthetic one? I myself was drawn to him through the physical appeal of his sculptures. Yet Beuys maintained that his *"Expanded Concept of Art"* was his greatest work. Why then is it that he is not remembered for it as much as he is for his object work?

Lukas Beckmann probably put his finger on it when he said that Beuys' *"revolutionary content"* was too full of *"biographical overtones"* to make it accessible to others. Whereas Beuys' objects can be appreciated on a purely aesthetic level i.e. without any explanation, social sculpture can only be understood through Beuys, thus rendering it at least as complex as Beuys himself.

It was the energy and passion with which Beuys infused his ideals that made them feasible, without him they seem hopelessly idealistic. Inevitably, history has absorbed them as it always does. But even before he died, Beuys' efforts seemed futile. Doctor Duncan Macmillan explained in October 1980:

"Beuys' position is logical, admirable and hopeless. He belongs to a long tradition of artists who have seen the identity of moral and artistic truth and he is no means. The first to follow the next logical step that leads to political engagement.

As Beuys discovered by experience, society has developed the

capacity to neutralize by absorption anything that the artist may do." (Macmillan 1980, p.456).

It is possible that Beuys' greatest handicap was being an artist. He must have been aware that his artistic reputation would impede his ability to convince society on non-artistic matters. Yet even within the parameters of the art world, Beuys' attempts seemed futile. In the transcript of a lecture Beuys gave in New York it would appear that the audience was more amused with him than interested in his ideas. Beuys' charisma had grown so much as to obscure his work or ideas.

One reviewer of the debate criticized the audience thus:

"Whenever anyone began to address Beuys from a position as far to the left as his, but which proposed different - perhaps more conventional - assumptions, they came in for a lot of flack from the crowd. The New York art world's love of orthodoxy was confirmed in this and given the explicitly political overtones of the event, that kind of immediate protection of the guru seemed to me to be quite scary. A cult of personality is the least liberating influence conceivable in a discussion of either art politics or both." (Gilbert Rolfe 1974 p.69).

However, although Beuys' plans may seem too idealistic, few I imagine could fault him on his ideas about education and the FIU. In fact some of his approaches that at the time seemed outrageous, have filtered through to many art colleges today, even if they are, to a certain extent, diluted.

Perhaps the reason for the greater success of Beuys' educational ideas is because he himself was a teacher. He knew how educational organizations operated and

how to suit his purposes. The opposite could be said of his experience in politics. The lack of economic or political detail in Beuys' theories reveal the limit of his knowledge in these fields.

Essentially, Beuys was a good artist and a bad politician. Beuys, I think, eventually realized this and gave up direct political involvement, to concentrate on his art. Thankfully it is his art for which he is remembered.

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