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*The Influence of  
Chinese Calligraphy  
on  
Western Informel  
Painting*

中國書法藝術對西洋繪畫的影響

*Düsseldorf 2015*

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on Western Informel Painting**

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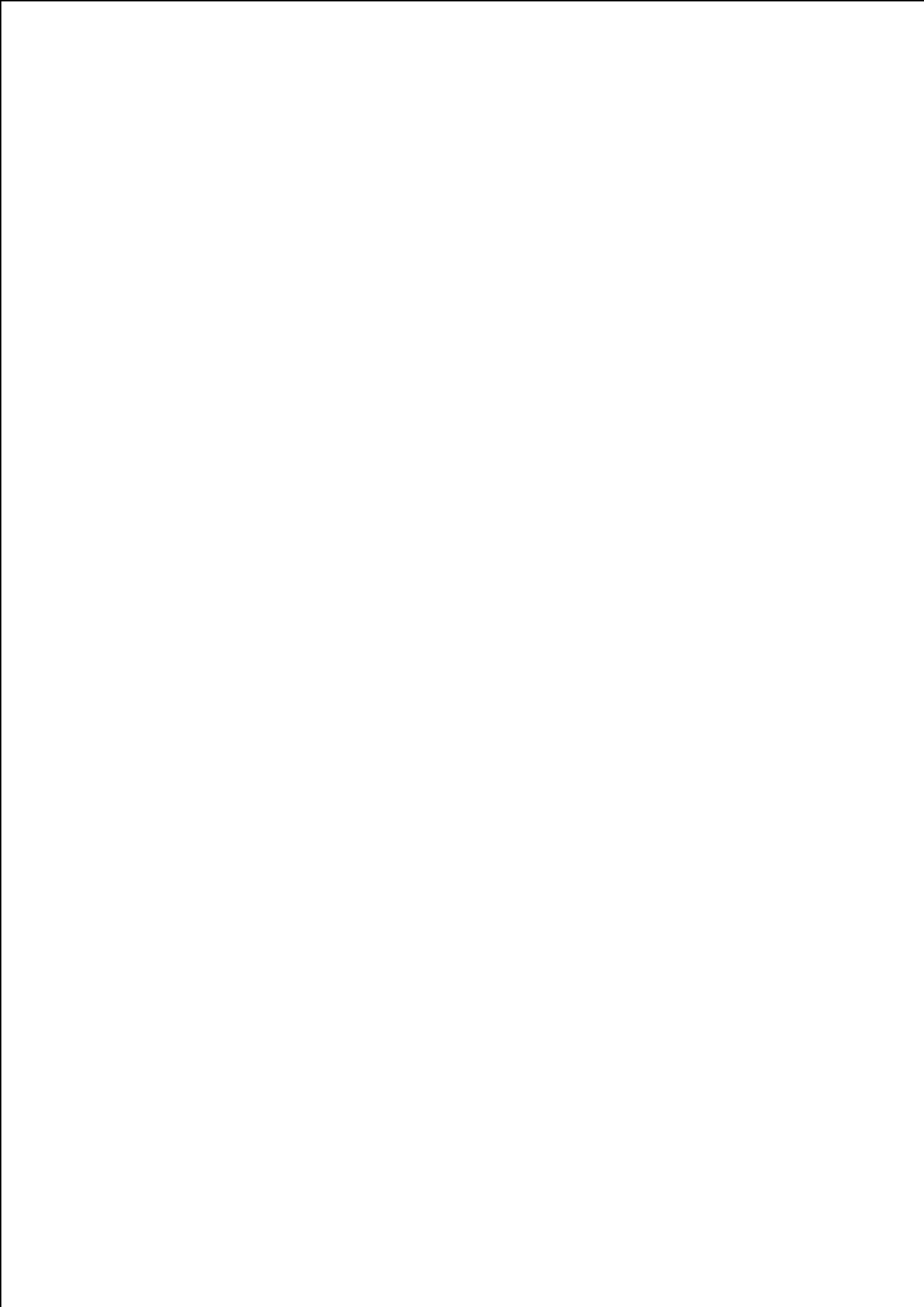
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## Preface

This work, which deals with the influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy on the Western Informel Painting, is an attempt to contribute a little to the understanding of some of the essential aspects of two cultures and their relations: the Western European-American on one hand and the East-Asian, particularly the Chinese, on the other hand. The subject of this work concerns an aspect of intercultural relations between the East and the West, especially the artistic relations between Eastern Asia and Europe/America in a certain direction, from the East to the West. The suggestion to this research arose from the practical employment with the art of the West during my artistic education, by which I, as a Chinese coming from the artistic culture of my homeland, almost unavoidably came to the employment with attempts of artistic meetings and syntheses between elements and aspects of East Asian and Western Art. The step to the employment with this problem also from a theoretical and historical view did not lie far away.

As will appear in the course of the investigation, differences exist in the intensity of the Calligraphic influence, namely in such a way that some artists have learnt the methodology and technology of Calligraphy intensely and have turned it inward, like Tobey and Masson, so that here can be spoken of an "influence", and other artists have dealt less intensely with it and have borrowed only some aspects, and this, hence, only can be called "inspired". Taking into account the width of the subject and also the quite large number of more "inspired" artists, a detailed investigation of the Calligraphic "influence" has to be limited to the work of two artists, who were most strongly influenced: namely Mark Tobey and André Masson.

I would like at this point to express my gratitude to my honoured supervisor, Professor Dr. Eduard Trier, for the steady support and the valuable and informative suggestions and advice and for the understanding, which was given to me. He has not only accompanied the work with understanding, but he also has taught me the ways of thinking and the methods of art history and has encouraged me to apply them also to the non-European art. In this regard I also have to thank Mrs. Professor Dr. Eleanor von Erdberg and Professor Dr. Rolf Trauzettel very warmly for their steady attentive company and support, as well as for the numerous tips and suggestions.

Moreover I would like to express my thanks for the support and the procurement of material and information to Dr. George Ellis, the director of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, to the East-West Centre for the Research of Cultural and Technical Interchange in Honolulu, to Mrs. E. Sayre from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, to Dr. Chiang Fu-Tsung, the director of the National Palace Museum of Taipei, as well as to the staff of the San Francisco Art Museum, the Museum of Modern Art New York and the Metropolitan Museum of New York.



I also owe thanks in this regard for discussions and information to Professor Hann Trier, Professor Dr. Cyrus Lee of the Edinboro State College of Pennsylvania / USA, Mr. Hans Heidenheim of the Gallery Ursus Presse Gallery in Dusseldorf, Dr. Greub and Mrs. S. Greub of the Greub Gallery in Basel, as well as to Mrs. Beyeler of the Ernst Beyeler Gallery in Basel.

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## **I. Introduction**

This work is an attempt to delineate and analyze the influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy on the Informel Painting of the West. A special work on this topic and important art historical aspect of modernity exists, as can be seen so far, not yet, and all comments on this topic in the most general literature hardly go in depth and also do not investigate the deeper connections, factors and effects, especially regarding the specific nature of Calligraphic Art, its features, even from the point of view of their origin, i.e. from the Chinese Art, and what caused its impact on the Western Informel Art and its circle. The remarks and comments on the influence of East Asia and Chinese Calligraphy are limited mostly by only stating the influence of Chinese Calligraphy, without analyzing it closer, or they deal only with the influence of Zen-Philosophy (Chinese: Ch'an 禪) or Zen-Painting, without fully working out the active elements and methods of Calligraphy in their formal sense.

As the Zen philosophy as a faith or way of thinking differs from Calligraphy as an art, despite some points of contact and overlap in the ideological basics, it is an aim of this research work to try to work out the differences here as well as the relationships. The Zen-Way of thinking has originated with artists such as Mark Rothko and Ad Reinhardt formal and visual results, that differ greatly in the silence and calmness from the picture boards of the linear dynamic works, which were exposed to the influence of Calligraphic Art. One reason for the hitherto rather vague distinction between Calligraphy and Zen as influences on the Informel possibly are the previously still missing detailed analyzes of the involved individual artists, and especially of the Calligraphic influenced or inspired works or groups of works, further also the currently low consideration of Chinese Calligraphy and its formal and aesthetic principles, which were already very early formulated in the "Six Principles" of Hsie Ho (謝赫六法), and which apply equally to Chinese Painting.

In contrast to the art of Calligraphy Zen, or in Chinese Ch'an (禪) first of all is no art, although in connection with this thinking a special kind of painting has developed among those, who have mainly pursued Zen, the monks of the Zen-Buddhism. But Zen is a philosophy, a religion, or, more precisely, a spiritual attitude, whose goal is the direct experience of the ultimate truths in the 'satori' 悟 (Jap.), a state of consciousness in which the duality of the world has ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup> Artists who have dealt extensively with Zen, but have learned little or not intensive and not long enough the technique and methodology of calligraphy as an art, and so usually only adapted it in the form of some aspects, especially the moment of speedy execution (like Mathieu and others), and who therefore lack the mastery or control of the typical Calligraphic characteristics, can therefore at best only be considered as "inspired", which applies to most of them. Other artists, who like Tobey or Masson, partly Graves, have practiced and internalized technology

and methodology, and thus have learned the typical "space-plastical" (raumplastisch) ductus, can thus record a real "influence", as they have tried to assimilate and master all the important elements of the Calligraphic Art.

The focus at this investigation is therefore concentrated on the "influenced" artists, especially Tobey and Masson, while "inspired" artists can not be treated as detailed as them. In addition, the historical significance of Tobey and Masson for the Informel Painting (Abstract Expressionists in the USA) and their artistic neighbourhood was greater than that of the other artists interested in Calligraphy. Mark Tobey was well aware that Zen first of all is a state of mind, when he says:<sup>2</sup>

"Zen is more a philosophy than a religion."

And he confirmed elsewhere that only the method of Chinese Calligraphy, the "Calligraphic Impulse", had developed and acquired him all the visual possibilities of a freer and more dynamic art of movement and vibration.

"I have received there (in Japan and China), what I call the Calligraphic Impulse, that has opened up my work new dimensions. So I was able to paint the rush and turmoil of the large cities, the interlacing of the lights and the currents of the people, who are caught in the meshes of this network".<sup>3</sup>

The direct experience of the ultimate truths in the Satori is achieved by immersion in one's interior, in one's own self being, by killing the desires and tensions of the outer life, through meditation and the subsequent recognition of and the awakening of one's own being.<sup>4</sup> The characteristics of Zen can be formulated in the following early saying:

"A special mental inspiration, outside of didactic instruction, no dependence on letters and words, immediately targeting on the spirit in each of us and looking in one's own being, thereby attaining Buddhahood".<sup>5</sup>

The Zen thinking originated in China and following in Japan since the 6th century A.D., and is first and foremost a mode of cognition or cognitive attitude, which is used to attempt to gain access to the latest and most transcendent truths. Its foundations in East-Asia lies in the first millennium B.C. (and earlier), in the world view and theory of knowlegde of the I-Ching ( 易 經 ), the "Book of Changes", and the teachings of Lao-tzu ( 老 子 ) in the Tao-Te-Ching, as well as the teachings contained therein from the highest principle "Tao ( 道 )", which unfolds



itself in the dualistic-polaristic principles Yin ( 陰 ) and Yang ( 陽 ) in the world.<sup>6</sup> Coming from the Taoist Chinese thoughts elements of Zen are also contained in the principles of Calligraphy, as we shall see.

So apart from that, Zen was for an artist like Tobey and others only the possibility of penetrating into mental attitudes or states, which for the artists of the West previously were unknown or foreign, and of course they were eager to employ them. However they still lacked the possibility, the means, the methods by which their ideas and thoughts, discoveries and sensations could be implemented into the reality of their art, because the Western tradition had not provided them according funds.

These means the artists, who were interested in East-Asian thinking, found in the Chinese Calligraphy, whose practical foundations are much older or at least as old as the philosophy of the Tao and the Zen thinking. Chinese Calligraphy is the artistic exercise or art form of Chinese Writing, whose basic element is the linear-structured character as carriers of meaning and information. Both in reality and in history, as well as for the aim of this work, the Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy in their essential characteristics are considered to be identical and adequate; a distinction is therefore unnecessary.

In China (and Japan) Calligraphy, the exercise of writing as an art, is regarded as the supreme and highest art, it ranks ahead of the painting, because its principles and characteristics are identical, or such that the foundations and principles of Calligraphy rang above those of painting. André Masson was well aware of this and he remarks:

"One knows, how much in China as in Japan scripture is connected with the exercise of the great painting."<sup>7</sup>

This is also evident from the earliest theoretical writings on art in China, such as the "Ku-hua p'in-lu" ( 古畫品錄 ) of Hsieh Ho ( 謝赫 ) about 490 A.D., which contains the famous "Six principles"(liu fa 六法), or the "Pi-fa-chi" ( 筆法記 ) of Ching Hao ( 荆浩 ) about 920 A.D. containing the "Six inevitables" ( liu yao 六要). Its most important principles are: the "living spontaneity" or the "spirit of life" (Ch'i-yun 氣韻) and the application of the "bone" method (ku-fa yung pi 骨法用筆),<sup>8</sup> whose exact meaning will be explained later. This principal interdependence and conditionality of Calligraphy and Painting in China, whose consequence in East-Asia is that painting without the artistic mastery of Calligraphy is not possible, as Masson has recognized and stressed, becomes clear by some statements of Chao Meng-fu ( 趙孟頫 ), the great painter, calligrapher and theorist from the Yuan-Dynasty ( 元朝 ) of the 13th century A.D.:

"In painting a tree is like fei-pai ( 飛白 ) (the technique of overflowed white), ..., the bamboo is like writing, the

painter should also know and master the "Eight principles of the character Yung (Eternity) (yung-tzu pa-fa 永字八法)", (i.e. the principles of Calligraphic fundamental strokes (auth.)). Who is able of that, should also know that Calligraphy and Painting are the same."<sup>9</sup>

Yang Wei-chen (楊維楨), another theorist remarks similar thoughts:

"Calligraphy and Painting are one. When the literate can paint, he must also be able to write very well, because the method of painting is inherent in the method of writing."<sup>10</sup>

From these observations of significant Chinese artists and aesthetes, it is clear that the foundation of the whole East-Asian art of Calligraphy is that their principles and techniques are those of the Calligraphy, and that art without mastery of Calligraphy is not possible. This must indeed, perhaps due to their distinct intuition, have been more or less consciously or unconsciously clear to all the artists, who were interested in the Art of East-Asia in their search for new means of expression, but especially to the two artists, who were most intensely dealing with it and have most deeply penetrated into the spiritual world as well as the techniques and methods of Calligraphy, namely Mark Tobey and André Masson. Tobey therefore spoke soon after having made the acquaintance with the Calligraphy of the "need to write an image"<sup>11</sup> and confirmed the Calligraphic Influence in several ways:

"In 1934 ... I made a trip to China and Japan, where I studied the brushwork and got acquainted with some of the East-Asian masters. In the early twenties years I had learned the brushwork in Seattle with Teng Kuei, a student from the University of Washington, and I found out, that one could experience a tree as well by the dynamic line as through mass and light."<sup>12</sup>

André Masson also clearly indicates his interest and involvement with Chinese Calligraphy:

"The Chinese Calligraphy had attracted me very early, and with it all East-Asian and oriental 'writings'.<sup>13</sup>

Both artists, Tobey and Masson, who once met by virtue of their common interest during an exhibition of Tobey in Paris, belong to a small but important group of artists who, scattered throughout the Western hemisphere, are not organized, and their conjointly link primarily is an unusually strong interest in the art of a very different culture, the Far East, and especially in the art of Chinese Calligraphy. Other artists except Tobey and Masson have been interested in this Calligraphy, like Alechinsky, Alcopley, Bissier, Degottex, Graves, Hartung, Mathieu, Michaux. Some of them, in whose work and statements more or less clear and intense an inspiration of the Chinese Calligraphy can be pointed out, but who had not as intense practiced and internalized the specific technology and methodology, can therefore only be called "inspired", but not as "influenced". The aim of this research work therefore is to try to work out this "influence" as well as the nature and extent of "inspiration", to show their origins and backgrounds and different accents in the works of various artists and the effects and consequences. As it is within the context of this investigation not possible to address all the involved artists as detailed, and as the importance of Tobey and Masson, both in terms of the influence as well in their dissemination is most significant, the more detailed study should be limited to these two artists, who dealt especially intensive with the technology and methodology as well as the aesthetic foundations, and whose work can therefore be considered as most representative.

As in the years of the actual domination and dissemination of Informel, caused by the specific techniques and methods of Informel Art, such as the Automatism and the use of pictorial gesture as means, similarities in the visual results of elements or works of Chinese Calligraphy of course occurred more frequently, a selection of the works and artists, who can prove a genuine "influence" compared to those, who only have a physical resemblance, must be applied. Artists and works, which show only a similarity without any evidence of contact with the Calligraphy, are not examined in this study, nor can they be included into the vicinity of Calligraphic Influence. The theme of this research work limits its review also on the works and periods of those artists, who were demonstrably under the influence of Calligraphy, and does not refer to not affected early works and periods of the artists, if it is not necessary for the understanding.

While the term "Chinese Calligraphy" generally is well understood and defined equally, even if its content and aesthetics in the West except by some specialists and artists are not so widely known, this is not the case with the concept or term of "Informel". There is regarding the scope, content and definition still much disagreement in the practice of art, in art criticism and art theory. Artists and works that are assigned by the critics and theorists to the Informel, have been also assigned to the terms "Tachism"<sup>14</sup> (Gueguen), "Lyrical Abstraction"<sup>14</sup> (Mathieu), "Action Painting"<sup>14</sup> (Rosenberg), "Abstract Expressionism"<sup>14</sup> (Coates) and others. All of these terms refer more or less to an individual or partly aspect, as the emphasis is put on the act of painting or the use of stains (tache) in painting. None

of these words is so comprehensive and universal, that it would be suitable as a general term. Therefore for the purpose of this work the term "Informel" shall be used, because it is still comparatively most extensive, and is used in this regard in the relevant literature.<sup>15</sup> The concept of Informel is more comprehensive, because it is a negative term, i.e. a term that gets its meaning and significance by means of negative demarcation, which initially formulates that what does not belong to, what it does not say or mean. "In-Formel" does not mean, as always assumed until now, the "non-form-like", but means, as the word says precisely by itself, the "non-formula-like".

A "formula" is generally understood to be an essential definition based on symbolic characters or numbers for structures, conditions or other units of being, which are used as the basic elements of the theories of natural sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology and technology. An essential feature of a formula is the strict dependence on logic, rationality and clear formulated definitions, also the feature of repeatability and reproducibility. Applied to the phenomena of art, these features can both be assigned to the Concrete (abstract) Art, Geometric Abstraction, as well as the illusionist realist art of the Post-Renaissance, because the latter is based partly on "formulas" as the perspective space structure or body proportions and construction schemes. The term "Informel" excludes at least largely, and this is essential, the characteristics of the logical-rational, the realistic-illusionistic, the repeatability and objective accountability or validity, and is based, considering it as an arts feature, on the qualities of the intuitive, irrational, spontaneous, impulsive, unrepeatable and the unknown and randomly.

All of these features also apply to the artists and works of Tachism, Action Painting. A more detailed and in-depth analysis of these concepts is not the task of this research work, however, as there must necessarily be a minimum of definition standards for clarity, the term of "Informel" is used in this work as the 'parent concept of work', which refers to the works of those artists, who show the above mentioned characteristics. Those are quite a lot, but in the course of this work, the term as well as the scope of the relevant artists will be widely narrowed on the "Calligraphic Informel", in which a main feature is the use Calligraphic emblematic and linear-gestural elements of Calligraphic origin as artistic or pictorial means. Tobey and Masson have to be assigned hereto, and other artists inspired by Calligraphy, or vice versa, all artists, who have integrated elements and features of the influence of Chinese Calligraphy into their work or were clearly and demonstrably inspired by it from certain formal attributes.

The influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy is a section of intercultural relations between cultures, and especially the Art of East-Asia on one hand and Europe and America on the other hand, as Eduard Trier in connection with the history of drawing in the 20th century mentioned.<sup>16</sup> The precursor of this to date last major intercultural exchange were the Chinoiserie of the Baroque and Rococo

and the influence of Japan, particularly Japanese woodblock prints (ukiyo-e 浮世絵) on the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists (Nabis, van Gogh and others) and Jugendstil / Art Nouveau. Even later, at Nolde, Eduard Trier still states this influence significantly:

"The ink sketch 'Chinese junks', that Nolde on a trip to the Far East has improvised in 1913-1914, goes back to the common sources. It ties in the form and technology directly on the East Asian ink painting. Not only the motif observed in the South Sea is Far Eastern, but also the most economical, consistent plain and form abstracted like a character, with which the East Asian Art lasting for over fifty years has given an impetus to European Art."<sup>17</sup>

Although some effects of the Calligraphic line of East-Asia can be detected coming over the woodcuts of Japan into the linear Art Nouveau, it is not the task of this research work to go into this more detailed. It can be stated, however, that through this first effect of a Calligraphic element, which Nolde even was aware of as Trier mentioned, some foundations have been laid for the subsequent influence on the Informel, even if it was only indirect and diffuse.

For the aim of this investigation we can work with the following tentative hypothesis: The influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy has been a significant element in the development and change of Western Art, and actually as far as this influence effected:

- 1) The intensification of an intuitive, irrational and more linear-dynamic art and movement and action in opposite to the logical-rational, illusionistic or static traditional art, or in opposite to the similar static and logical-rational concrete (abstract) art.
- 2) The liberation and development of the intrinsic value of the pictorial means and finally its separation from the illusionistic Realism.
- 3) The crossing and overcoming of the separation of art and life in the action (in the artistic action).
- 4) The emergence of features of a universal and culture-independent or overcoming the individual cultures universal human art, in a synthesis due to an approach of universal human characteristics and fundamental values, which are common and immanent to all cultures.

The analysis of an artistic influence is the statement, the evidence and the explanation of a change in the work of one or more artists or groups through the works of other artists and its factors and elements, as well as by personal cultural

factors of another sphere or culture, which are assimilated artistically, reevaluated and integrated into one's own work and thinking, initially by means of information transfer from the donor to the influence taker, and resulting by changes in the thinking and actions of the influence receiver. It is therefore necessary to clarify from where the informations came, how they were transported and what they affected. As for the artistic influence, it is to look for human encounters, traveling, visiting exhibitions in galleries and museums, preoccupation with certain literature, exchange of experiences among artists, learning methods, techniques and ways of thinking, considering the social environment and situation, employment of artists with world views, philosophies and aesthetics. Affinities in thought and belief must be clarified, as well as resulting changes in the works, such as the appearance of new elements, techniques, methods and means, style changes, as well as similarities and identities of elements, factors, development and effects of the artwork influence of the transferee and their possible causes in the area of the encoder.

As concrete materials and tools have to be used statements of the artist(s) by themselves in interviews, letters, or own writings, comparative analyzes of the ideological and philosophical and religious foundations, especially formal analyzes and comparative analyzes (analyzes of the works, works comparisons, even detail comparisons and comparative analyzes of formal elements of the influence receiver and potential influence of donors). In addition, of course, the already in the literature existing statements are to be considered and possibly revised. All of these factors and practices then provide informations on the extent and nature of the influence. Of course, the above factors may not always be clearly separated in the course of the concrete work analyzes, but merge into one another, are weighted differently or applied simultaneously. Here it must also be noted that the Chinese sources and their terminology, as far as it is possible and necessary, are to be used and considered to illuminate the problems and relationships through all relevant views, to be able to draw precise and complete conclusions.

This results in a structuring of the research work into four main sections or chapters. Following this introduction (Chapter I) first, the essential attributes of Informel Painting and their tendencies are to be characterized briefly (Chapter II), including an ideological analysis of the influence receiver. The distinction between "influenced" and only "inspired" artists (Mathieu, etc.) will be taken into account, in so far as they are analyzed together with the identification of Informel characteristics and features. The "influenced" artists Tobey and Masson (Chapter IV) will be analyzed following on the identification of the nature and essential features of Calligraphy (Chapter III), and finally (Chapter V) a summary lists possible conclusions, which have to be drawn from the study.

## **II. The essential Characteristics of Western Informel Painting and their Tendencies**

### **1. The Social and Cultural Situation and the Philosophical Fundamentals of the Informel Painting**

#### **1.1 Social and Cultural Situation**

The urge for pictorial freedom from the traditional limits and the retreat into subjectivity and the inner world of man, which characterizes the development of the Informel tendency of modernity, is also, among other, founded in a changing of the socio-cultural situation. In order to understand the development of modern Informel Painting and thus the possibility of an influence and its background, it is necessary to understand clearly the socio-cultural situation and then to illustrate the ideological and philosophical influences on the artists of that time, which in the Informel tendency responds as a counter-movement to the rationalist arts of Geometric Abstraction, Constructivism and the Bauhaus successors.

A major factor was the situation in Europe and particularly in Germany, caused by the ostracism of many artists as degenerated by the Nazi regime, by the destructions of the war, which were not merely materially, but also were separating people and families and breaking spirit and soul of many people. Self-esteem and discernment were also like the cities in ruins. But also the art world was destroyed; not only that the Nazi regime had suppressed and eliminated all politically not acceptable movements; after the war intact museums, galleries and exhibition opportunities were also missing.<sup>18</sup> Not much more positive for the arts in the United States was the poor economic situation, which developed since the Great Depression, which was also true for Europe, the lack of income and social recognition of artists, leading to frustration and devastating consequences for the self-consciousness of the artists. The prevailing sense of inferiority of the artists in the USA, caused by a provincial nature of American art in an international comparison, also contributed to the lack of self-consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

The consequences of this situation were an increasing isolation from the public, an emphasis on individualism and an emigration to the inside, as well as fear of life, aimlessness and despair. Through the war communication between the artists and society had been then continuously prevented, and thereby also lacked a critical art audience and a numerically strong elite.<sup>20</sup> Art and Artists in this situation are thrown back on themselves and see, as a result, the only way of lasting values only in dealing with their own emotional or psychological processes and values. The art appears therefore as an essential medium for self-fulfillment outside of the threats from the no more comprehensible and manageable social forces.<sup>21</sup> Society and public values have lost their sense for many artists and are no more an issue for the art.

A logical consequence of this desolate time situation therefore was the abandonment of employment with tasks and issues, that are in some way related to political or social or generally over-subjective value systems. Among the artists it comes to a retreat into subjectivity and a more intensive study of the ideas and concepts of life philosophy, existentialism, and by several artists with the ideas of East-Asia, especially the Zen-Philosophy (Chin. Ch'an) and the Taoist thinking, which, however, in contrast to the Western Philosophy of Life seek the over-subjective and over-individual in the subjective.

As a result, more and more artists deal with the myth as an expression of the transcendence of man, and the artists of the Informel also emphasize the prevalence of being and experience, the existence and the experiencing action against reason and logical-rational order as a measure of value and opportunity for self-realization.

### 1.2 Scientific Worldview, Philosophy and Existentialism

A certain affinity and parallelism between the Informel and the modern, scientific world view, above all to the physical world view, is not to be overlooked.<sup>22</sup> The knowledge of modern physics led about the discovery of the nuclear fission and the elementary particles to the conclusion of a world view deviating from the present object world of the duality of matter and energy; the Einstein'sche theory of relativity to a resolution of the three-dimensional space to multi-dimensional, stooped and clearly not conceivable rooms, and findings of physics to a trend of all existing matter to extend steadily in the space and to distribute to dust of homogeneous density. The striking similarity of Informel paintings with these principles and knowledge is not surprising, when it is realized that the physical world view dissolves all known relationships, which gave the people security, such as space, matter, object, texture, shape, etc., and leaves all to a probability distribution. The resulting uncertainty and vagueness of the world and of man and its reflection and expression in the artistic work as an analog behavior to cognition are evident.

Within the scope of this work it is not possible to give more than indications about this problem; a more exact analysis of the connections between world view, philosophy and science and their influence on the respective art of their time would be certainly very fruitful and informative for the understanding of the art of that time, because everything, also the art, is in the historical time. This is, however, not the task of this work and also not possible within a limited space. The investigation of the interest, the understanding and the relation of the respective single artists and in addition a synthetic whole analysis would be necessary, what is not possible here because of the width of the Informel Art movement. Nevertheless, in this work shall be indicated at a given point the ideological and philosophical interest of both general representatives of a



Calligraphic Influence, Tobey and Masson, as far as necessary. The ideological basis of Informel Painting in general, which can be demonstrated in brief, was in addition to the already mentioned scientific world view, and with this of course also as with the historical time situation standing in connection, the philosophy of Nihilism, outgoing from Nietzsche, the Philosophy of Life and the Existentialism.

When in the USA the worldwide economic crisis and the long continuing depression destroyed many hopes, the Nihilism became an ideological centre. After Kerber<sup>23</sup> the thoughts of the Life-Philosophy stand in the USA in the foreground of the social and artistic interest, and then the Existentialism and the American Pragmatists James, Dewy and Peirce.<sup>24</sup> In France, the second artistic centre before and after the war, also dominated the Life-Philosophy of Bergson and the Existentialism Sartre's and Camus'. The Life-Philosophy, whose bases go back to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, is a part of the great reaction against the theories of the Enlightenment (Aufklärung) and Rationalism, and thereby a continuation of romantic-idealistic ideas.<sup>25</sup> It asks for sense, aim and value of the life, and it wants to understand the "vital" live, which can not be understood with the means of the logical-rational thinking, but namely from inside oneself.<sup>26</sup> Movement, becoming and development are central concepts and ideas of the Life-Philosophy, which considers the reality as organic. Epistemological the Life-Philosophy is not subjectivistic, but recognizes absolutely a reality existing objectively apart from our thinking.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, it's irrationality, the preference of the feeling, the instinct, the intuition, which is in opposite to the logical-rational intellect, attracted the artists of the Informel.

Not concepts, logical laws and apriori forms, but the immediate view, the intuition, grasping according to feeling, the understanding and experience are valid for it as essential methodical means of the cognition and the coping of the existence.<sup>28</sup> Herein also lies the connection point of the Informal Art, in the creative freedom and activity, and herein also lies a certain affinity to Zen and East-Asian world view. Henri Bergson was in the area of art the most influential representative of the Life-Philosophy. From Bergson's thoughts on one hand the concept of "élan vital" mostly interested the artists of the Informel, the vitality and the thought that the time is not something unique and unrepeatable homogeneous, but a not reversible result of events, every moment. The time is for Bergson one single indivisible flowing, a becoming, but for the single person and the artist only the lived or experienced time is important. Hence the artists of the Informel above all are interested in the moment of intuition, which marks the time and with which only in a pure (intuitive) view the fluent, the sequential and organic of the time can be felt. After Bergson, and this was important for the Informel, the transmission of the own knowledge to other people is only possible through the pictorial representation of the intuitively recognised, in words, concepts and visual pictures.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, the central concept Bergson's is the "élan vital", which is the life itself, that or better the power, which causes behind all matter and external appearance the movements, which manifests itself in permanent becoming, in the action of all living, the climbing up of the life and the dropping of the matter. The development of the life comes after Bergson not from the matter, but works against it, against sluggishness and decay to higher and always higher, freer forms.<sup>30</sup> The employment of the lived moment and its expression in the art, as well as the view of the picture as a relic or track of a life execution in the Informel, is based on the thought of the Life-Philosophy and the Existentialism or Philosophy of Existence. They also deal with the "life", but for the Existentialism "life" is not as for Bergson the universal life, but means the existence of the person, which stands in the centre of the consideration. Existence means the personal, individual existence, so the existence and so-being of the single person; though, hence, the Existentialism therefore is humanistic, but is also very subjective. The human being has not a fixed nature like a thing, but it has to make or create itself its being, namely by its action. The Existentialism also wants to grasp immediately, however, not the objective or general laws or nature, but the concrete existence. Because all existence is transient and is bound to the time, the Existentialism is dynamic, it dealt mainly, what was essential for the Informel Art, with the concrete experience of the existing individual in the time, however especially with the border situations, like fear, menace and death.<sup>31</sup>

Many formulations and views of the Informel date from Jaspers, Sartre and Camus, and the artists were particularly interested in Sartre. Sartre himself pursued and knew the life and work of Wols, which he had got to know in Paris. Existentialism has faced the task, through the experiences of two world wars hard, realistic and ideologically hostile, to be helpful to cope with the burden of one's fate and to put the individual into its ideological center.<sup>32</sup> Its starting point is the loneliness of man in the world and in front of the nothing, the fear (Kierkegaard), the absurdity (Camus) and meaninglessness of the world. Absurdity and meaninglessness of the existence and the world are, especially in France, stressed by Sartre and Camus, who tear away all civil, all bourgeois existences, church faith, conventions, etc. and recognize only the "very existence". However, just in this lies the freedom of the human being, and the sense of the human existence can be seen in overcoming these negative basic conditions. The salvation and freeing from it is possible by the fact, that one does not accept the worry (Heidegger) and fear (Kierkegaard) and that one let not drift oneself from it, but that one overcomes them - in free decision - by practical action and deed (Camus), by endurance and self-determination, by existential engagement (Sartre).<sup>33</sup> Besides Camus and Sartre also stress the importance of interpersonal relations and communication as means of the overcoming.<sup>34</sup>

A characteristic is, that the redemption and freeing of the person does not happen from the outside, not through third parties or mercy (Christianity), but by selfredemption in inwardness and separation, and herein appears a great resemblance to the Taoistic Thinking of China and to the meditative Zen-Buddhism (chin. Ch'an 禪), which is also of Chinese origin, and on which we shall still come back later.

So the Existentialism is also anti-rationalistic, irrationalistic and subjectivistic. Its existential thinking, which seeks to comprehend the whole person (body-soul spirit), and which in principle did not want to recognize objective truths above the subjective-existential ones, was in an aporia: Each of its statements was insofar generally, although it refused general statements.

An overcoming of this contradiction was possible with Jaspers by the adoption of a transcendence and an 'encompassing' (that means a general or universal), with Heidegger by acceptance of a (general) encompassing 'Sein' (= being), which itself as a fate-like sensory reason and ground of reality 'sich entbirgt' = (comes into existence) in the history, with Sartre and Camus by transition to the 'you', to society and community, so to the 'we'. An overcoming of the initially 'negative' Existentialism finally happened through the acceptance of positive aspects, like joy and cheerfulness as a counterbalance to death and fear (Bollnow), and the overcoming of the radical subjektivism and the egocentricity by acceptance of the above mentioned comprehensive (universal), which caused a new secureness.<sup>35</sup> To what extent now the Informel artists in detail accepted, have understood and have processed the thoughts of the Life-Philosophy and the Existence-Philosophy or the Existentialism, can only be revealed with single artists on the basis of work monographs. As stateable general effects of this interest remain the inclination to myth and symbol and cipher (Jaspers), the stress of the life, action, and the action of the artist as means of the cognition and the coping of existence, the emphasizing and the use of the emotional and intuitive, the coincidence and the unknown (Baumeister, Tobey, Masson et al), the use of the informel informality as well as the turn away from the idiom of the objective, the world of real things and their representation, to the own subjectivity and individuality, as a basis of the artistic creativity.

### 1.3 The Taoistic Thinking and the Zen (Ch'an)-Philosophy

#### 1.3.1 The Taoistic Thinking of China

An essential factor for the development of the art of Tobey and Masson in special and the Informel Painting in general was their employment with the East-Asian Philosophy or world view of the Zen<sup>40</sup>, which is, strictly speaking, more an approach to life, a method of the thinking and behaviour, which has, however, certain resemblances to religious and philosophical mysticisms, and which besides

touch and overlap each other in different attributes, like the emphasizing of the life, *élan vital*, as well as an intensified lifestyle and other characteristics with the European Life Philosophy and the Existentialism.

Moreover, however, the values and characteristics of Zen, as far as they are congruent with those foundations of the Taoism, have entered into the aesthetic principles of Chinese Calligraphy, what is to be discussed in the course of the investigation even closer. Both, Zen thinking and Calligraphic Aesthetics have their basis in the Taoistic ideological thinking of China as a historical basis. The spiritual and historical basis of the Zen thinking is the Taoism of China, which has developed from the "Book of Changes" (I-Ching 易經)<sup>41</sup>, a classic, which contained for the first time a system of the Chinese Worldview, and from the Tao-Te-Ching (道德經)<sup>42</sup>, the "Book of Sense and Life", the classical work, which is ascribed to Lao-tzu (老子) (4.Century B.C.). Some artists of the Informel, among them Tobey and Masson, have also dealt directly with the Taoistic thinking and the Chinese Worldview, that means without detour about the Zen thinking, which besides pervades the whole Chinese mind and art history and has deeply influenced and imprinted them in their essence and their development. Mark Tobey documents this knowledge in a conversation:

"The old Japan (with which also China is meant, the author) with its Zen apprenticeship and the apprenticeship of the Taoism felt the contents of an empty cup tastier, than those of a full one. This means: the emptiness, released from the image, it allows one to reach a spiritual state, in which one does not need to deal any more with the images of others"<sup>43</sup>

André Masson also confirms to us - quite early - his knowledge of the Taoistic thinking:

"On the other hand, I have read when I was very young, Lao-tzu and the fathers of the Taoism."<sup>44</sup>

How deeply and extensively the effects of the Taoistic thinking were in general in the Informel shall here remain disregarded, because they were rather different and would sprinkle the frame; on the importance of this thinking for the art of Tobey and Masson shall still be returned to briefly at another place.

The reason and occasion for the origin of the Taoistic thinking in the Tao-Te-Ching (道德經) was, among others, a time situation, which had a certain resemblance to that, in which the art of the Informel developed as an answer and

reaction: a time, in which also the order and values of a cultural time segment, the older Chou-Period ( 周朝 ), broke and war and material deprivation as well as lack of human ethical values ruled, and the result of it the "Time of the Fighting States" (Chan-Kuo 戰國時代) was. Besides, Lao-tzu fell back, like him had also done K'ung-tzu (Konfuzius) ( 孔子 ) (551-479 B.C.), however with an another, more rationalistic-organizing thinking, on the already available philosophical system of the I-Ching ( 易經 ) to reach the aim of the spiritual, mental and social reorganisation.

The "Book of Changes" ( I-Ching 易經 ), first a collection of symbols for oracle purposes, contains the system of the Pa-Kua ( 八卦 ), the "Eight Trigrams", which were understood as pictures of that what happened in heaven and on the earth, by their combination of Yin ( 陰 ) (--) and Yang ( 陽 ) (—), the polaristic basic principles of the Chinese thinking. Besides, one imagined, that a sign and therefore a situation in the world goes over permanently into another, and so one came to thoughts of the change (I 易), which was decisive for the whole later thinking. What here was paid attention to were not the things in their being, like in the West, but the movements of the things in their change.<sup>45</sup> The Pa-Kua ( 八卦 ) or "Eight Trigrams" are not pictures of the things, but of their movement trends. The I-Ching served not only to the oracular-magic investigation of the future, but gave by its signs also always instructions for the action of the people, so that they were not delivered defenceless to an uncertain destiny, but were themselves involved in the creation and development by their activities and doings.<sup>46</sup> It shows here that the Chinese thinking, which became later decisive for the whole East-Asian thinking, since earliest times, was already characterized by the principles of the permanent change on one hand and the active human action on the other hand.<sup>47</sup>

It was especially this thought of the change, which particularly attracted some artists of the Informel, as for example André Masson, and manifested itself furthermore in the aesthetics of Calligraphy. The means, with which the I-Ching fulfilled its original purpose, the enquiring and experience of the destiny, was the accidental, whose use gave in the oracle (with yarrow stalks or tortoise's bones, which were provided with written questions) the people the answers. The language of the oracle was the number and its symbolism, basic categories of the world were sky and earth, mind and matter. The lines of the Pa-Kua ( 八卦 ) were pictures or symbols of the real world states with their combinations of the bright, heavenly and the dark, earthly forces. The I-Ching thus served not only the oracle, but also the intuitive grasping of the world relations.<sup>48</sup>

A basic idea of the whole is the thought of the change (and with it implicitly of the movement) which, how later is shown, also for Tobey and Masson was of essential meaning for their art. The I-Ching assumes the fact that the world makes sense, and that a certain sense forms the basis of all events. This sense, the everlasting law or first principle, is the TAO ( 道 ). If this acceptance should not be

simply dogmatic, it had to become evidently how the Tao develops in the reality, how it is possible that the Tao, which is something spiritual, immerses itself in the material reality, so that it causes in it a creation, a structuring, in which it shines through recognizably. Moreover, the I-Ching had to show how the person can grasp this sense and furnish its life afterwards. The person is placed into the connection of the events, what was also only too clear to the Informel artists, and it had to intervene, as Camus suggested in the Existentialism, as the only alternative, every minute intervening in the connection, whether it wanted or not (see also Appendix 1 for the ontological system of the I-Ching).<sup>49</sup>

If now a deeper sense forms the basis of all events, the action of the person can be successful only, if it corresponds to the sense or Tao of the events and the relations, the person if acting against it would fail. Now, how does however, the spirit become reality, how becomes the transcendent everlasting and unalterable and timeless Tao something, which is subjected in the appearance to the change and the development, the change in often indiscernible, small steps? The changing phenomena exist in Chinese view not in something materialistic, in which from the outside by some force changes are caused, but they are themselves the work of forces. This everlasting interplay would be a chaos, if there would not be some persisting, a being as its basis. This being is in Chinese view typically not a substance, but the being in the movements, the firm unalterable law, the sense after which all movements take place, thus the Tao. Being and movement are identical here to some extent, the movement determines everything in the constant change, it is the all dominating force, as Lao-tzu says it a short time later clearly:

"The sense (Tao) is always flowing out, but  
it never overflows in its work." (TTCh. 4)

This view, that the movement and not the firm substance is the dominating being has attracted the artists of the West, like Tobey and Masson, who raised the movement and dynamism of the pictorial elements to their essential means and subject; here also lies the affinity to the words of Klee, who said:

"The movement is the given in the universe".

and Tobey's remark, which also sees the movement as the essential:

"Always in movement... I have tried to tear out some  
little scraps of that beauty from the miracles of the  
universe, which is in the extensive variety of the life."<sup>50+51</sup>

Herein now lies also an essential difference between the dynamic Chinese and the mechanical causalistic world view of the West (at least as long as it did not give the

last, all things relativating knowledge of modern physics). The Chinese Worldview has mainly an organic-dynamic view of the world events. The Tao is nothing located beyond the nature, but it is to be grasped in the movement and in the change itself and contained in all beings. The changes of the uniform Tao thereby become possible, because the Chinese thinking already accepts a variety contained in this unity, this is the second basic idea of the Book of Changes and, so to speak, its theory of ideas. This immanent variety of ideas, pictures or germs, similar to the Platonic ideas, are the invariable being and prototypes of the things, which exist independent from space and time as objectively and really being in themselves, and which are to be perceived not sensually, but only experienceable spiritual-intuitively.

The Pa-Kua ( 八 卦 ) or "Eight Pictures" or " Eight Trigrams" show pictures, however, not from objects, but from the basic change states of the world. With it appears the conception, which also develops in the whole East-Asian Art, and which is included in the teachings of Lao-tzu as well as of K'ung-tzu, namely that everything what happens in the visible world, is an effect or result of a picture, an idea in the invisible, in the transcendency.<sup>52</sup> An explanation of all cosmological elements of the mental system of the I-Ching is not necessary here. Important for the understanding of the bases of the Chinese Art and outgoing from it of some characteristics of the Informel, particularly with Tobey and Masson and some others, as for example Bissier etc., is the theory of Yin and Yang ( 陰 陽 ) and the "Great (unified) Polarity" (T'ai-Chi 太 極 ). Through the Wu-Chi ( 無 極 ), the pure possibility of the being in the transcendency, the Tao unfolds itself into the "Great (unified) Polarity" (T'ai-Chi 太 極 ), which as the unity of Yin ( 陰 ) and Yang ( 陽 ) exists in the reality.

The two in this unity of the real being inseparably connected basic principles of all being and all existence, so also of the human being, are the polar basic forces Yin and Yang.<sup>53</sup> The Yin principle ( 陰 ) is the negative, solid, stiff, the receiving, the spatially expanded (space). The qualities of the shady, faint, weak, formable and the calm are assigned to it. The movement of the Yin principle is the (spatial) self-opening, the separation; its rest state is that of the contracting, closing, thus a direction from the outside inwards. The Yin is increased if it contracts. The bright Yang principle is the positive, the creative, the temporal movement (time), it is the world of the changeable and variable; it is a force, which works in the time as changeable and variable; it is a strength which works in the time as a pure, durable actuality; it is the movement in itself. Its movement is in the dimension of time forwards, its rest position is keeping still; its movement direction is outward from the inside, and it is most increased if it extends.

These two basic forces Yin (symbol -- ) and Yang (symbol — ), which were already known to Leibniz, are in constant impact and movement. The reason for this is a permanent existing state of tension between them, a slope which holds both forces in movement, forces them to a union and to a mutual action, by which

they generate and change everything and also themselves over and over again. The approach of both polar basic forces happens in a kind of the strengthening, until finally a point is reached, where the forces can overturn into each other.<sup>54</sup> We have here, although these two basic forces are understood as not contrary, but as being complementary and conditional complements, also the first attempts of dialectic thinking. This dialectic of Yin and Yang meets us in the work of Tobey, to which still has to be given time.

The elementary force of the change mentioned by the I-Ching can appear in different forms, like the non-change, as a reference point for the statement of a change generally, as a starting point of the change; further the steady ongoing development; henceforth an oscillatory kind of change, as it manifests itself in the behaviour of the two basic forces Yin and Yang; and, finally, the circular change, which returns to its origin.<sup>55</sup>

Changes and movement have developed with most different Informel artists, who dealt with the East-Asian Philosophies, in their pictorial means and topics; the most obvious sign is the strengthening of the trend towards the Action Painting. Masson made the element of the change in his pictorial "metamorphoses" a main element of his art. This ideological thinking caused by the Taoism was already deeply rooted in the consciousness of the whole people, its calligraphy, painting and its behaviour more than thousand years, as, about, 527 A.D. the Zen Buddhism (chin.Ch'an 禪) came to China, and it had hence a strong influence on the development of the Ch'an-Thinking, so that the main features and the most important elements coincide and are identical, whereas the thoughts of the Tao-Te-Ching (道德經), ascribed to Lao-tzu (老子), which again go back to the I-Ching, shall be briefly be outlined in the following.

The creative power of the transcendent Tao manifests itself, as to Lao-tzu, in a worldly power, which belonged to the main interests of the Informel Painting of the West, as well to the Western Philosophy of that time, the Existentialism and the Life philosophy: the life or the vitality, the "élan vital", which corresponds with the "living spontaneity", the Ch'i-Yun (氣韻) of the aesthetics of Calligraphy and Painting, and which Lao-tzu calls "Te" (德), and which Eleanor von Erdberg terms "active force of the Tao", which produces all "movements from the absolute rest".<sup>56</sup> Then the concept of the Te (德) also becomes the quintessence and the highest ethical graduation for the principle of the good. The evil does not exist from the beginning on, but through human action. The good is therefore identical with the (ontologic) life principle, the life per se is good.

The achievement of the Te (德) corresponds to the Satori, the enlightenment experience of the Zen. However, more important is still the understanding of the East-Asian way of thinking concerning the "Nothing" or "non-existence" or the negation, as well for the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting as for the Informel and for artists like Masson and others, who intensely argued with it. For the ontological



System of the I-Ching and Tao-Te-Ching see Appendix 1.

"Yes, going out from the transparency of the heart", says Masson, "from the infinite detachment of the artist, from the knowledge of the emptiness, which is so foreign to us (which has nothing in common with our view from the nothing)."<sup>57</sup>

The Nothing is in China not an absolute emptiness, not existing, but it is the complementary counterpart, the complement, the antithesis to the substantial being, whereto Laotzu says:

"One forms tone and makes from it vessels, the Nothing in it gives the vessel usefulness. Therefore: The being gives possession, the non-existence gives usefulness."  
(TTCh. 11)

Because the Nothing or non-existence is understood as a complement of the being, it is never absolutely empty or non-existing, it can also not be separated from its counterpart, but both form like the forces Yin and Yang an inseparable unity. Hence, conceptual and ontological, the non-existence or Nothing is the Tao. The basis of the Chinese aesthetics of Calligraphy and Painting and the endeavours of the Informel Art of the West to surmount the limit, which is set by the external appearance, are as a possibility and origin of pictorial creating already expressed by Lao-tzu, in "the pictures, things and seeds", which are included invisibly in the Tao (TTCh. 21), and can be reached by means of a subconscious knowledge. Two other qualities of the Tao, which play a role in the Art and Calligraphy of East-Asia, but also matter to the Western Informel Painting, Lao-tzu already calls:

"Return is the movement of the sense, weakness is the statement kind of the sense...". (TTCh. 40).

The return movement or the movement returning to the origin, as it is inherent in the Ch'an-Buddhism as a circulation of the existences, is a fundamental principle of the Chinese thinking, and we encounter it again with Tobey. The "weakness" means the imperceptibility of the really important basic context of being, in comparison to the from experience oppressive material of the substantial being. The element of the weakness has come into the concept and the pictorialization of the "ephemeral" with Masson. This weakness, which means the same as the relationship-thinking of the Ch'an-Buddhism contains it, is the true force in Chinese view. For the human action, in so far as it wants to be successful and right, the "Naturalness" or "Happening by itself" (tzu-ran 自然) is very

important, which appears in the Calligraphy as a principle and graduation (cf. Sun Kuo-t'ing's (孫過庭) (646–691) "miraculous being of the nature" (tzu-ran chih miao-you 自然之妙有), which is also mentioned by Masson as an impulse of his art:

"The one say: we let the nature speak, and the other:  
We let the nature speak through us." <sup>58</sup>

This "Naturalness" is not to be mistaken with the nature in the Western sense, but to understood rather as an original naturalness, which stands in accordance with the principles and laws of the universe, thus of the Tao.

One for the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting as well as for the interests of the Informel most important and at the same time most difficult understandable concepts is the "Wu-Wei"(無爲), which is normally translated with "non-action", and which E. von Erdberg calls the "art of living of the Taoists".<sup>59</sup> With Tobey we encounter it as "not to stand in the way", with Masson as "do not injure" or "not intervene", and Trauzettel verbalizes it as "not intervene".<sup>60</sup> Alfred Forke determines the sense of the Wu-Wei (無爲) as follows:

"The action of the Tao exists in the non-action or non-activity, a difficult concept, which has a certain resemblance with the non-existence of the Tao, because it is no absolute non-action. 'Tao' says Lao-tzu, 'is durable without action, but there is nothing that it would not accomplish', nevertheless, so it acts, only in another manner than we are used to it with the people. Its activities are natural, spontaneous, according to its character, are completely unselfish, not for its own welfare and its own fame. It lets the things develop of course without intervening by force, forges no plans, which should change the natural run of the things, is not much-busy like the people, but works slowly, with the simplest means, but sure." <sup>61</sup>

Karl Jaspers gives us an even further definition:

"The purpose-like will, directed in the world on limited and certain things, can win itself reasonable reality only if it is taken up in a non-wish. To understand these non-activities, non-action, this origin of the fulfilling undeliberateness, would mean to grasp Lao-tzu's ethos in

the core. Wu-Wei is the spontaneity of the origin itself. By no means these non-activities are the idleness, by no means passiveness, bluntness of the soul, lameness of the impulses. These are the real activities of the person, which is done by him thus as he would not act. It is a work without laying weight in the works. This activity is the all enclosing action, embracing, the non-action driving out only from itself and giving sense to the action...., it is the undeliberateness, the being of the origin-born activity, the deliberateness is the being born from an isolating, finalizing, purpose-like thinking activity. It happens without being wanted, and, nevertheless, steers the purpose-like will;. Since with Lao-tzu the sense of the activity is founded in the Tao and in the life united with it. Lao-tzu's non-action is the living work from the depth, the "non-action" not resisting the evil becomes a mean of fighting, becomes a willing to achieve through abandon of the opposition.

The real undeliberateness, which is a mystery in its simplicity, has never been made in philosophizing so definitely the basis of the truth of the action, as by Lao-tzu." <sup>62</sup>

One can possibly define the Wu-Wei, which also Jaspers cannot grasp exactly with one single term, most understandable with "spontaneous, natural and intuitively behaviour grasping really the conditions of the events by granting and leaving grow". This principle of the natural letting happen appears in Bissiers remark "this simply thus comes", just as in Pollocks "if I am in the picture, I do not know what I do" and in Massons citation, let the "nature speak through us"

According to the non-action or unintentional action is the averting of the exterior world of appearance and to the search for the greatest truths through ones own inside, ones inner world, which is in connection with the world spirit, who brings himself through meditation and intuition into the appearance. Lao-tzu gives in the sentence:

"Without going out from the door, one can recognise the world." (TTCh. 47)

to understand unambiguously, that to reach the full knowledge of the truth of the world, it is necessary to look into ones own internal being, ones self, to try to reach the consciousness layers of human existence, which lie before or above the rational mind. This is a method, which not before more than thousand years later has been

adopted from the Zen Buddhism, to meet once again more than thousand years later the interest of Western artists, and the lectures of Suzuki in New York played a mediator's role. The meditation and the intuition are the adequate methods to reach the higher experience:

"The knowing does not talk, the talking does not know, one must close one's mouth, close ones gates, blunt ones astuteness, dissolve ones weird thoughts... (TTCh. 56),

it is said in in the Tao-Te-Ching ( 道德經 ), and at another place:

"Create emptiness til to the highest, keep the silence up to the most complete, then all things may rise at the same time, I look as they turn." (TTCh. 16)

This turn into ones own inside has inspired a lot of artists of the Informel to look for pictures from the unconscious, or, however, from the superconscious, for which the precondition was the emptying of the "I" from the rational mind and its chains. Tobey, but also André Masson, have strictly applied this procedure. Masson mentions the connection of contemplation and the 'emptiness of the heart':

"In the suite of the cheerful contemplation, which causes the emptiness, the vision comes".<sup>63</sup>

and Tobey also is aware that "the painting should rather emerge through the ways of meditation than by the canals of the action".<sup>51</sup> But also other painters of the Informel, as especially Rothko and Reinhardt, have referred in their meditative chromatic painting over and over again to it.

For the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting the meditation and the establishing of the emptiness is also an essential precondition of the creative process and the way of pictorial composition, with which for example the relation of emptiness and fullness of the characters and the space between must be observed. In the Hua fa Yao-Lu ( 畫法要錄 ) of Yü Shao-sung ( 余紹宋 ) (1883 - 1949) it is said:

"The emptiness and the fullness complement each other"  
(Shih-hsü hu rung 实虚互用)<sup>64</sup>

or it is spoken of the "empty mind" before the writing (ling-k'ung 灵空)<sup>65</sup>. At the same place is said further:

"Calligraphy and painting of the ancient people have the same roots as the creation of the nature; they originate from Yin and Yang. That means, the 'emptiness of the heart' is the root of all things."<sup>66</sup>

The emptying of the heart is also a central concept of the Ch'an, whose most important context should be briefly explained in the following.

### 1.3.2 The Zen Thinking (chin. Ch'an 禪)

The previous explanations have made clear, that the basis of the Zen thinking is to be searched in the Chinese Worldview and Philosophy, and that most principles of the Zen are already included in it. During and after the Second Worldwar the interest of different cultural groups and people in the way of Zen thinking started to increase strongly in the USA and also Western Europe, and above all the lectures of Suzuki and the appearance of his books played an important mediator's role in New York. It is known that Tobey and Graves went to Japan to a Zen monastery, on which we will still come back later briefly. Masson also dealt with it, and like him many others: Rothko, Reinhardt, Pollock, Stamos, Gottlieb and many others. Among others, reasons for this suddenly strong interest arose from the at the beginning described time situation, which with its material destruction, the absence of universally valid ethical-social values, and the inability of the ruling superficial intellectualism to solve the pressing questions and problems, particularly of the younger generation, made the people look for new values and models and bases, even beyond their own life and cultural sphere.<sup>67</sup> They found them in the Zen.

The Buddhist teaching, introduced in the 6th century A.D. to China, found there a fertile ground, as already was mentioned, and what also Eleanor von Erdberg indicated.<sup>68</sup> The Ch'an-Buddhism is a special kind of Buddhism, which is characterised most appropriately in the following theorem:

"Targeting immediately on the mind in each of us, and looking into ones own being, by which one attains the buddhaship."<sup>69</sup>

A fundamental idea of the Zen is the non-difference of our personal being from the absolute being, in what the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, as well as the Western artists' attempt to get in accordance with the creative forces of the universe receives its confirmation.

The relation of "unity" and duality", from subject and object, their respect and their understanding, already mentioned by Lao-tzu, means an essential difference between the thinking of the West and Eastern Asia, particularly of China, and what

has also affected the respective arts. While the European thinking since the Greek philosophers was more occupied with the metaphysical and ontological problem of the substance, Eastern Asia in the Taoism and Ch'an were more concerned about the relation. The substance is that, what in all change is the remaining one, is what is from itself always the same, and thus is as it is. The substance has its being not from the relation to something, but from itself, an assumption after which the substance can hence only be something conceivable.<sup>70</sup>

In Buddhism, particularly in the Ch'an Buddhism like in the Taoistic thinking, it is basically denied to understand the being in the sense of the absolute being with the category "substance", which becomes then the object of the logical-rational thinking, as something being, which has its reason in itself and is identical with itself. Taoism and Ch'an-Buddhism stress as basic being qualities, which are also important for the Painting and Calligraphy, the change and the relation between all beings. Everything what is, is nothing in itself, as the Buddhism says, and only something in the relation with others, in mutually conditional relation.<sup>71</sup>

André Masson was probably aware of this difference, when he wanted to abolish "every separation" , to understand "that it is the wind, which gives their forms to the branches of the trees, to say: wind tree, tree wind".<sup>72</sup> The meaning of the relation Lao-tzu expresses already before the Ch'an thinking like this:

"If on earth everybody recognises the good as good, the non-good is thereby already set; because being and non-existence generate each other, hard and soft complete each other... ". (TTCh. 2)

In Tobey's works, the moment of the relation meets us *inter alia* in the fact, that the swinging and vibrating continuum of the *Allover* originates only from the cooperation, the relation of the Calligraphic single lines; which is similar with Masson.

The assumption of the substance singulates and isolates the things, as it has been the case in the West for a long time, in the separation of picture space and picture object. However, for the relational thinking it is about the abolition of the separation of subject and object, space and object, from I and the world. The substantialising, logical-rational, analytic thinking of the West also blurs the immediate, sensuous contact with the things "as they are"<sup>73</sup>, because it overlays the primary sensuous experience by its exclusiveness. The abolition of this separation was not only demanded by the Ch'an thinking, but already by Lao-tzu:

"Therefore the direction to the non-existence leads to the looking of the miraculous beings, the direction to the being to the looking of the space. Both has one origin and only different names." (TTCh. 1)

As well as all beings, all things, the man also has - in the state of the unconscious or superconscious, which does not know the separation of subject and object, I and world of the logical-rational thinking - a primarily unity with the universal active ground, the Nothing or Tao. To restore this original unity and to be always aware of it, is a basic idea of Lao-tzu and the Ch'an, it is immanent to the correspondence of man and world in the creative Calligraphic process, and it fascinated the modern Western artists of the Informel, where it meets again with us at Tobey as well as Masson and others, in the principle of the unity.

An essential aspect of this abolition of the separation of the original unity of man and universal forces is, that the being and action of man based on it does not mean the lack of differentiation or termination of all consciousness and action, but contains an "at the same time"<sup>74</sup>, which is reached in the maximum awareness of the enlightenment or the highest level of cognition, a state which Tobey aims in his art, and which he tries to reach by the "light as a relating medium". Also other Informel artists, like Reinhardt or Rothko try to induce this state of the highest consciousness with their "meditation boards", animated by the East-Asian thinking. To reach this, as to Lao-tzu and the teachings of the Ch'an, is only possibly by an action of the unselfishness, in the freedom from the "self bound state"<sup>75</sup>, which is nothing than the already mentioned "non-action" of Lao-tzu, the "Wu-Wei" (無爲). A concrete aspect of the "non-action" and the highest consciousness of the action, which is found in the Calligraphic Aesthetics and which also is important to the Western Art, is the full presence of the action in the here and now, in whose instantaneous, permanent difference of existing and non-existing no duration is included, only the permanent movement.<sup>76</sup> In this deliberate presence of the action the human senses are consciously stressed and are exceptionally sensitive, a factor which was important for the reaction of the artist in the Calligraphic process, and which was always tried to reach by the Western Informel Art, a reason for some of them, beside the employment with the Zen or Taoism, also to batten onto the highly sensitive method of Calligraphy.

A result of the resolution of the "I" was the abolition of the centre position of man in the thinking and in the art, a centre position, which the man never had in the East-Asian Art, and which we also subsequently do not find with Tobey any more, also not with other artists, like Reinhardt or Rothko, and which was attenuated by Masson in comparison to his beginnings. The concrete pictorial means for the reaching of this aim of the directness and unity and the superconsciousness of the pictorial action was the Chinese Calligraphy, in which according to East-Asian view and after the conviction of Tobey, Masson and the others the unity and directness were already reached.

The artistic unity and experience of superconsciousness in the Calligraphy is based on a psychic process, which culminates in the enlightenment experience of the Ch'an, in which the rational intellect is destroyed and an individual psychic disposition is created, which leads first to an absence of preconditions of the

consciousness and with it to perfect openness. This is the "emptiness" named by Tobey or Masson, and therein occurs in the enlightenment experience and also on the low steps of the inspiration of the creative process the answer of the universal nature, which hereby has achieved to transform its reaction to the alert consciousness immediately. In this experience the man receives an insight into the unconscious or superconscious, into the nature of the own being, into the primordial person.<sup>77</sup> The way to this original person and to the highest consciousness leads, as already mentioned, over the creation of the "emptiness" in oneself, what already was stressed by Lao-tzu:

"Create emptiness up to the highest, protect the silence up to the most complete, then all things may rise at the same time, I look as they turn." (TTCh. 16)

This emptiness is the absolute lack of preconditions and the emptiness of all cognitive contents, contents of experience of sensually kind and from the rule of the rational intellect. The consciousness of this state, which in the Calligraphic process is reached by the meditative preparation, was recognized and accepted by Tobey, Bissier and others, and also in Pollocks words "if I am in the picture, I do not know what I do", this attitude is effective. Masson confirms the importance of the emptiness for the East-Asian artists admired by him and for himself:

"The emptiness, seen by the Europeans as negative, is for the East-Asian painter the fullness, the fullness of the being, which is emptied by any distraction of the alert consciousness."<sup>78</sup>

After Jung in the emptiness and meditation energy is taken away from the logical consciousness contents and the logical-rational mind activity, and the saved energy is transferred into the contents of the unconscious, which can thereby penetrate lighter into the alert consciousness. In the state of the superconsciousness, a complete show of all possible and to the normal consciousness not accessible images and a tension maximum exists, in which the contents of the unconscious or superconscious break into the alert consciousness. There rules a compensatory relation, because the contents of the unconscious bring everything to the surface, what is necessary in the farthest sense as a supplement or to the entirety of the deliberate orientation. This procedure, which is also effective in the Automatism applied by Masson, however not with the same intensity, drew the Informel painters and led them to the employment with Zen, to receive such a new method of the picture finding. But because to them, nevertheless, as Masson soon found out, the pure resort on the unconscious was not sufficient, because it also lacked a minimum of deliberate clarity, the step to the Chinese Calligraphy, which



combines access to superconscious states and contents of the unconscious as well as a clear methodical concept was obvious, and this led for example Masson, on which is still to be come back, to the averting of the pure Automatism and turning to the East-Asian Calligraphy and Painting.

Zen thus is an absolutely realistic thing (after Suzuki)<sup>79</sup>, a way to the internal reality, a life from the inside, an affirmation in the higher sense, a higher form of cognition, by freeing from the unnatural obstacles and the limitation of the discerning analytic mind and the connections of the logic. Zen is an everyday living experience, whose aim and truth lies and is to be found in the everyday life, by confidence in ones own most internal being, by strict selfbreeding and discipline (by no means through the devastating complete freedom), by which in a spiritual change the internal perception is strengthend and a new point of view is reached, and the truth and solution of all problems is found in the self. Hence, the only way there also is that, which one goes oneself, the experience which one makes oneself. Zen is (after Kellerer)<sup>80</sup> a method of the thinking, experience, behaviour, with the aim of a superconceptual selfexperience and world experience. It is a matter of learning not conceptual, but of practicing behaviour. Besides, the most important is the unconditional devotion to the experience of the easiest needs of the action and behaviour, so activities in a very high consciousness. Thereby it is possible to collect much greater vitality (what corresponds in the art with the creative potential) and to invest it in arbitrarily elective experience contents. Then the state of the emptiness is a state without experience execution and synonymous with complete freedom and concentration of the vitality, as it can be reached possibly in the Calligraphic process. On the basis of these contexts not only the sentence Sartre's, that "life is an action (vivre est agir)" is valid, but thereby Zen was for the Abstract Expressionists and others also an essential medium in the search for new pictorial results and their required methods.

Besides, the occurance of the enlightenment and highest conciousness is based on a parallelism of everyday reality and teaching contents, through which in a spontaneous experience like a dischargeo the present layer separation of deliberate and unconscious spirit is lifted and both contents unite in one image. In this trans-logical experience are seismographic sensitivity, spontaneity, full attention and proficiency, thus skills that can bring a state of intense concentration and discipline, prerequisites for that in the state of maximum awareness vivious experience of integrating of the self, a holistic unity with the universal forces. All these characteristics, like concentration and sensibility, in unity with the absolute control of the means, are essential characteristics of the Chinese Calligraphy, which thereby became the only useful medium for the integration of highly deliberate action into the creative artistic process, for which the Informel Painting has looked.

An effect of the enlightenment and the highest conciousness is the overcoming of the elementary fear of life and a great affirmation of all mental possible and real. It is a condition that a Zen anecdote describes as that in it mountains are mountains

again and water is water again, after they first were it, then were not, and finally were it again, but in a higher consciousness. The learning of the Chinese Calligraphy and the internalization of its methodology leads to the formation of a released and yet controlled "ductus", in which all possibilities and artistic freedoms are included, and actually by the absolute discipline of the artistic gesture just made possible, because the means "do not stand in the way", as Tobey calls it. The precondition for it is the practise and the following internalized control, which Eduard Trier also demands for the Western draftsman:

"Ingres told his pupils: 'The drawing includes everything, except the colour. One must draw constantly. Draw with your eyes, if you cannot draw with the pencil. As long as you can not hold the balance between the perception of the things and your (graphic) implementation, you will not achieve any really good result.' In the mechanism of the drawing, which is requested to be practiced permanently over and over again by all great artists, the contrasts, which make the style duality of the 20th century obviously, touch each other; since the differences between drawing as spiritual order and as an expression of the psyche correspond to the two great trends within the art of our epoch".<sup>81</sup>

Trier confirms the fact, that he accepts for the Western Art principally, just as it belongs to the essential attributes of the Zen and of the Taoistic Thinking and the aesthetics of the Chinese Calligraphy, that in the super conciousness unconcious automatism and directing order of the mind equalize themselves, hence also accept a balance of irrational and rational forces as the highest measurement. In this balance of the two basic forces of all cultures Zen thinking and Chinese Calligraphy meet each other, as the practical exercise of this attitude to life, and herein also layed the power for overcoming the pure automatistic procedure, with which several of the Western Artists were not content any more and hence substituted it through elements of the Chinese Calligraphy.

These relationships have therefore been described here comparatively detailed, because they were previously in the literature hardly taken into account, and because the few remarks about them mostly lack particularity and distinctness. Besides Zen-Thinking and the Taoistic Chinese Worldview are not only an aspect of the Informel interests in general, but manifest themselves, as will still appear, in the formal and pictorial characteristics of the Chinese Calligraphy.

In the following remarks on the Informel Painting and its characteristics and pictorial elements shall be indicated, in what exactly the responsible attributes of this tendency for the influence of the Chinese Calligraphy lies, namely in the use of

the gesture or the gestural action of the artist and their residual trace as a pictorial medium, as well as in the use of signs as a bearer of the graphic statement. These two attributes are also the essential elements of the Chinese Calligraphy, carried by the line or stroke, which distinguishes itself nevertheless from the Western lines by their specific space-plastical (raumplastischen) ductus (=duct or characteristic style), which gives it its special dynamism and spontaneity. Nevertheless in these two attributes lie the affinities of these two art styles, and basing on this potential, the approximation and assimilation points. The following discussion therefore first clarifies the general principles that characterise the Informel Painting in that areas, which were open and ready for the Calligraphic Influence, including artists, who have not been affected directly from the Calligraphy.

Therefrom are to be separated, after the above-mentioned main features in their essence and their occurrence in the Informel Art were characterized, those artists, who were inspired or influenced by the specific features of Chinese Calligraphy, that means the artists of the so-called "Calligraphic Art Informel", whose characteristics and formal features are summarized after that in an overview. Tobey and Masson as those, who have most intensively dealt and employed themselves with Calligraphy and have integrated it into their work, are subsequent to the investigation of the essential characteristics of Calligraphy treated in detail, because they, with respect to the level of integration of Calligraphic (and philosophical and aesthetic) characteristics and to their importance for the development of modern painting of Informel, which they both have substantially influenced and fertilized, have a particular status.

Both "General Informel" and "Calligraphic Informel", are based on the use of the line and its gestural execution and the use of symbolic structures, wherein the main difference, which separates the Calligraphy of China as well as the Calligraphic Informel from the General Informel, lies in the mastery and internalization of the pictorial means and the typical space-plastical ductus of the Chinese Calligraphy.

## 2. The Development and the Tendencies of the Informel

### 2.1 General Characterization

For the beginning of the General Informel Painting is the determination of a fixed point of time only roughly possible. In the literature there is an agreement, however, that the beginning of the General Informal Painting lies in the time between 1940 and 1950, in which some of its main representatives tended more and more into the direction of Informel characteristics, such as Pollock, who started at that time to free his art from the previously existing mythological motifs and relationships and started to develop his technique of Drip Painting. Some representatives, as for example particularly Tobey and Masson, came even earlier

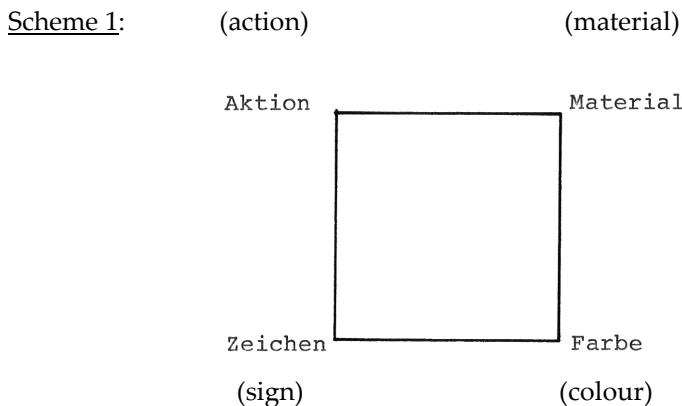
to forms of expression of a more informel kind, like Masson after 1925 and Tobey after 1934, or Hartung, who began also early (1921/22), to develop his informel gesture. The large number of painters, however, who then were the carriers of this style, only appeared in the art scene in Europe and the United States after 1945 and lasted until about 1960, whereby some artists partly changed and modified this trend and carried it on until the present.

If one wants to try to classify the nature of the Informel Painting, a counter movement to the Structural and Geometric Abstraction and its harmonic order of the visual world, it can be settled, if one goes out from the formal nature of its main representatives of this style, on a field between the poles listed below:

- 1) Action or gestural process; as well as
- 2) Signs or sign-like patterns up to symbols;

whereby these two features are the main elements and main affinitative carriers of the Calligraphic Influence, and thus also are the main features of the Calligraphic Informel. Besides these attributes the General Informel still has the colour as a chromatic quality and the use of matter or material as main pictorial elements, but these two are unimportant for our topic.

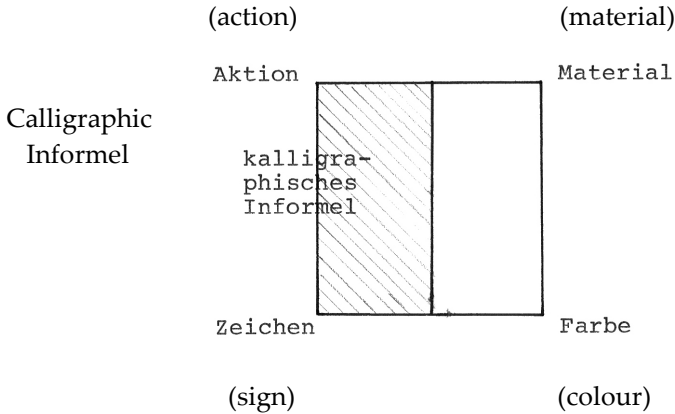
This field of attributes can be represented as a quadratic surface, whose vertices are each formed by the mentioned formal features, and on this surface each of the Informel Painters is at one point located, depending in his the location on the particular nature of his art, which is almost always determined by several of the above features, but applying them in various combinations.



Of course, this drawing is not more than an aid for the classification of Informel Art, and also with this formal identification of the environment of the Informel Painting it is not yet possible to grasp its total range and problematic. So the emerging feature of representational-figurative reminiscences is lying in the field

between the poles. To classify the Calligraphic Informel, with whose representatives this work is dealing, and fit them into this schema, it must be placed between the poles "action" and "sign/character" (see Scheme 1a).

Scheme 1a:



The formal poles of action, sign, colour and material correspond in the area of the reality ground, on which every work of art including the Informel relates, to corresponding states, processes or principles. The pole of action refers to movement and energy and to the action of man; the characters or signs in the image stand for intellectual content or meaning in general, an idea or spirit in general; color as chromatic value indicates mental or psychic movement as well as energy and mental qualities; and finally, the pole of matter or material in the image stands for the matter and the object in reality.

As the development of art after the Informel showed, what cannot be deepened here in detail, the focus on one or the other formal principle then led to certain developments: the emphasizing of the action, particularly in the human action, to the Happening; the emphasis and further development of the sign and the nature of its spiritual significance to the Concept Art; the emphasis on the matter to the various forms of Object Art; Material Art and certain forms of Minimal Art; the emphasis on color in return related to a painting located between a more organic-variable, intuitive color abstraction (such as Rothko), and a more inorganic, rational arranging and analytical color abstraction in the context of the harmonical Geometric Abstraction (eg. Albers, Lohse, etc.). In terms of its visual techniques, the Informel differs from the bounding on the geometric shape of Constructivist Painting by the fact, that the brush is used freer and more spontaneous, and that it is used with new methods of colour application, partly in such a way that the brush even completely is given up. Also all possible colour materials as well as other, pasty and earthenlike materials in the image will be used, which were not common until then.

Pollock, for example, is known to apply the colour not with the brush, but with a perforated, back and forth swinging can. In a fast movement fine traces of color arise, with prolonged stay in one place develop spots that spread and run. During the work process the painting surface lies on the floor. This technique of Drip Painting, which Pollock probably had taken over by Hoffmann, has also been combined with the use of techniques like the brush, spatula, etc., or it is also used the blotching technique originating from the Surrealists.<sup>82</sup>

The focus of the Informel Painting is the opposition to the Geometric Abstraction and the Constructivism, so against the strictly rationalistic and harmonically aligned side of art, which in the years after the war characterized the face of the art, especially in Paris, and against their followers, who dogmatically pursued the composition of purely geometric shapes, which were painted plain and without color modulation. The Informel Painting is rebelling against the smoothness and rigidity of geometry. It puts the colour in layers and overlays, the colour flows into swirls, lines and spots over the canvas and regains its sensual consistency. The precise geometric shape of the Constructivists is switched off completely. Either appear now stains, remembering on organic life, or a network of lines or irregularly distributed clusters of colored curves without compositional centers. The classical composition problem, that had been binding until now, is giving way to a disorganization and decomposition.<sup>83</sup>

In this way, the colour shall be freed in its elemental potency. It is also an expression of movement, which is contrasted to that of the classical composition manner, whose possible dynamism remains always bound by the statics of the verticals, and which breaks, so to speak, the image frame open. Movement trains penetrate in the Informel Painting often from the outside into the picture space and cross it, to continue beyond its borders into infinity. So the Informel image shows a section of a larger energetic-dynamic field, and not a limited and closed "hole" in the wall, like Tobey's friend Teng Kuei (Teng Baiye) noticed about the traditional Western Art, because it were more interested in the "physicality", and how Tobey also remarked:

"If you compare Eastern and Western art, one could say that artists in the East are more interested in the line and in the West they are more interested in the physicality. Certainly the artists in the East were far away from the spirit of the Renaissance, as my Chinese friend once remarked: 'The images of Western artists are framed 'holes'. ....'"<sup>84</sup>

Because visual dynamism and movements, as Tobey and other Informel artists soon recognised, express themselves more in the line than in spots, Chinese Calligraphy soon appeared to these artists as a means to overcome the

unilateralness of the pure Automatism and above all of the patchily pure Tachism. Historically seen the Informel Painting is a renewed attempt to enlarge the areas of the free forms and formlessness (in a sense of solid bodies), and the Informel Painting also shows strange hybrid forms, with which it is not possible to detect, whether it is a discovered or deliberately applied colour value or mush of colours. The act of painting comes therefore, as with the *Objet trouvé*, often to a pure demonstration of the raw material<sup>85</sup>, it varies between creation and demonstration, like it shows both in the use of tubes instead of brush by Mathieu, dripping tins by Pollock, material images like those of Dubuffet or in the sand pictures like by Masson (as early predecessor). Through all of them speaks the independence and the emphasis on the intrinsic value of the artistic means.

Another impetus, that led to the Informel, was the technique of Automatism, on which in connection with the art of André Masson, who probably was the first in art, who strictly had applied it, still shall be come back.<sup>86</sup> The automatism allowed a direct pictorialization of mental impulses, the control of the consciousness is switched off in its purest form, to intrude without obstacles into the field of the pre-rational, anonymous and collective, and enter into a higher personal unity of self and the world. In a spontaneous act it is attempted to overcome visually the division between subject and object. But this turned the Informel Painting in contrary to the Western classical rational tradition, whose philosophical basic problem, the separation of the exploring subject and the recognised object, which manifested itself pictorially in the development of the central perspective, the illusionistic picture and the seclusion of the viewer of the artwork in an analytic distance and in the separation of the pictorial objects from the picture space. After an initial Euphoria, what Masson already recognized in 1925 and had drawn his consequences from it, the pure automatism proved as not productive enough, because, as Masson remarked, it "often brought only unessentials":

"Hence, its attraction and its weakness: to be often content too easily, and to remove oneself from that variety as well as from the noticeable knowledge of the world."<sup>87</sup>

Also the move towards East-Asian Philosophy alone gave no compensation, because only the specific method of the Calligraphic ductus enabled the synthesis of conscious and unconscious forces. This recognition led a part of the artist then to use the Calligraphy.

The American Action Painting and European action artists as a group, which place the gestural action of painting in the foreground, want the deliberately emphasized self-expression of the handwritten gestural impulses, it liberates from certain dictated pictorial means and ways of working and creates a universal openness, in which implemantations of life are made directly visible. The picture

as an action cannot any more be separated from the biography of the painter, and the difference of art and life is lifted therefore partially, the work becomes a relic and result of human-artistic life implementation. Through the appeal to the irrational, inexhaustible power of life, whose enactment in the art also puts it in the sphere of the irrational, one can recognize a new actualization of the old opposition of calculus and instinct, made and grown, law and liberty, rationalism and irrationalism, on which Eduard Trier indicates in the contrast of "drawing as concrete made thinking"(Cezanne) and "automatistic motorized drawing" (Rodin)<sup>88</sup>, and which Tobey sees embodied in the two "great currents of classicism and romanticism".<sup>89</sup> The primary time of the Informel was a fling of the historical pendulum fully to this pole.

## 2.2 The Fundamentals of modern Informel Painting

Every art, also the Informel, is a part of a specific human activity system and cognition system in the confrontation with the reality in which we live. Informel Art is therefore also a means of communication with and appropriation of reality. It is therefore necessary to ask briefly after the relationship with reality in modern art since the early 20th Century, and especially in the Informel Painting. Some answers already came up in the section on the philosophical foundations and the socio-cultural situation, from which the tendency of the Informel to an anti-rationalist, irrational attitude can be derived.

The development of European modern art has after Hofmann<sup>90</sup>, with reference to the basic contrast of rational and irrational in the human being, which corresponds to the two layers of the human mind-soul being, two impulses: on one side the striving after the "purely and everlasting artistic (l'art pour l'art)", the immortal and unalterable artistic autonomy, which is immanent to all art, and which manifests itself in the harmonical creation of the Geometrical Abstraction, and on the other hand art as means of life execution, as a finding of truth or as means or an instrument for art external value ranges, to which especially the Informel Painting belongs, as well the Surrealist and Expressionist tendencies.

The developments since the Renaissance were driven primarily by the contrast of illusionistic imitation, including all concrete-symbolic and classical-idealistic art, and the tendencies toward a resolution of realism and liberation of the visual means, whose climax culminates in the Informel. Around the turn of the century, it came then as known to the by Kandinsky aptly named separation of Realistic-Illusionistic Art ("Great Realism") and Abstract Art ("Great Abstraction").<sup>91</sup> The transition from the illusionistic realism and classical basic trend was not made suddenly and spontaneously, but like all history gradual or stepwise by artists, who repeatedly distanced themselves from the classical rational attitude, and thus since the 17th century. This process culminated 1900-1920 in three "dogmatic statements" of modern artists, who by this prepared the transition from the older



classical-rational art to the modern art of abstraction on one hand and the involvement of the unconscious mental region on the other hand:

1. the concretization of the artwork (by Picasso and the Cubism),
2. the desire for the immediacy of the expression of internal states, emotions, psychic impulses (Kandinsky and his 'Abstract Expressionism', as well as Klee's 'Psychic Improvisation')
3. the desire for a balanced artwork (Mondrian and the Konstruktivism).<sup>92</sup>

The Informel Painting had its starting point especially in the immediacy of expression and the arts of Kandinsky and Klee, but also the concretization of piece of art and the new cubist picture order had a certain portion in the early time of most Informel artists. For the Informel development most important was the striving for direct expression, which prepared the influence of the Calligraphy (whereby already in Kandinsky's works Calligraphic elements can be found, such as in "Character Set (Zeichenreihe)" of 1931, and others).

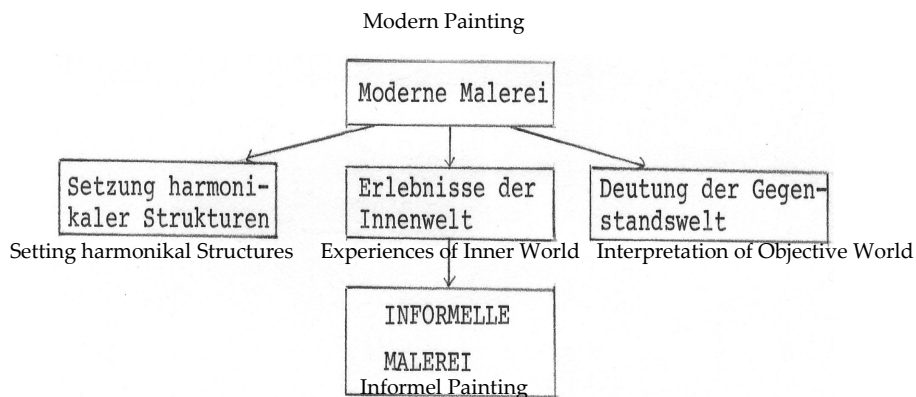
Although the actual beginning of the Informel Painting, whose development the Calligraphic impulse from East-Asia helped to shape, only began in the years after 1940, the fundamental pulses providing the general basic historical situation of the development of Modern Painting were already immanent around 1900.

But these needed, like all important historical events, a certain incubation period until they came to full expression, also partly by the special time situation of the years after 1940. The radical break, that occurred in 1900, has its origin in the recognition of a new relationship to reality (reality reference) in the course of the world and art history.<sup>93</sup> This new reality reference is based on the subversive experience, that the external visible reality only is the surface and only one of many possible manifestations of the real. With it along went the reciprocal recognition, that the inside world of man is an as concrete and equivalent reality as the world of the external phenomena. This relativity of the external world and the critical relationship to it was set off by the findings of the modern science (theory of relativity, quantum theory, modern psychology etc.) in 1900, peculiarly accompanied by the intuitive recognition of analogical or similar correlations by the artists. We have here parallel or analogous cognitive directions with partial touches.

The painting as a form of visual cognition and visual action was since the Renaissance tied to the visible reality, which was recognized with the senses. It was thus considerably geometric, perspectival, of static-continuous character, just like the reality level meant by it. The new findings in the area of the smallest and largest reality and all laws and conditions of the visible world have already been relativized and the so-called second reality started to shine through. This was in its acausality, discontinuity, aperspectivity, finally absurdity no longer tangible with the previous pictorial means, and as the perception of the world changed, the

illustration of this world with pictorial means parallelly also had to change. Through the insights of psychology and analog modes of recognition of the visual arts, there came also a relativization of the human "I", from the single layeredness of the rational consciousness to the multiple layers of the total consciousness (alert consciousness - sub- or super-consciousness). The reaction of the pictorial consciousness was a growing interest in what "behind the appearance" is, the interest in the static appearance, among other things, passed to underlying dynamic life and growth forces.

The central event, however, was the change of the relationship of person and reality, toward an ambiguous, multidimensional conception of reality, as well to the inside (psyche) as to the outside (2nd reality). Because the art reacted as an analogous and parallel form of cognition to it, everything what occurred in the modern painting and marked it, was a "reflection of a certain inalienable existential situation of modern humans" (Haftmann).<sup>94</sup> Everyone has his individual existential field, and this is included in the complex general ground of being, both in his outer as well as inner being. The multidimensional outer world and the similar multidimensional inner world of man as well (unconscious personality field and superpersonal mythical field (C.G. Jung)) intertwine themselves in the human existence. The intensification of this entanglement is an absolute goal of human life, and an aim of all art. The modern art up to the Informel had recognised this situation and had to act before this existential background. As the existing visual means of illusionistic painting were no longer able to explore the existencefields of the unconscious and superpersonal and bring to the light of awake consciousness through adequate pictorialization, the result was the emergence of a completely "new image". The reproducing picture changed under abolition of the nature-copying depicting character and became an evokative picture. This is the central event with the development of the modern art. "The modern picture is one in the formal categories of the evoking picture answering counterpiece of the emanations from the changed frame of reference of our century, from our radically changed relation to the reality" (Haftmann).<sup>95</sup> It manifests a pictorial experience, analogue to the changed kind of experience of the reality and reaches in its extent from the setting of harmonical, absolute and rational relations (Mondrian and the Constructivism in all varieties), over the interpretation of the objective world (New and Magic Realism), until the experience or expression or reaction to the human inside world (instigated by Kandinsky and his Psychic Improvisation).



The Informel Painting and the Calligraphic Informel, which is the issue of this work, are primarily a continuation of the tendency initiated by Kandinsky and Klee, mixed with elements of Expressionist expression, but have also other sources, which, however, stand in the same context. With the abolition of the imitating, depicting character of the picture towards an evocative function logically also a change in the character of the pictorial means and their function came along, the second important event in the transition to the modern painting. As far as they were released from the binding to the imitation, they obtained the freedom of the independence and the representation of their own valency. Colour, space, light and form thereby became independent resources of presentation, which are already able by their characteristics just as by their combination in rhythmic, movement and expression to be bearers of associative and evocative forces for the representation of reactions or experiences with the inside or outside world of man.<sup>96</sup> This is especially true for the art of Informel, whose evocative pictures can be understood as coloured accorded, vibrating sound bodies, which are to be seen and to be understood in the same way, and which a saying in the Chinese aesthetics about the relation of artwork and spectator remarks, quoted by Tobey:

"It is better to feel a piece of art, than to view it."<sup>97</sup>

## 2.3 Development and Tendencies of the General Informel Painting

### 2.3.1 The Development of the General Informel

The previous explanations showed, that as origins of the General Informel in the modernity, as already indicated, the following three new artistic practices may be considered:

1. The Abstract Expressionism of Kandinsky (1911 - 1914),
- 2) Paul Klee's Psychic Improvisation and method of finding pictures,
- 3) Automatistic experiments of the Surrealism and Dada.<sup>100</sup>

To make, nevertheless, a certain continuity in the historical development of the Informel clear, by which, as already at the beginning intimated, also the influence of the East-Asian Calligraphy and Painting always played a not negligible role, and which bases on generally accepted continuous lines of development in the historical events, despite of all individuality and time restraint. Early manifestations of Informel endeavors in art shall be demonstrated, without which the History of Art would have developed otherwise, and where almost always an influence from East-Asia was present and had initiated visual changes. Besides, though it does not concern yet a prevailing Calligraphic Influence, like in the modern Calligraphic Informel, however, about the influence of Chinese Painting and partly also over the Japanese Woodcuts, in whose lines also Calligraphic elements are included, an indirect and subliminal influence of the Chinese ink line and Calligraphic paintbrush technology becomes efficient. This is in so far significant, as the Informel Painting is by no means the first Western style trend, which receives a liberating Chinese brush technique. but is to be considered the culmination of this development.

The shift away from the classical rigor and subjection to measure and form, subject and illusion, is not an invention of the 20th Century, but could be, as Hofmann<sup>101</sup> has shown, retraced to liberating trials from the classical rigor in form and content by Leonardo. But the first signs of a continuous liberation of pictorial elements from the object toward the formlessness are not earlier than at Watteau one hand and Turner on the other hand to be found, where especially Turner had a lasting impact on the further development.<sup>102</sup> Tobey and Masson both refer to Turner. Tobey said, when asked, to whom in the past he refers:

"Bach, the late Turner, Cezanne..."<sup>103</sup>

Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) points after Reichwein<sup>104</sup> in his landscapes, particularly in the work "Embarkation to the island of Cythera (Louvre)", reminiscences to Chinese landscapes. A certain influence by the knowledge of Chinese Painting is to be supposed after Reichwein, but can not be proved yet unambiguously. Nevertheless the loosening of the forms and melt of the picture parts in their misty, loose atmosphere in his works is significant, caused by the loose, spot-like and spontaneous brushwork. Composition manner, form of the mountains in the background before distant fog swaths, painting manner of the leaves, the freer, spot-like paintbrush writing, everything with a trend to a dissolution of the firm forms and formation of a uniform expressive mood reminds strongly to Chinese landscape paintings and anticipates<sup>105</sup> Informel qualities. His style found wide spread ubiquity in the 18th century.<sup>106</sup> The long-standing touch of England with the art of China brought in England an even more far-reaching and deeper influence or inspiration by Chinese painting<sup>107</sup>, particularly in the English landscape painting of Cozens, above all, however, with Turner, with whom this

trend led towards the development of the watercolour painting.<sup>108</sup> After Reichwein it is to be supposed with certainty, that the knowledge of Chinese Painting in the England of the late 18. and early 19. Century induced the expansion of the watercolour painting. How extensive this knowledge and its influence were (also in France and Germany), should not be examined here further, also not, which effects the Chinoiserie Art in this regard possibly had.<sup>109</sup>

Particularly the pictures of Cozens show in their technology of the ink painting as well as in their phenomenal appearance a great resemblance to the Chinese Art.<sup>110</sup> Cozens has painted with the paintbrush, but he also has applied a technique, which was taken up again only by the Surrealism and Informel, namely a technology which generates informel forms by means of an automatism, which stand in close connection with the individuality and subjectivity of the artist.<sup>111</sup> The picture from Cozens (Fig.1) contained in this work clearly shows the resemblance in the kind of the Chinese "Fei-Pai"-technology (飛白), the technology of the "flowover white", which is caused by a dry paintbrush and causes the impression of great speed and movement of the implementation. The almost linear forms already show a certain resemblance to the Calligraphic lines of China, as they appear in the landscape and the Ch'an-Painting, and they are in this time an astonishing exception, which only Turner still can join, with whom the possibility of an influence of the Chinese ink painting also must be supposed. The method used by Cozens has among others inspired Turner, who began as an aquarellist, whose free, spotty and almost Informel painting style and preference for light glowed, very expressive and atmospheric containing colour<sup>112</sup>, both can be explained through this origin as well as by a certain, although not fully detectable, influence of the Chinese Painting.<sup>113</sup>

From Turner a line goes to the Impressionists and to the Informel; it leads over Monet, who already admired Turner's clear attempts for a freeing of the pictorial art from the object into the direction of a spontaneous, shimmering informality and included this in his work, and it further goes to the Informel in a direct referring back in the sense of an affinitative appreciation.<sup>114</sup> His motives arise from a romantic passion for the sublime of the nature: Sea, mountains and sceneries, in which the man hardly exists, seems only to be a spot, he seems lost in bubbling and in the strong movement of the elements and the forms of nature, which he melts in the light.<sup>115</sup> The work of Turner stands in the art history almost incredibly alone there, in the sense that in it successively two absolutely different forms of expression come to a full perfection, what assumes a fundamental change of the artistic feeling. Astonishingly is with this sudden, abrupt transition of a more traditionally style of classical severity to the modern tendency of the form resolution, that the possibility of a consistent derivation out of his own work is not given.<sup>116</sup> An explanation could here be the influence of the Chinese Painting, supposed by Reichwein, whose qualities and features are partly to find in his

work. Not only in his oil paintings, but above all in his watercolors, which seem, as already mentioned, to stand under the influence of East-Asian ink painting, Turner strictly aims the resolution of the traditional object painting and melts object and picture space in patterns of colour and light. A special attribute of the watercolour painting is, as well as in the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, the absolute control of the means and the craft and a sensitive feeling for colouring and light values, which expresses itself particularly in the works of Tobey and partially also Masson, both inspired by Turner. Thrift of the means, strict training of the hand and the eye are indispensable conditions, because every paintbrush line, like in the Chinese Ink Painting and Calligraphy, is unrepeatable and no more correctable.<sup>117</sup>

An essential characteristic of the works of Turner is the strong independent movement of the picture elements and the spontaneity of the expression. Turner's anticipation of Informel qualities, likely under an involvement of Chinese Painting and its qualities, is, on the one hand, the spontaneous and self-reliant of object independent use of the colour as a colouring and material value, as well as the freeing and spontaneity of the painting act in the direction of a gestural painting. Besides, it was for him not only about a sort of Impressionistic representation of sensations, but about the pictorialization of forces and energy, which prevail the animated as well as the inanimate nature. This also is a parallelism to the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, for which it is also about the representation of the forces and the spiritual being working behind the phenomena, the Ch'i (氣), which is to be found in Turner's works in the vibrating and shimmering atmosphere and mood. This light-containing vibrating atmosphere as an expression of universal forces is later to find again in the works of Tobey.

From Turner learned Monet, who got to know him in 1870/71 in London with the help of his works<sup>118</sup>, the value of the tint breaking, the putting of colours side by side in many small paintbrush lines, treatment of the shades, achievement of coloured brightness. Monet completes, what Turner began: to see the reality as a phenomenon of the appearance of light and colour and movement, so as the result of forces.<sup>119</sup> With the dissolution of the concrete world and the abolition of the illusionistic, static-perspective picture space, in which the picture objects are often no more discernable, Monet succeeded to capture the time, which runs in the movement, in the picture and to repeat the lived and full moment Bergson's on the canvas. Fundamental qualities of the Informel Art are developed by Monet (and the Impressionists), and with it the ground for the influence of Chinese Calligraphy is prepared further. Besides, the influence of East-Asian Art is also effective here again, even though about the Japanese Woodcuts, with their sectoring method from a larger whole and their overlapping composition manner. Delacroix, who also influenced Monet, and to whom Masson referred himself several times and understood his art as a paragon, helped the breakthrough of the principle of the spontaneity of the painting act and the expression of the personality of the artist in the work. Masson says about the influence of Delacroix

clearly:

"There is a line, which begins with Delacroix, leads over the Impressionism and ends with Bonnard".<sup>120</sup>

and he expresses his admiration for him also clearly:

"The admirable with Delacroix is the full awareness of both ways: the picturesque one and the linear one."<sup>121</sup>

To the relation of picturesque and linear (graphical) style in the painting and drawing, which Eduard Trier mentions in connection with the drawing of the modern age<sup>122</sup>, shall be come back in connection with Tobey. The Impressionists and Monet accentuate instead of the impersonal and universal the unique and special and prepare the absolute informality, subjective reflexion and individual creation. Therein already lies a strong affinity and anticipation of ideas also effective in the Informel, of artistic visions and methods of their realisation. Hence the Impressionism is a knot point of important currents, on one hand an extreme naturalism, however, on the other hand the application of countercurrents against the naturalism, above all it is also a pointing of romantic-revolutionary trends, which culminate then in the Informel.

In the opposition of the Impressionism, the anti-art of its time<sup>123</sup>, to the tradition expresses itself, like already with Turner, Delacroix and others, and as later over and over again up to the Informel, the great dialectic contradiction, mentioned by Tobey, of Classic and Romantic; between rationalism and the socially universal on one hand and the irrationalism, the subjective, individual and special on the other hand, which pervades the whole history of Art. In the freeing and ongoing spontaneisation of the painting act and the trend towards the pictorial gesture lie the forces of the Impressionistic innovation. The Classical Art eliminated all undeterminable, however, the Impressionists searched the freedom of the creative first beginning, so that their art lead to a subjective irrationalism. The resolution of the reality in the picture to spots and colored vibrations, which enclose and integrate the person into the all pervading movement and vibration of the picture, and which by this cause the abolition of the classical separation of object and picture space, I and world, also give to the Impressionism a strong affinity to the Chinese aesthetics, whose influence was partially effective in it. From this affinity only arises the possibility of an effective influence of East Asian Painting and Calligraphy, which latter then at the end of a certain incubation time had its fully impact in the Informel. The therein inherent subjektivism and antirationalism, as to Masson's opinion, who admired the "new picture unity before the nature" which Monet created, leads to the fact, that by the destruction of the form and the complementary and synchronous fusion of the elements in the colour light, with

which particularly the changeable and ephemeral of the world can be expressed, the new picture unity as a whole could develop. Masson says in addition:

"The perfect work has its balance in the melting of the elements"<sup>124</sup>

and:

"In the great paintings of Monet... there is no emptiness. The space is full.... There is no space, which does not vibrate by the kind, as the colour is applied. This is a very personal painting... a whole system of signs."<sup>125</sup>

This new Impressionistic picture space is much closer to the space of the Chinese Worldview and Art, which Masson describes as "filled with forces" and "pure becoming"<sup>126</sup>, than that either completely empty or, however, constructed perspective picture space of the Western traditional art. Besides, the resolution of the picture objects and the development of a new unity takes place in the light, the most important medium of the Impressionists, which meets us later with Tobey again, also with "uniting" strength. This world experience is based above all on an immediate intuitive experience of the subject, whereby the picture conveys the impression of a whole, which is determined by a never ending movement and represents an accidental cutting from an all-embracing whole. The world thus becomes in the picture a configuration of visual forces, an edifice of dynamic factors.

Here lies the connecting point Kandinskys<sup>127</sup> with his "Great Abstraction", and from here the line of development leads to the Autonomous, Absolute Painting and another line of development to the Informel Painting, here lies also the connection with the East-Asian Aesthetics and Calligraphy. Both also put the experiencing subject in the foreground, in which outside world and inside world combine to an immediate unity. This opinion that the subjective "I" actually is the creator of the world ("of its world") comes from the romantic tradition.

Even if here cannot deeper given time to it, it must be nevertheless mentioned, that as is generally known and significantly, in this time an influence from the East Asian Art on the Impressionism and the late van Gogh, Gauguin, the Nabis and the Jugendstil/Art Nouveau<sup>128</sup> and the development of their art in detail played a part, and has as well influenced the general development of the Western Art into the direction of the resolution of the fixed picture form, the perspectivic illusion space, a tendency towards the own valency of the colour and a strong excerptionism, movement and vitalization of the picture: the influence of the Japanese coloured woodcuts (Ukiyoe). Indeed is the influence of the Calligraphic lines, which in the Japanese picture basically obey to the same principles as they underlie the Chinese aesthetics of Calligraphy, however yet not distinctive, but was thereby quite



subliminal introduced and had a strong influence on the linear art of the Jugendstil/Art Nouveau, which inspired many later artists, like Kandinsky and also Tobey, who already before his acquaintance with the Calligraphic method came through the Jugendstil lines to a linear, moving and more dynamic picture form. Therefore there appears in the wider connection of the subject at least the statement of this influence of the East-Asian Art to be important, which significantly was present at the time of a radical transformation in the European art history.

In the sentence of Cézanne, to whose art and thinking some qualities of the new evocative picture go back, which are also effective in the Informel: "the art is a parallel to the nature", lies, although here no direct touch took place, also an affinity to the Chinese Aesthetics. This natural affinity to the Chinese Art was for some painters of the Informel, overall for Masson, an additional confirmation for the continuation of Cézannes principles. Cézannes pictorial procedure was the creation of the painting from the creation of a new unity of picture object and picture space, as it was already realised rudimentary by Turner and Monet, namely in this respect that the picture space at Cézanne was never empty, but was just as "filled" as the pictorial objects, by which it came to a unity of surface and space and to the development of the new picture space from the compositional harmony of the colours on the surface. The new picture space therefore was also a function of the vision of the viewer, to whom since then on one hand a greater freedom and on the other hand the need of cooperation was committed. The agitation of the coloured structure at Cézanne is unmistakable and lets his art in the same way be in effect as a basis for the Informel as it is claimed by the Cubists and Constructivists.

The picture is at Cézanne, and here also lies an affinity to the Calligraphic Aesthetics, which Masson also has recognised<sup>129</sup>, an exact balanced product between the abstract things of the pure form and the optical appearances of the nature; it is the concrete, achieved in the autonomous world of the image surface coming to the appearance; it is simultaneously a completely autonomous thing as well as recreated outside world. In this "at the same time" lies another affinity to the Calligraphy and Painting of China, just as in the thought of Cezanne:

"His (the painter's) whole wish must be quiet. He should let fall silent in himself all voices of the prejudice, forget, forget, create silence, be a perfect echo. Then on his photosensitive plate the whole scenery (the reality, the auth.) will be recorded."<sup>130</sup>

How near here yet lies Lao-tzu's sentence:

"Create emptiness up to the highest, protect the silence

up to the most complete. Then all things may rise at the same time, I look as they turn." (TTCh. 16)

A remark of Yü Shih-nan (558-638) ( 虞世南 ) proves the closeness of Cezanne's thought to the Chinese Aesthetic of Calligraphy and Painting for the meditative preparation of the creative process:

"At the time one intends to write, one has to retain the sensory operations of the seeing and hearing. One puts down one's thoughts and concentrates one's mind; if one makes one's heart 'straight' and brings one's vitality to the harmony, then one is in accordance with the miraculous."<sup>131</sup>

Another anticipation and preparation of Informel qualities is to be found with Vincent van Gogh, through the expression of human feelings as an answer to the world of the things, with which he is connected, and as an expression of his existence and identity and their relation to the reality. Van Gogh stands there again, as already Turner, Monet and others under a certain influence of East-Asian Art.<sup>132</sup> He discovers and forces the independent ability of language and expression of the pictorial means, he transforms the thing-describing line into the moving, dynamic expression line, and the colour into the bearer of psychic and emotional expression.<sup>133</sup> Painting is here just as by Cézanne "treatment of the nature, its recreation in the parable of the coloured forms, in which the mental answer of the person resonates", a view of the relation of art and nature or art and world, which again has a strong affinity to the East-Asian Aesthetics, and has helped to carry the influence of East-Asian Art in his work. This artistic aim is of Romantic origin and is tried to be reached by van Gogh, differently from Cezanne, through subjectivisation, passionate confrontation with the things and the contents and movements of the inside world of the person. Van Gogh thereby recognised above all the communicative ability of the pure pictorial means, he recognised, that the quality of a colour, the movement and gesture of a line and the rhythm of the forms have to represent the sensations of the person, wherein at the same time a pantheistic perception of the all-soulfulness of the nature becomes distinctive.<sup>134</sup>

While van Gogh recognised and employed the dynamic, rhythmical line and expressively increased colour tones as means for the mental touch of the person, he prepared the possibility of pictorial use of aspects and emanations of the psychic region, its reflexes, emotions and dreams. From this a branch leads to the later Surrealism, above all, however, to the Expressionism and the the Informel Action Painting. His influence took place about a wide current of Expressionist procedures and works during the first half of the 20th century. Certain basic connections between the Informel Action Painting, particularly distinctive in the

life and demise as well as in the personality of Jackson Pollock and Vincent van Gogh, are evident, both underlie the tragic life position, which culminated in the self-destruction, but which strengthened however also the connection of art and life. The expressionist, which forms itself with van Gogh and is continued as a legacy up to the Informel, is actually present in the whole history of art, it can, just like the Informel tendency, only limited be circumscribed chronologically, but it is just as the Informel a fundamental condition of the human being and present in all cultures with different conciseness. The Expressionistic trend of the art wants to formulate in the picture by distortion of the reality its feelings or ideas in drastic manner: drunkenness-like states of excitement, fear, negative moods of all kind, turmoil and protest.<sup>135</sup>

Formally these aspects in the work of van Gogh are carried by an indirect influence from the Chinese Calligraphy, which has been largely ignored up to now. Within the scope of his interest in the East-Asian art of the Japanese Colour Woodcuts, which Trier<sup>136</sup> mentions, van Gogh also dealt with sketchbooks for paintings, what is mentioned by Wiechmann<sup>137</sup>, like the Manga of Hokusai, books which were in that time very much widespread among artists, a fact which has also been largely ignored up to now. These books contain models for painting, as for example trees, grass, rock or also bamboo, and where particularly the bamboo painting, as will still be shown up (chapter III), includes the typical attributes of Calligraphy, its linearity, dynamism and its typical space-sculptural ductus as a bearer of the individual expression and bearers of elementary pictorial movement and power. These models have not only influenced his drawings, like "Stone bank and Ivy"<sup>138</sup> from 1889, like all the others executed with a feather pen, which he preferred more than the paintbrush, or "Cottages de Saintes-Maries" from 1888 (Fig.2), but also the typical stroke ductus of his oil pictures in a synthesis of Impressionistic and Pointillistic elements, with Calligraphic lines of East-Asia, finally the Chinese Calligraphy. Van Gogh's far-reaching influence on the following artists and styles has delated already, just as the linear swing of the Jugendstil, the essential elements of Chinese Calligraphy, and thus has prepared the still more profound direct influence in the Informel.

Kandinsky had the most important preparatory and stimulating influence on the course of the Modern Painting and the Informel, as for example on Pollock and others,<sup>139</sup> here again accompanied by an influence of Chinese Aesthetics and partly of Calligraphic elements. Kandinsky's source<sup>140</sup> was the search for the mysterious world of the mind, which to find one had to break through the world of the phenomena, to find picturesque recompenses for spiritual perception. In Kandinsky's work interfere the linear influences of Monet's haystacks<sup>141</sup>, the colourful and linear abstraction trends of the Jugendstil<sup>142</sup>, the psychoanalysis of Freud and the modern scientific world view<sup>143</sup>, with the influence of the Expressionist work of van Gogh<sup>144</sup> and the East-Asian influences<sup>145</sup>, which was

twice effective here: once over the linear Jugendstil art, which, as already mentioned, strongly was shaped by it, and on the other hand by his partly Asian origin and his thereby conditioned interests and knowledge. After Herbert Read<sup>146</sup> his great-grandmother should have been a Mongolian princess, and the Mongolian culture was related to the Chinese and a knowledge of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy was for Kandinsky not only possible but absolute likely; this shall however despite several hints in the literature not analyzed deeper.<sup>147</sup>

The search for the "mysterious world of the mind" in the inside world is in the Informel, at Tobey, Masson, Bissier and many others an essential attribute of the art intention. Kandinsky negated the object and the confrontation with the outside world, painting was for him rather communication with the human inside world, a procedure which Tobey later formulated clearly:

"My work is internal looking."<sup>148</sup>

In his first period of the "Abstract Expressionism" (till 1922) he postulates and illustrates the correspondence of the inside world of the person with the generating forces of the universe<sup>149</sup>, his main formal means are the moving free line and the expression-loaded free colour spot. The picture herewith tends to an object of independent, own reality, the act of painting is understood as the naturalness of the creative beginning<sup>150</sup>, and draws its contents and impulses from the unconscious and the totality of the universal nature. The means are for him, like in the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, ambivalent: the line can be a pictorial medium, as well as an object for itself. The undelying basic world-view is, that the "world sounds" and is a "universe of the spiritually working beings", which let the dead matter also become something like a living person.<sup>151</sup> His artistic aim is the representation of the great vibrating interrelations of the Creation as active forces.<sup>152</sup> The analogy to the Chinese Aesthetics is here obvious, what the following remarks of Shih-t'ao (石涛) verify:

"The whole painting has its roots in the recognising mind.... Since what is the painting other than the great method of the changes and developments in the universe? Mind and internal being of the mountains and waterways, development and growth of the creation, the active strength of Yin and Yang, everything is revealed by paintbrush and ink. If the handwrist is gifted with creative strength, the painting excels everything, what human thinking is capable of, and if the wrist moves in harmony with the mind, mountains and waterways expose their soul."<sup>153</sup>

The belief of the Chinese Aesthetics, that the internal truth corresponds with the universal forces, is also confirmed by Kandinsky:

"Thus the abstract (art) puts a new (reality) besides the real one, which externally has nothing to do with the (external) reality. Internally it is succumbed to the general laws of the cosmic world." <sup>154</sup>

Art and real world are based not only in the Chinese Aesthetics of Calligraphy on the same general "laws of the cosmic world", but also with Kandinsky, who thus submits himself to the forces of the universal principles and the guidance by the unconscious<sup>155</sup>, and who transmits this to the Informel Painting. Kandinsky's main heir was the free, undogmatic expression of internal experiences, which became in connection with the Surrealistic Automatism the most important initiator of the Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting in the USA and Europe.

Not only in certain qualities of his spontaneous linear handwriting appears a formal influence of Chinese Calligraphy, but also in some signs which appear in his pictures and cannot deny their origin and still existing "legibility" in the sense of Chinese writing, and which own a certain resemblance to sign forms and structure of the K'ai-Shu (楷書) and partly of the Li-Shu (隸書) of China, the "Standard Script and the "Office Script". Thus, for example, the "Komposition X" from 1939 shows a form, which corresponds to the sign for "moon" (yüe 月), and another picture, "Sign Row" from 1931, contains at least eight different "readable" Chinese signs (Fig. 4). These are: "Person" (ren 人) or "enter" (ru 入) (No. 1); "eye" (mu 目) (No. 3); "field" (t'ien 田) (No. 2); an approximate shape to "but / nevertheless" (erh 而) (No. 4); "large" (ta 大) (No. 5); "a little" (shao 少) (No. 6); an approximate form to "bow" (kung 弓) (No. 7); and the genitive particle (chih 之). (No. 8). Furthermore the combinations of two horizontal lines distributed in the picture probably go back to an inspiration by the "Pa-Kua" (八卦) of the I-Ching (易經).

All in all, it is unlikely that the great number of these "readable" signs and the correspondence of the aesthetic principles and the partly linear expressive paintbrush writing are accidental, so that also with Kandinsky a certain coeffect of an influence of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics can be stated in the process of the development of the modern painting, particularly of the spontaneous-expressive trend, leading to the Informel.

The consent of man and artist with the forces of the Creation expresses oneself in the pictures and thoughts of Paul Klee, another initiator of the Informel Painting, by whom most Abstract Expressionists in America<sup>156</sup> and also many European artists were inspired, over the sign and the line, but which, different from Kandinsky, to whom he stood very close, still contain figurativ symbolic

relations to the object world, however in a subjective symbolic system, which represents his reaction to the world and his inner vibrations. In the beginning by the reduction of natural physical contents to their formal constructive elements, Klee wins symbolical signs of the physical world, which become according to the specific internal reaction of the artist new pictorial composition patterns, analogous to the world of things, but principally independent. The creative process of nature contains after Klee a fine, all prevailing system of laws, a variety of ordinal patterns and movement rhythms, which the artistic power of conception can recognise and reproduce. In the smallest detail of the nature he recognises analogies to the construction and to the laws of the universe in whole. Here also a strong affinity to the principles of the Chinese Aesthetics is given again, as the explanations of Shen Tsung-ch'ien (沈宗騫) (1736-1820) can prove easily:

"All material has originated from accumulated power. Therefore the wave-shaped movements of the mountaintops and every rock and tree own living power.... Everything has its own shape, however, is related together and forms a unity. It differs in figure and kind, however, is controlled by this vital forces and is in the possession of the beauty of the living. It is this, what one calls "Shih" ( 勢 ), the powerful movement. If those, which speak of the "Six Principles" (liu fa 六法) put the "lifelike mood and atmosphere" (ch'i-yun 氣韻) in the first place, they exactly mean this.. If one speaks of paintbrush strength (pi-shih 筆勢), one wants to say that the living movement of the paintbrush expresses the essence of the different objects..... The powerful movement (shih 勢) is visible, but not the vitality (ch'i 氣) (of the reality). Consequently one needs the powerful movement to reproduce the liveliness of the things.... Thus vitality and powerful movement have the same source."<sup>157</sup>

The pictorial means are hence for Klee, like in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, the instrument, with which the subjective mental answer as well as the objective cognition of the creative inventions of the nature can be transmitted into the visible creations of a picture, and thus create a second reality, which for the artists is more perfect than that of the appearance in the eyes. The sentence of Cézanne, that the art is a harmony in parallel to the nature, hence is also true for Klee. Klee thus wins a Calligraphic equipment of sign-like figurations, with which he creates images of internal prepositions of the cosmic rebirth. These symbols, basing on the moving line, are as well symbols as pure forms. The line becomes

sovereign, like in Chinese Calligraphy, as an independent force, which contains a dynamic oscillation as well as functions as a denoting sign, and which with the realisation of a pictorial microcosm manifests the artistic creative energy of the mind, a way of pictorial action, which André Masson calls "work in the manner of the nature" and "as if it acts like this (way of nature)".<sup>158</sup>

Klee overcomes with it the tension between perception and invention of reality, between reality and ideal, between world and I, because different from the Western tradition, Klee searches, like the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, the "consent with the forces of the 'Great Creation'", not the assertiveness and dialectic opposition.<sup>159</sup> He builds up with the pictorial means, which are equivalent to the means of nature, in a dialogue with the artistic creative means, the 'reality' of the picture. If he speaks of "creation as a genesis" and "line as a moving action", or if he with lines and points, movements and elementary forms in the picture depicts such processes like "review, bridge, unity, excitement, flashes" etc., manifests itself here already the conception of the pictorial action of the artist as a creative process on one hand, and of the associative and evokative forces of the picture signs on the other hand, both are essential characteristics of the Informel Art.<sup>160</sup>

The correspondence with the world creation, which he postulates like the Chinese Aesthetics, will be achieved by the simulation of its creation process in the picture, where forces and conditions analog to the universal forces and states become manifest in the picture. Hence the beginning for him is the chaos, the creative action is the organization of the chaos, wherein a certain analogy to the "one-line principle" of Shih-T'ao (石涛) is to be seen; and he thus has early entered and prepared the areas of the Informel, because the great span of his art has given him like no other one the possibility to shape the following artists up to the Informel.<sup>161</sup>

The influence of the East-Asian Art on Klee is confirmed by Weston<sup>162</sup>, as well as from other authors:<sup>163</sup>

"The work of Klee shows many borrowings from both hemispheres, in particular from the art of the Far-East, and also from the Zen-faith, in the legality of the spontaneous action",

the "Non-Action (Wu-Wei 無為) and the "Natural Action" (tzu-ran 自然) of the Chinese Aesthetics. Besides in his works can be found a formal affinity to the signs of the Chinese Calligraphy, how Wedewer<sup>164</sup> notices, particularly to signs of the "Small Seal Script" (Hsiao-chuan 小篆書) and the "Office Script" (Li-shu 隸書), related with a balance of rational and irrational forces, from spontaneity and control, as it is also to be found with Tobey. Also with Klee can finally be noted, that the effect of his work on the Informel Painting again was accompanied by a

certain influence of Chinese Aesthetics and some Calligraphic elements, a connection, which can be found with almost all artists, who prepared and stimulated the Informel.

The tendency of the informel pictorial reaction, which is to be distinguished from the "Modern Informel Painting", on which now in the following is briefly to be entered on, is, as the present implementation made clear, a historical process, which did not start just in the modern age, but which already began substantially earlier, and which encloses all attempts for the resolution of the firm object form, production of a new unity of space and object or abolition of the traditional separation of both, strengthening of all irrational moments, like spontaneisation of the painting act and from expression of contents of the human inside world and psyche, just as the freeing and automation of the pictorial creative means. The present explanations have proved, that this historical trend was accompanied or carried almost always by an influence or an inspiration from elements of the Chinese Aesthetics and Worldview, and in many cases also from Calligraphy and Painting, a hypothesis which relativates the overemphasis of the autonomous development of the cultures and their arts. It also confirms the hypothesis that the Western Arthistory without this influence, solely under the supremacy of the rationalistic tradition, would have run surely different.

On the importance of the pictorial linear Automatism, which at the beginning was mentioned, and which was not addressed up to now closer, shall because of formal reasons given time to in connection with André Masson (chapter IV), because its development in the artistic area is primarily owed to him.

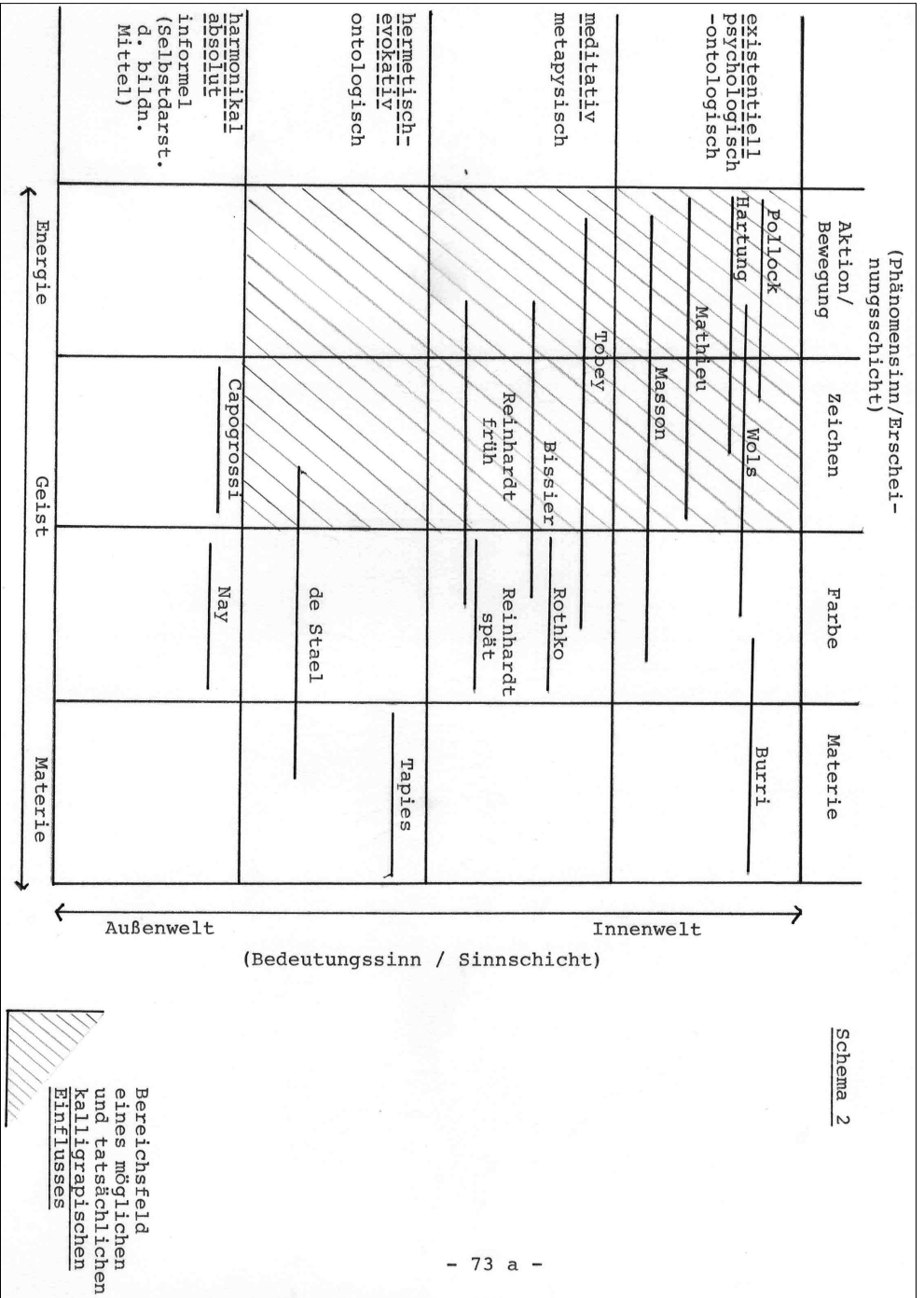
Hence, the achievement of the modern Informel Painting, the General Informel as well as the "Calligraphic Informel", where to the general signs still specifically Calligraphic signs were added, was essentially the advancement, perfection and partial extremisation of the already available "informel" possibilities. Hence, in the following section a clear distinction should be tried between the General Informel and the "Calligraphic Informel", and where at first the tension poles between which the Informel ranges in general shall be worked out, in order to demonstrate then, outgoing from this, the specific features of the single artists of the "Calligraphic Informel" and their formal qualities. The special importance of Mark Tobey and, in a little lesser degree, also of André Masson concerning integration level and art-historical importance of their works in comparison to the other artists of the "Calligraphic Informel", demands on one hand the differentiation of "influenced" artists (Tobey, Masson) and "inspired" artists (Alechinsky, Degottex and others), whereby the difference is of more gradual nature, and on the other hand the special treatment of the main representatives of the "Calligraphic Informel", Tobey and Masson, whereby as already mentioned several times Tobey is that Western Artist, who has integrated Calligraphic and aesthetic signs of China most intensely into his work (chapter IV). Before that it is still shortly to be given time to the essential characteristics in regard to the interests of the "Calligraphic Informel",



which designate the Chinese Calligraphy, and which have inspired or have influenced the Western artists (chapter III).

Explanation of the German expressions of Schema (scheme) 2

Bereichsfeld eines möglichen und tatsächlichen kalligraphischen Einflusses	Range field of a possible and actual influence of the Chinese Calligraphy
Aktion / Bewegung	Action / movement
Außenwelt	Outer world
Bedeutungssinn	Meaning sense
Energie	Energy
Erscheinungsschicht	Apparition layer
Existentiell	existentially
Farbe	Colour
Geist	Spirit
harmonikal-absolut	harmonically-absolutely
hermetisch-evocativ	Hermetic-evocative
Innenwelt	Inner world
Materie	Material
meditativ / metaphysisch	Meditative / metaphysical
ontologisch	ontological
Phänomensinn	Phenomenon sense
psychologisch	psychological
Selbstdarstellung der bildnerischen Mittel	Self-presentation of the pictorial means
Sinnschicht	Sense layer
Zeichen	Sign



### 2.3.2 The Tendencies of the General Informel Painting

In the following it is not about to go in detail into the General Informel Painting, but those characteristics should be worked out here briefly, which were decisive for the Calligraphic Influence on the Informel, and whereby on single artists only is entered, when it is necessary for exemplification. The special concern of the Informel Painting, which is also represented by those artists who have dealt with the Chinese Calligraphy, was because of the at the beginning described time situation a referring back on their own subjective life, as the relation on valid objective social values was not given. It was a matter of integrating the art and the individual life and its events, to depict in the work personal as well as universal experiences, according to disposition and interest. The referring back on the ideology of the scientific world view on one hand, as well as the Life-Philosophy, the Existentialism and for some artists on the East-Asian Philosophy had caused the opinion, that life above all is determined from characteristics, like change, movement, flowing, action and primarily from the experience of events in the personal area. While in the Western thinking first dominated the view, that life concerned only the personal, individual life, the Eastern thinking brought in this respect an enlargement, as it assumed an analogy of personal life and general universal life, from which an analogy of universal principles and artistic principles resulted.

Hence, the artistic means equivalent to these dynamic contents and procedures were, as already mentioned, the genuine expressive values of the pictorial means relieved from the illustrative function: the linear gesture as a residuum of an artistic action, the sign which is connected more or less with the linear gesture, the meaningful power and content-load carrying capacity of the colour as a chromatic value, and the evocative abilities of the colour material or other materials. For the picturing of dynamic aspects on one hand and therefore for the interests of the Calligraphic Influence important are above all the first two elements:

- the linear gesture and action and their dynamism,
- the sign or sign-like elements or functions of the pictorial means, particularly the linear gesture,

since these two formal elements also mark the formal characteristics of Chinese Calligraphy. Linear gesture and action as well as signlikeness are essential characteristics of the Chinese Calligraphy, as well as of the Informel Painting in general and also of the Calligraphic Informel in particular, whereby the Calligraphic Informel shows some special attributes obtained from the Chinese Calligraphy, as particularly the mastery of the typical space-sculptural "ductus" and a greater liveliness and spirituality (ch'i-yun 氣韻) than the artists of the General Informel show. Hence, in the following first the general characteristics of

the gestural and the sign-like element will be determined, whereupon then with the help of examples of artists of the Calligraphic Informel these two main elements of the Calligraphic Influence shall be put in relation to the Calligraphy (section 3).

A more exact determination of these and of other important characteristics of Calligraphic attributes for the Informel follows then in the next chapter (chapter III), whereby for reasons of precisement also definitions and explanations of the Chinese Aesthetics must be consulted. Then a detailed analysis of the factors of influence and their effects follows, as already mentioned, with the help of the works of Mark Tobey and André Masson (chapter IV), who have integrated the Calligraphic attributes most intensely, and who therefore allow the most comprehensive analysis.

The possibility of an influence of the Chinese Calligraphy on the Informel Painting was *inter alia*, as already mentioned in the introduction, a function of their characteristics in formal regard and their pictorial and general statements and aims. Without a minimum of existing affinities an influence or even an inspiration would not have been possible at all, because the connecting possibilities were then absent. The basic hypothesis thus is, that it were existing affinities - and which are always existent with every form of influence or inspiration - which enabled an openness for influence from other than artistic areas of life on one hand and from other cultures than the Western on the other hand, partly even demanded it, because the artists, as for example Tobey or Masson or Mathieu and others were partly more or less consciously or unconsciously aware about their aims and intentions, often, however, in their present art or that of their culture did not find the means necessary for their realisation and procedures, and because they lacked the philosophical and moral backing of their society and its world view.

The Informel Painting in toto is not limited only to those two above mentioned formal attributes, but encloses a wide range of stylistic-formal features. It reaches on one hand from action over the use of signs up to the chromatic colour value and the use of colour materials. Still existent or during the pictorial process appearing figurations fall, besides, due to the peculiarity of all figurative or partly illustrating art, under the attribute of the sign, which is the probably most complex attribute of formal nature. These formal attributes, which permit a possibility of categorial order of the diverse single aspects, appeal to the phenomenal appearance or the phenomenon sense of the piece of art, more exactly said, the main aspects of the phenomenal (formal) appearance layer. Because all art works are at the same time also a component of the objective and subjective reality and were generated with their essential categories, this phenomenal appearance layer comply with the categories energy (power), mind (spirit) and matter (material).

On the other side the Informel Painting in general is also determined by the attributes "existential", "meditative", "hermetic evokative" and "harmonical absolutely". The existential Informel Painting, which is for example represented by

Pollock, is determined by psychological and ontological aims; the meditative Informel Painting among which Tobey and also Bissier can be counted, has its roots and aims against more in the metaphysical sphere. The hermetic-evocative Informel Painting concerns the vast area of works, which intend to visualize the hermetic emanations from the sphere of the reality surrounding us, it is aimed substantially ontological. The selfrepresentation of the pictorial means and their significance and meaning possibilities has the last ordinal category, harmonical-absolutely (informel) as a basis (compare scheme 2). These categories for the order of the Informel Art are derived from attributes, which concern the aims, intentions or contents, so the meaning (significance) sense or the statement (evidence) layer. Besides, it appears that these ordinal categories correspond also to certain areas of the reality, namely an inclination of the respective art more to the area of the outside world or to the human inside world. A special difficulty with all investigations to the modern painting, particularly to the Informel Painting, lies in the actual absence of a uniform conceptual system and an exact and systematic methodology of the investigation. Thus the analytic concepts used here cannot be regarded as universal applicable, but they can possibly make the understanding of the basic problems easier.

The influence of the Chinese Calligraphy reaches within these categorial limits on one hand from the already mentioned gestural-linear, actionel element to the use of signs of different kind, and in the content area from meditative aspects (Tobey inter alia) over existential problems up to hermetic-evokative signs. The other features, besides, are here only of subsidiary importance. Hence, in the following sections first of all the specific features of the gestural Action Painting and the use of signs shall be explained.

### 2.3.2.1 The gestural Action Painting

From the synthesis of Surrealistic Automatism, the influence of Kandinsky's Abstract Expressionism, the lyrical imaginative painting of Miro, Matta and Gorky and Klee's idea of the Psychic Improvisation developed in America under the influence of many famous emigrants from Europe (eg. Ernst, Masson, Hofmann) with Pollock, Motherwell, de Kooning and others the Abstract (American) Expressionism and the Action Painting (which merge into each other or are identical), which have similar aims as the Tachism in Europe with Wols, Saura, Vedova, Mathieu and others<sup>165</sup>, and whose most important formal characteristic is the spontaneous, gestural action on the painting surface.

Particularly the idea of the Psychic Improvisation was here of great importance, whose basic thought was to create a pictorial freedom of self-expression, which still took seriously the most concealed emotions of a person and regarded painting as an immediate expression of the life<sup>166</sup>, but also as a questioning of the hitherto trusted reality.<sup>167</sup> Pictures were painted and formal means and technologies were

used, which contradicted all present aesthetic norms, and which took their justification from the internal need of self-expression<sup>168</sup>, wherein a tragic context lies. The accentuation of the artistic creation act as an archetypally creative behaviour and as an act of the finding of pictures renounces on a hierarchical structure and poses the dynamic character of the painting process as the uppermost criterion. The processual Informel Pollock's, Mathieu's and others connects art and life in the painting act, by which the piece of art becomes a dramatic report, a selfreport of the artist, a spontaneous flowing out of the divesting psychic-spiritual movement. The painting process itself as well as the creativity become with it problematized, and the picture shows as symbolic model event the constant conversion of the picture reality in its appearance, the change of development and destruction, of morphogenesis and form destruction.

The sense of method of the Automatism invented by Masson and also used by Pollock and other informal artists, on which shall still be entered closer in connection with the Calligraphic Influence on Masson, was to produce pictures from the subconsciousness, without control of the rational consciousness, pictures which were hence so far not accessible to the consciousness. The scribbings free of rational thought, which were often a starting point for on it following deliberate creations, should not become separated, to open thus the sources of more freely creative emanations from the unconscious. With this method the technology got of course precedence before the contents, what Masson later regarded as insufficient and hence tried to modify the pure Automatism by Calligraphic elements, with which a renewed control of the consciousness and the deliberate creation should be achieved, whose balance only produced satisfactory results. The weight hence was however moved by the pure Automatism first more and more from the process of the picture finding and picture developing onto the real painting process and its pictorial appearance. The as low as possible control of the automatic creating had therefore unintentional effects as result, which were considered as a sign of spontaneity, it was attached importance on more accidental colour splashes and colour drops of special value.<sup>169</sup> The accentuation of the playful was adopted to obtain the freshness of the painting. Nevertheless lies here a difference to the Chinese Calligraphy, which does not emphasize the chance and the playful to such an extent, but integrates it into control and mastering, what shall still be explained closer by the example of Tobey.

Since Jackson Pollock the canvas for the gestural painting of the Informel has become an "arena" for an action, not only a surface, on which an object is represented. What happens on the canvas is primarily an action, not a picture. The painter has to deal with the material facing him, to defeat it and to modify it, the result of the encounter is the picture. Here also again lies a difference to the Chinese Calligraphy, in which not the conquest in a struggling confrontation dominates, but the internalized control of the means, on which is still to be entered closer. Hence, the gestural informal picture contains in its purest form no more

plans or preliminary stages, but spontaneously originates from the dynamic representation or the precipitation of a gesture, as a residuum of an action on the canvas, wherein a great naturalness of the pictorial procedure is seen.<sup>170</sup> Hence, the picture is inseparably linked with the life and biography of the artist, it is a direct expression, direct note of a life situation, the difference of art and life is almost lifted. The painting thereby becomes a fight with the pictorial means, the self and the life in general.<sup>171</sup>

In the paintprocessual Informel of Pollock, Mathieu, Vedova and others the painting process, the action therefore is not only a means of the action-different purpose, but above all also an end in itself, and while from the syntactic and semantic expression values of the colour and forms is largely abstracted, it comes to an concretization and absolutization of the painting process.<sup>172</sup> A perfect identity of painting and action, so the extreme of the pure action and dynamism or action in itself, is thereby not possible, because in the paintprocessual Informel still originates a picture as residual fact from the painting process. Allan Kaprow sees a complete detachment of the art process from the piece of art, especially from the picture work, in the Happening; which for him represents the logical consequence of the paintprocessual Informel, as a "painting, released from the canvas".<sup>173</sup> Hence, the nature of the paintprocessual Informel is not yet the absolutized action, but the dialectic of the antinomic connection of action and facts (the picture), from painting process and picture.<sup>174</sup> This applies in the same way to the nature of the Calligraphic piece of art, which differs, nevertheless, from it by the space-sculptural dynamism of the Calligraphic ductus and by a greater spirituality. The dualism and the reciprocity of the processuality of the painting act and the relationality of the picture composition or picture structure, which in an extreme case becomes a surface-filling all over composition, is another characteristic attribute. It is it also with Tobey and partly with Masson, and it is rudimentary also a characteristic of the Calligraphic work structure, particularly of the Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy (草書).

A third attribute for all Informel Painting, so also for most artists of the Calligraphic Informel, is the actuality of the hightening of the implemented painting process by the overlapping of the action tracks on the selected painting sector, an attribute that is only partly valid for the Calligraphy, and primarily for the K'uang-ts'ao (狂草), the "Erratic Writing/Script", and which is to be found with some Ch'an-Calligraphers. The fourth attribute, which finally is also to be found with some artists of the Calligraphic Informel, as for example Tobey and Masson, but not with all, and which again is basically also immanent in the Calligraphy, particularly in the dynamic Ts'ao-Shu (草書), is the permanent challenge of the viewer through a permanent denial of the adaptation, and with it a permanent aggressiveness in a not quiescent perception process, which Tobey names with the fact, that in his works "the viewer can nowhere rest".<sup>175</sup>

The gestural Action Painting thus becomes an analogon of the external chaotic moving and fluent reality, whose reliable structural correlation has got lost by the new world view and the social and political occurrences, and to an analogon of the psychic spiritual reality, which reacts to this external chaos and the insecurity moments resulting from it.<sup>176</sup> Herein also a basic resemblance to the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics is given, on which still in connection with their specific attributes and the art of Tobey shall be entered closer. A part of the above mentioned characteristic features of the gestic Action Painting has arisen from the development of the Western Art within its own limits, while another part appeared more distinctly under the influence of Chinese Calligraphy. To differentiate here is only possible after a more exact analysis of the typical Calligraphic elements and their effects, particularly in Tobey's and Masson's art.

First however shall the importance of the above mentioned formal and content criteria of the gestural painting be verified with the help of some remarks about the art of Pollock, and besides an indirect influence of Chinese Calligraphy, what up to now was merely paid attention to, which had not unimportant effects on his work and furthermore, because Pollock was of enormous influence. This indirect influence, or better said, a limited inspiration, took place on one hand on account of one or more contacts to Masson, when he stayed in the USA, and on the other hand over the knowledge of Tobey's work. Because it was not a direct contact and an intensive dealing with Calligraphy, Pollock can not be counted among the Calligraphic Informel. Nevertheless this connection is to be mentioned because of its importance.

Pollock was the dominating figure of the Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting in the USA, and he shows in his works first in a totality, which was not existing up to then, the renunciation of a pictorial form structure and an illusionistic space, as well as paintings, which with the method of the colour-dripping covered the canvas with chaotically sinuous irregular line tracks and colour-trace arabesques, generated in the style of the Automatism. With these works in the so-called "Allover" structure, which we also find with Tobey and partially with Masson, in which for the first time in a so complete manner the expression of human existence is reflected, Pollock changed not only the American, but the whole painting of his time.<sup>177</sup> Hereby a certain proportion originates from the indirect influence of Chinese Calligraphy, provided by Tobey and Masson. Although there is no relation between the, probably in 1943/44 from Hofmann and Max Ernst adopted method of the Dripping, and the genuine space-sculptural dynamic method of the Calligraphic paintbrush technology, which, as appears in Tobey's linear picture elements, generates its ductus by lifting and lowering of a paintbrush in the gestural-linear movement; but Pollock's dripping tracks are in spite of the greater materiality and density basically still a residuum of a linear gestural movement. The emerging Allover of the structure and the linear oscillation space of the picture are essential characteristics of the spontaneous



Ts'ao-Shu Calligraphy (草書), which has influenced Masson and Tobey, who developed the Allover and the linear oscillation space before Pollock and inspired him with it.

The influence of the European emigrants, like Ernst, Miro, Masson on one hand and the work of Kandinsky on the other hand is sufficiently known. Pollock, who read a lot, and visited particularly all regularly exhibitions, had an eclectic character and thereby rapidly absorbed suggestions and ideas<sup>178</sup>, whereby the already mentioned East-Asian influence over Kandinsky's work also indirectly had an affect and confirmed the influence of Tobey and Masson, because from them basically similar impulses went out. An effect of these impulses or influence was, on one hand, the linear oscillation space, which generates by the impossibility of simultaneous appropriation of the movement tracks, covering the picture, the impression of a constantly swinging linear structured space continuum of undeterminable depth and variable density and kinetic energy, and which provokes the viewer constantly to new fixation attempts, these however constantly denies to him, so that the basic impression of an unceasing dynamism originates.

The second effect of the indirect Calligraphic impulse over Tobey and Masson is the already mentioned Allover-Structure, which fills the whole picture field and which forms by the various overlappings of the linear drip and movement tracks, and which induces the impression of an arbitrary cutting from a larger swinging whole, and which substantially is determined by a moving point of view (moving focus) in the sense of Tobey. Both attributes are also found with Tobey and partly with Masson, with the difference, that above all the pictures of Tobey are substantially more dematerialized and more ethereal, than the heavy materialistic works of Pollock. Also format and internal sensitivities are smaller with Tobey or of meditative kind, as it is also the expression of the work, while Pollock's movements on the very large formats, which "inhale" the viewer almost visually, are determined by a basicly existential character of the linear movement tracks, about which Pollock noted:

"The modern artist, so it seems to me, works and expresses oneself from an internal world - in other words - he gives the (internal, the auth.) energy, the movement and other internal forces expression."<sup>179</sup>

In this view of world lies, in spite of the existing differences, a certain affinity to the Chinese Worldview and Aesthetics, but also to the thoughts of Kandinsky, Tobey and Masson. Betty Parsons notes to this aspect of Pollocks thinking:

"He was exceptionally occupied with the internal world - what is this anyhow? He had a sense for mysteries. His religiousness was in these concepts - a feeling of the

rhythms of the universe, the big order - like those of the oriental philosophy."<sup>180</sup>

Tobey also called, as we have seen, his work "internal contemplating"<sup>181</sup>, and a confirmation for this also gives Anthony Smith:

"(Pollock) dealt loudly with esoteric religious ideas, oriental philosophy, things about which I knew nothing."<sup>182</sup>

The term "Oriental Philosophy" is surely rather comprehensive, but taking into account the at the beginning detected general interest in the philosophy of Eastern Asia, like the the Zen-Buddhism and the Chinese Worldview by the art world of that time in New York, the conclusion is absolutely legitimate that Pollock also knew main features of this philosophy and ways of thinking, what is absolutely confirmed by his statements, by which the indirect influence of Calligraphic elements over Tobey and Masson was animated and carried. Because Pollock was wellknown as a "regular museum and gallery visitor"<sup>183</sup>, an additional presumption lies close, that Pollock - as an artist of course primarily interested in art - also had seen the extensive collection of Chinese and Japanese Calligraphies and Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and that he had assimilated impressions of it in his works.

The importance of Tobey for the development of the pictorial principles of the gestural Action Painting in Pollock's works, like the Allover Structure, the linear gesture and linear oscillation space with the not fixable point of view, which arose by the fact, that Pollock saw exhibitions of Tobey's works in New York, and that he received in the years 1942 - 46 stimulations from Tobey, is wellknown. Less known was up to now the influence of Masson on Pollock, which caused a considerable deepening of this process and thus the indirect mediation of elements coming from Chinese Calligraphy. Rubin points out the relationship or the influence of Masson on Pollock.<sup>184</sup>

The impulse for this gave the fact, that Pollock as well as Masson worked in 1941 in the graphic workshop of Stanley William Hayter in New York, although not at the same time, by which Pollock had the opportunities to see works of Masson. Masson worked there in 1941 the cold needlework "Rape", which was still purely automatic (Fig. 5), and which shows an amazing correspondence between the abstract, automatic line structure Pollock's in a - later - etching of 1945 ("Untitled") (Fig. 6). After Bernice Rose this correspondence is too strong to be able to be accidental. Hayter stressed with regard to this work

"the meaning of the lines winding to a net, the imaginative control of space and time by the elementary gesture, which indicates the drawing of a line", and "of the vivious character of the hand writing"<sup>185</sup>,

all attributes, which were absent in Pollock's work to date. Bernice Rose concludes from it,

"that the central experience of this structural change, so Pollocks invention (?!) of the (Allover), the line structure covering the whole surface and the philosophy of the risk contained in it ,which one also finds in the other activities of Pollock, is to be found in the Automatism and the technology of this etching."<sup>186</sup>

Massons work "Rape" thus gave Pollock the impulse and the first means to create a continuous, expressionist line structure, without any figurative purpose. In this etching Pollock's from 1945 all important elements of the later main works already exist: the "Allover" Structure, the automatic linear manuscript, the polyfocal composition manner without hierarchy and attempts of a non-cubist space effect, which is determined by a linear swinging continuum.<sup>187</sup> These first moments of influence were strengthened and renewed by the works of Masson from the years from 1943 to 1945, which Pollock partly saw, and which already, like "The Kill" from 1944 (Fig. 73) and "The Tree" of 1943 (Fig. 109) or also "Entanglement" from probably 1943/44 (not as assumed from 1941), and which contain unambiguously elements of a direct influence of Chinese Calligraphy, which Masson became acquainted with in 1942 in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and on which is to be entered even more exactly later (in chapter IV).

Comparisons between works of Pollock and Masson, particularly his drawings and etchings of 1941-1947, show further influences Masson's on Pollock, and confirm the already above mentioned and so important influence Masson's on the development of the Informel Painting. Rubin points out on a connection between Massons "Meditations about an oak leaf" (1942) and Pollocks "Totem I" from 1944, and he detects that Pollock has also seen Masson's works in exhibitions of 1932, 1935, as well as 1936/37, and later during Masson's stay in the USA, because these took place in New York, what can be proved from comparisons of etchings and pen-and-ink drawings (e.g., "Hatchings and Germinations", from 1938) and an ink drawing Pollocks, "Untitled" from approx. 1939 - 42, (Coll. Lee Krassner)<sup>188</sup> and other similar works from the same time.

Rubin points out further to the fact, that some moments of influence by Masson on Pollock can be documented. He cites Greenberg, who determined:

"He (Masson) has anticipated more than any other one the Modern Painting, and I do not think that he got for it enough recognition."<sup>189</sup>

and then he points further to the fact, that

"the anticipation, about which Greenberg wrote, did not refer to the influence of certain pictures, but rather concerned the advanced kind of Masson's composition, calligraphic vocabulary and the special character of his 'automatic' lines."<sup>190</sup>

Masson has therefore induced and released certain pictorial possibilities, which were then later realized by Pollock, and whereby the direct influence of Chinese Calligraphy on the work of Masson was determining, because this only made possible the further development of the automatistic procedure which was discontinued by Masson, while the controlled and disciplined Calligraphic ductus was connected with the pure linear automatism in a synthesis. This was already realized in Masson's works from 1943-45 and will be addressed in more detail in Chapter IV. A comparison of other works of both artists confirms the statement of Rubin, that the "affinity" Pollock's and Masson's basically was a question of "lines", a kind of lines which dissolve themselves from a descriptive and thus surface contouring and modeling way, what corresponds with Pollock's development from 1943 - to 1947.<sup>191</sup>

Masson had already during the thirties years through the work of Duthuit<sup>192</sup>, which he co-illustrated, and since 1942 through the visit in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which accommodates the biggest collection of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in the USA, obtained deep knowledge of formal and aesthetic kind of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, and his works have undergone already shortly after his visit there in the linear Automatism perceptible and clear changes in the direction of a use of lines in the Calligraphic kind, which show attempts of the space-sculptural ductus. This is clear to see in the already mentioned works, like "The Kill" (Fig. 73), the "Tree" (Fig. 101), as well as especially in "Entanglement" (Fig. 36), which is probably from 1943/44, not as supposedly from 1941. The picture "Entanglement" already contains all elements of Pollock's art, namely achieved by the use of exceptionally spontaneous, moving and differentiated Calligraphic lines, which, in spite of a certain softness, more than clearly by their form, ductus and movability show the knowledge and a certain control and conversion ability of the formal aspects of Chinese Calligraphy. These lines form an Allover-Continuum, which is polyfocal and which condenses the whole picture space into a space of permanent oscillations. Two results arise from these connections:

1) The fact, that the essential formal innovations of the Informel, like Allover-Structure, Polyfokality and the linear oscillation space, were no "invention" of Pollock, but were already earlier realized by Tobey and Masson, what later will be proved even closer (chapter IV), and which from these two artists were transferred to Pollock, who was then important for their further spreading.

2) The Calligraphic Influence from China, which was already integrated in the works of Tobey and Masson, and which there had caused the already mentioned formal aspects and especially had distinctid them, was indirectly the releaser and donated the missing pictorial means and methods. These assessments permit and thus confirm the conclusion, that the Calligraphic Influence from China has helped in an not unimportant wise to carry the development of the Modern Western Painting, particularly of the Informel.

Other artists, who show a distinctive Gestural Action Painting as attribute are de Kooning, Franz Kline in the USA, Saura in Spain, Vedova in Italy, Mathieu, Hartung, Soulages in France, as well as Götz, Sonderborg and Hann Trier in Germany.

For Georges Mathieu the spontaneous automatic painting process means the relinquishing of a personal key visual by the spontaneous painting gesture, which is executed with extreme quickness, sometimes before many spectators, because the painting act after his opinion produces only such picture results from the subconscious, which have formed there already as "semantic embryos", as a result of personal historical experiences. Art is for Mathieu, who had decisivly taken part at the development of the Informel as an artist as well as as a theorist, transgression of the border of the unconscious to the consciousness in the spontaneous forming gesture, it is the structuralisation of the unconscious, which receives sense in the structure spontaneously and simultaneously, and which therefore becomes a gestural residual sign, which for Mathieu above all is based on the expression potential of the line.

"Only the quickness of the action makes it possible to grasp and to express that, which ascends from the depths of the being, without that its spontaneous outbreak is held back and changed by rational consideration and intervention",

is Mathieu's opinion.<sup>193</sup> This moment of the gestural vitesse, which manifests itself in the linear residual sign, Mathieu lended from the Chinese Calligraphy, on which at another place still shall be entered briefly.

Hartung also stands on one hand in the area of the gestural painting, thus belongs to the paint-processual Informel, on the other hand, however, with the logical investigation of the sign aspect of the gestural painting in another problem circle as Pollock. The fortunate coincidence of spontaneous painting execution and

thoughtful picture composition distinguishes him from Pollocks often extreme action painting, from dynamic action of the line and the structure of the picture whole<sup>194</sup>, the picture is for him the forcefield of a formed out assertion of being. On the relation to and the inspiration from the Calligraphy of East-Asia, which occasionally is mentioned in the literature, shall be entered critically briefly at another place.

The quality of gestural painting, to be originally a movement like the dancing, beomes significant from the explanations of Hann Trier (1915–1999)) to his painting:

"The coherent surface obeys to rhythmical laws.... Painting means to dance in a coherent course on a clear surface;. The simultaneous visibility contains the reversible, in the painting process experienced time....The creative time becomes as a readable fallout of breathing activity the picture and again readable from it... ."195

The remark of Trier, "the man thinks, but the hand paints", is typical and expresses clearly the view of the parallelism, of the entering of genuine forces in and of the expression by the moving hands of the painter, a fundamental principle of gestural painting, how already Konrad Fiedler has recognised<sup>196</sup>, and as the aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy comprises it. His pictures, mostly two-handed painted, are thus the dancelike realisation of a groth process, in which on the one hand world detachedness, on the other hand trance and cheerfulness, sometimes also tragic-brooding thoughts express themselves. His pictures, in which the expansion of the image plane as an action field into the motoric and dynamic basic principle takes place, is a constant discussion with the labyrinthine in him in the dancelike dualism of movement and reaction.<sup>197</sup>

The elements of the picture, often similar to Calligraphic signs in ductus, structure and consistency or transparency of the colours, are gestural residual signs and live and swing on plains, whose colourness, which is very like the transparency and sensitivity Tobey's, form by their balance and harmony the equalising, harmonizing contrast to the linear gestures (Fig. 10). Trier confirmed to the author in a conversation in 1979, that he has dealt with the Chinese Aesthetics and the thoughts of Lao-tzu in the Tao-Te-Ching, and that he always had a great interest in the pictorial procedure of the Chinese Calligraphy. This affinity manifests itself above all in the moving linearity of his pictures, which expresses itself in vivious, inspired lines and attain their effect on the viewer by their naturalness and their almost seismographic reaction to internal oscillations, as well as in the view of "creative time as a precipitation of breathing activity to the picture", in which a reminiscence to the principle of the "living sponateity" ( Ch'i-yun 氣韻 ) of the Chinese Calligraphy is to be seen.

Gestural and actionel characteristics are still to be found with many other artists, as for example with Hoehme, K.O.Götz<sup>198</sup>, who has up to now presevered this painting style, and others more, on which here should not be entered any more, because the present implementation is enough to the exemplification of the most important characteristics

### 2.3.2.2 The Use of Signs in the Informel

Beside the gestural processual element as a precipitation of human movements, deed or action in the picture, the sign is the second essential element, which has helped to carry the Calligraphic impulse or influence, and which hence, partly also appears in the General Informel, so also with not necessarily from Calligraphy inspired or influenced artists, which notably however in the "Calligraphic Informel" becomes an essential factor of the picture statement as a formal attribute. Thereby between these two groupes of course exist certain formal differences, which result above all in the stronger approach of the "signs" of the Calligraphic Informel to the original signs of the Chinese Calligraphy, whereto in connection with the characteristics of the Calligraphic Informel briefly shall be come back. First, however, the general characteristics and elements of the use of signs in the Informel shall be indicated in the following as a basis of the Calligraphic Influence.

Panofsky defines a piece of art "as an object made by man, which wants to be experienced aesthetically."<sup>199</sup> This definition of a piece of art, on which here should not be entered substantially closer, can be extended from a point of view, that every piece of art and the art in general is an object or a system of objects, which still beside the quality to be able to be experienced aesthetically, owns the quality to be a general and universal mean of communication, namely between artist and world and artist and viewer. The aim of this communicative area is, in addition to the area of the purpose-destinated communication of the general life, to investigate other areas of more purpose free being connections, and to provide experiences and knowledge from it to the human cognition, whereby nevertheless the purpose-bound areas can be co-considered in a reactive respect. This applies as well to the Informel Painting as well as to the Chinese Calligraphy. An essential element of this communicative area is, as can be assumed from the pricipally fundamental equality of all being areas, so also from the purpose-bound and purpose-free ones, the sign and its medial use. The following remarks from Shih-t'ao ( 石 濤 ) make the media meaning of the use of Calligraphic signs also in the Chinese understanding clear:

"The whole painting has its root in the recognising mind.... Since painting means to depict the forms of the universe.... Since what is the painting other than the great method of the changes and developments in the

universe? Mind and internal being... development and creative growth, the active force of Yin and Yang, everything is revealed by paintbrush and ink, and the skill lets itself also put under proof in Calligraphy as in Painting. Hence these are related arts with the same task. One single line (= the elementary calligraphic sign or the basic line of the calligraphic sign, auth.) is the origin of all calligraphy and painting."<sup>200</sup>

A sign is, defined in general, a space-temporal thing, which stands for something else.<sup>201</sup> This, in the difference to the Chinese Calligraphy, lacking understanding of informal signs, has in consequence that also the pragmatic sign dimension, which concerns the actional and behavioral request of the sign, remains incomprehensible and ineffective. Therefrom results the well-known isolation of the Informel Artist, his works and his work, which thereby remain in an area of socially non-committal and not understandable individual spirituality. This does not apply to the primary situation of the Chinese Calligraphy, which is based on a socially approved and known corpus of meaningful signs, which comprises, like a frequency modulation, the individual attributes of the single artistic written art signs, thus the personal gesture and the personal ductus and also had let them generally be understandable by century-long experience.

For the sign function of the Informel Art and the Chinese Calligraphy of importance is the ability of a sign, to be able to become a symbol.<sup>202</sup> Under a symbol one understands a sign or picture, which points beyond itself, which demonstrates a sense, a meaning, especially as a pictorialization of a nonobjective, which in no other manner can be made objective, which for us only is, if it is in the picture, or as visualization of something, which cannot be exhausted with concepts or words. However, a symbol or something symbolical can generally also be something sensually given, which represents a common or universal, which depicts something spiritual, invisible or expresses or opens a deeper content of the reality immediately, without the mediation of the conceptual thinking, and it can be a sign, whose meaning is determined by general agreement.<sup>203</sup>

This comprehensive definition applies to a part of the General Informel as well as for the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, particularly, however, for Tobey, Masson and the Chinese Calligraphy, where the symbolical work of the pictorial elements, like the linear basic gesture, the Allover, the undefined linear oscillation space etc., represents the symbolic form of a "deeper content of the reality". Here also lies a point of relationship between common informal and special Calligraphic qualities, which in the unity of linear gesture and signlikeness perform the symbolic representation of basic questions of the universal life, whereby qualities of the General Informel do not always succeed, on account of their very subjective individual kind.



The possibility of a line, coloured form or otherwise pictorial element to be generally a bearer of expression, which is more than a self-representation, thus an expression of reality of the most different kind, of forces, moods of the person, universal life connections etc., is confirmed for the pictorial sign by different art-scientific views of the character and the effect of the symbol and needs a short clarification, because this possibility was always postulated by artists, like Tobey, Masson and others, as well as by the Chinese Calligraphy.

The polarity theory of the symbol by Warburg, which uses Vischer's definition of the symbol as a connection of picture and meaning, understands the nature and the effectiveness of the symbol either as magic-binding, or, however, as logical-separating, whereby symbol and meaning are regarded as according each other. In spite of the absence of representational or naturalistic motives and symbols in the Informel Painting or in the Chinese Calligraphy, this view basically applies to both of them. For the understanding of the Informel Painting and the Chinese Calligraphy even more important is a, by Vischer called "reserved" level, between both extremes lying stage of the understanding of the symbol, where human mind and symbolic sign are on one hand still bound to the faith in the magic potency of the sign, where on the other hand however the mind tries to understand the sign, its meaning and relation to the meant in a clear analytic distance. The nature of the symbolic sign thus is able

"to go through the whole range: from the pure matter of the symbol almost completely rapt concept, which to be able to be fixed at all, attaches itself to a lifeless and so unambiguously determinable sign, up to the cult-like act, which - under the compulsion of the corporeality of the symbol - in the most true sense of the word grasps it with hands, consumes it or destroys oneself before it."<sup>204</sup>

The Informel picture, particularly, however, the Calligraphic piece of art, has in this understanding a place in the middle,

"where the symbol is understood as a sign and still survives as a picture, where the mental excitement is held between these two poles, neither by the binding force of the metaphor is concentrated so much, that it discharges in an action, nor is dissolved by the disassembling order of the thought so much, that it vitalizes in ideas."<sup>205</sup>

The possibility and explanation of artistic expression in gestural and symbolic signs in the Informel Painting and in the Chinese Calligraphy can be derived from the view of Warburg, that on one hand a continuous transition exists between the

human expression of internal enthusiasm, various movements of the internal soul and mind forces and the act of artistic meditation on the other hand. This possibility of gestural symbolic expression explains the "theory of the mimic expression" (Wind) by the fact, that it are the same muscles, which perform a physical and an expressive function. Every expression by a muscle movement is therefore also metaphoric and is subject to the polar qualities of the symbol; the stronger and more concentrated the mental excitement is, which discharges in the expression, the nearer is the symbolic movement to the physical one. This problem, recognised by Warburg, of the polarity of the mental-spiritual behaviour, which has a strong affinity to the basic ideas of Chinese Aesthetics, helps to explain the problem of the periodicity of the development of art as an oscillation process between two poles, the Classical and the Romantic, which for the influence of Calligraphy insofar matters, as in it and with it a compensation, a balance of both tendencies can be reached. After Warburg all art is in the tension state between the darkness, unconscious, natural, and the bright, free and the keen awareness and creates, depending on circumstances and influence, a whenever only temporary balance. Nevertheless, this pendulum movement is in the European art history substantially stronger as in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting.

Also the even more comprehensive symbolic concept of Ernst Cassirer intervenes here, who understands under a "symbolic form", as we find it for example in the swinging All-over-Structure of Tobey's works as an illustration of his view of a dynamic world, or in the dynamic ductus of the Chinese Calligraphy, which symbolises the change of the universal forces, every energy, by which a spiritual content is attached to a concrete sensuous sign and is assigned to this sign internally. The art thus is a world of selfcreated signs and pictures and faces that what we call the objective reality of things and asserts itself against it in an independent fullness and genuine power, it carries the general character of symbolic creation in itself as a whole, by which a higher grade of freedom and spiritual self-finding is won.<sup>206</sup> Finally is still to be mentioned here that according to Warburg not only the art, but also the whole human existence lies between the two poles of the dark and bright, irrational and rational<sup>207</sup>, and here also exists again a strong affinity to the Chinese Worldview and Aesthetics.

In the Informel Painting in general the use of signs appears with different main focuses and can symbolise an object, an action, a gesture, a thought, passions and emotions and a lot of other. The providing of knowledge and experience, the communicative process, occurs more in an emotional-intuitive and evokativ-associative way than with rational means; signs and pictures must be read or interpreted more or less subjectively, are experienced aesthetically, as Panofsky says, wherein a greater freedom compared with rational signs and rational recognising lies.

Just as in the Chinese Calligraphy the use of signs in the Informel Art may also have "magic intentions", as for example with Baumeister<sup>208</sup>, Gottlieb<sup>209</sup>,

Capogrossi<sup>210</sup> and others; the sign can also appear as a figurative element in the picture, like with Alechinsky<sup>211</sup>, Appel<sup>212</sup> and others; an aspect which is not strange to the Chinese Calligraphy, which by its origin from originally iconic signs and is potentially still present in it; but it can on the other hand also be gestic up to a huge sign, as for example with Serpan, Michaux and Kline, and it can originate from writing and Graffiti, like with Bryen<sup>213</sup>, Trier<sup>214</sup>, Tapiès<sup>215</sup> and others.

The "magic" use of signs in the Informel Art is based on the already indicated conviction, that the sign always contains a correspondence to the reality in some way and can help to disclose this. The artist is an insider in dealing with the "magic" force of the signs and symbols and can transfer this ability on the viewer, a view of the nature of art and artist, which is very similar to that of the Chinese Aesthetics, wherein the points of contact and possibilities of the Calligraphic Influence lie, and which also over this influence found its way into the Western Aesthetics.

This principle similarity and the involvement of the "soul", the "heart" or the "intuitive mind" (hsin 心) in the Chinese Aesthetics of Calligraphy, the following remarks of two Chinese calligraphers and aestheticians make significant. In the Fa-shu-k'ao (法书考) of Sheng Hsi-ming (盛熙明)(Yuan-Daynasty) it is said:

"The miracle of brush and ink are closely related with the highest intellectual understanding (shen-ming 神明)." <sup>216</sup>

From the words of Shih-t'ao (石涛), that

"Painting (as well as the Calligraphy, b.auth.) is the method of the great changes and developments in the universe."<sup>217</sup>

the effective relationship with the fundamental forces and principles of reality has already resulted, especially the ability to depict "change" and "development", two phenomena that just attracted artists of the Informel, like Tobey, Masson ("metamorphosis") and others.

The ability of Calligraphy and its symbols and gestures, over the recognising mind and the psyche of the artist to grasp and to express forces and interrelations of the reality, becomes verified by Sheng Hsi-ming (盛熙明):

"What concerns the art of writing, it is the trace of the heart (or 'mind', hsin chih chi 心之迹). Thus it has its seat inside and takes shape outwardly, one grasps it with the heart and the hand responds (ying 应)".<sup>218</sup>

The intuitive connection of sign-like expression in the Calligraphy is further confirmed by Chang Huai-kuan ( 张怀瓘 ), who proves that in the Calligraphic sign and its creative process characteristics of the general universal creation forces and the things of the reality manifest themselves, namely in a quite immediate and direct, spontaneous manner:

"This becomes effected without (deliberate) activity (wu-wei 無爲) and corresponds with the work of the nature (tzu-ran chih kung 自然之功). The things take the form corresponding to their kind, and thus comply with the principle of creative creation (tsao-hua chih li 造化之理) For all of this one does not know, why it is so. One can bring oneself spiritually in correspondence with it (hsin-ch'i 心契), but it is impossible to express it in words".<sup>219</sup>

This view culminates in the concise formulation, which belongs to the common property of Calligraphic Aesthetics, that

"Heart and hand are in correspondence" (hsin-shou hsiang-ying 心手相应)

in the Calligraphic, so artistic process, which generates the gestural signs or symbols. The accordance to the thoughts of Konrad Fiedler, on whom the Informel or also general aesthetics of the Gestural Painting is often led back, are not to be overlooked. Here thus lie the reference point and the underlying moments of the Calligraphic Influence over the gestural-processual residual sign, the unity of gestural action and sign-like expression.

In the works of Klee and Miro signs already appeared as "magic" or effective pictogrammes or ideogrammes, wherein an intuitive recognising and handling of the fundamental sources of life expresses itself.<sup>220</sup> This is particularly the case also with Willi Baumeister, who applied a great part of his work on the investigation of personal symbols and modified them in series. His pictorial signs, similar to hieroglyphs, which in some aspects resemble to the Chinese Seal Characters (Chuan-Shu 篆書), have magic character and originated from the interest of the artist in magical African rock pictures, Sumerian-Mesopotamic art, Mexican and East-Asian Art, and it is to be supposed with him, that the Chinese Calligraphy was known to him and that the resemblance of some works can be explained from this knowledge.<sup>221</sup> Also his picture titles, as for example "Han" (= Han time of China, around Christ's birth 漢朝), prove deeper knowledge of Chinese art and culture. With the most different means generated pictorial scripts of Baumeister

step up towards us in symbolic sign forms, which sometimes resemble archaic Chinese signs. In these graphic symbols the "unknown" becomes visible, in whose investigation Baumeister also devoted a lot of effort, and about which he writes in his book "The Unknown in the art":

"From the position of the painter the painting is the art of the visualization of something, which becomes only visible through it, and did not exist before, belonged to the unknown. With all objective and unobjective works, as well as ornament and writing, it is a concealed which the viewer should absorb.... The unknown forms the polar contrast to every experience. Art should be considered as a metamorphosis, as continual transformation.... He (the artists) is the organ of a world whole, whom he remains responsible."<sup>222</sup>

Adolph Gottlieb's works, especially the "Pictographs", contain symbolic forms for cosmic elements, which were animated partly by the Chinese Worldview (Yin and Yang 陰 陽 ). The serrated, comb-like sign Capogrossi's, which reminds of archaic Chinese signs, contains in spite of its simplicity inexhaustible expression possibilities by an ornamental array and combination in the sense of the "one-line principle" mentioned by Shih-t'ao, on which in connection with Chinese Calligraphy and the work of Tobey shall be given time to.<sup>223</sup> Figur-like or figurative sign elements are found with many Informel Painters, as for example with the members of the COBRA group.

Another aspect of the sign in the Informel is the gestural-residual sign aspect, in which lies an especially strong affinity to the Chinese Calligraphy, particularly in the kind of the Ts'ao-Shu (草 書 ) - or "Concept" style. The significance of the gestural Action Painting per se has already been treated in detail, it should not be entered further on it. Because, however, in the gestural-residual sign aspect, which is also a main attribute of the Chinese Calligraphy, and which contains and carried as a basic component of Informel Painting the affinity to and influence of the Chinese Calligraphy, and which combines gestural action and sign-like meaning expression, should be still made reference to it briefly.

The relation of gestural-residual and symbolic-semantic sign is determined by the relation of expressiv-spontaneous intuition and rational reflexion during the sign creation, so with the creation of the work, which is transferred to the viewer. The rational reflexion of pictorial problems and also of more general spiritual and real connections mostly causes a more frequent use of symbolical-semantic, non-gestural signs, this is to be found with Capogrossi, Baumeister or Gottlieb, and the pictorial signs are primarily subjective-individual and need an explanation.

The expressive-spontaneous intuition, which corresponds with the surrealist Automatism and opened the Informel particularly for Calligraphic impulses, is the basis of the gestural-residual sign category, whose pictorial precipitation takes often place in a simultaneous process with and in the artistic gesture, which is hardly controllable by the mind. The gestural-residual sign brings above all contents of the unconsciousness of all kinds, like emotional, intuitive or other aspects into the picture, which are normally not accessible to the Ratio, anyway not immediately.

Both sign categories are almost always tied together with each other, mostly in a pictorial unity, as it is the case also in the Chinese Calligraphy, where between both a balance state rules, whereas in the Informel and also in the different styles or kinds of Calligraphy sometimes the one and sometimes the other aspect predominates. The gestural-residual sign category is an expression of unaware or subconscious forces and connections, but also from characteristics of the personality, the character and the psychic-emotional state of the artist, which is again often to be led back on external connections, and also on this way picturizes aspects of the outside world. The gestural-residual sign becomes effective about the movement, which arises from the internal psychic-emotional movement and the physical movement of the artist, and the residuum, which arises necessarily, is risen to a sign; the symbolic-semantic sign in opposite is effective through its form and structure, whose specific attributes function as a bearer of - first of all mostly subjective - meaning. Both however stand together in a reciprocal relation, because the superior force of the one causes the inferiority of the other and vice versa. This is an aspect, which applies in the same way to the Chinese Calligraphy and expresses itself in the relation of the font styles of K'ai-Shu (楷書) and Ts'ao-Shu (草書), on which shall be entered even closer, in the investigation of the characteristics of Calligraphy as well as in connection with their use in the works of Tobey and Masson. The more static symbolic-semantic sign can not simultaneously include a violent, high-energetic movement; the gestural residual sign, however, contains more movement than structural order and strength. Nevertheless, both sign aspects are predominantly perceived by the sensations of the viewer, emotionally and through forming of associations, because first of all at the Informel, and this also refers to the Calligraphic Informel, the framework of the rationally to be deciphered character meaning, which denotes the Chinese Calligraphy, is missing.

Another aspect of the sign-like in the Informel, which still must be briefly pointed out, is the use of alienated or modified writing or parts of writings, mostly from the sphere of the European writing. Taken out from the text connection and used as as pictorial means, the writing possesses own pictorial, associative-evocative effects, through alienation, deformations, destructions, by which originally written values can be tied together with new additional associations. This sign aspect is only in that respect significant, as the use of transformed or

alienated Chinese Calligraphy writing underlies the same condition, if it is applied by artists of the Calligraphic Informel, like partially by Tobey, Masson, Alcocpley, Wilke and Alechinsky, or also some others, without that these know the linguistic meanings and refer to them. Here also only counts the pure pictorial value, which should draw the attention to new meanings and connections. The area between gestural painting and the use of sign forms, as appeared, the potential and the actual event field of the Calligraphic Influence.

The use of the chromatic colour value as a characteristic feature, as we find it with Rothko<sup>224</sup>, Reinhardt<sup>225</sup>, Francis<sup>226</sup>, Nay<sup>227</sup> and others, as well as the integration of material qualities or the colour material, as for example with Burri<sup>228</sup>, Tapies<sup>229</sup>, Dubuffet<sup>230</sup> and others, has virtually no connection with the essential attributes, which determine the Calligraphic Influence, so that it must not be entered on it further. Colour material and chromatic value are in the Chinese Calligraphy replaced by the consistency of the ink and its grey values, which originate from bright-dark gradings and which contribute in the same manner to the living expression like the "five colours", as the Chinese Aesthetics expresses it. This is a fact, which also affects equally the Calligraphic Influence in the Informel.

### 3. The Calligraphic Informel

After in the present explanations already the formation and the development of the Informel Art in general was indicated, and after the decisive elements and aspects of the Informel for the Calligraphic Influence, which allowed this influence and carried it formally, were worked out, which above all are the gestic-processual, linear action painting on one hand and the use of signs in the picture on the other hand, in the following now should be entered on the "Calligraphic Informel", in whose works the mentioned attributes and elements meet and connect each other with elements and signs of Chinese Calligraphy.

Under Calligraphic Informel shall be understood those artists and works of the Informel Painting, who have - in the most different manner of meeting, adoption and using - employed themselves with Chinese Calligraphy, by which their work has received impulses, without which it would have developed in a different way. Besides it is, as already mentioned before, to make a distinction between such artists, who have only been "inspired" by Calligraphy, and who have taken over certain different aspects of Calligraphy as an inspiration for their work, but who nevertheless do not or only slightly control the specific technologies and methodical principles, because they did learn or practice for a longer time and did not internalize the so-called "Six principles" of Hsie Ho (Hsie Ho Liu fa 謝赫六法) and who especially did not deal with the control of the typical space-sculptural ductus of Calligraphy and the so-called "bone method" (ku fa 骨法), on which still shall be entered on closer; and on the other hand the artists who were "influenced" and who have learnt and internalized the specific procedures and methods of

Calligraphy at least so far, that they can control apply and transpose the "bone method" and the space-sculptural ductus, and who tried to apply the Calligraphy in the sense of the "Six principles".

For this reason, as already indicated at the beginning, a separation has to be made in this respect, that the really "influenced" artists, and this merely concerns Mark Tobey and André Masson, are examined in a separate chapter and are submitted to a more intensive analysis of the influence, its characteristics and effects. Hence in the following section will first be demonstrated, as far as it is possible and necessary, to what extent the "inspired" artists have dealt with Chinese Calligraphy, to summarise in the following briefly the characteristics of the Calligraphic Informel, which result from the present implementation. A deeper and more detailed analysis is not possible and also not necessary, because of the lower intensity and the lower scope in the employment of the "inspired" artists, and because almost all aspects of the influence can be indicated by examining the works of Tobey and Masson.

The "Calligraphic Informel" naturally is already, because of the geographic separation of the affected artists, no "art direction" or "school", but merely for this work introduced as a working concept, to be able to summarize an ideal community of artists on an often affinitativ base. Their personal aims may be very different in detail; what nevertheless connects them is a specific relation to the European art tradition, from which they have turned away in the direction of a more dynamic, object-dissolving art expression, which feels the unity of person and universe and wants to express this, and which did not find for it the means in their own artistic culture, because they yet were not developed there in such a way, as in another one: in the the East-Asian Art and especially in the dynamic expressive means of the Chinese Calligraphy. This had already per se or over the painting forming with it one unity, partly also the East-Asian graphic arts, entered more and more into the consciousness of the Western artists, and they found in it the artistic means, which they needed to express what they wanted: Line and signs of dynamic liveliness as expression means for universal-human unity and for contents of the human inside life.

None of these artists had the intention to make "Chinese Art" or "Calligraphy", nobody wanted to become an "oriental", but they saw the matured high developed state of the pictorial means required by them in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, linear gesture and emblematicness and the dynamic spontaneity and primordial, striking directness of the expression of the essential. Thus it was natural that many artists, on the way about the procedure of the linear automatism and the psychic improvisation, hit upon the Chinese Calligraphy and came back to it over and over again. The affinities to this art and their pictorial means, as the previous explanations have already pointed out, were already present through the preceding touches with the art of East-Asia and an independent development in this direction, so that they could intensify under favorable circumstances and at a



given time. Because at present a more exact investigation of the specific characteristics and elements of the Chinese Calligraphy, which is carried out in chapter III, still is pending, it shall be gone out in the following first from the formal appearance of the "inspired" pieces of art, as well as from the way of their dealing with the Chinese Calligraphy.

In an investigation of possible Calligraphic Influences in the work of an artist, formal criterions, as well as criteria of the ideological or aesthetic fundamentals can be attached, as well as as non-immanent criteria, indirect hints and pieces of evidence. The formal criteria, which are per se the decisive criteria of an influence before all others, and which in case of doubt allow a decision, are:

1) the control of the Calligraphic technology and methodology of the raising and lowering, twisting and turning of the paintbrush point, or attributes from which arises phenomenally, that the technology and methodology of the Chinese Calligraphy has been learnt, was practiced and was controlled. This criterion is the most essential, because it can prove only by itself a Calligraphic Influence. The result of this control of the Calligraphic means is the availability of the space-sculptural Calligraphic ductus as another criterion. With it is meant the rhythmic gestural dynamism of the linear pictorial elements in the style of Chinese Calligraphy, an alternating swelling and subsiding of the paintbrush lines. A Calligraphic ductus can be present through the processing of the Calligraphic technology and methodology, even if its mastery can not be seen at first sight, as it is the case, for example, in some pictures of Tobey due to the strong interweaving.

2) the use of lines as a main pictorial element, possibly also of linear spots, often linked with emblematicalliness and linear gestural-processual residual traces, as well as the integration of original, imitated or defamiliarized Chinese characters in the picture, which here mostly are used as a purely associative-evocative form value, without considering their original meaning.

3) with it linked nearly almost always an affinity of the basic spiritual attitude and an integration of ideological and aesthetic aspects of East-Asia, as particularly the desire for communication and correspondence with the creative forces of the universe in the artistic process and in the piece of art as residuum, as well as resulting there from a dynamic basic view of the reality, of the life and their determining factors. The mastery of the technology and the presence of a Calligraphic ductus is vital here, because a spiritual or ideological affinity can be also effective without a Calligraphic influence, like with several artists of the Informel, as for example Rothko or the late Reinhardt. In the sequence of these characteristics and criteria still some other factors can or become transferred, which could be caused by the Calligraphic Influence or by its inspiration, but which however could have existed already originally in the Western Art. This

includes above all:

4) the balance or the harmony of plan and chance, objective and subjective, rational and irrational, pictorial spontaneity and deliberate control in the artistic process, as well as

5) thereby caused a vivacious expression, spontaneity and power of the artistic performance as well as expression of a pristine and natural directness and liveliness of the work in the sense of the Chinese conception of the "living spontaneity" or the "spirit of the life" of the Calligraphic artwork (Ch'i-yun 氣韻). This lively naturalness is no self-existing pictorial means, but, as an expression or manifestation of the work, a function of the pictorial elements and their interaction, insofar only intuitively experienceable and hardly rationally determinable. Nevertheless one can assume that the essential criterion of a lively spontaneity or the Ch'i-yun ( 氣韻 ) is the presence of a Calligraphic ductus and the mastering of the means and the technology in the sense of the specific methods of the Calligraphy, which hence become the uppermost criterion. Other factors or pictorial elements, which can appear in connection with the Calligraphic impulse and then may be evaluated as a criterion, which however can appear also without an influence, are

6) the picture space as a ground, which is mostly of low colourfulness and represents the event field for the Calligraphic action (where it is colorless and mostly empty and undeterminable). Tobey's and Masson's vibrating oscillation spaces with their all-over structure are here a special case, on which still will be entered closer.

7) the attempt, with these pictorial elements to record attributes of the artistic personality or its conditionality, or to transpose the inside world etc. into the picture. This is a claim which was also made by the Western Informel painting in general, so without reference to the Calligraphic impulse, so that here again only the connection with the Calligraphic ductus and the mastery of the technology guarantees the possibility of a use of this aspect as a criterion of a Calligraphic Influence. Finally, there can still be regarded as non-immanent criteria, which can prove an influence or an inspiration from the Calligraphy:

8) statements of the artist or third persons, that an interest existed in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, and that or whether a more or less intensive employment with or learning of its specific technology and methodology has taken place.

To the "inspired" artists, who have beside Tobey and Masson dealt in different ways with Calligraphy, belong: Alcopley, Alechinsky, Bissier, Degottex, Graves, Mathieu, Michaux, the early Reinhardt, Smith, Tomlin, Wilke and eventually Hartung.

Eduard Trier sees the influence "of Asian art" in the works of Alcopley clearly and calls them "modern Chinoiserie", which expresses itself with Alcopley<sup>231</sup> in an "abstract calligraphy". The term "modern Chinoiserie" confirms the view corepresented in this work, that the connection between the Chinese Calligraphy and the Informel stands in the succession of the first greater push of influence from East-Asia, the Chinoiserie of the 17th and 18th century A.D., and resumes the continuity of intercultural relations between East and West. The term "abstract calligraphy" points for its part to the Chinese Calligraphy as an essential impulse giver, and the term "abstract" means probably the appearance of this impulse in Alcopley's works as similar to Calligraphy, but as abstract pictorial elements, which have not remained originally "readable". At another place Trier also points to the inspiration and a certain resemblance of Alcopley's works to Calligraphy:

"In the area of the draftsmen reference is made to the from Germany coming American Lewin Alcopley (born in 1910), living in Paris, whose rod dance, nevertheless, leans towards the somehow impractical calligraphic writing of the East-Asians, who are especially receptive to Alcopleys calligraphic signs."<sup>232</sup>

Alcopley has integrated aspects of Chinese Calligraphy as pictorial means with associative goals into his pictures above all in the way of imitative use of sign elements, which resemble the Chinese signs, hence are not readable; as it appears for example, in "Collage Painting" of 1954 (no illustration). In some of his pictures the signs are still "readable", as for example as the character for "big" (ta 大 ). Other signs also show a dependence on the clear structured linearity of the Chinese characters on a bright ground. If one looks however at the pictures more exactly, then will be noticed in comparison to the Chinese Calligraphy (for example in fig. 71, in the style of Wang Hsi-chih 王羲之) immediately a certain lack of spontaneity and the absence of the typical space-sculptural ductus, which is caused by lifting and lowering of the paintbrush. It is evident that Alcopley does not master the technology and methodology of Chinese Calligraphy and therefore his picture elements cause a lack of the "living spontaneity" (Ch' i-yun 氣韻) of Calligraphy.

In the work of Pierre Alechinsky<sup>233</sup> an inspiration by the Chinese calligraphy, among others, arose by the fact that in 1954 he got to know - a certain parallelity to the case of Tobey - the Chinese painter Wallasse Ting, who went out in his art from the painting and calligraphy of China, and who is to be attributed to the tendency of the international Informel. Finally, a year later in 1955, Alechinsky travelled at

invitation of the informel calligraphers of Japan around Shiryu Morita, which he had got to know already in 1952, to Japan (Kyoto)<sup>234</sup>. In their magazine "Bokubi" he could publish etchings, moreover, he shot during this stay the film "Calligraphie Japonaise"<sup>235</sup>, which at the festival of Bergamo (1957) and also on a film festival in 1961 in Tokyo received a special predicate. Hence, Alechinsky has dealt with the Calligraphy theoretically and in a limited extent also practically, however, he hardly mastered, as his works point out, the technology and methodology of Calligraphy, particularly the lifting and lowering of the three-dimensional paintbrush movement, which generates the ductus. Kind and extent of his theoretical employment can be gathered out from two articles, which he has written himself:

- 1) Au-dela de L'Ecriture, in 1955,<sup>236</sup> and
- 2) Japanese Calligraphy and Abstraction, from 1956, (together with the Japanese Hideo Kobayashi.<sup>237</sup>

These articles show a certain basic understanding for aspects of Calligraphy, like for the principle of gestural expression in the linear-symbolic sign, the fundamental equality and analogy of Calligraphy and Painting, the possibility of graphological expression and as an answer in the communication process of man and nature.

"The study of calligraphy", Alechinsky writes, "is in the Japanese education of greatest importance. Its effective principle is called development of the mind, linked with manual skill.... a paradoxical task: all its movements are subjected to an unusually strict discipline, and that in regard to an expression, which should be free and spontaneous.... The regulation wants to make its movement so natural. Even the smallest emotions, which the expression demands, are put together in a gigantic, presently available repertoire."<sup>238</sup>

Alechinsky has here recognised, in contrast to some other artists, the need of the control of the means and the Calligraphic technology as a precondition of a free and spontaneous expression; however, this found only partly entrance into his works, because it requires many years of training. He further says there:

"While the hand in such a way, supported from the habit, performs a tender and exact play of the skill, the mind is completely concentrated upon the 'tip of the brush'. Painting and Calligraphy proceed in the same manner, until in the finest trains of the paintbrush the intensity of

the complex action-thought shows itself, which culminates finally in the instinctive. Certain well-chosen word pictures serve as a source point for a free, immediate interpretation, where mind and brushwork penetrate each other.... where interpretation and creations get married in an unpredicted, which solely is weighed out by harmony; so also the calligraphers improvise. Are these artists not like us - only with other, their own, means - in search of an echo from the depth - with the only difference, that with them the picture owns a structure, which they inherited as a self-evident fact? A picture net, based on ideograms, what we do not own.... The meeting place between Western Artists and Japanese Calligraphers does not lie in the formal origins, but probably in the similar attempts of immersing into oneself, the diving after a mutual pearl.... Our means of expression all search for the same aim: a human sign which is at the same time nature."<sup>239</sup>

Further to these general principles Alechinsky also explains in his article "Au-delà de l'écriture" the meaning of the Calligraphic fundamental strokes with the help of the character "Yung" (Yung-tzu Pa-fa 永字八法), on which is to be entered even closer in connection with the essential characteristics of the Calligraphy, besides he goes out from the Japanese terms. He also describes the connections of Calligraphy and Painting as an art of the same aims and means, and he elucidates this with the help of the kind how both meet in the kind of performance of certain leafs or flower blossoms: leafs of the orchid, the bamboo, the plums and chrysanthemum blossom.<sup>240</sup> From this becomes evident that Alechinsky quite knows certain theoretical fundamentals of Calligraphy and has besides also with his articles provided for their spreading among artists, however an exact analysis of his works, as for example "Ombre sur la plage", "Les Ombres" and others, like "Variations after Sengai" (fig. 13), shows a lack of the typical space-sculptural ductus of the three-dimensional paintbrush movement, which originates from the lifting and lowering and twisting and turning of the paintbrush point, and it can be assumed from this fact that he had not learned and internalised the Calligraphic technology and methodology of the brushwork practically. In his theoretical works is not found any entering on the important "Six principles" (Hsie Ho liu-fa 謝赫六法) and the "bone method, tendons method and meat method" (Ku-fa, Rou-fa, Chin-fa 骨法 - 肉法 - 筋法). As a result of the Calligraphic inspiration in his work can be stated a use of certain character patterns, as well as the use of the living, more spontaneously linear spot forms, which caused a

turning away from his Western origins and with it a more dynamic expressive orientation of his work.

Also the art of Julius Bissier has been inspired by the Chinese world view and elements of Calligraphy, but he is also lacking the intensive mastery of the Calligraphic technology and the ductus, like already with Alcockley and Alechinsky. The Far East was for him, primarily through China, not only a model, but above all a confirmation and purification of his own thinking and artistic creativity, which began about 1919 with the friendship with the sinologist Ernst Grosse. A large part of his works are ink paintings, whose individual signs are personal symbols, which have originated from the processing and assimilation of elements of Chinese Calligraphy, like the use of ink and selfmade paintbrushes and their gestural-scriptural use, which reach from tender gradations of the bright grey up to the deep black. These are signs of subjective meaning, which sometimes have the form of readable Chinese characters, as for example in the "Ink Composition" of 1955 (Fig. 117), where a sign like "West" (hsi 西) or "Hundred" (pai 百) can be seen out. Certain of his subjective signs, the "signs of the bipolar life", as he calls them, appear over and over again. The analogy to the Calligraphy is clear to detect here in the spontaneous manner of writing, the gestic-linear composition and the sign-like structure, also the relation with the Yin-Yang-Theory of the Chinese Worldview. However the intensive mastery of the Calligraphic technology and a vivious, space-sculptural ductus as attribute are also absent here.

The pictorial activity was for Bissier, like in the Chinese Art, a kind of concentrated meditation, which brings him near to Tobey, whom he knew and appreciated, and by which he tried to rise about earthly compulsions and to a cosmic freedom, to a harmony with the creation. His firm signs of hieroglyphic semantic-symbolic kind keep in the balance with the free personal expression by gestural residual-signs, which mostly float before clear grounds of light colourness and great meditative depth. To document the relationship with the Chinese Art, he at some time even uses selfcut small round stamps, similar to Chinese seals, as a compositional balance to the pictorial signs, through which in the picture express themselves tension, rest, threat, movement, security and other basic states. Concerning his ink paintings Bissier says:

"I hold the ink paintings for the only really original spiritual testimony in my weird painting experience".<sup>241</sup>

The Calligraphic inspiration manifests itself in Bissier's works through the emblematicalliness of his pictorial elements, the preference of the ink and the paintbrush as means, as well as in a spontaneous gestural use of the paintbrush in connection with the transparency of the ink and the colours; however an absence of the Calligraphic ductus and an only low mastery of the Calligraphic technology must here also be stated again.

Also in connection with the works of Jean Degottex an influence of Chinese Calligraphy is often mentioned, whereto Rolf Wedewer remarks:<sup>242</sup>

"... This setting of signs often expresses itself in gestic courses, whose formal relationship with Asiatic characters is evident. In the Chinese Writing the possibility is given, for example, to convert the picture of the single meaning character according to the personal sensations of the writer... Herefrom explains itself the formal analogy of the gesture to the Asian Writing, nevertheless, it is also in the gesture a matter of forming contents by the ductus of the hand. These connections come out especially clear in the painting of the French Jean Degottex, actually not only at the level of the formal analogy, but also in the view of the underlying meaning. Degottex dealt in 1957 under the influence of the philosophy of Zen with vast studies of the history of the Calligraphy. Besides it was for him particularly about the problem to develop a European art of the sign, outgoing from the Calligraphy. We have the case, that the formal analogy to the Asian "Writing" with Degottex not arises afterwards from the gesture, but is consciously searched at the level of related thinking.... It is indicative when Degottex expressed recently in a conversation with Julien Alvard: 'The West is, I think, committed too much to contrasts. That what expresses itself in the Asian thought of the Yin and the Yang, characterizes less a difference than a sequence, from the Yin to the Yang'." <sup>242</sup>

Degottex himself has formulated his artistic aims and relations with the Chinese Calligraphy and his way of thinking implicitly so:

"Try to deepen the ontological experiences of the pure action in the picturesque and 'gestic' expression. Your aims of such an experience are: unintentionalliness, emptiness, gestural trance, state of an at least great spiritual freedom.... Search for a new language, go out from the spontaneous gestural writing, which originates from the unconscious (metaphysical). Study at the same time the symbolic and concrete value of the gesture in old writings (particularly Chinese)...." <sup>243</sup>

Degottex' scripture-like pictures, in which from the emptiness of a bright or dark surface spontaneous abstract strokes appear, show a certain connection of Calligraphic and gestural elements of the West, sometimes similar to Chinese Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphies, containing dynamic movement tracks in the kind of the Chinese Fei-Pai-Technique (flownover white). His remarks prove an understanding of the active emptiness of the Chinese worldview and the Non-Acting, the unintentionalness (Wu-Wei), as well as of the dynamic expressiveness of the Calligraphic signs. Nevertheless the mastery of the Calligraphic technology and the space-sculptural ductus, which are to be reached only after long practise, are also absent in his works, so that the other remarks of Degottex here also have not been further effective than in the sense of an inspiration:

"What concerns the Chinese writing, one ascribes its origins to two divinatory procedures. The I-Ching, the Book of Changes, connects the hexagrams (Pa-Kua 八卦), a real method of the obfuscation of the unconscious. One sees very good, to which origins all writings date from, and how the art of Calligraphy, the art of the writing has received that vital origin... There is a transcending of the sign in the Calligraphy of the Sumi or Zen, but how can one approach the transcending of occidental signs? Everybody invents his vocabulary and transcends it after his façon.... This is it, what to me appears so wonderful in the writings, the movement.... I believe that they expose to myself more and more the most important things. The entire and self-confident of the writing is like breathing."<sup>244</sup>

Because with Degottex also a deeper mastery of the Calligraphic ductus is absent, a further formal investigation should be renounced. Only a remark of Degottex concerning the contrast of Calligraphy and the pure Automatism, on what in connection with the art of André Masson still is to be come back, shall be mentioned here:

"Calligraphy", he notes in a conversation with Julien Alvard, "requires in no manner a maximum of attention (notations), but a guided (controlled) implementation, and it addresses itself at the same time to several abilities (facultés).... What concerns the Orientals (East-Asian), their controls are also of physiological kind."<sup>245</sup>



The control on account of a profound mastery of the means and technologies is here emphasized by Degottex clearly as the most important criterion for the difference of European and Chinese spontaneity. This important knowledge is to be seen as an essential effect of the Calligraphic inspiration on Degottex.

In the USA there are above all the pictures of Morris Graves, a friend of Mark Tobey, which, in collaboration with Tobey's art, was inspired by Chinese Calligraphy and by the Zen thinking. Like Tobey and the artists of East-Asia Graves also understands his art as a personal act of fulfilment and of the communication with the forces and principles of the universe, by a creating out of the interior.<sup>246</sup> Like Tobey Graves also by no means copied Far Eastern Art and Calligraphy, but integrated them as a specific medium in his work, however differences exist in this respect, as he uses them not in the kind of a surface filling Allover, but only as a polar, light-containing-ethereal counterbalance to the, also by Calligraphic lines created bird beings, the "birds of the inner eye". The differences to Tobey will become clear with the investigation of the work of Tobey.

"I paint", says Graves "to unfold a changing symbolic language, a language which is able to express of which kind our secret abilities are, which give us an understanding of the last reality. I paint to rest from the appearance of the world surrounding me - to say that clearly - and to make records about their essence, with which the internal eye shall be confirmed."<sup>247</sup>

Graves is no more concerned, even if figurative motives still appear in his pictures, about the external appearance of the things, but, a trend in the modern art in general, which the present explanations also verify, about that what is "behind the phenomena", about the active forces and connections, an intention which was strengthened by the Chinese Aesthetics.

To achieve his artistic aim, to find the inner self or the Tao of the Chinese World-view, Graves uses general symbolic motives as well as ones of personal kind, as for example the birds or transformed inspirations of bronzes of the Shang ( 商朝 ) - and Chou ( 周朝 ) time, as well as white Calligraphic lines inspired by Tobey and deepened by detailed own studies of the technology, the "White Writing" which is based on the foundation of the Chinese Calligraphic lines, and which with Graves mostly builds web-like line concentrations, similar to net-like energy fields, around, about or among his symbolic birds forms. The implementation of the white Calligraphic lines shows that Graves masters the Calligraphic technology of the lifting and lowering, twisting and turning of the paintbrush point in comparison to the other mentioned inspired artists substantially better, and with it almost comes close to the technology achieved by Tobey.

But because in his works the use is not so strictly and continuously and because, besides, the art-historical importance of Graves, particularly what concerns the passing on of the Calligraphic impulse is more slightly than that of Tobey, the effect of the Calligraphic impulse and the East-Asian Aesthetics shall be indicated only briefly in main features. Nevertheless in spite of the takeover of the Calligraphic technology from Tobey, Graves art is different from that of Tobey. The most important difference is, that Graves does not use the Calligraphic lines as strictly as Tobey as a main media to generate a "world of finer substance (Tobey)", but that they are used in his work only secondarily, once as an element of light-containing "surroundings" of his "birds of the inner eyes", and on the other hand as body-building, partly as contour-building factors, so in a figurative function. Also his art is different from that of Tobey and the Chinese and Japanese one, because his basic mood is pessimistic and dark, not like the East-Asian or also Tobey's art friendly, brightly and harmoniously. While in Tobey's work the forms resolve in the space and the movements in the picture, Graves' birds come out vice versa of the darkness of the ground, surrounded by an unreal luminosity of the Calligraphic line networks, as if they were obsessed by magic, life-waking forces. The space is not like with Tobey the subject, but the basis from which the forms manifest themselves, a fact, which caused Tobey to remark, that he is "still Renaissance".<sup>248</sup> Tobey remarked to a picture of a billy goat of Graves exhibited in the Willard gallery:

"I said to him ... last night... how 'Renaissance' it was. ... Have you not noted, that there only was the external appearance? A real eastern artist would never have painted it in this manner, but would have brought out the energybearing elements, ... to bring forth the internal essence (being)."<sup>249</sup>

Sullivan compares Graves' birds to those of Pa-Ta-Shan-Ren ( 八大山人 )=(Chu Ta 朱耷) and finds out, that Graves' pessimistic and often dark world view does not correspond with the Chinese one, but rather complies with Western mysticism and Western tradition with their trend towards the tragic.<sup>250</sup>

Graves' interest in East-Asia has been woken and encouraged by his love to nature, which also was present with Tobey, and some trips to China and especially to Japan. After the war he first only came to Honolulu/Hawaii, where he tried to learn Japanese and probably also made Calligraphic exercises. His aims and his understanding of the function of art in the general and the art of East-Asia in special, which in addition moved him to apply the technology of the White Writing invented by Tobey, the use of Calligraphic lines, Graves mentions in his substantiation for an applied Guggenheim scholarship:

"The artists of Asia have spiritual-achieved forms, instead of aesthetic-invented forms, and from them I have learnt that art and nature are that environment of the consciousness, in which we can track the essence of human existence and aims, and from which we can attach the red thread, which leads our journey from the partial consciousness to the full deliberate consciousness. I try to escape from that Western aesthetics,...to go away from the self-expression called exhibitionism, to the base of public art, namely the metaphysical experiences, which give creative painting as a precipitation... it is about to paint a record... instead of adding something to the strain of the world with paintings of human employment with surfaces... I try to paint how forms manifest their most subtle qualities, called 'idea'."251

Graves himself sees in his painting in opposition to the remarks of Tobey and in relation to the Chinese Aesthetic the picturing of "ideas", spiritual contents, not to external phenomena, which connect like in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting subjectives and objektives, contents of the inside world and the outside world, harmoniously:

"... it is about to connect the great freedom, which has brought the Western life-style to the singles and which has encouraged with it their self-expression with the way of Asia, which has given to the artist an even higher subjective technology for the reaching of this aim. It is a matter of finding out, that the reality exists in the unity of subjective and objective...., in the identification of inside and appearance as a way for the liberation..., and that the immanent divine spirit as an idea in the consciousness of the artist finds its... expression in the work of the artist... if he unites himself so with his cosmic source, that his images are founded in its verifiable essence."252

In these explanations of Graves are the affinities and the influence of the Chinese Aesthetics, as they also manifest themselves in the Calligraphy of China, clearly, particularly in the conviction, that the artist has in his action and work access to the cosmic forces and laws, and that these express themselves in his work, but also in the conception of reality as a unity of subjective and objektive, internal and external world, wherein he agrees with Tobey, but also with other artists inspired by East-Asia.

The opinion, that the living paintbrush movement and the hand of the painter bring the cosmic forces and the internal being of the things to the appearance is descended from the Chinese Aesthetics of Calligraphy and Painting, as the remarks of Shih-t'ao (石涛) confirm once more:

"Then, what is the painting other, than the great method of the changes and developments in the universe? Spirit and internal being..., development and growth of the creation, the active forces of Yin and Yang, everything is revealed by the ink and the paintbrush, as the reproduction of the Universe..."<sup>253</sup>

Graves had also got to know already the Zen thinking in Seattle through Dorothy Schumacher and, besides, had received confirmation from friends, like John Cage, Mark Tobey and others. Caused by his basic attitude, which sees divine work in all things of the universe, in the Zen thinking and, in consequence, in the Chinese Calligraphy qualities like simplicity and directness, naturalness, silence and calmness, asymmetry of the art and the daily utensils, as well as the principle of the emptiness fascinated him.<sup>254</sup>

His symbolic art of the "vision of an inner eye", "manifestations of another (higher) reality level", as he calls them, are, just like with Klee or Tobey, signs or symbols of the deep creative forces of the nature, and the attempt of the unification with the infinite active ground, in the symbolic representation of a vision of an internal life. The role of Chinese Calligraphy in the technology of the White Writing in his work is on one hand to create a kind of cosmic environment for his symbols, in which the everlasting human conflict of his material nature and his spiritual one on the other hand expresses itself. On the other hand the Calligraphic impulse was a means of symbolic figuration, so still "Renaissance" as Tobey called it, is still secondary and is serving in a certain sense, in contrast to the absolutely autonomous liveliness at Tobey. Here also appears the adaptation of Chinese thinking in the form of the Yin-Yang-Polarity. Very clearly all these moments express themselves in "Bird singing in the moonlight" from 1938-39 (fig. 15), where the singing bird on a stone is wrapped up by a light-containing cloud of energy-rich white lines, like a cosmic field of force, which only lends the vitality to the symbolic bird being. Here clearly the matter-energy antithesis is realised pictorially in the duality of the bird and the cloud of dancing and humming Calligraphic paintbrush lines.

As for Tobey the Calligraphic white lines are at Graves symbols and bearers of an internal, visionary light, which create for his symbolic beings a magic environment, which evokes the real mystery of the natural surroundings. As with Tobey the Calligraphic white lines represent "light", which flows through all parts and beings of the universe as a combining element and thus connects them, what

expresses itself pictorial in the light-containingness of the symbolic beings, their "magic surroundings" and the bright-dark contrast, and where the light-containing white Calligraphic lines, whose ductus, although less internalised than at Tobey, but still perceptibly, have developed from the behaviour of the Calligraphic K'ai-Shu-lines, often in approach to Tobey's Allover fills the picture spatially, extends it into the depth and enfolds the symbolic beings like in an aether or field of energy. A picture like "Bird singing in the moonlight" (Fig. 15) makes this clear. The basic knowledge of the Calligraphic method of the paintbrush movement, which causes the dynamic space-sculptural ductus, becomes also clear in it, but also in a "figurative" picture, like "Wounded Seagull" of 1943 (fig. 16). Both show certain signs of a living ductus and the mastery of the so-called "bone method" (ku-fa 骨法), of the development of structural power (ku-li 骨力) of Calligraphy, which caused Rexroth and Theodore Wolff to see a use of the "Six-Principles" of the Chinese aesthetics (Hsie Ho liu-fa 謝赫六法) in Graves works.<sup>255</sup>

The higher intensity and consciousness of the Calligraphic method in Tobey's work in comparison to Graves becomes clear not only in the greater liveliness and mastery of the Calligraphic ductus by Tobey, but also in the harmonious uniformity of the integration in a "world of finer substance" in the picture, with which Tobey does not like Graves fall back on figurations.

Hans Hartung, who is also often seen in connection with the Chinese Calligraphy, had done the step from the figurative procedure to the pure abstraction already very early, about 1921/22.<sup>256</sup> The literature dealing with his art contains various places, at which is pointed out on this nearness, resemblance or an influencing of the Chinese Calligraphy. Nevertheless there are virtually no hints, when and where this influence should have taken place. If one looks closer at Hartung's work, a strong resemblance and affinity to the Chinese Calligraphy is given in the gestural-residual signs, which resemble for some time very much the bamboo paintings of China, and which were generated principally with similar movements of the painting hand; however it also becomes immediately evident, that a mastery of the Calligraphic technology does not exist, and therefore the distinctive space-sculptural ductus is absent (cf. Fig. 17 + 18).

Hartung's artistic aims and pictorial procedures, as well as his statements to ideological aspects prove a basic spiritual affinity to the Chinese Aesthetics and Worldview, but this is not supported by an appropriate mastery of the means. Hartung's basic principle, "the flash steers the universe" from Heraklit, stands about his life and determines his art. Already always fascinated by natural cosmic events, it was a matter for him over and over again of forming the tension field of the universe, the harmonical ground of the world between chance and order, chaos and figure, energetic movement and rhythmical construction in the picture, the secret connection of art and nature, their growth laws and the pictorial thinking, to represent the basic formative order in his works with the means of the Calligraphic, spontaneous, but still mastered and controlled free linear

expression.<sup>257</sup> In this lies his nearness to the Calligraphy, but also to the Automatism of André Masson, from whose earliest phase Hartung differs by the always available control, the balance of spontaneous gesture and spiritual control and guidance.

The gesture similar to Calligraphy is a transcript of internal attunement and condition, an illustration of the inherent forces of a person and of things, through the opening of the unconscious, a procedure which he calls

"clear listening into the natural inside world space, bound to the own physical body, which has, rather guessed, a deep connection with the cosmic width of the world creation."<sup>258</sup>

Herein lies the connection with the East-Asian Aesthetics, while from the Calligraphy could have been taken over the speed of the execution (similar with Mathieu) and a linear spontaneous gesture as a pictorial action and leading element of the expression, but which is lacking the characteristic element of the Calligraphic method, the ductus and the structural power of the paintbrush (ku-li 骨力), so that here can only be spoken of an inspiration, which limits itself to some formal aspects and certain similarities of the fundamental aesthetic position.

In the pictures of Georges Mathieu, whose works are also often regarded as inspired by Chinese Calligraphy, everything comes from the movement vigour, which symbolises the life process, wherein really lies an affinity to the Chinese Aesthetics.<sup>259</sup> The elements primarily assumed by the Chinese Calligraphy are the speed and the spontaneity of the creating process, because Mathieu was convinced that a form must be effective spontaneously, and that this arises best of all from an inner fierceness. The "signs", as he calls them, which originate besides, appear almost always in isolation in front of empty coloured grounds, a formal but secondary analogy to Calligraphy. Animated by the spontaneous - however also well-balanced and controlled creative process of the Chinese Calligraphy - Mathieu announces in his writings, which have performed a not inessential contribution to the theoretical processing and foundation of the Informel Art, four dogmatic principles of the "new" lyric-abstract painting:

- 1) Quickness of the creative process,
- 2) Lack of predetermined defined forms,
- 3) Lack of preplanned gestures,
- 4) A state of the ecstasy.<sup>260</sup>

Merely in the quickness of the creative process these principles connect themselves with those of the Calligraphy, which as well Tobey as also Masson (after he had got to know the Calligraphy), tolerate neither the complete freedom of all rules and

forms (2) + (3) nor a state of the ecstasy, because only the balance of spontaneity and controlled gesture allows an optimal freedom in connection with a control of the means and their traditional pictorial possibilities, and gets the access to the creative forces of the universe.

Mathieu accentuates unilaterally the quickness and spontaneity, without any control of the deliberate mind, thus basically uses the means in the sense of the pure gestural Automatism, with which he also remains, because to him only the spontaneity makes it possible,

"to express and to grasp that, what ascends from the depths of the being, and without its spontaneous expression becomes withhold by rational consideration and intervention."<sup>261</sup>

Mathieu points out that it was possible to the great masters of the Calligraphy in East-Asia to execute a masterpiece in some seconds,

"Result of fifty or sixty years of work and discipline",

whereby for him the quickness should be not an end in itself, but a consequence of the art-historical development: for the liberation from the object and the use of prepictures and predrawings. Mathieu is theoretically aware of that, that like in the Calligraphy the mastery of all means and extreme concentration are a precondition for the success of the painting act and the forming of a positive mood<sup>262</sup>, however, this is not given in such an extent in the performance of his works, as a comparison with Calligraphic works on account of the missing ductus shows. It can be assumed the fact that Mathieu, as his works indicate, beyond his theoretical studies has probably had not learnt and mastered the technology and methodology of Calligraphy, wherefore a longer time of practise is necessary, a handicap which empeded a deeper penetration almost for all young painters of the past, while Tobey, Masson and certainly also Graves had and also used the necessary time. Similar to Pollock and others to him the piece of art is a "witness of a lived", and the thereby emerging "signs" from now on precede the meaning:<sup>263</sup>

"The signs will find their meaning to such an extent, in which the mankind will concede this to them, without that ever can be spoken of a literal meaning. The art remains an overcoming of the signs, that is pushing forward into the space, which begins beyond all signs."<sup>264</sup>

Mathieu takes, in spite of the absence of a Calligraphic ductus and of a "Calligraphic" mastery of the artistic means, the nearness to the Chinese

Calligraphy consciously in claim:

"By the quickness and their connection with the improvisation, the relationship of the creative procedures of this kind of painting with...the East-Asian Calligraphy turns out. André Malraux wanted to express this in 1950, when he shouted in view of my works: 'Finally, a Western Calligraph'. In the Far-East it occurs to nobody to deny an art value to calligraphic works, because they have been originated in a few seconds."<sup>265</sup>

Mathieu further says, indicating on his use of "signs" and the origin of the painting:

"In the extent, as I am a painter, I am also a calligrapher. It is deplorable, that one must ascertain over and over again, that the Western world completely ignores, that the painting arises from the art of writing. One has spoken of me as the first Western calligrapher (Malraux), because the West has never attached enough meaning to the Calligraphy... Because my pictures are based basically on signs, they are necessary calligraphic."<sup>266</sup>

Though Mathieu confirms in his book "Au-delà du Tachisme" from 1963, that it is known to him, that

"that calligraphic style of China, which stands next of the gestic painting, is the Ts'ao-Shu ( 草書 ), which is "erratically and fast",<sup>267</sup>

however the present explanations prove, that it was primarily the moment of the quickness, which Mathieu introduced from the Chinese Calligraphy into the gestural art of the West, and that his theoretical statements contributed to the spreading of Calligraphic thoughts in the artistry.

The situation is similar with Henri Michaux<sup>268</sup>, who pointed Mathieu as first to the relationship of his painting process with East-Asian concepts, while he reported to him about a conversation between the Chinese painter Chang Ta-ch'ien ( 張大千 ) and André Masson.<sup>269</sup> Michaux, who undertook several trips to the Far East, connects the inspiration received by Calligraphy – in the sense of a confirmation of his present procedures - with his automatic writings, dictations from the unconscious, which he partially created in a Meskalin intoxication, and which show merely externally "East Asian moods" (Schneckenburger)<sup>270</sup> and the



spontaneity of the free, psychographic-automatic procedure, without that here a control or even knowledge of the Calligraphic technology and its artistic principles are to be found. In their pure subjective irrational driven automatic a Calligraphic inspiration is merely to be seen for the purpose of a moral support of the pictorial automatism, but no cataclysmic or innovative formal changes have taken place.

Outgoing from works in the kind of the Cubists and Mondrian's, Ad Reinhardt came in the forties to a use of Calligraphic elements in his works<sup>271</sup>, which lasted from about 1937 to 1949, and led to a relaxation, freeing from constructivist elements and to a spontaneity of his brushstroke (Fig. 19), then from 1949/50 more and more was converted into the direction of the monochrome cross icons and to the "ultimate" works, like the timeless Buddha representations without association, with which he became more known.<sup>272</sup> Reinhardt had intensely dealt with the Ch'an-Buddhism and the East-Asian Art and had studied them some time, where also articles about landscape painting or Buddhist sculptures arose from, and his own works were besides changed formally.<sup>273</sup> This remained not without effects also on the other Abstract Expressionists, as Hobbs remarks:

"During the forties Reinhardt's art showed relations with the East-Asian Art, which also influenced some of his companions. Motherwell and Baziotes soon read volumes from the series 'Wisdom of the East' and discussed in detail Laurance Binyons 'The Flight of the Dragon' and Kuo Hsi's ( 郭 熙 ) 'Treatise on landscape painting'.... and Tomlin created at the end of the forties paintings and drawings, like an 'Untitled' of 1949, which show an astonishing resemblance to Calligraphy."<sup>274</sup>

A certain resemblance to the works of Tobey is obvious in that time with Reinhardt, also an assimilation of some of the Calligraphic elements, like linearity, spontaneity and gestural implementation, even if restrained as with the Abstract Expressionists, further reminiscences to emblematicalliness of the elements, as well as a certain balance of free and bound elements, plan and chance. However, it also applies here again, that Reinhardt did not master the technique of the lifting and lowering of Calligraphic ductus and his lines show virtually no ductus, because the employment with Eastern Calligraphy and Painting took place more theoretically than practically.

The American artist David Smith<sup>275</sup> became known by Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics in his pictures and above all through a lecture in the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA):

"Although the long sheets of an orchid run to the earth

down, they all want to point to the sky. This Chinese position take 'for the clouds', in which I see forms in ceremonious works and, contradictorily, in those ones of an unearthly nature. Some Japanese formalities seem to be close to me, as for example the beginning of the brushstrokes outside the paper and their continuation through the space of the drawing, their projection under it, so that they in the enclosed part own the strength of the original as well as of the projection. This creates the impression of strength, and if drops fall, they become attributes or elements of relation. Similar if the paintbrush flows out and the hair becomes dry, thereby arises, and this may be greater in strength, a natural quality which does not need to be reworked, which contains in the intention enough to transport the stronger contents. It is not the Japanese painting, but some of the principles contained in it, which mean something to me. A Japanese concept requires, that if an object is represented, which should suggest strength - like a rock, claws, talons, tree branches - at that moment when the paintbrush touches down on the paper, the sentiment of force has to be transferred by the action of the artist into the painted object.<sup>276</sup>

Smith shows with these remarks, that to him different aspects of the East-Asian Aesthetics, like the Chinese paintbrush technology of "Fei-Pai" (飛白), the "overflowed white", which can be an expression of speed and strength, as well as the principle carrying the expression of the "living spontaneity" (Ch'i-yun 氣韻) of the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting were familiar. Also the East-Asian ink painting was absolutely familiar to him, what various books in his possession, which had always intensely influenced him, prove.<sup>277</sup> Also the lines of his pictures show attempts of a light Calligraphic ductus in the swelling and go down of the form, which are originated by pressure and reduction of the paintbrush point, as for example in Fig. 20; expressive lines, sensitively and often uncertainly, which want to express the sensations and feelings of the painter and in which the attempt of the approximation to the Liang-Tso line (棕琢), used by Tobey, can be observed.

Smith proves with it in comparison to most Informel Artists a greater understanding and a certain closeness with the Calligraphic elements, but which however can not be compared to the extent and the depth of Tobey's knowledge and his mastery of the Calligraphic principles and methodology, because particularly the ductus of the paintbrush lines is relatively undistinctive. Yet the Calligraphic inspiration is for him, as for most of the appealed artists, still an up to

then not available medium of artistic expression, like a kind of new writing or language, to express new spiritual and mental contents, whereby nevertheless, in contrast to the Calligraphy of China and the powerful lines of Tobey, the linear gesture by Smith are characterized by a weaker implementation and a relatively low structural strength (ku-li 骨力), as well as from a rather weak appearance of the pressure and lifting movement of the paintbrush (tun-ti movement 頓提).

This applies in the same manner for the inclusion of some Calligraphic aspects in the works of Bradley Walker Tomlin, who was at times also inspired by the Chinese Calligraphy.<sup>278</sup> Tomlin's assimilation of Calligraphic qualities limits itself to the linear, sign-like gesture of his brushstrokes, which if they are written with dry paintbrush cause the appearance of a Fei-Pai-Movement, and in many of his works, different from how most of the "inspired" artists do it, cover the picture surface like Tobey with a linear Allover, which is nevertheless substantially coarse meshed and more broadlined as the ethereal "world of finer substance" of Tobey. Also the freer paintbrush writing is limited to a certain period, after which the spontaneity of the transcript, which was always controlled and reserved, changed more and more into a constructive, geometrical surface grid.

For a limited period of time Chenault sees Calligraphic moments having an effect in Tomlin's work, and Frederick Martinson compares a two-page drawing in the possession of the painter Coggenhall, particularly the B page, to the wild erratic Ts'ao-Shu of Huai-Ssu (怀素) from the 8th century A.D. and notes in addition:

"The resemblance is too narrow, as that it could concern an only accidental correspondence."<sup>279</sup>

Tomlin's temperament, which Guston describes as

"A temperament, which insisted on the impossible pleasure of controlling at the same time and being freely too,"<sup>280</sup>

held the assimilation of the typical Calligraphic ductus and the great spontaneity of the Ts'ao-Shu in narrow limits, effectuated however through the interest in Calligraphy on the other hand a greater pictorial freedom and a liberation from the cubist gravity and severity.

While in the USA an interest of the Abstract Expressionists in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting in several cases had first gone out from an acquaintance with the Zen-Philosophy, which led to the East-Asian Aesthetics, with the French painter Pierre Tal Coat<sup>281</sup>, who is also seen in connection with an inspiration of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, the meeting with the pictorial work and the inspirational strength of André Masson in Aix, where they lived between 1947 and

1950, was the starting point. Masson, who had received the "shock of the essential" in Boston, familiarized Tal Coat with the paintings and Calligraphies of the Sung time of China and with their aesthetic bases. The impulse of the Chinese Painting is assimilated by Tal Coat as light and movement forces in his pictures, about which is said, that they show a resolution of the scenery, like "Transhumance" from 1959 shows it, sceneries which remind of the Ch'an-Painting, but which hardly show somewhat typical from the Calligraphic ductus and the structural strength of Calligraphy (ku-li 骨力), so that here hardly can be spoken of an effect of Calligraphy, but primarily of an inspiration by the "boneless" painting of the Ch'an, which led to a freer and more spontaneous, sketchy tentative use of the pictorial means.

Finally shall still be mentioned briefly the in Germany born and in the USA living Ulfert Wilke, whose works, as for example "Plus and Minus" from 1958 (Fig. 22), performed with paintbrush and ink and showing the Chinese characters for "One" (i 一) and "Ten" (shih 十), show an approach to a Calligraphic ductus, which Wilke, like Tobey living in a Zen monastery, had learned in in Japan.<sup>282</sup> This first sign of a ductus shows, and this seems to be characteristically for the degree of control and assimilation or the internalization of the Calligraphic technology and methodology by Western artists, a similar strong degree of softness of the implementation as already ascertained with others, and with it a not unimportant difference to the structural strength and the distinctive ductus of the works of Mark Tobey.

Of course there are in the USA as well as in Europe still some other artists, who have been interested in a restricted extent in Chinese Calligraphy, Painting or Aesthetics and Worldview, and who have received from it inspirations for their work, but on which should not be entered here closer because of the low intensity of the employment and the results. The up to now mentioned artists have still different detectable formal or content effects in their art, however, the present implementation has also shown, that an intensive, longtime and deep influencing through the Calligraphy and its artistic sphere has only taken place in the work of Tobey, and also - with lower intensity, but still not unimportant effects - in the works of André Masson.

After the manifestations of Calligraphic characteristics in the works of the "inspired" artists of the "Calligraphic Informel" were addressed in this section, in the following the formal aspects and effects of Calligraphy and its aesthetics on the works of the artists and the experiences of the viewer, which are identifiable from the present implementation, shall be summarised briefly.

#### 4. The aesthetic Elements and formal Principles of the Calligraphic Informel

A summary of the aesthetic elements and formal principles of the Calligraphic Informel also serves the specification of those characteristics, with which the possibility of a touch and integration was given by attributes of the Calligraphy and really occurred. These are the kind of the used artistic means and materials; the ambivalence of the piece of art, which moves itself between gestural action and emblematicity; the seismographic-automatistic expression of attributes and conditions of personality, the resolution of the pictorial form by gesture and sign and the renunciation of a referring back to the objective world; the indefinite or infinite picture space and the light available in it, as well as the non-hierarchical picture structure and composition, which partially manifests itself in an Allover of pictorial elements, from what a boundless room to move between picture and viewer originates, as for example with Tobey and Masson. Further in addition still comes the problem of the mastery of the pictorial means; the balance of rational and irrational in the relation of chance and intention, demonstration and creation; as well as the piece of art as a life execution and the emphasizing of the experiencing subject, which leads to a desire for communication with the universal creative forces.

##### 4.1 The artistic Materials and Means

Within the Calligraphic Informel all artistic materials and means are used with great freedom, so that all ever conceivable effects can be tried out. However, here also a concentration and restriction on certain means takes place, which stand close to the materials of the Chinese Calligraphy, like the use of ink or only light-liquid colours with restrained chromatic value, and, besides, mostly linear picture elements are preferred, because the possibility of gestural-sign-like expression is inherent to them alone, which the spots or colour mashes etc. are lacking. Moreover, the linear performance of Calligraphic lines causes a use of the paintbrush as an essential medium, because the aim of the artistic action is the dynamic line as a residual movement track and an expression of the internal artistic being, which can almost only be reached with the paintbrush. Use of tubes, like by Mathieu, affects immediately the Calligraphic quality.

While most artists of the Calligraphic Informel, as we saw, use dark, hardly coloured linear elements on bright or light-coloured grounds, this relation is reversed with Tobey and Graves, because they mostly work with the white lines of the so-called "White Writing" to win with it a light-containing fluid. Masson however tries to connect the Calligraphic elements with a stronger colourness. Common to them is a relatively free, controlled, but in comparison to the general Informel more mastered and processual more controlled use of the artistic means, as well as their consensient approach to the fluidity of the Calligraphic means, as

means of expression of movement, emotions and psychic-spiritual conditions, which become instantaneously experientable to the viewer.

#### 4.2 The Ambivalence of the Piece of Art; the Picture between Action and Sign

##### 4.2.1 The Picture as a gestural Residuum and Relic of a processual Action (Action Painting)

In contrast to the pictorialization of clear and definable harmonical images and their structures in the constructivist-geometrical picture, the Calligraphic Informel picture is an embodiment of the free impulsive painting style, a pictorialization of movement and dynamism from the inside of the artist over the external, physical movement action, and for the viewer through the lines and linear spots of the picture adaptable.

"...the Calligraphy (of the picture) covers the whole surface. The line", Masson says about his art, "is no more essentially designating; it is a pure movement (pure élan), it follows its way (or its track). It has no longer the function of an outline. Anyway, however, it can unite with a part of the colour field, which appeals to the designation."<sup>283</sup>

This dynamism in the picture, which is mostly connected with a simultaneous emblematicalliness, and whose pictorialization, as was already indicated, is based on a longer historical development, is an analogous means of expression for a world view, whose characteristic attribute also is the movement, a process to which already Fiedler mentioned:

"... the artist will be aware, that the highest development of his spiritual-artistic life begins only at the moment, in which his imagination impulse sets the external organs of his body in motion, in which to the activity of the eye and the brain the activity of the hand comes along.... Then he does not know how to distinguish any more between percipience, imagination, between reminding etc.... and the mechanical action of the external organs of his body, which seizes bit by bit of the whole person and sets him in motion."<sup>284</sup>

The artistic means carrying the dynamism is the line, less the coloured spot, as a bearer of movement, rhythm as well as spacebuilding , but also as a crystallisation

element for signs and figurative elements. The creation of the work, the creative process, has here come as a track into the work, which is a relic of this process, this creative action. The work transmits this state as a movement impulse, and the dynamic creation- and relinquishing-process of the artist on the one hand, as well as the dynamic adoption of the viewer on the other hand, are the characteristic features of the Calligraphic Informel. The piece of art is a relic, a track, a concomitant of the living process especially important for these artists, the creative moment, by which it is for the artist, this since the Romanticism, an instrument of selfconfirmation and self-realisation. With it the duty of the reenactment of the creative process is imposed on the viewer.

These characteristics are inter alia also to be found in works of the General Informel, but what distinguishes them, nevertheless, from the Calligraphic Informel, is the availability of discipline and superconscious control of the seismographic gestures as they are inherent to the Chinese Calligraphy, according to the degree of the mastery of the Calligraphic method and technology. In the ductus of the Calligraphy, if it is present in the Calligraphic Informel, the uncontrolled and often accidental movement, which in principle also a non-artist could carry out, becomes superelevated to balance of freedom and discipline, chance and guidance, which raises and expands the expression potential of the gestural line tracks exceptionally compared with the General Informel, because the control of the means does not restrict, but on the contrary permits the access to all conceivably possible forms, what is not the case with the pure chance of the general Informel gesture. This is an important argument of the Calligraphic influence.

#### 4.2.2 The Picture as an aesthetic Sign

More than in the General Informel the emblematicalliness, often symbolism is intrinsically to the works of the Calligraphic Informel, which Mathieu over and over again mentions, and from which André Masson, referring to the emblematicalliness of the Chinese Calligraphy, says:

"The coloured vigour (élan) must combine with the discovery of new ciphers: signs, ideograms, which awake an unsuspected consciousness of man, who conquers his universe."<sup>285</sup>

The emblematicalliness in the Calligraphic Informel is determined, like in Chinese Calligraphy, by two contradictory aspects, which in that correspond the K'ai-Shu (楷書) on one hand and the Ts'ao-Shu (草書) on the other hand, and which go back on the basic contrast of rational and irrational, Classicism and Romanticism (Tobey calls them with these two basic artistic positions). One sign category, according to the Classicism, is the symbolic-semantic, the other,

according to the Romanticism, is the gestural-residual one, which both are determined by the respective reaction of rational reflexion and expressive-spontaneous intuition during the sign creation and its adoption by the viewer.

This context has already been in detail addressed further on top. The relation of both to each other is different according to artist and character, sometimes the gestural residual aspect predominates, as like with Mathieu, sometimes the symbolic-semantic one, like with Bissier, here linked with the meditative procedure of the picture-finding (Bilderfinden). The first one works about the movement, which became obvious and was captured, which results from the internal psychic-gestural movement and the external reacting physical movement of the artist, and which makes the residuum which originates simultaneously to a sign; the second one works over its form and structure, whose specific attributes act as a bearer of subjective (and also objective) meanings. Both however stick together in a reciprocal relation, because the superiority of the one causes the inferiority of the other and vice versa. This is a very important correlation, which characterises the relation of the Chinese K'ai-Shu to Ts'ao Shu Calligraphy in almost the same manner, and to such an extent as elements of one or the other were integrated by the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, also concerns their art. The examples of Mathieu and Bissier already indicated this, but also in the work of single artists this relation can matter, as appeared at times with Tobey and others. In every case a result of the Calligraphic influence is always a more distinctive emblematicalliness in the sense of determinable elements in the contrast to the accidental-arbitrary and uncontrolled forms without discipline and elements of some representatives of the General Informel, who tend to the extreme of the chaos, and hence impede themselves the purely associative evocative interpretation and reception, because a basic quality of human knowledge and visual adoption and their interpretation is the search for order, which enables an understanding, even if this is only emotional or intuitive. This more distinctive emblematicalliness in the sense of a discernible order applies also with the purely gestural portion of the pictorial elements of the Calligraphy and, in consequence, also with the Calligraphic Informel, because in contrast to the mostly arbitrary and hence from the - limited - chance defined gestures of the General Informel the Calligraphy and, according to the degree of integration, Calligraphic Informel build up on a codified stock of spontaneous, dynamic gestures, which are based on centuries of experience of a whole culture, and comprehend these experiences as a discipline, as well as as a potential of artistic possibilities, whereby in addition the possibilities of chance events are still open.

The antithesis of symbolic-semantic and gestural-residual sign aspect owns a basic affinity in both arts and has as cause the polar opposition of rest and movement, remaining and changing, the Yin and Yang principles of the Chinese thinking, which is effective not only in the East, but also in the West, because it is not a fiction of one culture, but an elementary principle existing objectively and



forever. Herein lies a strong affinity of Informel Art and Eastern Calligraphy, and hence the possibility of the touch and the exchange, which can occur only on account of and by available basic affinities; moreover in this lies the proof of the basic equality or resemblance of formative cultural (and artistic) basic elements, because they are of general-human or universal origin and no foreign mystery, as Tobey meant it, when he said:

"All oriental is to us no longer a crooked respected mystery, which exists in a murky and remote past,<sup>286</sup>

and which thus can connect the cultures, an assumption which resonates in this study always implicitly. The more static, symbolic-semantic sign cannot take up at the same time, as already implied, a violent movement rich in energy and vice versa. Both nevertheless make the picture of the Calligraphic Informel also a bearer of information and means of interpersonal communication, both are absorbed primarily by sensations, emotions and associations, which can be very varied, so that the piece of art of the Calligraphic Informel, no less than that of the General Informel, becomes a character of openess, and non-completion, which demands of the viewer a permanent spiritual-psychic activity and makes the piece of art a catalyst. Besides the sign character mediates, in addition to the pure gesture of the General Informel, even more new, unusual scopes, which the artist offers according to his own experience of the (internal and external) world through the medium of Calligraphic transcript to the viewer, to encourage him to own confrontations with the world no less than that of the General Informel.

The specific merit of the Calligraphy and its features in the Calligraphic Informel is, in contrast to the General Informel, concerning the character and the gesture the relative balance between the two, whereby incomparably more faculties of man can be addressed as by the most purely irrational elements (and their reception) and the associative-evocative functions of General Informel works of art, which are dependent by chance, for the reason that the nature has given to man both spiritual and essential regions in equal parts as means of experience. If only one part would be addressed, as it is the case in the traditional - mainly classic rational - Art of the West, or in the most purely irrational art of the General Informel, an ability or capacity of the total human spirit remains unused, unaddressed and the art unilaterally. The Calligraphy and some part of the inspired or influenced Western artists unite both sign aspects in a relative, harmonic balance: the structural order of the semantic-symbolic part and the gestural freedom of movement, whereby all human and intellectual capacities are addressed, as Jean Degottex has clearly recognized, when he says:

"The Calligraphy calls in no way a maximum of (conscious, the autor) attention (notations), but a guided

(controlled) execution, and it turns to multiple skills (facultés)".<sup>287</sup>

That to this balance corresponding receptive behaviour is, as Tobey emphasizes, the intuitive sensing on a highly conscious receptive level; therein lies the meaning of his statement:

"I believe that painting should emerge more by the way of meditation as through the channels of action"

and

"The ancient Chinese used to say: 'It's better to feel an image than to look at it (penetrate into its emotional world than to examine only its handwriting)".<sup>288</sup>

#### 4.3 Seismographic-automatistic Expression of Personality, of its physical and psychological Situation and its conscious and unconscious Contents

The above aspects, being on one hand a gestural residuum and on the other hand something emblematic, is inherent a further determination of the Calligraphic Informel, namely to be a seismographic-automatic expression of the personality, its physical and psychological condition and its unconscious contents. In this respect Tobey's remark should be understood:

"My work is internal viewing. My work evolved, I think, more unconsciously than consciously. I do not work with intellectual deductions."<sup>289</sup>

With different weightings for the individual painters of the Calligraphic Informel it is about letting the natural inner impulses free rein, whereby a direct, graphological transcript of spontaneous inner sensations is made possible. In the spontaneous adhesion and sketchiness of the picture also is reasoned an empathetic and thus to the intellectual content of the image closer way of viewing. This conception of art, which adduced the reference to the unconscious as an important drive and expression of artistic activity, has already, as mentioned above, been explained by Konrad Fiedler. In his view, physical movement of the hand, so the linear brushwork and the inner mental and spiritual movement, are equivalent; here also a strong resemblance to the thoughts of the Calligraphic Aesthetics of China is to be seen. This André Masson wants to express with the following remarks:

"Intuitive Mallarmé. Because one has to go out from this transparency of being to feel, what such a perfect

expression of soul force and penetration requires.<sup>290</sup>

In the artistic action, in the process of painting, the concepts, ideas and contents of the artistic consciousness, as well as his subconscious manifest themselves, whereby the act of painting is so closely linked to the personality of the painter. All intellectual and mental functions form a unit in the artistic process and remain as traces. In this action, as many artists believe, in affinity to the Chinese Worldview and Aesthetics, the artistic existence, artistic action and the "world" or "being" in general form by the emergence and manifestations of their principles a unit in the art process. This view is not only in the West, but also in the Chinese Aesthetics represented, as cause and reason of the Calligraphic Influence. This is proven for the Calligraphy by the words of Sheng Hsi-ming (盛熙明) in the Fa Shu K'ao (法书考) from 1331:

"As for the art of writing, it is the track of the heart (or 'spirit', hsin chih chi 心之跡). Therefore it is situated in the interior and takes shape to the outside; one grasps it with the heart and the hand responds (ying 应)".<sup>291</sup>

And Sun Kuo-t'ing (孫過庭) complements this with a quote from the Wen-hsin tiao-lung (文心雕龍) by Liu Hsieh (劉勰)(466-522):

"When the emotions are in motion, they take shape in words; and if the inner principle (li 理) emerges, it will be visible in an artistic form (wen 文)".<sup>292</sup>

Then according to the Chinese conception

"Heart and hand are in accordance (Hsin-shou-hsiang-ying 心手相应)".<sup>293</sup>

The fundamental difference in this context of the expression of internal states, thoughts, feelings, etc. between the General Informel and the art of Chinese Calligraphy, which affects in the same manner the relationship of the General to the Calligraphic Informel, is that the General Informel has no common ground, no fundamental frequency, but that arbitrary and random prevail. This however means that one, neither consciously in the analysis, nor unconsciously in the reception by the viewer, can not distinguish between purely accidental and personal characteristics of the artist, both intermingle. The recognition possibility for quasi graphological expression is low and uncertain.

In the Calligraphy on the other hand, and as a result partly in the Calligraphic

Informel, exists a common, codified base, a familiar fundamental frequency, which everyone knows, and whose personal-related deviations - one needs only to compare the style of Mi Fu (米芾) (1051 – 1107) (Fig. 46) with the "Gold Line Style" of Emperor Hui-tsung (徽宗) (1082 - 1135) (Figure 45) - reveal the degree and the possibility of recognition of personal, individual imprints.

Solely the deviation from a basic function in the sense of a "frequency modulation" makes this experience possible, as a recognition is only possible on the basis of a measurable deviation from a standard. This is the case with the Calligraphy and is partly, although limited, as a possibility transferred by the Calligraphic Influence, depending on the degree of intensity of Calligraphic inspiration and influence strength. The claim of expression of personality, expression of feelings and inner conditions is in the General Informel in many cases doubtful, since for the viewer not experienciable and distinguishable, in the Calligraphy however it is proven to be given, as the remarks in chapter III will complement .

#### 4.4 Dissolution and Dematerialisation of the traditional illusionistic Form and the concrete abstract Form through Gesture and Sign

An effect of all the impulses that led to the Informel, was, as it turned out, the increasingly becoming tendency to the dissolution of the representational-illusionistic form, and subsequently the resolution of the harmonic forms of concrete geometric abstraction through the Informel. The Calligraphic Informel also stands in the same line. For Tobey destroying the form was almost like a declaration of principles:

"The only goal that I can remember definitely, was when I said in 1918 to myself: 'If I get nothing else to do in my painting life, so I will after all destroy the form (smash form)'".<sup>294</sup>

Similarly announced André Masson:

"We were all obsessed with the desire to go beyond the 'plastic integrity' of Cubism ... I remember that Miro said. 'I will break their guitar'".<sup>295</sup>

Gesture, sign and linear movement of the Calligraphic Informel carry further this trend, reinforce it, since they express their statements and meanings neither by figurative contexts, nor by harmonic, bound principles, but - equivalent to a dynamic conception of the world and a manifestation of irrational and often unconscious forces - can reach their expression appropriate only with the free,

spontaneously created, unbound form and particularly with the free dynamic line in the immediate, direct way. Since these lines here are employed no longer object descriptive and subordinating, bound, indirectly defining, but contain that what they shall say directly in their movement and in their impact on the viewer, the renunciation of all definable, ratio-underlying objective forms, and absolute, geometric mathematical forms is pre-programmed in the nature of Calligraphy, and, starting from there, in the Calligraphic Informel and is therefore inevitable.

The abandoning of the objective form is already initially present in the Calligraphy, at least since it had left the state of pictography and, going one step further, after it had expanded the pure static, symbolic emblematicity by the moment of the gestural movement of the lines and the dynamics of the space-plastical ductus. This happened, when the standard form Kai-Shu by shortening and merging of gestural movements in the character generation had developed to the Ts'ao-Shu. In the Calligraphy the form is not simply dissolved and eliminated, but replaced by a new medium, the linear gestures and their expression and designation potency. This is a factor, which has entered more or less into the qualities of the Calligraphic Informel through the Calligraphic Influence, but which is not necessarily to be found in the General Informel, since in some cases it goes almost to the amorphism and has nothing to oppose the destruction as a substitute. Forms are also still present in the Calligraphic Informel, there are the lines or the blots, and, consulting the Chinese Calligraphic understanding, the shape of the movement or the movement as a form, an aspect which will still be discussed in relation to the K'ai-Shu and Ts 'ao-Shu and clarified in greater detail in Chapter III.

The new form so is a form of movement equivalent to a dynamic world view, which has been fully cultivated in the Chinese Calligraphy and studied experimentally for centuries. Since the Calligraphy more than the General Informel comprised this new form of movement structure, here partly also lies a difference between Calligraphic and General Informel.

#### 4.5 The indefinite or "infinite" Space and the linear Oscillation Space

The idea, the concept and the phenomenal appearance of space have in the art of Calligraphic Informel a manifestation, which is deviating from the tradition as well as from the General Informel. The previously mandatory perspective object space was deformed via the color-light continuum of the Impressionists and its swinging and vibrant appearance, but still contained remnants of the perspective space, and over the Cubists faceted or parceled, filled space, dissolved and eliminated, and integrated into the surface area; space and image objects were intertwined and the separation of the two blurred or removed. The space of the Calligraphic Informel is like in the General Informel, in a first determination, illogical, irrational, actually initially indefinable, only negatively definable and only about the emotional and intuitive response to concrete visual appearances of the image to capture, and so

from person to person different. In an extreme case, the only possible determination of this kind of artistic space is only possible negatively, namely as "indeterminable". The concept of "infinite" space, which is often used in connection with the new art, is basically hardly meaningful, because the infinite is, despite all the efforts of philosophy to determine its nature, actually definable only by the concreteness of the word as "non-finite", and therefore completely non-descriptive and even inconceivable. At most each individual can be conceded his own, usually not describable, idea of infinity, whereby this term hardly seems understandable as a means of scientific art analysis, even though the stated goal of art and art history is the explanatory analysis and interpretation of experiential phenomena.

Essentially can be first distinguished two different artistic concepts of space, outgoing from the phenomenal appearance of the Calligraphic Informel and depending on the type of application of the Calligraphic impulse, whose nature is based on the specific visual effect of the pictorial means and is generally comprehensible: on one hand the intuitive and emotional conceivable color-vibration space, build on the emptiness of the ground or the chromatic color value or the color vibrations, usually the continuum of the image ground, on which the linear movement of the pictorial elements take place; and secondly, caused by the linear movement, by distance and course of the lines, especially by their superposition and its direction tendencies, which act with or against another, the linear vibrational space, that often appears divided into parcels through its contents. These are per se not two different rooms, but only the different spatial effects of pictorial elements, which through the direct visual impact on the viewer only generate one logical hardly definable, alternating and complex structured and constantly changing spatial experience for the viewer, whose key feature however is a free, yet rational undetermined vibration and movement, which, the denser it is, such as by Tobey or Masson, can compress the image space to new, elemental ethereal and transparent forms. This namely is partly at Tobey and Masson the case and constitutionally present in the Chinese Calligraphy, which the Ts'ao-Shu of Huai Ssu and others clearly show and from there has been taken over as a pulse, while at most other artists, such as Mathieu, Degottex, Alchinsky, Bissier and others - and this is also a feature of the Calligraphic space - the pictorial space often serves as a homogeneous free ground of different color quality and color depth as an event space for the picture elements.

Both, free ground and linear vibration space, are no longer an illusion of the outer space, but as in Calligraphy, an event field for the visual appearance of internal movements and forces, which express themselves in the linear calligraphy-inspired elements, and it is the symbolic form of intuition of the human interior, which, through their mental processing and implementation in artistic elements includes the events of the outside world, and which is also the symbolic form of intuition of a higher field of consciousness, as Tobey always emphasized.

Inner and outer space are for Tobey - and here he also speaks for others - combined in a balance in the image space:

"The dimension that counts for the creator is the space that he creates in himself. This inner space is closer to the infinite than the other, and it is the privilege of a balanced mind - and the attempt to achieve this state, is necessary - to become aware of the inner space so deliberately, as he is aware of the outer. If he endeavors the one and neglects the other, he will fall from his horse, and the balance is lost."<sup>296</sup>

This interior space as a symbolic form of intuition of the universal event field of forces, movements, transformations is very close to the space of the Chinese Painting, which after Seckel - referring in the same manner to the Calligraphy - for the particular case of Ch'an-Painting, which features the Chinese space particularly clear, is characterized by framelessness, like a fragment of a greater whole, and all-openness and all-interconnectedness:

"Thus, the Zen-image tends to infinity, so there it has its home. Nothing proves this more clearly than its relationship to space. Zen pictures intrinsically is preferably that 'framelessness' or better positive expressed, all-openness and universal interconnection, that fullness, width, vibrancy of atmosphere, that universal interpenetration of being and subject areas, that infinity and choppiness of the image space, which belongs to the the fundamental characteristics of the East Asian Painting, even the East-Asian Lifestyle; especially in the landscapes this all is to experience in a great way. But this spatial depth, although it is intensely envisioned, but seldom determined dimensionally clearly, it is a non- or oversized, a-perspective un-room, a rootlessness, that includes indeed all 'local' and therefore the sur-antithetical, non-duality, gives an idea of emptiness, which underlies every Here and There. The image ground is usually no objectively definable and locatable 'back'ground, but per se ground, it tells nothing about its what, how and where, and just therefore owns such a tremendous telling-force - in silence, not in dumbness."<sup>297</sup>

The fulfillment of the empty space, whereby it is only experienceable, which particularly Tobey and Masson implement in the direction of the linear vibration space, Tobey justified by the concrete fullness of the inner and outer space of the man and his world:

"Scientists say that something like the empty space does not exist. The space is always loaded with life ... with electrical energy, waves, rays, spores, with possible sighs, possible sounds ... and God knows with what all yet."<sup>298</sup>

André Masson also sees the space as an event field and a symbolic form of intuition for the "game of forces"; which he attributes to the space of the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy:

"The space is for the Asian painter neither outside nor inside, it is a game of forces -. Pure becoming. It is indefinable ... It is something else to look at the room as a field, where forces meet and entangle - as a place where keel waves romple and trajectories cross, and to refrain from that one focal point ... piling up, successions, fluidity, cosmic breathing... place of all expansions, sanctuary of openness."<sup>299</sup>

It is characteristic for these manifestations of pictorial space, as Masson says it clearly, the lack of a defined center, which is also mentioned by Tobey, lack of a horizon, a boundary of illusionistic kind and a hierarchical order, so that all space-compartments are equivalent in terms of a democratic principle. This, too, is already intrinsic in the Calligraphy, as well as the empty ground as a symbol of the infinite, and the experience of the linear vibration space as a symbolic form of the universal movement.

The problem of time is also different here. First of all, it should be noted, that the Calligraphic Informel makes no references to real historical time by depicting events objectively, but it records "lived moments" in the sense of Bergson, artistic events, artistic actions. Insofar the art of Calligraphic Informel - here equally aptly with the General Informel and the Chinese Calligraphy - has unlike the harmonic Geometric Abstraction, or illusionist or symbolic object-bound art a historical reference, namely an evidence of an artistic act or "testimony of a lived", as Mathieu formulates it. Another, formally-related time-aspect is given by the perception of a process, a movement in the image space, in the dynamism and movement of visual elements, which always is perceived in the present time of the viewer and in the internal time of the current experience. Imagination and perception of time in this sense are experienced as more intense as the moving and dynamic of the pictorial elements are, wherein the time-motion of the creative



process is transmitted to the viewer. Even this moment has been substantially already included in the Calligraphic artwork and forwarded to the Calligraphic Informel.

#### 4.6 Light

The appearance and sensation of light is in the Calligraphic Informel either depending on the appearance of the ground, its color and the (lower) color brightness of the presenting linear or spot-like elements; or, in a reversal of this relationship, as it is the case for example at Tobey, Graves, and within certain limits also with Masson, the light appears as an image-immanent light with the apparition of the vibrating, oscillating allover or linear movement weave.

Light plays especially in Tobey's art a role as a "unifying idea," as he calls it, but to a lesser extent with the other artists. Tobey sees in the picture-immanent light of the vibrating and oscillating allover a much more independent and more important image factor than do the other artists, also than Masson:

"I wanted to break up that phenomenon, which was in the room, and I wanted to bring the light, that was in the form, bring to freedom in the space."<sup>300</sup>

While at the other artists including Masson the light is more or less accepted as a picture-immanent factor, processed and otherwise not further emphasized, because they accentuate more the moment of movement and gesture, the light plays in Tobey's works, which still in Chapter IV will be discussed in detail, a role as an intuitive-symbolic form for the maximal awareness of the universal mind, and as a pictorial symbol for the "world of finer substance" strived by him, in which the light is the uniting element ("unifying idea"), and which is equivalent to the stage of maximal consciousness, which may represent the reality of the divine being in the world. With Tobey therefore the image light has again arrived at the function of the symbolization of a supreme being, like the Sacred Light in the Middle Ages, which carried out the symbolic illustration of the divine greatness and omnipotence.<sup>301</sup>

While since the Renaissance this Sacred Light was replaced by an - illusionating - illumination light, which, in the course of turning away from the illusionism and the object resolution in the new image-immanent light of the color particles of Impressionism and the subsequent modern art in the Abstract Painting, and transformed itself further to a meaning nothing more than itself phenomenal picture-light, this - profane - presenting itself picture-immanent light with some modern artists, especially with Tobey, recently developed again to a quasi-sacred symbol-light. The light is then no longer only something given to the pictorial means and "entrained", but receives also again artistically a unifying function,

because in it and through this light the phenomena of the image unite and get a consistent symbolic sense, unlike for the General Informel and in opposite to the only self-meaning light of the Harmonic Abstraction, Minimal Art, Colour Field Art and others. In this function, it is accompanied by the effect of the linear movement and the vibration of the Allover and the linear vibration-space at Tobey, which will later turned out in greater detail.

The role of the Chinese Calligraphy in the generation of this symbolic light at Tobey does not lie in the Calligraphy-inherent luminosity, which is phenomenally low, and which was also not payed very intense attention to by the Chinese Aesthetics, because the Calligraphic lines rarely contain much light, possibly at most through the Fei-Pai-effects (overflowed white), and the lighting effect of the Calligraphic work mainly is depending on the supporting ground and its relationship to the linear movement and its fullness and structure. This ratio has been of course partially taken over by the works of the Calligraphic Informel, but without being a specific Calligraphic feature.

The role of Calligraphy per se has in this regard in contrast been the combination of light and linear motion, which, like for example in the swinging continuum of Tobey, the gives the light an additional energetic-dynamic element, which a simple smooth or colored ground lacks. The combination of light (the color or brightness of the colored material) and linear movement structure creates a high degree of vibration and energetic content, since two originally energetic factors combine and their qualities potentiate in combination, whereby the symbolic effect and significance of light is increased. This is the real "light effect" of Calligraphy.

#### 4.7 Allover and non-hierarchical Structure and Composition

The appearance of the structural "Allover" and the non-hierarchical structure and way of composing is not only a characteristic of the American Informel (Abstract Expressionism) of a Pollock, but also a constitutive element of Tobey's and the European Calligraphic Informel, especially with André Masson, as Carolyn Lachner wrote:

"Some works of this type have occasion to compare with the style of the White Writing of Mark Tobey, in an East-Asian quality of lines and an "Allover", which is occasionally to be found with Masson and constantly at Tobey, the two artists have something common."<sup>302</sup>

The freedom and irregularity of the shapes, dynamics, life and freedom, which embodies the organic, is in the General Informel accompanied by a corresponding image structure, namely a tendency to an almost complete structure resolution,

often in a disorganized chaos, but which is almost never achieved. This becomes in the General Informel significant, especially with Pollock, whose structure partly goes back to the influence of Masson and Tobey.

In the Calligraphic Informel, which works more with linear elements, the ratio of lines and ground and the way of structural order is similar to the ratios of the Calligraphy. It is fundamental, that neither here nor there a hierarchical structure still exists, but the structural order of the picture expresses itself either in a linear sequence order, or in extreme cases, in a likewise linear allover of the elements. This is a tendency, which was already present in the paintings of Turner, who inspired the Informel tendency as well as the works of Tobey and Masson, the Impressionists and partly also the Cubists. Tobey called implicitly these origins, when he stated that his paintings, such as "Broadway", show something Impressionism, Cubism and some "writing/scripture", whereby the last item, the "writing/scripture", points up the connection of the precursor to the Calligraphy.

The essential feature of this new structure is among others, that the whole of the picture, not just individual parts, is a primary means of expression, and that the individual elements tend to a homogeneity of the parts in the Allover, which supports the oscillation and vibration of the whole and causes a permanent fluctuation. The relationship of the Allover structure and the holistic appearance of the image denotes Tobey, when he says:

"I have sought to make my painting 'complete',  
but to achieve this, I have needed a swirling mass."<sup>303</sup>

and speaks elsewhere of "structure or tissue" in one breath.<sup>304</sup> The new form and the "world of finer substance" at Tobey is the function of the allover structure and identical with it:

"In the forties, I created a phenomenon of mass by  
the superposition of myriads of independent lines."<sup>305</sup>

The range of possibilities between structural and non-structural is in the Calligraphic Informel also not small, and structure is not only determined by the Allover, what a comparison of works by Tobey with their Allover and Hartung verify, whereby Hartung has a clearer tendency to structural order in the traditional sense.

However, we must ask here, whether the traditional concept of structure is sufficient here, and whether this, which refers to the order of static forms, does not have to be replaced by a dynamic concept of structure, which detects the movement structure of the picture elements. The structural appearance of the Allover and the non-hierarchical order, which was first applied by Tobey and then after taken over by Pollock, Tobey and Masson, who used it as early as Tobey, as

the investigation showed in section 2.3.2.1, is a formal phenomenon essential for the Chinese Calligraphy, and, as further explanations will show in Chapter III, only by the influence of Chinese Calligraphy on Tobey and Masson became an important feature of the new formal image organization of the Calligraphic Informel, and in consequence also of the General Informel. Although approaches have been already present at Kandinsky, Klee and some others, the structural Allover however had only become an integral part of Modern Art by the not inconsiderable influence Tobey's and Masson's in the forties on Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists in the United States. The source for this has clearly been the Chinese Calligraphy, whose decentralized successively-simultaneous image order of linear gestures appears already in the K'ai-Shu, but particularly evident in the Erratic K'uang-ts'ao ( 狂草 ) of Huai Ssu ( 怀素 ), where the linear movements cross themselves, overlap and tend to surface-space filling and build a connection of successive order and simultaneous appearance.

The same applies to the problem of composition, to form, space and structure: it is lacking in many works of Calligraphic Informel prima facie an elaborate composition, as it had been hitherto the basis of a picture. It is certain that the composition of the Calligraphic Informel work is not planned predominantly rational, as in the Traditional or Constructive Art, but usually relatively spontaneous, carried out during the artistic process, in constant response to the already existing, whereby the degree of spontaneity and use of chance and their relationship to the pictorial reflected way of composition may vary. The resulting image organization is in the Calligraphic Informel no static simultaneous order, but mostly a combination of succession of partial structures and movements and simultaneous overall effects, that show a separate order.

This ratio is in the Chinese Calligraphy approximately in an equilibrium, which has been transformed to a certain extent, depending on the degree of integration of the Calligraphic method to the Calligraphic Informel. At the artists inspired or influenced by Calligraphy is in comparison to Pollock or other Action Painters and Tachists not the pure automatistic transcript from the unconscious without control of the mind predominant, but in convergence with the need for mastery of the pictorial means and to the principle of "conception before the execution (i tsai pi hsien 意在筆先)" of the Calligraphy a tendency to compensate the purely automatic process or a "dictation of the unconscious", as Masson called it, the control of the pictorial organization will, which has always been a constitutive attribute of the Calligraphic method. This led particularly Tobey to compensate both tendencies, while Pollock, despite contrary assertions, was much stronger dependent on chance and the pure Automatism.

One effect of the Calligraphic structure is not only the framelessness, the semblance of a section of a fluctuating whole, and the decentralizing trend with its equality of all parts, but also the "moving focus" and the consequent greater involvement of the viewer into the image-happening, as the one, who is integrated

in the creative process as a necessary complement of the unfinished provisional nature, the openness and sketchiness, similarly as it is the case with the Calligraphy and in the Ch'an-images of China and Japan.

#### 4.8 The Problem of Control of the artistic Means

The mastery of the pictorial means up to their absolute internalization, which in the Chinese Calligraphy is a matter of course and a precondition of all artistic activities, and which there also is almost completely unmitigated, because of many years, often lifelong training, is in the General Informel in this degree virtually not given. Because here, as generally in the Informel Art, much is experimented with previously unknown materials and resources, and because often a mastering is for ideological reasons in principle rejected, in misjudgement of the real freedom lying in it, the artistic process, unlike in the Chinese Calligraphy, is not really "free", but on the contrary often dominated by a permanent confrontation and a fight with the means and the creative freedom thereby bound, as it does not know how it should articulate and vice versa, what is the meaning of that, what has just articulated. The so-called freedom then proves to be a domination by the means and by chance, unless the means have been internalized in their potential by dealing with them in a long practice, so that they form no longer a barrier, "no longer stand in the way" as Tobey mentions it.

The effect of Chinese Calligraphy in the works of Tobey, Masson and the other artists of the Calligraphic Informel, has in this regard two aspects: on the one hand it induces the mastery of the Calligraphy's own means and methods - depending on the intensity of the employment and internalization - and, secondly, it has moreover a paradigmatic effect on the handling of all artistic problems and resources, their control, due to a fundamental relationship thereby also facilitated. Tobey's statements and artistic work can be considered exemplary here, because with him a particularly high degree of intensity of the control is present. Tobey's words clearly prove this need:

"Work without any spiritual-artistic prerequisite, such an attempt is doomed to failure, because if you do not have a paragon – may the stimulation by it be positive or negative in the sense of provocation - you can not build a picture. But today no one thinks about that any longer. Everyone wants to make big money as quick as possible, but not to use the time for training of his own formal language".<sup>306</sup>

The cultivation of an own formal language on the basis of the traditional potential, which is complemented by the new means, increases this potential and

thus the artistic freedom. The abolition of all existing means and possibilities, without compensation, does not cause any new freedom, as has been erroneously believed by many Informels initially, but restrictions and lack of artistic potential. These correlations have been recognized by the aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting early. Shen Tsung-ch'ien noted in this sense:

"It should be recognized rather the dangers of such restriction (to one style or limited variation of pictorial method, author), develop one's own ideas in order to bring one's personality to expression (hsing-ling) and unfold one's personal character on the basis of the art of the ancients. So one does not embark on a leaked track and brings it to an unforced, natural mastery."<sup>307</sup>

In the consciousness of these relationships Tobey further explains:

"The older we get, the emptier the world becomes, because it increasingly is losing its substance of tradition. You can indeed paint what you want, but no one knows whether it is good, because where is a scale without the tradition?"<sup>308</sup>

The lack of mastery of the tradition and the means represents a loss of all standards and thus a loss of assessment, understanding and reception facilities on the viewer's side, which became one of the most serious problems of the General Informel and led to counter-reactions to its vagueness.

The mastering of the Calligraphic means and in consequence also the better mastery of all creative possibilities resulted with Tobey and with Masson and in varying degrees with other artists of the Calligraphic Art Informel in a renouncement from the pure Automatism, from the pure chance and to a state, in which the artist "does not stand in the way" (Tobey) of artistic impulses of any kind, so that the impulses, as it is called by the Chinese Aesthetics, "natural (tzu-ran 自然)" and "without conscious, purposeful action" (wu wei 無爲)" may occur in the appearance, a condition that Tobey describes in the words of his friend Takizaki:

"Let nature take the lead in your work."<sup>309</sup>

In addition, the mastery of Calligraphy for Tobey had reached - and this also for many others - that his work had been "opened up to new dimensions".<sup>310</sup>

#### 4.9 The Prevalence of Irrationalism and the Relation of Random and controlled pictorial Design

The starting point of the Calligraphic Informel concerning the ratio of guidance and chance was, as with the painters of the General Informel the goal, to oppose the possibilities of chance and other irrational forces to the, as to their opinion, long dominant and constricting rationality and its rigid immobility and lack of equivalence to the forces of life. The pure unconscious and irrational, as it expresses itself in the for this purpose mainly used methods of Automatism, which contains a high proportion of random and uncontrolled formations, was for many painters soon no longer satisfactory. This was even by André Masson, the founder of the Linear Automatism, soon expressed distinctly:

"I have dedicated myself with passion (to the Automatism), but only during a very short time, because my faith to the pure automatism has gone very quickly."<sup>311</sup>

Masson mentioned elsewhere the reason for his dissatisfaction with the automatic method and the dependence on chance and the pure unconscious, irrational:

"The risk of Automatismus is undoubtedly, often to associate only insignificant relations, whose contents, as Hegel said, do 'not go beyond that, which is included in the images'... Hence its appeal and its weakness: Be satisfied too easily and to remove both the diversity and the tangible knowledge of the world."<sup>312</sup>

Even Mark Tobey has a similar opinion, that the pure chance and the dominance of the pure unconscious are not enough to substantiate a work:

"Even if I do also not deny the element of chance, but I do not make it the main thing. Even more than the Chinese people the Japanese love the chance-momentum, worship it, respect it and look for it even at times. I personally accept it, but often only to incorporate it into the specified elements."<sup>313</sup>

Both, Tobey and Masson, have recognized, that the pure chance and the uncontrolled movement of the Automatism, as many artists of the General Informel used and revered it as their main pictorial means, results insufficient pictorial deliveries, and therefore should have to be complemented by the

management and control of the artistic intent. This experience has long been evident in the aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy, as a quote from the Hua-Fa Yao Lu (畫法要錄) proves:

"The Ch'i-yun (氣韻) must comply with the basic principles. If the basic principles (of the pictorial action, author) are internalized, then the spiritual resonance (= living spontaneity, i.e. ch'i-yun) will be present ... There is a spiritual resonance (ch'i-yun), which comes from the brush. There is one that comes from consciousness, and there is one that comes from the unconscious. That one, which comes from the unconscious (superconscious), is the best; that which is coming from the consciousness is the next, and the worst spiritual resonance is based on the pure technique of the brush."<sup>314</sup>

In the Chinese Calligraphy this realization led to a balanced connection, a balance between intellectual content and inspiration and internalized mastery of the methods, which takes place in a process of three stages, whereby the highest level of a superconscious state of wakefulness and activity represents, in which both the forces of the unconscious, of chance or of the found, as well as their mastery, their visual control, have been achieved concerning the overall artistic goal by the internalized mastery of means and methods. Thereby is the second step the conscious learning of the the technique and methodology, whereby the first stage of the non-mastery - the predominance of chance and the unconscious - is to be overcome, which is then surmounted on the third stage in a condition of synthetic high consciousness of all possibilities.

This discovery remains, more or less consciously or unconsciously, not without impact on the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, who through the influence of Calligraphy – which they partly, like Masson and others, purposefully have looked for - turned also away from using the pure Automatism and pure chance - towards a balance of chance and pictorial control and management, selection and recognition of found. Jean Degottex has significantly mentioned the awareness of this compensation and the consequently greater potential:

"The Automatism is based on a weakening of the control options, strictly speaking the constraints, and the Calligraphy on the other hand is a discipline. It presupposes control possibilities obtained through exercise. ... The Calligraphy demands in no way a maximum of attention, but a masterly skillful execution,



and it addresses oneself "at the same time to different skills."<sup>315</sup>

Due to the influence or the inspiration of Calligraphy artists of the Calligraphic Informel tried here to achieve a balance of unconscious automatism and conscious pictorial control, whereby, depending on disposition and nature and intensity of the employment with the Calligraphy differences occurred, as a comparison of Mathieu's works, build up on the rapidity, which allow little control, and like Michaux's pure Automatism, with, on the other side, half consciously guided and semi-meditative methods of Bissier or Graves shows.

The balance between the two forces, which Tobey repeatedly sought and also reached in his works, Masson also had emphasized and made to a destination and method of his artistic actions:

"I know that one can get strong suggestions through the unconscious, but not without choices ... Only so much of what the automatic method gives shall be used, as it can be absorbed aesthetically."<sup>316</sup>

and elsewhere:

"The unconscious and the conscious, the intuition and the mind, must make their transformation into the sur-conscious, in the shining unit."<sup>317</sup>

The "prevalence of the irrational" so is in the Calligraphic Informel - with different weighting - to be understood in the sense of a unity of the conscious and unconscious forces in a super- or highest-conscious state.

#### 4.10 The Relation of Art and Life

The conception of life as a dynamic process, which as already mentioned, developed under the influence of Life-Philosophy and Existentialism, but also under the East-Asian Philosophies in the artistry of the Informel, brought the Informel Painting to see the work of art as a life enforcement and to emphasize the experiencing subject and the "lived moment". While, however, the artists of the General Informel, especially those who had been concerned neither with Oriental Calligraphy nor with its aesthetics and underlying worldview, regarded life more or less as a subjective-individual, or at least as organic life alone, and which faced a lifeless, inorganic world, was for many artists of the Calligraphic Informel through the contact with the East-Asian Worldview life synonymous with the universal life, which conceived all aspects of being as living and as a fundamental principle of the

universal life, and which regarded the vicissitude and the movement as its basic principle. This was the case with Tobey, Masson, Graves, Bissier and some others. From this conception originates the desire for communication with the universal life and its principles and forces, as it was expressed by these artists.

This underlies the belief, that human and universal nature are identical, and that the artistic act can capture the forces of nature, such as the statements of Shen Tsung-ch'iens show clearly:

"This so-called natur ("heaven") is also human nature. Neither can the human escape nature, nor can nature a long time escape the mankind. ...If one speaks of the brush forces (pi-shih 筆勢), one wants to say, that the living movement of the brush expresses the essence of the various items. ... If one gets ready to bring ink on the paper, one should feel a force in one's wrist, which resembles that of the universe during the creation. The life force causes the powerful movement, and the powerful movement transmits the life force. ... So the vitality and the vigorous movement originate from the same source."<sup>318</sup>

The communication and the expression of - universal - life in the Calligraphic Informel goes, and here is pointed on Mark Tobey as example, about the inner life of the artist, with the meditative process of introspection in oneself playing the mediating role between the inner world and the artistic pictorial action:

"The spirit of this method is more Oriental than American. It is facing the inner life, a non-temporal art. ... In the works that can be found meditative, I try to reproduce something of the tenderness, that nature evokes in me."<sup>306</sup>

Here lies a big difference to the basic attitude of the General Informel, which mainly refers to the subjective-individual human life, while the Calligraphic Informel, with the means of the Calligraphic ductus and its lively dynamics as a carrier of expression of change and movement, justifies its life terms from the conviction of the unity of human and universal life, human and universal nature.

The role of the viewer is compared to the traditional Western art greatly enhanced, because he deserves through the imperfection and spontaneous temporariness, especially the openness to all sorts of associations and evocative possibilities, a decisive role in the interpretive implementation and completion of the artistic intentions, in the enactment and reliving of the movements, sensations

and life enforcements transported and indicated by the pictorial manifestations. The previous explanations have demonstrated the development to the aspects and features of the Informel, which transported and enabled the Calligraphic influence or the inspiration from Calligraphy, and, concomitantly, from the Chinese Aesthetics and Philosophy of life. They have also attempted to clarify and weighting the signification and effects of this relationship in the work and thinking of different inspired artists, whereby also became evident, that Mark Tobey and, to a lesser extent, also André Masson must be seen as the actual representatives and agents of a Calligraphic Influence. After subsequently the formal impacts of the Calligraphic inspiration were clarified in principle, in the next chapter (III) the main influencing factors of Chinese Calligraphy are to be considered more detailed, in order to show then in Chapter IV their appearances and effects in the works of Tobey and Masson more accurately.

### III. Characteristics and Essentials of the Chinese Calligraphy concerning the Interests of the Calligraphic Informel Painting

#### 1. Analogy of the basic Elements of Calligraphic Informel and Calligraphy: Gestic Action-Painting, use of Signs and Expression of vital Forces

In the now following explanations it is about to work out the specific aspects, features and elements of Chinese Calligraphy, which have made and supported the Calligraphic Influence on Western Painting possible. André Masson speaks of the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy as an "Art of the Essential" and concedes, unlike it was in the West so far accustomed, to the "Art of Writing" its high rank and the principle of equality and equivalence with the painting:

"One knows how much in China as in Japan, the writing is connected with the exercise of the great painting. There is no example, yes, it is inconceivable that a great painter would not be also a great calligrapher. And he is almost always a sage and an aesthetician (he writes not only artistically, he must also be able to write about his art) More precisely said:.. the most admirable of the Chinese painting of ideas is its picturesque quality "<sup>319</sup>

In the term "painting of ideas" retraces Masson the combination of painting, thinking and language, which is characteristic for the Calligraphy. To understand this "painting of ideas" of the "Essential" closer in its foundations, it is necessary to define the essence of Calligraphy from all relevant aspects concerning the Western art of Informel, to integrate them gradually, to achieve so an understanding of the artistic possibilities of the Calligraphy, which has attracted the artists of the

Calligraphic Informel. It also includes a brief addressing of the formal structure of thinking, which underlies this communicative and artistic medium.

The Chinese writing and its art form Calligraphy befits a paramount importance in the Chinese culture, as it is not to be found in other cultures. The reason for this is the particularly high and differentiated development of this system to a communication system, which is not to be considered here, and at the same time a highly developed art, and also the almost magical character, which adheres the Calligraphy until today, as well as the connection of mastery of the written language and Calligraphic Art with the predominance in society, which is not limited to one social class, but was also open upward. The special significance of the written language therefore automatically resulted in its development to a genre of high, for East Asia actually surmounting, primary rank, which was at first difficult to understand in the West. This signification becomes clearer, when one considers, that the artistic practice of the written language was that medium, in which existed the thinking and beliefs, artistic expression and social power and status functions in an inseparable unity, and which let participate those, who mastered this art, more or less, in all this and also still integrated them into the system of universal laws, which were decisive for the course and the welfare of the East Asian world.

The Calligraphy is not just an ordinary means of communication, but by the tremendous variety of the historical and cultural values contained in its semantic symbolism and its gestural ductus, it is in East Asia the artistic medium per se. The Chinese thought, underlying the Calligraphy, does since ancient time not search the support of clear and explicit terms and signs in most accurate definitions, as it did the West, but it transmitted itself to a certain extent rather highly adaptable under the surface, and by no means with the tools of logic and individual details, but on the whole, by organizing movements together, which are transmitted through rhythm, gesture and symbol from mind to mind.<sup>320</sup> The Chinese thinking is, unlike the mostly analytical and rational reasoning of the West and its languages, a strongly holistic-synthetic thinking, and language and Calligraphic Art are also structured more holistically-synthetically. A philosopher of classical China is, as to Granet, convinced to have won a valid insight, if he has defined all necessary order relations to explain a particular phenomenon and thereby brought theory and experience to cover. A thing is not defined solely in its suchness, not searched the absolute, the isolated, but in its relativity and relationship to a field<sup>321</sup>, and the Chinese perception of the world is therefore especially a definition of cosmic and human-social orders functioning in accordance with nature, and in which all things and beings are integrated with a specific (but variable) place. About the underlying worldviews has already been discussed at length.

So it is understandable that this way of thinking had expressed itself in the language and in the Calligraphy as an art and helped to form their specific peculiarities. In the expression of ideas of order, it does not depend on an

extremely accurate analytical conceptual definition, but on the definition of the essential of a thing in the relativity of the relationship. The insulating structure of the language and the inflexionless on one hand, as well as the extraordinarily pragmatic function of the Calligraphic character are thus understandable. The individual words and characters, such as “shan ( 山 ) mountain”, is intended to express the general nature of the mountain, not its details. When one speaks of several mountains, therefore a flexion for a numer assignment is not necessary etc.. This principle of the expression of the essential is a key feature of Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Culture. André Masson, one of the many artists, who have dealt relative intensively with Chinese Calligraphy and Painting as well as the Chinese thinking, has recognized this quality, and called the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy therefore "An Art of the Essential"<sup>322</sup>, whereupon still has to be responded.

It is especially intrinsically to the Chinese language and art of Calligraphy the amazing ability, to convey feeling impulses and to invite to comments, their strength lies in the concrete expression and an often unconscious influence on the communication partner. A character or sensual pattern is often blurred, which means that the meaning can be very deep, comprehensive and diverse at the same time, because it appeals to intuitions and associations more than in other cultures; an aspect that came to meet the intentions of Western artists. Thus, the Chinese Calligraphy does not include fixed terms, but it raises a not precisely circumscribed and defined complex of pictorial ideas into the consciousness.<sup>323</sup> The essential means of Calligraphy, in which lies the analogy with the basics of the Calligraphic Informel, which derived its origins not least from the origins of Western art, and which have led and supported inspiration, influence and relationship ability, are the gestural movement in the sense of an action painting, the use of symbols and metaphors, and the expression of life forces which seem to give the gestural signs independent life.

The interest of Western painting of a Tobey, Masson and others starts with two essential characteristics of the smallest Calligraphic unit, the characters, as André Masson emphasizes:

"The colored élan must connect to the discovery of new ciphers: characters, ideograms, ... <sup>324</sup>

The character is constituted in two different designation levels: the semantic-symbolic on one hand and the gestural-processual or gestural-residual on the other hand, which forms the basis of the Action Painting, which we have met already during the determination of the basic features of the Calligraphic Informel, and which only analytically can be separated, otherwise form a visual unit, and which, so to speak constitute the means, by which meanings of all kinds are carried and expressed in the Calligraphy. Therefore to the Calligraphic signs as a symbol also

applies the symbol definition of Warburg already recognized for the Calligraphic Informel, even more as precisely in the tension between emblematicness and action is particularly clear: it has its place in the middle,

"where the symbol is understood as a sign, and yet remains alive as a picture (!), where the emotional excitement between these two poles is held in tension, neither is concentrated by the binding force of the metaphor so that it discharges in action (= gesture), nor is resolved by decomposing the order of the thought so much, that it evaporates in terms."<sup>325</sup>

Especially the middle between these two poles, namely the balance or harmony - two for Tobey's reception of Calligraphy important terms of attributes - of semantic and gestures, have given to the Chinese Calligraphy its prominent place in the art of East-Asia, as "mother of all arts". And therein lies simultaneously the attraction that it had to the Informel Painting as a means of gestural expression and an ability to overcome the pure Automatism, and, secondly, the fundament of the two today essential fonts, that have affected Tobey and Masson: the more symbolic-  
-emblematical K'ai-Shu (楷書) and the more gestural-procedural Ts'ao-Shu (草書), whose importance for the work of Tobey and Masson is to be characterized below. The for the script as such important symbolic-semantic designation level has already been tried to characterize and categorize in early times in the "Shuo-wen chieh-tzu" (說文解字) of Hsu Shen (許慎 or 徐鉉) and the (Liu-Shu 六書) in the form of the "Six categories of characters"<sup>326</sup>, which, however, here should not be discussed further.

Here, however, becomes already clear, what the semantic-symbolic aspect of the character is based on, and thus maintains, defines and communicates its meaning: it is the clearly defined, in form and structure unambiguess and generally recognized and known objective linear structure of the character. This could be also achieved by a system of static and rigid, mechanical line combinations, as evidenced by other writings, and as it was even the case in China in the beginning. Therefore it is not this static-semantic aspect, but the gestural residual character aspect, which particularly attracted the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, but whereby, as it becomes apparent from the previous explanations and the comments of the artists, the first, as it is usually, may not be overlooked, because the gestural action of Calligraphy would not exist without the semantic character structure.

Moreover because, what is also indirectly important for the influence on the West, therein is included all individually and socially relevant knowledge and the value system of the Chinese Culture, to which the Calligraphers respond and react with their gestural residual behavior, and so in turn re-influenced this, and wherein among others the artistic character of the Calligraphy is founded.

The interest of Western artists like Tobey, Masson and others focused primarily on the mediumistic power of the smallest character-element, which was the real carrier of the Calligraphic impulse, the single stroke or the line. The fundamental importance of this line is called by Masson:

"The line in freedom. Never free enough never open enough, is movement."<sup>327</sup>

This Calligraphic line, in a yet to be specified basic form, was the medium, which gave Tobey's art "new dimensions", as he said:

"... By the Calligraphic line I could catch the restless pulsation of our cities today."<sup>328</sup>

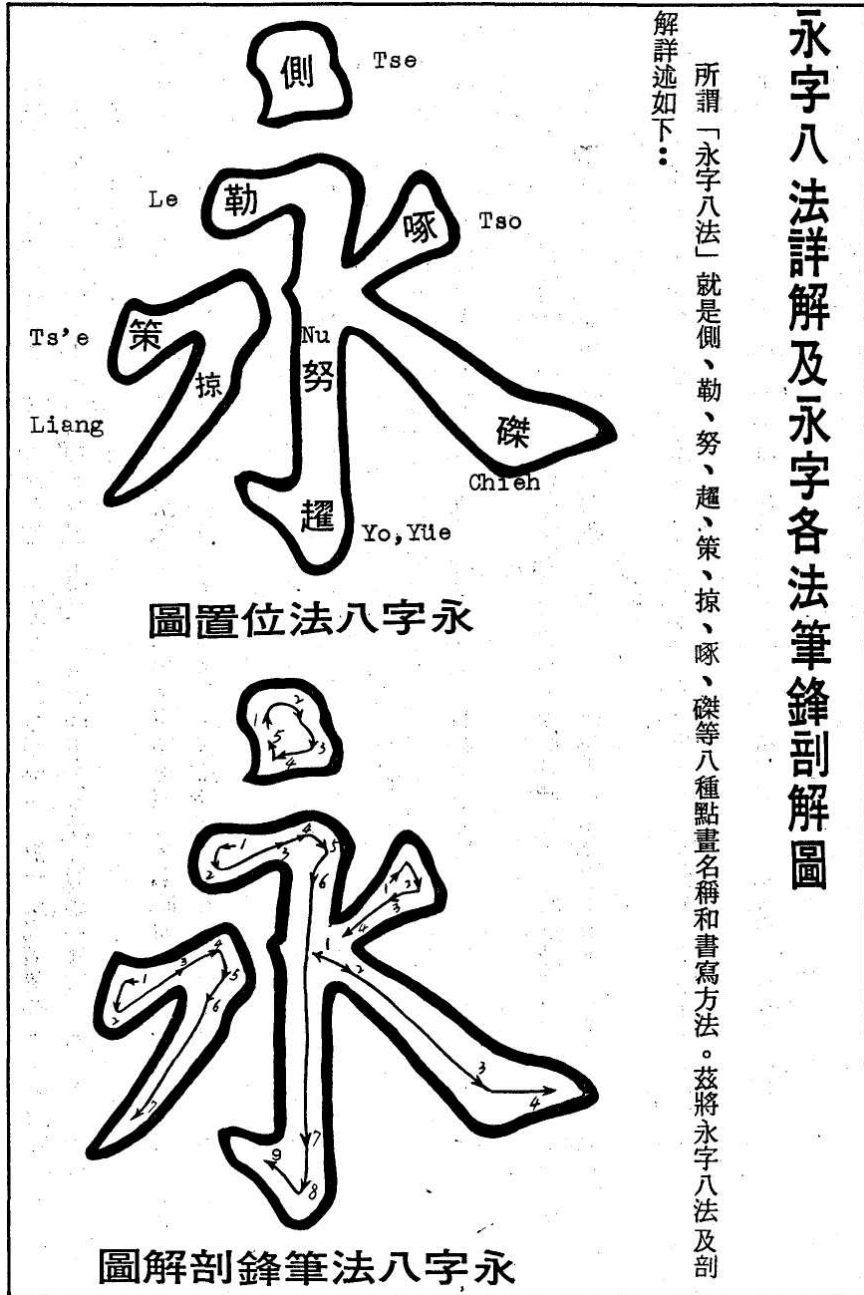
The line as "living line", as Tobey called them, is in contrast to the lifeless, after Chinese view wire-like, mechanical-mathematical line, which is often used in Western art, especially in the graphics, the basic element which determines the character of the Calligraphic Art. Because of its function as a carrier of meaning, structure and order, it can not be arbitrary in shape, course and position in the sign. These requirements are codified in the scheme of the "Yung-tzu pa-fa"(永字八法), the "Eight-line method of the character Yung (= eternity)", going back to Wang Hsi-chih (王羲之) (307-365) (see text Figure 3), which include as well as the "Six Principles" of Hsie-Ho (Ho Hsie liu-fa 謝赫六法) the main generally accepted and thus systematically codified principles of Calligraphic Art.

In this sign the most important eight basic strokes of Calligraphy are included, which every person in East Asia must learn and master, and therefore also for the Western artists, if they wanted to deal seriously with Calligraphy, are binding as a starting point for their own designs. These lines, of which, as will be shown, Tobey and Masson have chosen especially two for their purposes, are:

1. The point Tse (側)
2. The horizontal stroke Le (勒)
3. The vertical stroke Nu (努)
4. The vertical hook line Yo / Yüe (躍)
5. The left diagonal stroke Liang (掠)
6. The right downwards diagonal stroke Chie (磔)
7. The semi-diagonal line upwards Ts'e (策)
8. The semi-diagonal stroke downward Tso (啄).<sup>329</sup>

The System of the Eight Fundamental Strokes of the Character Yung  
 (Yung-tzu pa-fa 永字八法)

Figure 3





The numbers also indicate the order of strokes when writing the character, from which especially the two strokes Nos. 5 ( Liang 掠 ) and 8 ( Tso 啄 ), usually in a combination and unity of the two, are the essential dynamic element in Tobey's art as well as in Masson's images, originated by form and writing kind, and create the therefrom resulting space-plastical ductus, on which still is to be responded.

The confrontation with and appropriation of the world in the Calligraphic characters and procedures is supported by three layers of meaning, depending again on the relationship of signs and gestures: the rational, object-oriented, form- and structurally-designating layer, the rational, object-related, gestural designating layer of meaning, on which, for example, the investigation of Tchang Tcheng-ming enters<sup>330</sup>, and the irrational, subject-related, gestural automatistic significance layer, which stands near to the method of the linear pictorial Automatism, and which was the main interest of the Calligraphic Informel Painting, since it manifests the same or similar issues, as they are prevailing in the Informel. The focus of further investigations will therefore be here.

But the precondition of artistic exhaustion of the gestural-residual aspect of Calligraphy first of all is the mastery of all the methodological and technical possibilities on the basis of codified rules, without which no free gestural expression is possible, since according to Chinese believes only when "heart and hand in accord"<sup>331</sup> are, and as a Chinese text further says<sup>332</sup>, "the rules first must be internalized", before "the spirit comes to expression freedom."

While the aspects associated with the meaning or semantics of the character relate more to the general scriptural and communicative character in the objectively-social area, the deeply artistic element of the Calligraphic character is based on the gestures of men, as an archetypal pictorial instinct, that thus becomes the central issue. The individual characters, actually already each stroke, is an irrational, automatic-dynamic residuum, which is also a feature of the Informel Art. But even here, various subordinate shapings or aspects can be worked out.

The first aspect is, that gesture and writing process, as already mentioned, can be understood as an individual statement to the semantic of the character, as an irrational, emotional and intuitive reaction layer, also with respect to the meaning of the sign, and therefore also as a layer of reaction to the designated kind of reality, which manifests itself in the design of the ductus.

The second aspect is therein the emanation of attributes of one's own being, which parallels the graphologists' scriptural expression in the West in gesture and writing process, as it also indicates a Chinese text:

"The brush expression is like the personality of man",<sup>333</sup>

while the third aspect finally lets the Calligraphic characters appear as a result of a gestural human action, as a residue of an objective spatial movement and a materialstructuring process, a dynamic process. These gestural aspects were the

starting point for Tobey and the painters of the Calligraphic Informel.

Statement and reference to the internal and external world take place via selection of the characters, location and arrangement of the linear elements, about writing style and individual formation, but particularly over the shaping of the space-plastical ductus, in which all these moments flow together, and whom thus befits a central importance in the Calligraphic Art as a carrier of individual expression. Its importance for the Calligraphic Informel will be discussed in connection. The precondition of this ductus and the living expression is, as Tobey had recognized and expressed it, the learning and mastering of the means, which will be followed later on.<sup>334</sup>

The previous explanations of the nature of the Calligraphic Art have made the dynamic vitality of the lines, which Tobey called "living line", clear, and indeed is the Calligraphic sign according to Chinese believes a living being, which as one can see, was respected in the Calligraphic Informel and entered into the new conception of the artistic line. This view is clearly stated by Yang Chia-lo:

"It (the sign) appears as a human being, but is it not yet"  
(shih ren erh fei 似人而非)."<sup>335</sup>

Just as in China all things are regarded as animated, because they have in themselves the universal force of Tao (道) and are caused by the two primal forces Yin and Yang, the painted picture and the character also are regarded as living beings. The sign is not just a lifeless anything set by man, but an autonomously living, by the writing artist created being, whose "life" is based on principles, which are analogous to the general rules and principles of life, indeed identical with them. This conviction is also reflected in the aesthetic principles of the "bone, tendon and flesh Method" (ku-fa, rou-fa, chin-fa 骨法、肉法、筋法),<sup>336</sup> which denote the structural brush force, the power of the ink consistency and the compositional context of the writing process, which will be followed by entering into more detail, because especially the structural brush force, called "ku-li" (骨力), was important for the dynamic expression of the artists of the Calligraphic Informel. This "lively" dynamics of the linear Calligraphic gestures enabled Tobey to represent the modern "life" of the big cities in a new way, and

"to paint the frenetic rhythms of the modern metropolis,  
what I even would not have been able to try with the  
technique of the Renaissance."<sup>337</sup>

This analogy with the construction of the human body, which the "bone, meat and tendons method" denotes, corresponds with the conception Yang Chia-Lo's, which classifies the character and its "life" in the universal material and spiritual

context of the universal nature. This understanding is reminiscent in the words of Tobey to his feelings after his first Calligraphy lesson:

"I just had my first lesson in Chinese brushwork with my friend Teng Kuei. ... There is pressure and release. Every movement is like footprints in the snow, detained and often loved because of itself. The great dragon breathes sky, thunder and shadow; wisdom and mind enliven."<sup>338</sup>

Tobey makes here clear, that the "life" of Calligraphy is manifested through the combination of movement and ductus of the gestural process with the intellectual content. This life is essentially connected with the human life as well as the universal life, a view that more and more, by the encounter with the worldviews of East-Asia, through the Calligraphic impulse, as well as by a change in Western thought, which has already been mentioned, was taken over by the Western painters of the Calligraphic Informel and made an integral part of their artistic work.

The association of life in the Calligraphic artwork has been entered into a key term of the Chinese Aesthetics, which Masson designated by the term "Essentials": it is the "Ch'i-yun" (氣韻), the "Spirit of Life", the "lively spontaneity" or "spiritual resonance", which, in the works of Tobey, Masson and, less explicit, others also plays a role in their thinking.

Concrete examples of Calligraphic style types can illustrate or exemplify these aspects; characters of the over the time developed style types are prototypical of one or the other aspect. The prototype of a character or a Calligraphy-type, in which the symbolic-semantic aspect predominates, is the sign of "Hsiao-chuan" (小篆) or "Small Seal Script" (see Figure 23, Hsiao-chuan 小篆) and, for the art of Tobey and Masson as well as for our further explanations important, the K'ai-Shu(楷書) or "Standard Script" or "Regular Script". The prototype, in which the gestural-procedural aspect and the living essentiality outweigh, and the aspect of symbolic semantic already recedes because of the readability, is the "Tsao-Shu" (草書) or "Concept Script" or "Running Style"(see Fig. 24, Huai Ssu (懷素)).

These two script style types and their distinct qualities and features are that, what we encounter in the works of Tobey and Masson, and to which all other artists of the Calligraphic Informel have referred, mainly, like Mathieu (he explicitly mentions it as that Calligraphic style type in his book "Au-delà de Tachisme), mainly the fast and lively Ts'ao Shu, while Tobey probably went out as the only one and as it is common in East Asia, from the K'ai-Shu, integrating gradually Ts'ao-Shu elements. In the following sections, therefore, it concerns to work out the fundamental characteristics of these two types of styles, insofar as they were artistically relevant to Tobey and Masson.

## 2. The main Types of Calligraphy and their Characteristics and aesthetic Principles important for the Informel Painting

In the previous literature, if it had entered upon the Calligraphic Influence, the connections and differences of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao Shu had hardly been considered; it was mostly generally just spoken of the influence of Calligraphy, which usually implied some aspects of Ts'ao Shu, like the movement and the speed (such as with Mathieu). Since such an approach is not appropriate to the problems, to enlighten these comments, some important factors and characteristics of these two forms of Calligraphy shall briefly be indicated, which demonstrate the inherent polar attributes of this art in entire clarity. Two differences from European writings, such as the Latin letter alphabet, which has hardly changed in the writing style since Roman, yes Phoenician times, make the for the Informel Painting all-important way of artistic expression for the art of Tobey or Masson clear: on one hand the possibility of a lively development of Calligraphy in the historical process, as opposed to the static form perseverance of Western writings, and, secondly, the necessity and possibility of the involvement of personal, subjective factors of the writer, which supported the historical development. Calligraphy is in China to a much greater extent a function of individual, historically unique factors, such as talent, character, interests and goals of the writer, which left their mark on the historical development, and which limited the separation of art and life, artist and society not only to a minimum, but, in some respects, created a combination of the two, making each writer potentially to an artist, when he gave himself the trouble to develop his creative forces in the Calligraphy.

### 2.1 Elements and Aspects of K'ai-Shu ( 楷書 ) essential for the Calligraphic Influence

The Standard Script K'ai-Shu ( 楷書 ), also called Chen-Shu ( 真書 ), which we encounter in Tobey's work and partly also in Masson's paintings, differs from the older scripts - and in this sense also from the Ts'ao-Shu ( 草書 ) - in the fact that each character has to fit into an imaginary square, and in that the vertical lines remain vertical, but while with it the horizontal lines (compared to the Chuan-Shu or Li-Shu) are slightly pulled up to the right. In the K'ai-Shu the fundamental aesthetic principles of Calligraphy manifest themselves, and it is a paradigmatic example of the basic techniques of the Calligraphic Art; it is supplemented and modified in the Ts'ao Shu by the element of movement, rhythm and the speed of execution. A general characterization of the essential characteristics of K'ai-Shu, which at the same time comprehends its value for the painters of the Calligraphic Informel, is given by Pao Shih-ch'en ( 包世臣 ) (1775-1855):

"Austere strictness (tuan-chuang 端莊 ) and balanced straightness (p'ing-chih 平直 ) are the expression values (shih 勢 ) of the Chen-Shu. The old masters have at every single point and line always (made sure that) it was performed with the movement of the brush tip and the rotation of the entire brush. Not only at the points of touch down (ch'i-chih 起止 ) and of extracting, they have applied the technique of moving and turning. Even with all vertical and horizontal strokes they have always used it."<sup>339</sup>

Even with the "austere strictness" of the K'ai-Shu movements and rotations of the brush tip are the most important Calligraphic feature, which brings out the forces of the line, that had attracted the Western artists, created by "turning" and "twisting" of the brush tip in a process of movement, which is determined by the polar forces Yin and Yang, that express themselves in opposing motion forces in the unit of a single line, something that the Chinese Aesthetic denotes:

"No hanging without pulling, no going forth without concentration (wu ch'ui pu so, wu wang pu shou 無垂不縮無往不收)".<sup>340</sup>

When Mark Tobey learned the basics of Chinese Calligraphy with Teng Kuei, it were these technical and aesthetic qualities of K'ai-Shu, which he absorbed and developed to his "White Writing", and it is therefore necessary to elaborate these principles in order to understand also their effects in the works of Tobey and further of Masson.

A comparison of the Calligraphic hook strokes in Fig. 26, an exemplary representation of the shape and style of this kind of Calligraphic strokes, as each Calligrapher and every person in China has to master them, with the hook strokes of Tobey in Fig. 25 clearly shows, that Tobey's lines, that fill the pictorial space with a whirring and vibrating dance of linear elements, clearly descended from the hook and the curved lines of K'ai-Shu. It's almost a matter of course to state that Tobey, since he has learned the rules of Calligraphy with Teng Kuei, began his employment with the East Asian Calligraphy with learning and practicing the K'ai Shu rules. This is evidenced by a comparison of Fig. 27 and 28, the basic element of the point or dot and its variations with the detail of a picture from Tobey. As will be seen, the assimilation of elements of the K'ai-Shu Calligraphy at Tobey is predominant and determines the phenomenal overall character of his work, while Masson used comparatively more the Ts'ao-Shu lines. In the following should be first entered on the characteristics of the K'ai-Shu, which were important for the Informel, and thereafter on the Ts'ao-Shu, starting from the peculiarities of the

writing materials and the brushwork, which are in contrast to the European techniques, as well as its consequent ductus.

### 2.1.1 The Writing Materials

With the pictorial methods of Calligraphy the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, especially Mark Tobey, but also Masson, Graves and some others, have in the broad also adopted the tools and materials of the Calligraphy, especially the use of the typical round and pointed brush. The writing materials, which are also the means of arts of Calligraphy and Painting, befit an outstanding importance in East Asia; therefore they are called the "four treasures of the studyroom" (wen-fang szu-pao 文房四宝). They are the brush ( mao-pi 毛筆 or pi 筆 ), the ink (mo 墨 ), the rubbing stone (yen-t'ai 硯台 ) and the paper (chih 紙 ). This special appreciation of the pictorial means and tools in China is insofar significant, as a comparable trend, which manifests itself in the conscious liberation of the pictorial means of the imaging and there serving functions and in emphasizing its intrinsic value, only recently can be found in the Western art and, significantly, again in connection with an influence of East Asian Art, over the Impressionism, van Gogh and others, and of course in the Informel.

The extraordinary importance of the - to be obtained after many years of practice and experience - mastery of the pictorial means, is repeatedly emphasized in the Chinese Aesthetics, such as the "Hua-yao fa-lu" ( 畫法要錄 ):

"When dealing with brush and ink, one knows their nature only after the first ten years; in the next ten years you can learn something from their methodological rules; after another ten years you can understand principles and spirit; so that one only after thirty years may alter or vary a little."<sup>341</sup>

In terms of tools and materials, a contrast to Western art is very clear; they are much finer, more flexible and sensitive, even for the slightest movement and expression emotions. The sensitivity of these or similar means only has allowed Tobey, Masson and the other artists to implement their internal them feelings and impulses into images, something, that Tobey called "could not be reached with the means of the Renaissance".

The most important tool of Calligraphy and Painting in China is the brush (pi 筆 ) or hair brush (mao-pi 毛筆 ), which befits in the Chinese Aesthetics a superior, almost mythical status as a tool and way of emanations of superhuman, universal forces, and which therefore in the Calligraphic Informel also became a preferred tool, as opposed to the brushless art of Pollock or others. The special feature of this brush is as Figs. 29 + 30 show, the round shape of the hair tuft, so a round tip,

unlike the mostly flat or bristly brushes of the West, because this roundness means in association with the pointed leakage of the hairs, that it is movable towards all directions. This construction makes the Chinese brush, that exists since around the Han-Dynasty (206 B.C. til 220 A.D.) in this way, superior to all other brush shapes, what Tobey and Masson noticed soon and were applying it, as it enabled them to carry out simultaneous movements in all directions, with extraordinary sensitivity and precision. Therefrom is immediately evident, that only the use of this tool alone has already brought about changes and developments in Western Art, that without this brush, which Tobey, Masson, Bissier (who sometimes had bound them himself) and others have used, would not have been possible. Its main features are therefore "pointedness" (chien) and "uniform roundness" ( yuan 圓 ), and "firmness", i.e. elastic stability, so that the brush tip in the writing- and painting-movement always has elasticity.<sup>342</sup>

After the brush the second most important artistic medium, which trough the diversity of its possible shades and gradations attracted Western art, is the ink (mo 墨), which is used in the form of pressed rods and is rubbed with water on the rubbingstone (yen-t'ai 硯台), the third of the "Four Treasures". The special thing with it is the durability and the option to reach the finest gradations of light gray to the deepest black, what with the Calligraphic Influence and the with it related interest of the West for the ink painting brought also greater freedom and sensitivity in the use of the gray values and shades into Western Art, which is particularly evident in Tobey's works. On this ability of the ink is based in China the idea, that the ink has all "five colors" (mo you wu ts'ai 墨有五彩), which means that, as is evident in the Calligraphy and Ink Painting, that the ink as a medium can be so rich, that for the creation of a vivid expression the colors are not absolutely necessary. This ability of the ink has in some way inspired Tobey to make his pictorial expression independent from the color. The chiaroscuro of ink is used with the intention to rhythmization of the ink tones, and more or less diluted ink plays especially in the painting a role in generating spatial atmospheric effects, but also partly in the Calligraphy.<sup>343</sup> The delicacy of the colored grounds and the use of white in the "White Writing" by Tobey is a transfer of the ink values into the Western medium of the color.

The rubbing of the ink does not only serve the manufacturing of the painting means, but it has always been a precursor to the process of painting, which was to serve the collection and concentration and meditative preparation, so that the creative forces of the artist could unite with those of the universal nature in the inspiration. The inspiration befits in China due to the specific spontaneity of the creative process a greater role than in the carefully modeled process of the West, as the statements of Shen Tsung-ch'ien prove:

"When you are getting ready to bring ink on the paper,  
you should feel in your wrist a force, which is like the

force of the universe in the act of creation. ... The moment of inspiration comes from itself and sweeps away all the uncertainty. ...It can not be repeated by effort, it eludes it only. As the effort to regain such a moment is induced by man (artificially), and not from heaven (inspired). Only those, who are in possession of comprehensive mental nature, have several such moments ".

Shen Tsung-ch'ien has here therefore pointed to the universal forces of nature as the basis of the artistic inspiration, as it has already become clear in the discussion of the ideological foundations, and he confirms that the deliberate effort only prevents the inspiration, and that this could only naturally (tzu-ran 自然) and without conscious action (wu-wei 無爲) be achieved. The origin of the natural force is the original context of the world and man.

"This so-called nature (heaven) is also the human nature. Neither can the man escape the nature, nor can the nature escape the man for a long time too."

But this connection alone does not guarantee success, only the combination of talent and long practice, so the mastering of the means, leads to the goal:

"At this connection of the artist's brush and soul both help each other and respond to each other. ... That can happen only to artists, who are gifted and practiced. Those with less talent or without adequate prior training must base on plans and designs, and never experience such moments. Once they lack powerful movement (shih 勢), because they are unable to draw quickly, and then they can not draw quickly because they lack the powerful movement. They are hindered by the technology and are bound to rules (because they do not master them, author);. whatever they are doing, striving for a realistic representation is obstructing them"<sup>344</sup>

These remarks of Shen Tsung-ch'ien make clear, how important for such a spontaneous art - and here lies the fundamental difference between the General Informel and the Calligraphy on one hand and the attraction of the Calligraphic method for some of the Western artists on the other hand - not only the talent is, but above all the mastery of the means as a precursor of pictorial freedom, whereby the preparatory concentration initiates the artistic process, and harmonises and aligns artists and creative forces to the upcoming pictorial action.



The importance of this almost meditative preparation has not only Tobey recognized, but also André Masson, when he wrote:

"In the entourage of the serene contemplation, which brings about the void, the vision comes, . The Great Way: pure collection, complete oblivion before the work and during the execution ...."<sup>345</sup>

Yü Shih-nan, a Chinese writer of the T'ang dynasty, confirmed this attitude:

"At the time you intend to write, you have to withhold the sensory activity of seeing and hearing. Shutoff your thoughts and concentrate your mind; if one straightens one's heart and brings one's vitality in harmony, then one coincides with the miraculous (essence of nature)."<sup>346</sup>

To understand the impact of the Calligraphic impulse on Tobey and Masson, and to be able to distinguish pure "Inspiration" by the Calligraphy from a real, intensive "influence", which requires a minimum of mastery of the Calligraphic technique and the methodology of obtaining the space-plastic ductus, it requires an elaboration and examination of basic rules of writing technique responsible for the Calligraphic ductus, which Tobey learned from Teng Kuei and consistently applied in his technique of the "White writing", and what distinguishes him from other artists.

### 2.1.2 The basic Rules of Writing Technique

In addition to the selection of appropriate tools and materials is the mastery of the basic rules of writing technique and its variations critical for the visual effect. It concerns mainly the holding of the brush in one's hand and the way of the brushwork; the mastery of all basic possibilities of brush holding and brushwork in the sense of the classical rules, which have emerged as the optimal way of handling in the sense of a dynamic spontaneous-creative activity through the experience of more than two thousand years and were not invented arbitrarily, but resulted naturally (tzu-ran 自然) through an optimization of the resources inherent to the possibilities of the means. Tobey has, as already said, learned these principles and practiced and deepened them in China and Japan; they were also known to Masson, but he did not master them so intense, and most other painters only partly imitated them, a reason to consider them only as "inspired", rather than "influenced".

### 2.1.2.1 The Holding of the Brush

The for the Calligraphy, especially for the K'ai-Shu, mandatory brush holding is that of the so-called "vertical brush" (cheng-pi 正筆) or "vertical pipe (shu-kuan 豎筆), one of the the most common topoi of the Calligraphic Aesthetics <sup>347</sup> (Fig. 29). As the figure shows, the brush is held higher on the upper handle half (depending on the size of the movement turns to be executed), held by the thumb on one side, the index and middle fingers on the other side, and supported by the ring finger down. The transmission of the movement and its force is not carried out through the fingers, that stand in approximately ninety degrees to the brush, but through the wrist and the whole arm. As a result, a much larger and more concentrated power delivery is possible, which was deliberately sought by the of Western artists. This two-finger attitude is called "Shuang-kou-fa" ( 双鉤法 ). The upright finger position are clearly underlying artistic factors, especially the possibility of optimum power unfolding, which Chu Ho-Keng in the "Lin-chih hsien-chieh" describes:

“With the upright brush you choose the force (ching 勁),  
with the inclined brush the grace (yen 妍).”<sup>348</sup>

The importance of the brush construction and the correct brush holding as a basis of Calligraphic expression is confirmed by Goepper:

"Such a brush is primarily a line item and not so much intended to evenly fill an area with color, how many of the European watercolor brushes, whose soft hair limp dragging while painting on paper. It has probably initially developed in this form from the requirements of the Calligraphy, and in the art of writing also the possibilities of expression sticking in it stuck were first systematically exploited and trained to an aesthetic canon, whereby already early showed up that typical Chinese ductus, which we know from the linear language of the two sister arts of writing and painting. This ductus results from the construction of the brush and from the way he is held and guided."<sup>349</sup>

A from the "vertical" differing angled brush holding (ts'e-feng 側鋒) (Fig. 30) is more applied in the painting and gives a soft, plane wide lines with different ink consistency, depending on the filling of the brush.

### 2.1.2.2 The Centered Brushtip (chung-feng 中鋒)

From the vertical brush holding automatically results a centered brush tip, which runs in the middle of the brush movement (chung-feng 中鋒), and the fact that the "tip is secured the brushstroke" (pi-chung ts'ang-feng 筆中藏鋒), two important characteristics of Chinese Calligraphy, which clearly reflect themselves in Tobey's lines, for which "Drum echoes" from 1965 (Fig. 33) is a good example. Tobey has here, in the consciousness of the centered brush tip, as it results from the white lines in the center of the signs of Figure 34, which are exercise samples during the learning of Calligraphy, added, traced and indicated these imaginary lines of the brush with red lines. "Drum Echoes" (Fig. 33) goes clearly back on this aspect of calligraphy, as a comparison with Figure 34 shows, a phenomenon that is also observed with Masson, which is still considered in more detail. The centered brush tip is therefore for the painters of the Calligraphic Informel not only a strange formal rule, but apparently artistically quite actual and highly conscious.

The tip of the brush is thereby pressed onto the paper and pulled behind in the middle, whereby the darkest trace of the line results (see. also Fig. 31 + 32). This technique is a prerequisite of the dynamic ductus. Chiang K'uei (姜夔) describes this process in the "Hsu Shu-P'u" (續書譜):

"Because if the brush is upright, the tip is also enclosed, but when the brush is inclined, the tip comes out (ts'e-feng 側鋒). Once lifted, once lowered, once in the dark, once in the light: Then the spirit comes out in an unusual way, the brush (tip) must constantly remain in the interior of the line, then everything is without blemish. Therefore every dot and dash has three rotations (san chuan 三轉) and each Na-stroke (na/chieh 磔) (down to the right), each Fu-stroke (fu 拂) has three bends."<sup>350</sup>

By raising and lowering the brush during the linear course is in cooperation with the "centered brush tip" created the for the Calligraphic ductus typical rhythm in the alternation of thickening and thinning, i.e. an alternating movement in the form of lines. The centered brush tip (ts'ang-feng 藏鋒) has, as Debon has shown, a figuratively called "gathered life force", which so can exert even stronger in a sudden discharge, and which possesses even larger penetration force.<sup>351</sup> This effect is clear to see in many of Tobey's pictures, who definitely used the "vertical brush holding" and the "centered brushtip".

### 2.1.2.3 The Brushwork

The brushwork is very important for the proper Calligraphic ductus, and therefore also codified since earliest times. The fundamental movement of the brush on the surface of the paper and in the height, so the whole process of its spatial, three-dimensional movement, that generates as a result the lively, Calligraphic, but actually two-dimensional line, becomes apparent from Fig. 34, whereby Fig. 31 + 32 show different variants and partial movements. The brush is placed generally vertically, and in such a way that its tip point into the direction of the movement of the line (Fig. 32 left), then it is pulled in the line direction and somewhat lifted, whereby the line slightly dilutes (Fig. 32 center).

The tip has been thereby turned around and is now pulled behind, only to be at the end pressed again with a slight twist and then lifted immediately, whereby at the end the brush tip rotates again. The round shape and the elastic construction of the brush allow these three-dimensional movements, whereby a pressure gradient on the tip can be found like shown in the drawing. In other types of lines, such as points and cusped lines, hook strokes etc., the basic movements are the same, modified according to the shape and course of the line. The succession of these three-dimensional movements generates the rhythmic alternating dynamic ductus on the two-dimensional surface. This three-dimensional movement and its track also give the Calligraphic lines of Tobey and Masson their effect, a comparison of lines before and after their acquaintance shows a clear difference.

This succession of spatial movement occurs always in a time, in an always successive motion and timing, representing its characteristics, leaves as its essence a trace on the surface, and in addition to the three spatial dimensions displays the fourth characteristic dimension of the Calligraphic process and its resulting line track. The Calligraphy is therefore the only art form, that is able to manifest all four dimensions simultaneously in a two-dimensional residual trace and to illustrate, that each of the dimension types, either the spatial or temporal, are present and immediately effective at any point of the work and at any time, and that it can transfer to the residual line track the visual phenomenal character of their original four-dimensional rhythm of life directly, and can therefore perceived by the viewer so immediately. The time factor of the successive line generation of Calligraphy is not only noticeable therein, that every move is performed directly in the time and as such sensible in the reception, but it is in the Calligraphic line shape and its specific gradient also with respect to its speed, so the motion-time-relation, visually experienceable.

Time and space in a movement of the K'ai-Shu Calligraphy are quite different in relationship than in a Ts'ao-Shu Calligraphy of Huai Ssu ( 怀素 ) or Sun Kuo-t'ing, and this difference is visually immediately perceived, even by unprejudiced and Calligraphic not experienced recipients, so it is not a learnable agreement fact, but immanent both to the art form of Calligraphy as also associated to the human

cognition ability. In this respect, the Chinese Calligraphy differs from all surface-forming and not real-spatial art forms, and was therefore the only means capable of the claims of Tobey, Masson and others in terms of direct pictorialization of fundamental real experiences and ideas, which take place in the real time-space continuum. Since the generation of the Calligraphic line structures is not just an illusion or symbolic figure or symbolizes a real spatio-temporal process, but a residual trace of a spatio-temporal event itself, in which all features of spatio-temporality are included and are visually experienced, they are the experience of an event of universal life, which is mainly characterized by its spatio-temporal dimensions and inextricably linked to the Calligraphic appearance, and therefore the Chinese perception of Calligraphy as "living beings" is understandable, as in both spheres, the life as well as in the work of art, the same fundamental principles of being are effective.

The Calligraphic ductus so is the linear residual trace of a three-dimensional spatio-temporal brush movement and its form-manifestation on a two-dimensional surface, whereby the three-dimensional movement is visible respectively feelable for the viewer's eye in the manner and the course of the residual form. This three-dimensional spatio-temporal movement resonates in the comments of Sun Kuo-t'ing to the brush technique:

"Within each brush stroke one creates changes in the rising and setting (ch'i-fu 起伏 ) with the help of the entire brush (feng-miao 峯杪 ), and within each individual point one brings difference in the technique of bending and turning over (niu-ts'o 衄挫 ), using the extreme brush end."<sup>352</sup>

And Pao Shih-ch'en ( 包世臣 ) adds, referring to the text of the Shu-P'u ( 書譜 ) of Sun Kuo-t'ing, with respect to the ductus of Wang Hsi-chih ( 王羲之 ):

"... (We see that) in places of such turns (the techniques) of the rising and setting (ch'i-fu 起伏 ) with the help of the entire brush (feng-miao 峯杪 ), and within each point one brings the difference in technique of bending and turning over (niu-ts'o 衄挫 ) by using the extreme brush end."<sup>353</sup>

This phenomenon of the conversion of three-dimensional spatio-temporal movements into two-dimensional residual signs was the basis for the special appeal of Chinese Calligraphy in the eyes of Tobey, Masson and the other Western artists. They were well aware of the central artistic importance of the Calligraphic

ductus and its possibilities for their own art, as a remark of Tobey shows:

"I just had my first lesson in Chinese brushwork with my friend Teng Kuei. ... There is pressure and release..."<sup>338</sup>

The Calligraphic characters possess, both individually and in succession through this ductus not only form structures, that indicate the position and direction in the surface, but still in a far greater extent a specific dynamic movement structure, which results through the alternating linear movement of the painting tool between the poles of the lifting and lowering of the brush tip.

In the Chinese Aesthetics some typical features and aspects of the brush work have emerged and terms have been defined, that have been repeatedly used by the critics, and that are essential for understanding the basic Calligraphic characteristics, and whose knowledge is also necessary for the understanding of Calligraphic impacts on Tobey's and Masson's work. Hereby the Chinese formulations will be used consciously. This approach is based on the assumption, that aesthetic criteria and formulations of other cultures can contribute to the understanding of Western Art, especially when this art has received some of their standards, forms and contents from that foreign culture. Conversely, since any assessment and analysis of Tobey's art or other Western artists in the moment, when it comes to the aspects of Calligraphic Influence, procedures and definitions, applies as well methods and understandings of Western Arthistory and Aesthetics to foreign cultures, namely Chinese aspects, which moreover every Western work on Chinese Art does, it is legitimate and necessary vice versa to consult definitions or methodological elements of Chinese Aesthetics and art criticism. This is here, as far as necessary and possible, done in order to be able to illuminate the Calligraphic Influence on Tobey and Masson and others from both sides.

Mark Tobey says in one of his articles, in which he outlines his views on the relationship between East Asian tradition and Western art, from the admiration for the "spiritual power" and the "concentration and devotion", which distinguishes the East Asian Art.<sup>338</sup> This concentration, an absolute precondition of the dynamic Calligraphic creative act, works in the Calligraphic brush or structural brush force (ku-li 骨力) "from the concentration freely out"(ch'en-cho t'ung k'uai 沈着痛快), a terminus, which is closely linked to the quality of the ductus, which contains the abilities "concentrated" and "free out" as coincidentia oppositorum and is a feature of the "spontaneous brush force" (pi-li 筆力), the most important assessment criterion of the Calligraphic brush movement and its quality. Chao Hsi-ku (趙希鵠) (ca. 1170-1242) comments this:

"... When writing keeping the tip centered means, that our hand holds the brush with concentrated vigour (ch'en-cho t'ung-k'uai 沈着痛快). Who is able to

understand the method, by which the calligraphers hold their brush, will also be able to grasp the concept, according to which a praiseworthy painting is without a trace."<sup>354</sup>

The brushstrokes of Tobey and beyond many of his works highly wear this attribute, as they testify extraordinary security and control with large spontaneous freedom. Also Masson linear elements can mostly avail this.

One of the characteristic features of Tobey's paintings is the use of bow and hook lines, as they occur in "Drum echoes" of 1965 (Fig. 33), but above all in works such as "Written over the Plains" and "Targets" and others, whose basic character and artistic force are based on the exchange of a linear movement direction. This change, or change of direction, or difference in the force of the brush movement, is named "tun-ts'o" (頓挫), an important term, with which a pronounced motion or abrupt fracture movement, followed by a movement in the other direction, is called appropriately (Fig. 32).<sup>355</sup> From the mastery of these technical aspects a force results - and the achievement of this force is the goal of every calligrapher - which "penetrates three tenths into the wood" (ru mu san fen 入木三分), which was attributed to the famous calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih.<sup>356</sup>

Most lines of Tobey's works show a dual brush movement, which is usually followed by a pressure and a subsequent decline of the brush pressure and a dragging out of the line. Basically, three movements are in each brush stroke of Calligraphy possible, that everyone must master, and which Tobey also has learned, of which he only two did chose as determining features of his lines:

- Tun (頓), the "self-concentrated movement", the "restainedness", which by somewhat stronger pressure by reversing the brush tip (Figure 32 left) allows a slightly broader line area, usually at the beginning;
- T'i (提), the "take-off", which by the dilution results a thinning of the line, mostly effected in the middle or continuously in straight lines or hooks, but in the extreme comes to a brushstrokes leakage resulting in a tip; as well as
- Na (捺), in which the brush is strongly pressed and the brush tip is pressed apart, resulting in a particularly wide leakage of the stroke (Figure 32 right).<sup>357</sup>

From these basic movements it are the "tun" - and the "t'i"-movement, which mainly characterize the lines of Tobey and Masson, because they are the basic movements of the "Liang / Tso-line" preferred by both of them, on which still will have to be returned, and whose application and variation in the works of Tobey and Masson is explained in detail in Chapter IV. For the characterization of the lifting and lowering movement must be additional seen the movements in the plane of the writing sequence in order to be able to determine the overall

movement structure. In the way of connection of the "hold" (chih 執), "pulling" (shih 使), "turning" (chuan 轉) and "applying" (yung 用) for Sun Kuo-t'ing the special expressiveness of the lines and the whole script is founded, whereby especially the "turning" (chuan 轉), that is the brush movement in the dimension of the writing plane and the compositionary arrangement and the succession (yung 用) are important for the expressiveness (shih 勢).<sup>358</sup>

Starting from the single fundamental line as elementary part of the Calligraphic sign, the artwork of the Chinese Calligraphy is built up successively, step by step and line by line, movement to movement, whereby in the final result of both the process and its sequence, i.e. the successive sequence as well as the simultaneous overall appearance connect in an artistic unit. This method differs very much from the usual procedure and especially the results of the traditional Western Art, which let the steps of the creative process disappear in the final result, something which led further to an already extensively indicated reaction on this and to a liberation and spontaneisation of the pictorial means, and which incited the influence of East Asian Painting and Calligraphy, in which the process of painting remained present.

As still will be seen later on, particularly Tobey and Masson have made this method, which Shih-T'ao (石濤), on whom Masson often refers, designated as "one-line"-method or "one-line"-principle, made an essential feature of their art. Shih-T'ao says:

"This one-line is that, from which all phenomena arise. ... The man should be able to reproduce the whole universe with one stroke, giving his mind clear and well designed expression. ... Vitality and gloss is achieved by circulating movements and curves, and wideness is achieved by inhibiting the movement. The line shoots out and stops; it can be square or round, straight or twisted, as the gravity of the water or the flicker of a flame, all by itself and not considering effect (tzu-ran 自然). In this way it senses the inner nature of the things ... .<sup>359</sup>

That the power and vitality can be achieved, which Tobey sought and found in the Calligraphy, "to capture the restless pulsation of today's cities"<sup>360</sup>, becomes clear by the explanations of Shen Tsung-ch'ien, who counts mainly on exercise and control, which cause the concentration and which are the precondition of the spontaneous development of power:

"The old are saying of a brush stroke that it could 'lift up a bronze tripod'. This is an allusion to the safety of the



stroke and the strength of the line. If one uses a brush, power is (here: ch'i 氣). the most important thing. The strength of the line is due to the power, any of such written row is powerful and alive .... It would be a major detriment, if one were to neglect this basic exercise. ... When you reach the championship, you can be a whirlwind, soar up and proceed unconstrained, with all spontaneity and yet in an adequately form ... If the brush touches the paper, there are only differences of pressure, speed, angle and direction ... Once the mind is detected, it will be expressed all the better, the lower the number of strokes (are), and speed, pressure and angle and direction then arise all by themselves, without error as a side effect."<sup>361</sup>

Here becomes clear once again that, in contrast to the overvaluation of the "freedom" of the pure Automatism by many Informel artists in general, according to the Chinese view only the discipline and mastery of all artistic possibilities create a potential of freedom.

The overall assessment of force, spontaneity and vitality, so the aesthetic value of a work and the content of "spiritual resonance" or "lively spontaneity" (ch'i-yun 氣韻) will be carried out depending on the shape and realization of the three superordinate formal-aesthetic principles: there are the principles of "bone, meat and tendons method" (ku-fa, rou-fa, chin-fa 骨法 - 肉法 - 筋法). It is concerning about the content of structural brush-force (ku-li ) of the character, as well as the consistency of the ink and its distribution with respect to the light-dark values and the transparency, as well as the compositionell structure of the sign and the sequence and the overall appearance. A Chinese text explains these three formal categories in more detail:

"The word 'ku' (骨) refers not simply to angularity and sharpness. One should rather put power in the brushstroke, and while writing have one's brush constantly under control, then none of the vertical and horizontal, the large and small strokes will be negligent. One needs really only to focus on the two concepts of straightness and firmness, then one will be able to understand this. "

As a result of the "bone method" (ku-fa 骨法) the individual strokes, characters and the overall picture get a clearly noticeable "structural force" (ku-li 骨力) in appearance, that is a solid visual structure, from which the course of the force lines

of the brush movement is visible, without falling out of the overall context. This may "Drum echoes" of Tobey (Fig. 33) explain, in which, despite the massive consistency of ink strokes their powerful movement structure is clearly visible, and the interaction of all parts of the picture conveys its vibrant vitality, as well as it is in other pictures the case, such as in "Targets" or "Written over the Plains 2". About the "meat" method goes on to say:

"The meat (rou-fa 肉法) results from the thick- and thinness of the brush and the lightness or heaviness of the hand. But in an even greater extent it is to be seen from the mixing ratio of ink and water. If the water is too abundant, the meat is falling apart; is it not enough, the meat is dry. Is the ink too deep, the meat looks distorted; is it too light, the meat is lean. "

The "meat method" (rou-fa 肉法) refers to the aspects of ink consistency, their light-dark value and their relationship of transparency and materiality; this corresponds in the chromatic painting to the color values and their relationships, interdependencies and interferences. In addition, the ratio of the ink value to the structural-linear force and the motion-dynamics of line composition must be in balance, as it is the case for example in "Drum echoes" of Tobey and in his other pictures; that means, that one feature may not overgrow and not overwhelm the others, but have to be with all the other principles and elements in a harmonious complementary relationship.

This also applies to the "tendon-method" (chin-fa 筋法), with which the compositional context of the movement and the flow structure is addressed:

"As part of the composition (chin-fa 筋法) there are three possibilities: The emerging apart, the reconciling and the restrainedness. What is the emerging apart (sheng 昇)? If in a scroll rows on rows emerge apart, that means, written in continuous line connection, and in a character one brush stroke from the other emerges apart, then the character reveals to the the viewer soulfulness, lifelines, i.e. continuous structure and flowing connection. What is the reconciling (tu 渡)? Is a brushstroke completed, one should over the empty gap be reconciled like flying to the second stroke, without letting go the expressiveness of the brush to a standstill. What is the restrainedness (liu 留)? May the expression of the writing style be beautiful, one must still have the feeling that one could concentrate it even more. May the

brush tip also be sharp-edged, it must in it still be reserved the possibility to gather it together even more. This means the sentence: 'restrainedness' causes a feeling of not being quite completed; discipline creates forms, whose excess is not fully utilized.<sup>362</sup>

Also aspects of the "tendon method" have been applied correctly and imaginatively by Tobey, such as the dynamic line structure of "Drum Echoes" shows, in which the ratio of parallel, opposite and interfering movements and rhythms match, so that tensions and calm, linear dynamics and material consistency are balanced, so that the swinging and powerful vibrating whole of the picture gives the immediate impression of drumrolls having become formative.

### 2.1.3 The System of fundamental Calligraphic Strokes as Basis of Tobey's and Masson's Calligraphic Elements and their Execution (Yung-tzu pa-fa 永字八法) and the Liang/Tso-Stroke

A closer examination of the formal structure of Tobey's or Masson's paintings shows, what has been pointed out several times, that it is primarily a very specific Calligraphic stroke, which both have made the basic shape or the basis element of their visual structure: the Liang-Tso stroke (棕琢) of the K'ai-Shu Calligraphy, a compound of the Liang (棕) and the Tso (琢) stroke (see Fig. 40 - 41), which at Tobey and Masson can pass over into the hook-line (kou 鉤)(Fig. 42) through a double movement. The recourse of both to this Calligraphic element shows the comparison of Figure 40-42 with pictures of Tobey, like "Written over the Plains 2" (Figure 37, detail), a previously (1985) unpublished work from the collection of the Galerie Beyeler, Basel, with the title "Untitled" from 1954 (Fig. 38) (now a private property (2015)), "written" in a very lively Ts'ao-Shu, and "Targets" (Fig. 39, detail), as well as with images of Masson, as "Touch/Entanglement" of likely 1943-44 (Fig. 36).

The "Liang-Tso-stroke" is one sample of various codified basic elements - of which, as already mentioned, there are also others appearing at Tobey and Masson, even though in smaller numbers - so that it is to be entered below briefly. These strokes are all contained in the system of the character "Yung", which means "forever", (Yung-tzu pa-fa 永字八法), which is the most concise and shortest stroke system. In this sign the eight main fundamental strokes are combined, which has already been listed in section 1.

The basic principles of their writing and the resultant particularities becomes significant from Figures 40 - 43, which also show diverse variations, but with which the actual possibilities are far from exhausted. Just precisely this diversity was of particular interest for the Western artists. Of special importance therefrom are, as already mentioned, especially the Liang-Tso-Stroke; the peaked drop-

shaped point (tse 側) and the hook or bow (kou 鉤) (Fig. 40 + 41 right + 42) in different variations, all appear more or less in the works of Tobey and Masson, but are clearly predominated by the Liang-Tso-Stroke ( 棕 琢 ). By André Masson they also are softer than by Tobey, so they have according to Chinese believe fewer structural brush-force (ku-li 骨 力 ), what will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV. These strokes possess through their form and writing style the most distinctive dynamic attributes, because they have the most substantial form of changes, such as sharp tapering or changes in direction and therefore are moved with the most pronounced brush rotations, but also with a relatively strong fluctuation between pressing (tun 頓) and the releasing (t'i 提) of the brush tip.

From the figures 40-43 it is clear that the turning (chuan 轉) of the brush tip is present in almost every kind of stroke and determines their trace and the resulting shape also decisively. The figures also illustrate how the typical Calligraphic ductus, the lively rhythmic movement and change in the line shape, result as a function of the turning and twisting as well as the raising and lowering of the brush tip, and how the lines merge into one another and are related compositionally. Therefrom can be stated again in summary, that the Calligraphic ductus is a residual trace of a brush movement, whose typical attributes result on one hand from the turning (chuan 轉) and drawing (shih 使) on the horizontal plane, on the other hand from the lifting (t'i 提) and lowering (tun 頓) of the brush in the height, and its transcript on the painting-ground.

Despite the codification and a fixed regularity in nature and form as well as in the course of strokes is the normative K'ai-Shu able to carry individual characteristics and different expression levels; however, the overall character is - in contrast to the Ts'ao-Shu - defined by the structure of points and lines, whereby the movements of the brush act modifying, while the opposite is true in the Ts'ao-Shu, as Sun Kuo-t'ing noticed:

"In the Chen-Shu ( 真 書 ) points and lines are that, what constitutes the (phenomenal) form, but movement and rotation of the brush are that what gives the character."<sup>363</sup>

The manifold possibilities of differentiation in the freedom of personal expression are significantly, when comparing calligraphies of Wen Cheng-ming ( 文 征 明 ) (Fig. 44) and Mi Fu ( 米 芾 ) (Fig. 46), both of whom have a strong masculine expression and still show significant differences in style to the writing in the "Goldline Style" of the Sung Emperor Hui-tsung ( 徽 宗 ) (Fig. 45), which at first glance appears refined, aesthetically sophisticated and exaggerated, according to the nature and behavior of the emperor. This possibility of stylistic and expressive differentiation of strokes and characters can also be found in the work of Tobey, who applies the Liang-Tso-Stroke and the hook-strokes not monotonous, but so

differentiated that the elements appear once as the scripture of Hui-tsung and another time of Wang Hsi-chih, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

These correlations show, that the K'ai-Shu standards, despite their clear commitment, permit diverse variations, ie artistic freedom, especially because in it the polar opposition of the Calligraphic style unit of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao Shu is already basically present, what has to be discussed in the following.

## 2.2 Characteristics of the Ts'ao-Shu essential for Tobey's and Masson's Art: Movement and Action

The main interest and the most important point for most Western artists, like Mathieu, Michaux and others, which is also in the work of Tobey and Masson of outstanding importance, and with which the Calligraphy in the West is almost always spontaneously associated, is the movement and the visual linear action. This has even led so far, that it is simply spoken of the Calligraphy, and thus implicitly is meant the Ts'ao Shu (草書), as Mathieu does it, who in his book "Au delà du Tachisme" represents the Ts'ao-Shu explicitly as Calligraphy par excellence.

The essential characteristics of once by shortening and slurring from the Han-time Li-Shu (隸書) and elements of the early K'ai-Shu emerged Ts'ao Shu have a stronger binding between the lines in the characters and the characters to one another, created in a uniform flow of brush movement, as well as a shortening of the form structure and the dominance of the gestural movement, of the procedural action.

The closeness of the strokes to a single continuous one or at least to very few brush lines, that arise because the brush retains on the paper and which is written faster, made the Ts'ao Shu to the prototype of the Calligraphic style. There are therefore essentially the normal Ts'ao Shu and the erratic Ts'ao Shu (K'uang-ts'ao 狂草) in the style of Huai Ssu (懷素) and others (Fig. 48 Sun Kuo-t'ing, and Fig. 90, Huai Ssu), which supported the influence on the Western painting of a Tobey (Fig. 38, detail from "Untitled", 1954), Masson (Fig. 36) and have effected the inspiration of a Mathieu (who is referring directly to it), Degottex and others. Because mainly the principle context or, in other words, a certain level of identity between K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao Shu was seen and defined by very few Western artists - Tobey forms here in practice an exception -, some comments of Chinese artists or aesthetes shall bring here more clarity, to have in the practice of assessing, as it will partly be carried out in Chapter IV, more precise criteria. Sun Kuo-t'ing explains the still today valid relationships of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao Shu and the nature of the latter one as follows:

"In the Chen-Shu (真書) points and lines are that, what constitutes the (phenomenal) form, but movement and rotation of the brush are that what gives the character.

In the Ts'ao Shu, however, dots and lines determine the character, while movement and rotation of the brush induce the shape."<sup>364</sup>

These comments of Sun Kuo-t'ing can take part in identifying the character of the linear elements in Tobey's "Untitled" (Fig. 38) clearly as spontaneous Ts'ao Shu lines, as well as a comparison with a detail of the Shu p'u (書譜) of Sun Kuo-t'ing shows (Fig. 48), where in both cases, the "movement-form" and the "movement-structure" are the predominant feature.

However, the moment of movement, as well as the connection and speed of writing as main features of the Calligraphy are not the sole determining factors for the expression values. After Sun Kuo-t'ing the two opposing writing speeds, fast and slow, have been included latent in one another, like the all-prevailing primordial forces Yin and Yang, and complement each other to a kind of unity of opposites (coincidentia oppositorum): "restrained hesitation" (yen-liu 淹留), which is a conscious self-addressed empathize, and "speed" (hsun-su 迅速) of the brushwork lead only to a balance through the application of the "understanding of beauty" (hui-mei 會美). Also Ts'ai-yung (蔡邕) emphasized this balance:

"With the help of the slowness one senses the beauty (yen 妍), by using the speed, however, the force (ching 勁)."<sup>365</sup>

In contrast to the K'ai-Shu, wherein the substantial is the configuration and the structure of the character from its elements, at the Ts'ao-Shu the process, the movement, the writing operation is important, which determines the shaping and formative feature and the character of expression.

The contrast between constructive-formal aspect contained herein (pi 筆) and the procedural brush technique (yung pi 用筆) is characterized by Pao Shih-ch'en (包世臣) (1775-1855) even clearer:

"It is indispensable that points and lines are embedded into the movements and rotations, so that then the character manifests itself within the formal .... Austere strictness (tuan-chuang 端莊) and balanced straightness (p'ing-chih 平直) are the expression values of the Chen-Shu. The old masters have at each point and line always made sure, that it was running with the movement of the brush tip and the rotation of the whole brush. ... Spiral thither running (p'an-hsing 盤行) and moving agitation (t'iao-t'ang 跳蕩) are the expression values of the Ts'ao-

Shu. In each single drawing (ch'ien 牽 ) and each connection (lien 連 ) in the ductus of the old masters the brush has always been in rotary motion (hsüan-chuan), and yet manifested in itself the spirit of correctness on the paper, so that not even one gran was lost. When in contrast everything is in a wild confusion, this falls directly in the eye. ... because Chen and Ts'ao have the same source, and only emerge through movements of the fingers and changing brush technique."<sup>366</sup>

This characterization of the expression values of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao-Shu partly meet with Masson's remarks about the target of his liberation of the line, especially in terms of the contrast between the form-structure and movement of linear pictorial elements: a tendency, that brought him in connection with the Chinese Ts'ao Shu:

"The line in freedom, the open, the roving line, can now manifest itself. However, it participates in the action of light, obeys it, never becomes the rigid, static line, that captures the forms ...."<sup>367</sup>

The connection of the linear drawing elements and their fusion into larger rhythmic units of movements as a key feature of the Ts'ao-Shu also Chang Huai-kuan characterizes:

"The formal expression (t'i-shih 體勢 ) of an entire character is produced with a single brush stroke. If there are occasionally no direct relationships (lien 連 ) (between the characters), so the blood vessels (hsüeh-mo 血脈 ) are still not interrupted. When you have reached full connection, then the vital force (ch'i-hou 氣候 ) pervades also through separate characters."<sup>368</sup>

The term "blood vessels" (hsüeh-mo 血脈 ) denotes here the appreciation of the in K'ai-Shu secondary principle of the "tendon method" (chin-fa 筋法 ), the compositional context of the process structure, which, in a Ts'ao Shu befits a much larger, constitutive importance as the element, which determines sequence order and interaction of the linear movement forces so, that by it the total expression of the work is determined. This was also the meaning of the formulation Sun Kuo-t'ing's about the reciprocal relationship of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao Shu, looking at the two types of styles as complementary "sisters", of which the characteristics of each

one are included and effectively in the other and vice versa, but each just with different weightings.

The characteristics of the Ts'ao-Shu are in the work "Untitled" by Mark Tobey, to name just one example, outstanding clearly present, and in the outflowing of a dark center (or flowing back into this) it appears in the white lines not only the symbolic appearance, but also the dynamic and vibratory power, that lies in the principle of connection (lien 連) of lines, either through direct transfer of lines into each other, or by space-bridging, "veins" continuing direction forces, which interweave the visible Calligraphic lines with a network of imaginary lines of forces no lesser effective and supporting the expression, which gives the painting the appearance of a vibrating field of elementary electric radiation forces. The main features of the Ts'ao Shu, also in contrast to the K'ai-Shu are therefore:

- The high speed of execution,
- the fusing or merging of strokes and partial elements of the character, and therefrom caused
- the merging of the alternating movement of the ductus with the linear progression rhythm of the flow structure to a swinging overall rhythm that constitutes a new unity of both forming forces, in which the rhythm of the raising and lowering (the movement in height) and the rhythm of turning and twisting (parallel movement to the surface) interfere, and so create a new interference pattern of the whole movement, which can vary greatly from the the K'ai-Shu.

This new interference pattern, the unity of two opposite movements in a unit, causes the great vitality and spontaneous dynamics of Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy for the spectator, which for this reason attracted the Western artists, without being conscious of the cause and mode of origin of these dynamics. Herefrom the importance of mastering the methodology immediately becomes apparent, because such a complex movement structure as the interference pattern of the two-way movement of Ts'ao-Shu - what could be proved experimentally easily - necessitates a capability of coordination of the artistic - handwritten - movement impulses and their motoric skills, which is not naturally present, but can be acquired only in a long process of practice and experience.

The decisive difference of Calligraphy and free Western improvisation (with lines or spots) - and therein lies the strength and attraction of the Calligraphy for the artists of the Informel - is the extraordinary higher amount of sensitivity and coordination of multi-dimensional movements and their nervous and motoric control, whith a simultaneous enlargement of freedom- and potential-volume of pictorial possibilities; this due to an internalization and absolute mastery of all of to the human experience previously potentially accessible pictorial possibilities, which are stored in an unconscious reservoir and at any time and without detour and recourse to the -slowly and disturbing - waking consciousness are immediately available for the artistic action, in a state of highly alert and sensitive consciousness, conditionally directed by a feature, that Jean Degottex has



presciently called "discipline", which is directed "at the same time to multiple skills (facultés)". More therefrom resulting characteristics of the Ts'ao Shu, who were of importance for the Western Art, are:

- the development of new and in the K'ai Shu non-existent partial and complete forms, as composing- and signification-elements
- the connection also of individual characters to character complexes and long movements,
- the greater possibility of expression of personal, character-related, education-related and situational characteristics of the inner man, in the sense of a graphological expression, as a superposition of codified forms, structures and flow rhythms in the manner of a frequency modulation,
- the transfer of expression gravity from the static form structures to dynamic flow structures,
- as a formal impact in many cases, so in particular in the erratic "K'uang-ts'ao" ( ) a tendency to a structural Allover and a linear oscillation-space.

Here is already evident, that some essential formal pictorial innovations, which were always partly attributed to Pollock, had already long been present in the Chinese Calligraphy, and, as will be shown more detailed in Chapter IV, over the Calligraphic effect on Tobey and Masson were introduced into Western Art. The reciprocal relationship of formal internal world of the Calligraphic character, which makes form-structure and movement available in an inseparable unity, was the specific means to do that, according to a remark of Tobey, what the "technology of the Renaissance" did not have available.

### 3. For the Western Art important primary formal Elements and aesthetic Principles of Calligraphy in accordance to the Terminology of Chinese Aesthetic (the Application of the „Six Principles" ( 绘画六法 )

The spontaneous success of painting and writing process befits, as it turned out, an extraordinary importance, and to achieve this by training was the main objective of a Chinese Calligrapher and Painter, which, as Eduard Trier emphasizes, also in the West "always again was demanded by all great artists":<sup>367</sup> The technical perfection and mastery of the tools and the pictorial materials, something that Tobey was aware of, and which he had always emphasized as a need, but which in the Western Art by contemporary painters, also those of the Informel, was sometimes neglected or even ridiculed. But just without this control, which is based on a decades-long training process, which imposes extraordinary requirements of concentration, self-control and power, and from which a pragmatic function of the art of Chinese Calligraphy is depending, the education of the character and the completion of one's own personality in the sense of certain ethical criteria; without this control such spontaneity of the Calligraphic process

with simultaneously satisfying high demands of sufficient artistic results would not be possible.

Inevitably this resulted in a certain intellectual disposition and a thereon dependent method of execution, which can only be a spontaneous version of an existing concept, whereby the bases of the outcome, so to speak, exists as a kind of intellectual structure, as an idea and desire already in one's mind, and which then during the rapid, spontaneous execution of the hand and the visual means, brush and ink, write themselves down and materialize, so to speak, the mental imagery. In the Chinese Aesthetics takes this principle, which is called "concept before the brush" (i tsai pi hsien 意在筆先), an important position.<sup>368</sup> Wang Hsi-chih supposedly already pointed out on the importance of this principle for the creative process:

"At the time of writing, one has to pay particular attention to a deep calm (ch'en-ching 沈靜) and bring it thereto, that the concept before the brush is there, so that the characters come only after the spiritual into existence."<sup>369</sup>

Herein lies a fundamental difference to the creative work of Western artists, particularly to some of the Informel, such as Pollock and others, by whom the artistic process often is a combative confrontation with the media, while in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting a concept is worked out in an almost meditative process before the spontaneous execution. Sun Kuo-t'ing also emphasized this procedure on the basis of Wang Hsi-chih:

"The conception (I 意) will be there first and followed by the execution of the stroke."<sup>370</sup>

The precondition for this is, however, as already mentioned, the technical mastery of the pictorial means and the familiarity (ching 精) and the proficiency (shu 熟), without which the security and freedom of execution never may be reached, because the confrontation with the means else always stands in the way. Also Tobey had recognized this and lets this resonate in his sentence "not stand in the way". Only when this condition is met, there may be a parallelism, even correspondence, between the intellectual and the physical and the performing process comes to an "correspondence of heart and hand" (hsin-shou hui-kuei 心手會歸)(Sun Kuo-t'ing).<sup>371</sup>

This idea, which has a great affinity to the above-mentioned thoughts of Konrad Fiedler of the correspondence between mind and executive hand in the artistic creation process, is also formulated so that "heart and hand in accordance" are

(hsin-shou hsiang-ying 心手相应).<sup>372</sup>

Also to the Painting, which is closely linked to the Calligraphy, applies this principle, which is expressed by Su Tung-p'o (蘇東坡), also called Su Shih (蘇軾), for the Bamboo Painting, which is the link between Calligraphy and Painting, as follows:

"If you want to paint bamboo, you must first be able to imagine it completely. Then take the brush, concentrate your attention, so that you realize it in mind, what you want to paint. Begin rapidly and swing the brush;.. Follow only that what you see directly in front of you (in your spirit), like the hawk swoops down, when the hare appears. If you hesitate just one moment, it is all over."<sup>373</sup>

Each too long hesitation during the act of creation of Calligraphy and Painting can not only wipe out the mental picture, but also causes errors and makes the result unusable, because a correction is not possible with the sensitive materials. The creative process must therefore, as already mentioned, "from the concentration freely come out" (ch'en-cho t'ung k'uai 沈着痛快), be powerful, concentrated and fast. Mark Tobey characterized his pictorial action after learning the Calligraphy as writing:

"It was for me a necessity, to 'write' an image, whether in color or in neutral tones",<sup>374</sup>

a formulation that assumes the visualization of ideas and concepts in the calligraphic writing process, and which stands to the Chinese formulation of the "transcription of ideas or imaginations" (hsieh-I 寫意) in close relationship, which refers both to the Calligraphic as the painteresque process. The underlying idea of a correspondence between spiritual ideas and spontaneous performing hand is pronounced by Sheng Hsi-Ming (盛熙明) in the Fa-shu-k'ao (法書考) of 1381:

"The wonders of brush and ink are in a closely related connection to the highest spiritual understanding (shen-ming 神明). As for the art of writing, so it is the track of the heart (or 'spirit')( hsin chih chi 心之跡). Therefore it has inside its seat and takes shape to the outside; one detects it with the heart and the hand responds (ying 應)."<sup>375</sup>

If the creative process takes place in this sense, the result (as well as the process) is "natural, as by itself" (tzu-ran 自然) and full of balance and harmony (he 和), a

condition and key concept, which Mark Tobey repeatedly emphasized and made it to a constitutive feature of his art:

"The solution is the balance of forces," says Tobey, "which brings the people into a state of mental equilibrium, .... It is a state of mental balance, which has to be obtained, if the man is to move forward in the right sense of the movement."<sup>376</sup>

And elsewhere he says:

"The Chinese have a saying: 'The center of everything is the best'. We have absolutely no sense for this middle ground, because we quickly run either forward or react quickly to the rear, and in this way extremes can be met."<sup>377</sup>

Unlike the Western emphasized and exaggerated appreciation of the ecstatic and often uncontrolled, guided by pure chance creative process, exuberance and extremes are rated lower in the Chinese Aesthetics, as Tobey has found out, and ranked far after the Chinese ideal of harmony and balance, which, however, does not demand a rigid symmetry of the structure or composition, but means a living balance of the moving elements, which for themselves may be and shall be contrary, but which, however, as a whole strive to compensate. We encounter this balance always again in the Calligraphy, such as the ratio of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao-Shu, and the therein contained ratio of rational, semantic-symbolic sign-aspect to the gestural-residual sign-aspect, or in the rules of composition, which here are not to be discussed in detail.<sup>378</sup>

The basis of these aesthetic principles of Calligraphy and Painting is the conviction, that the process of creation of Calligraphy is in accordance with the universal being and the creative forces, whereto Sun Kuo-t'ing remarks, that such writing "agrees with the wonderful being of nature" (tzu-ran chih miao-you 自然之妙有). A "naturally" or "by itself" taking place creative process is achieved by Sun "without conscious, rational and purposeful activity" (wu-wei 無爲), which causes that the Calligraphic work is in accordance "with the work of nature" (tzu-ran chih kung 自然之功):

"Things take the form respective to their nature, and correspond to the principle of creative creation (ts'ao-hua chih li 造化之理)."<sup>379</sup>

Han Cho (韓拙) (around 1121 A.D.) confirms the correlation, the parallelism, even identity of the acting, creative forces of art and nature:

"The Painting (and Calligraphy, author) are brush lines, and these brush lines show the movements of the heart. It goes back to before the still unformed, and one senses it only beyond the border. It stands in accordance with the creation process of nature and has the same driving forces as the Tao. By abiding to their laws, one spreads all the various forms, by swinging the brush one sweeps across thousands of miles, so one sets the forms with the help of the brush, and by using the ink a distinction of light and dark from each other is made."<sup>380</sup>

In the term "create" or "forming" by Han Cho resonates the view, that the real meaning and the essence is to be sought "beyond the picture" (hsiang-wai 像外), because "the largest image (the Tao) is without forms" (TTCh. 41). From this, the motto often quoted by Tobey derives, which dates back to Su Tung-p'o (蘇東坡):

"Who asks for similarity in paintings, proves that he is close to a child yet"<sup>381</sup>,

and which corresponds with the opinion formulated by Chang Yen-yuan (张彦远), (815 - ca.877), that in Calligraphy and Painting it concerns the expression of the universal spirit and the representation of forces, which manifest themselves in the artistic law of life, the "ch'i-yun" (氣韻):

"They (the ancients) searched (to expand) their paintings beyond the (mere) form similarity (Hsing-ssu chih wai 形俗之外), by endeavoring for the spiritual response (ch'i-yun 氣韻)."<sup>382</sup>

From this remark Chang Yen-yuan's results the most important aesthetic concept of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy at all, which at the same time is the highest artistic goal: the achievement of a "life-like mood and atmosphere", or of the "spiritual resonance", often referred to as "spirit of life" or "living spontaneity" (ch'i-yun shen-tung 氣韻生動).

The revival of the artwork with "spiritual resonance" (ch'i-yun 氣韻), with "living spontaneity", is equally sought by Tobey as well as Masson as a result of the acquaintance with Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics. Tobey expresses it like this:

"Not the search for beautiful draughtsmanship or subtle color, perhaps no color, but directness of mind will be a new viewpoint for us, as the arts in East and West grow together more closely."<sup>383</sup>

André Masson, who identifies the concept of "ch'i-yun" with the "essential", remarks:

"For an aesthetician of the 5th century (Hsie Ho 謝赫) the main thing is: the vibrations of the mind, which give life to the movement, and set the passive imitation of appearances immediately limits. ... The painters of the Far East, the painter of the essential, was in the great moments of his history filled with this idea. ... The painter gives a sign and he is understood. Because he has recorded 'the tone of the spirit, which animates the movement of the soul', and blows it into the mind of the viewer."<sup>384</sup>

This concept of "ch'i-yun" and its idea emerged for the first time explicitly with Hsie Ho (謝赫) around 490 A.D. in his foreword to the "Ku-hua p'in-lu" (古畫品錄), the so-called "Six principles of Painting" (Hsie Ho Liu-fa 謝赫六法), which apply equally to the Calligraphy, and which have become China's most important criteria of artistic production.

In addition to the mastery of the Calligraphic ductus therefore these six principles - and especially the first two - became also the most important criterions for assessing the Calligraphic Influence and for the distinction between mere "inspiration" by the application of certain aspects (such as the speed at Mathieu) or actual influence and assimilation of all essential elements (such as Tobey and Masson):

- 1) creating a lifelike mood and atmosphere or spiritual resonance (ch'i-yun sheng-tung 氣韻生動)
- 2) structure formation by forceful brushwork resp. development of structural power in the application of the brush (ku-fa yung-pi 骨法用筆)
- 3) forming according to the nature of things
- 4) appropriate color
- 5) creating a harmonious painting composition in accordance with the desired total expression (ching-ying wei-tzu 經營位置)
- 6) mastery of the tradition and its development (mo-hsieh 模寫).

From these six terms is according to the Chinese conception, and that should be approved here, the first, "ch'i-yun sheng-tung", i.e. the "spiritual resonance" or "life-like mood and atmosphere", undoubtedly the most important and also the highest principle of Chinese Aesthetics. The difficulty of this principle is, that it is hardly detectable rational, and therefore is dependent on the individual intuition. On the second place stands the assessment of the structural development of power (ku-fa yung-pi 骨法用筆). On the concept of "ch'i-yun", its meaning and translation, which is quite difficult, there have long been controversial opinions<sup>386</sup>, which are not to be further explained here. The word-for-word translation is "ghost-rhythm-movement-life", whereby in the general meaning lies the emphasis on "spirit", which manifests itself in a living movement, corresponding to the already mentioned universalist conception of an "all-spirited" (allbeseelt) world, which more or less was shared by Tobey, Masson and other Western artists.

In the artwork, may it be Calligraphy or Painting, is now created by the movement and force of the brush, such as illustrated by the already above mentioned explanations from Shen Tsung-ch'ien and Shih-T'ao, depending on the capabilities, the talent and the experience of the painter, also a kind of life movement and spirit of life, generated in a process analogous to nature and transmitted by the artist into the work and by the work to the viewer. "Ch'i-yun" is a criteria for the overall assessment of the work, and is often, such as by Sun Kuo-t'ing replaced by the "structural vitality" (ku-ch'i 骨氣)<sup>387</sup>: the fact and the ability to create a "living" or "animated" work, to create a work which contains on its own "vitality" or "breath of life" and emits it to the viewer. This is pretty good elucidated by a remark of Kuo Hsi (郭熙) (around 1080 A.D.):

"It depends not so much of the big and small things, or on their quantitative distribution, but one should focus on what is important. If one does not hit the essential in a single bite, the spirit (of the whole) (ch'i-yun 氣韻) is missing."<sup>388</sup>

Here the conclusion is already included, which we encounter at André Masson (and implicitly also at Tobey): that the Ch'i-yun and the Essential are something identical, that it is that, which gives the sense, the meaning and essence to all things behind their appearances

Now that the principles and elements of Calligraphy, which are essential for the Calligraphic Informel, have been worked out, should in the following still briefly be explained the relationship between Calligraphy and Painting, because the artists of the Calligraphic Informel (as well as already some of their predecessors) often refer alike to the painting, such as André Masson, whose relation to the Calligraphy had begun with the knowledge of Chinese Painting, and because most of the Calligraphic principles also apply to the painting and represent on this little

detour a further impulse. Calligraphy and Painting are according to Chinese believe closely linked with each other, they are branches of the same tree.<sup>389</sup> This is on one hand caused by the equality of the artistic materials and means, especially the use of the same brush and the ink; secondly, the possibility to obtain - after the "one-line principle" of Shih-T'ao - through minor changes and modifications of the Calligraphic brush strokes pure pictorial, artistic forms from the already forms associating characters.

The third connective element is the common aesthetic, that combines both, as already Chang Yen-yuan ( 张彦远 ) in the "Li-tai ming-hua-chi" ( 歷代名畫記 ) explained:

"The writing grew out of the need to express thoughts, and the painting grew out of the wish to present appearances. ... So we see, that writing and painting are closely related, although they have received different names."<sup>390</sup>

Shih-T'ao also confirmed this common root:

"... The proficiency can be proved in Calligraphy as well as in painting. For these are related arts with the same task. The one line is the origin of all Calligraphy and Painting."<sup>391</sup>

The connection of Calligraphy and Painting becomes - also in formal terms - particularly evident in the Bamboo Painting, one of the so-called "Four Noble" (Szu chun-tzu 四君子) (see Fig. 51 compared to Fig. 40 and Fig. 41....). Bamboo is the leading form of Chinese Painting, as its forms are like the Calligraphic strokes and features of different types of Calligraphic styles.<sup>392</sup>

"The brush must be quickly (hsing-pi yao k'uai 行筆要快), the stem of the bamboo is like the Chuan-Shu-Style (kan ru chuan-shu 幹如篆書), the trunk portions are like the Li-Shu-Style (chieh ru li shu 節如隸書), the branches are like the Ts'ao-Shu-Style (tzu ru ts'ao-shu 枝如楷書), the leaves are like the K'ai-Shu-Style (yeh ru k'ai-shu 葉如草書),<sup>393</sup>

says a Chinese text. As is apparent from a comparison of Hsu Wei's ( 徐渭 ) (1521–1593) bamboo painting (Fig. 51) with the Calligraphic strokes from Fig. 40 and 41, it is clear that both in fact are based on equal forms and principles; it are



particularly the extended point and the left oblique stroke of the Calligraphy, which correspond to the leaves of the bamboo - its most striking formal element.

Other contexts of Calligraphy and Painting shall here not be discussed any more. The example of the bamboo as a leading form of the painting is also significant insofar, as will be shown later in more detail, as André Masson, among others, about his acquaintance with bamboo paintings (of Wu Chen 吳鎮) (1280-1354) etc. in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts gained his first practical experience in Chinese Calligraphy, as a comparison of some of his works with a picture of the Boston Museum will show.

It is hereinafter merely referred with a short attention to some aspects of Calligraphy, which are also inherent in the Ch'an-Painting, which has Masson and many others inspired - and in many cases regarded as the Chinese Painting, by Masson and other artists of the Informel, a not quite permissible, but understandable simplification. Thereby do not so much interest the general relationships, that are based on the teachings of Ch'an-Buddhism, which was already initially discussed in detail, but only a few aspects associated with the Calligraphy, which found their way into the art of the Calligraphic Informel also in this way, while the general effects of the Ch'an and its paintings, such as at Rothko, Reinhardt and many others do not belong to the problem of the Calligraphic influence.

The Ch'an-Painting is like the Ch'an-Calligraphy a means and expression of the desire for enlightenment and experience of world and being, in the way of an intuitive holistic insight. Its effectiveness is based on the Chinese conception, that an image contains and can represent like a mote of dust the whole world and its laws. The Ch'an-Calligraphy (Fig. 53) and simple Ch'an-Symbols (Fig. 52), such as a circle or that like, just show the possibility of immediate free, powerful expression at its best, as long as they are based on the principles of Calligraphic Aesthetics and their internalization (which in the late period often no longer was the case, especially in Japan). For this reason, just to mention an example, André Masson was able to know Calligraphic principles and qualities by seeing Ch'an-Paintings and landscape paintings in Boston at the Museum of Fine Arts.

These qualities include features such as the suggestive, abbreviating, fragmentary representation, which is based on the absolute mastery of the Calligraphic methodology, as well as an infinitely deep and penetrating experience of the spirit, the eye and the hand. Everything is indicated by a few powerful and concentrated radically expressive brush strokes, and yet in these indications include all the essentials, and thus captured the spirit (ch'i-yun 氣韻). It is, as Confucius already expressed it, "with a corner shown the whole", what has manifested itself in the works of Ma Yüan ("One edge Ma") and Hsia Kuei in painting. Unlike in the Informel Painting in general, which also searched the sketchy, spontaneity, imperfect, random, the absolute mastery of the means and their possibilities and the great freedom of expression merge here and emerge apart of each other,

whereby the not shown, due to the inherent capacity of human beings to the perfection of the seen, is completed. The prevalence of the mastery of the Calligraphic means is confirmed by Seckel:

"Such a forming, that requires the most secure grip and the clearest presentation and yet requires a complete mastery of representing elements with a perfect holding of the matter, is only possible out of extreme concentration and meditation, and the painting of the artist is to summarize the essence of an object, such as the inner face, to the vision of the painter in the highest perfection, pushed through ability to freedom, through knowledge to the spontaneous act. The things to be delineated are here in a supported by all personality forces, but targeting the superpersonal, arising from a freely playing sovereignty, but by the strictest objectivity and discipline restrained representation seized in their innermost being and interpreted profoundly by brief, but striking unerring hints; they get a tremendous materiality and density, act simultaneously as well as transparent and spiritualized".<sup>394</sup>

These statements of Seckel clearly confirm the repeatedly presented thesis, that only the absolute mastery of the pictorial means - and this is a fundamental difference between the General Informel and the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, as Tobey and others, who have learned the Calligraphic method - causes the potential, on which the artistic freedom and spontaneity can freely unfold.

The great freedom and spontaneity of the Ch'an-Painting and the Chinese Painting in general is based not least on an attribute of the Calligraphic ink line, which Shih-T'ao with his so-called "one-line"-method denotes: the ability to create, unlike the often stiff and only modeling or contour-building lines of the Western Art, directly, immediately and without any additional tools shapes of all kinds out of themselves, and yet to be precise and to be able to contain and express a wide variety of pictorial qualities - picturesque and graphically, dynamic and calm, linear and flat, strong and delicate – at the same time or simultaneously and often with a single brush stroke and a single movement of the hand. Therein lies the special relationship of Calligraphy and Painting and its strength, which impinged the art of Tobey, Masson and some other Western artists and thereby helped to achieve similarly a maximum of expression despite reduction of form complexity, a method of which Masson said, it can "go to pure effusion".<sup>395</sup>

As immediate and abbreviated such a Calligraphic or pictorial work is, the higher is the degree of consciousness contained and conveyed in it. However, if

the Ch'an-Painting removes too far away from the methodology of the Calligraphy and overemphasizes the role of chance - and undervalues the internalized spontaneous steering, as it was the case with most of the artists of the General Informel interested in Zen-Painting, which also often relied on the Japanese Zen-Painting of the late period - the pictorial balance is shifted so that random results also dominate the overall expression. This was also the case, when Tobey about 1957, a short time, probably to vent himself, pounced on Sumi-Inks (Fig. 54), of which he said:

"It was like a kind of fever, .... Maybe I freed myself by painting in this way, or at least I believed it. Maybe I wanted to paint without thinking too much. I do not think that I was in the Void, that nowadays quite popular place."<sup>396</sup>

The "fever", that Tobey had acquired in the form of Zen-Paintings or Sumi-Ink, however, subsided very soon, because he realized that in them the harmony, the balance, which as a part of his nature that he could not escape, was missing. Here, too, lies an effect of the Chinese Calligraphy, which ultimately is always looking for the balance of both power spheres: the conscious and the unconscious, in a super-conscious synthesis of both. The "secret" of the Sumi was soon obvious:

"The mystery of the Sphinx has been revealed, all was exhibited. But was it really? Today it looks out into the world, a tired 'image', which one sees too much; and the secret is no longer there anymore"<sup>397</sup>

The lack of balance between the two forces let Tobey therefore very soon return to the Calligraphic method of the "White Writings".

#### 4. The Relation of Art and (universal) Life in Chinese Calligraphy and its Relevance for the Calligraphic Informel Painting

The question of the relationship to life concerns in China as in the West on one hand the ratio of one's own individuality and personality to the external reality, on the other hand the way of the experience of being and the position of art in this process, and the type of confrontation and encounter of man and the world, whereby it in China concerns the subordination into the universal nature, not the opposition, as in the West. This problem therefore applies equally to all artists, but with different weighting in Calligraphy, Calligraphic and General Informel. The following comments therefore apply primarily to the Calligraphy, and starting from it, the possibilities of the Calligraphic Informel.

#### 4.1 Calligraphy as an Expression of Personality

Calligraphy as an expression of personality and individual characteristics of psychological and emotional conditions was already known to Sun Kuo-t'ing in the T'ang Dynasty. In his view, the nature and the mood effective in the time of writing express themselves in the characters, their kind of writing, its ductus and its quality: the sign of internally hard people are rigid and without softness, the characters of a hard man are rigid and have no gentleness, the characters of a serious person have rigor, those of a indulgent person are soft and tender. The possibility of personal expression has been confirmed by the European Graphology, even though with some differences in the kind and the methods of interpretation<sup>398</sup>. In the Chinese art criticism Kuo Jo-hsu ( 郭若虛 ) (about 1075 A.D.) comments on this issue:

"Everything we say and do, think and feel, is determined by our heart. How much more this is true with the Calligraphy and Painting, which arise from the heart and mind of the artist and will be captured on silk or paper. Even the signature of a man reveals his character. How much painting and calligraphy can thus help to reveal the level of spirit and character of the artist. Master Yang says: 'words are the voice of the heart, Calligraphy is the art of the heart (i.e. the inner world of man). The way, in which language and painting announce themselves, reveals the noble man or the fool'."<sup>399</sup>

The Chinese Calligraphy and its Aesthetics have already very early recognized a connection between art and life, which in the Informel Painting of the West has been propagated as an experience opportunity: the manifestation and formation of individual personality attributes of the artist in the nature of the technical, gestural-processual performance, whose detection in the works is possible for the viewer, and which thus becomes a manifestation of a life processes.

An important difference to the General Informel must again, in spite of the fundamental affinity, recorded here: the Chinese Calligraphy has, similar to the procedures of Western Graphology, a basic benchmark as a measuring instrument for individual forming features, on the basis of a comparison of the codified standards and their respective individual expression in the work of an artist. This is generally not the case with the Informel Painting, because the arbitrariness of not codified form options etc. hardly allows a distinction between coincidence and personality traits. Although certainly personal characteristics are entering into the appearances of images of the Informel, they do not allow in any way a differentiation of individual characteristics in the same width as in the Calligraphy,

which lets the personal characteristics to the experienced eye relatively clearly visible in terms of a frequency modulation of a base frequency.

For the Calligraphic Informel this has affects at least in that way, that, based on the Calligraphic strokes, which have partially preserved their codified appearance, due to the different application and combination with other elements such as color, materiality or transparency, as well as through a differentiation of strokes in terms of width, weight or movement, certain individual characteristics can be seen out, such as between Tobey and Masson. Tobey's lines and their use are full of force, yet are sensitive and delicate, the connection to color and materiality is restrained, their main feature is a combination of clear pictorial order with sensitive, but great structural strength and spontaneity in a harmonious balance. Masson, however, shows a softer line style, which is more material or voluminous and also combined with strong colors; attributes of a less balanced, more impulsive and more to the emotions and instincts devoted character, also in the artistic field. This comparison is possible in so far as both have adopted the same basic element from the Calligraphy, namely the Liang-Tso-Stroke. The opportunities of the spectator, to detect individuality- and personality-traits in the picture, are thus potentially in the Calligraphic Informel, due to the codified elementary forms and their expression, greater than in the General Informel. This again is due to the influence of Calligraphy.

#### 4.2 Calligraphy as a Medium of Meditation, as Expression and Experience of a transcendental Being and as Subordination under the Universal Nature

Meditation is in the Calligraphy and Painting of China not only an external means of preparing the artistic process, so not only serves the intellectual and spiritual concentration, but it is attributed, due to the specific Chinese Philosophy, as already mentioned, the ability of cognition-enhancing effects, with which it is possible to accommodate to the universal forces and laws prior to and during the writing process. Both have been confirmed by André Masson. To prepare the meditative state he says:

"The great way: pure collection, perfect contemplation before work and during the execution: you are no longer there, or if you like it better:.. Your 'I' is blown away by the wind of the cosmos ... In the wake of serene contemplation, that brings about the emptiness, comes the vision."<sup>400</sup>

The expression of universal forces and beings in the Chinese - Calligraphic and pictorial - artworks is also admired by Masson:

"This 'raw' implied branch .... That is unveiling of the invisible struggles, that split the universe, which is also a symbol of the transience of human existence in this 'world of dew' and the eternity of the ephemeral. This ... brushstroke 'is' the spirit of the branch, the other the spirit of the nascent flower .... "401

Masson's comments on the meditative contemplation do not sound much different from those of Yu Shih-nan (虞世南) (558-638 A.D.):

"At the time you intend to write, you have to restrain the sensory activities of seeing and hearing. Turn off the thinking and concentrate your mind; If one makes one's heart 'straight' and brings one's vitality to harmony, then one coincides with the miraculous."402

Chang Huai-kuan (张怀瓘) confirms the correspondance of universal and artistic creation forces:

"This is accomplished without (conscious, purposeful) activity (wu-wei 無為) and it is in accordance with the workings of nature (tzu-ran chih kung 自然之功). Things take the appropriate shape of its kind and so correspond with the principles of creative creation (ts'ao-hua chih li 造化之理)".403

Shen Tsung-ch'ien also sees, like André Masson and other Western artists after their penetration into the world of Chinese Aesthetics, universal forces in the brushstroke at work:

"All phenomena in the universe are manifestations of some ideas .... Because the universe is formed by the accumulation of spiritual forces, and this spirit (ling-ch'i 靈氣) is reflected in the shape and nature of mountains and watercourses, ... It should therefore also be possible to the human mind, to express the spirit of the universe through the brushwork. The painting is merely a branch of art, but it has the creative power of the universe."404

The creative forces of the artist and the movement of the brush so bring the essence of things, such as Shen Tsung-ch'ien further notes, to expression, and the

expression of this being in the variety of the essential, the "spiritual resonance" or "lively spontaneity" (ch'i-yun 氣韻). From these remarks of André Masson and the Chinese Aestheticians becomes significant, that it is primarily not about the external appearance of things in China's understanding of reality, but the forming forces and the inner being. Under "reality" one understands the essence of the things, which is the essence of that, what reveals itself through the polar elemental forces, which appear as Yin and Yang in the reality and as a "spirit of life" or "lively spontaneity" (ch'i-yun 氣韻) in the Calligraphic and pictorial work. Capturing the reality means detecting the forces, confrontation with the reality is for the Chinese Calligraphy the experience and the collecting of the forces of reality in and through the Calligraphic work. If the "resonance of the spirit" in the "living spontaneity" of the execution (ch'i-yun 氣韻) is visible or palpable in a Calligraphic work, this goal has been reached. The immediacy and spontaneity of detecting and expression of the forces is again only under the condition of a complete mastery of the means and methods accessible, since alone this can cause that the hand does not "stand in the way" and can respond to every inner impulse without hesitation.

#### 5. Analysis of the formal Elements and Aspects of Calligraphy important for the Informel Painting

In order to understand the interest of Western Informel Painters for the Calligraphy in more detail, it is necessary, to summarize the main formal and general elements of Calligraphy, as far as they are of interest to Western art.

##### 5.1 Dominance of Lines and Points: living/space-plastically Lines as main Elements

The most important element of the Calligraphy as well as the entire East-Asian Art is the line, which may occur in the Calligraphy mainly as a point, horizontal lines, vertical lines, diagonal lines, as wave-, hook- and curve-lines, whereby wave- and curve-lines are especially for the Ts'ao Shu characteristic.

The main feature of the Chinese lines, which for the Western art of Tobey or Masson and beyond was formally so stimulating and developmental formative, and wherein a difference to all the lines of the European tradition lies, is their vitality, their momentum, but above all their autonomy and space-sculptural physicality.<sup>405</sup> The previous explanations of Calligraphy have already confirmed the Chinese justification for the view of the liveliness of Calligraphic lines, but also from the purely Western perspective, i.e. excluding the universalist thinking of China, a much larger life of their own as the Western lines is to be conceded to the Calligraphic lines. This life of its own is caused by the dynamic, rhythm and the momentum of the line course through the special space-plastical ductus.

The discussion of the specific brushwork showed, that the Calligraphic line is a residuum of a three-dimensional, i.e. spatial movement, which remains as a trace on the surface, and which preserves essential characteristics of the three-dimensional movement and physicality in the two-dimensional expansion and appearance, thus transmitting them to the viewer, who is perceptively integrated into the Calligraphic movement.

In every part, every form, even in the point, in each course is in it the spaciousness of its movement inherent and visual experientable, because it has substantiality through the ink a phenomenal physicality. It is autonomous, because it nearly never acts as a boundary or dividing line, an essential feature of traditional Western lines, and because it describes or defines almost never three-dimensional, illusionist physicality, but has itself physicality and this is represented by its own forms, often with the means of a single stroke and a single movement.

Needless to hold here on the other hand an example of European serving lines and subject-related lines against, which are generally known. Incidentally, the above findings of diversity also apply to the difference to abstract lines, such as those of the Geometric Abstraction, which as well as those only have a serving function, and even if they are exempt of that, they are wire-like, mechanical-mathematical and have no life and physicality of their own. On the other hand, an analysis of the living Calligraphic lines, which are hardly grasped rationally, through these attributes is complicated. The essential formal elements of Calligraphic lines, which determine the character of a script, are the gauge or thickness of the brush stroke, also the alternating ebb and flow of the line width in their course, resulting in their physical form, and which is caused by the pressure differences, i.e. the vertical movement of the brush (lifting and lowering, twisting and turning). The rhythm of the ratio of surface motion to the amount of height movement of the brush gives form and ductus, and thus the character of the writing, it is also the transmission mechanism for the individual mood and character of the writer. So there are real phenomena and states, such as the weaker or stronger pressure of the brush tip and the distance or proximity of the brush and the hand to the surface, and especially the manifestation of the third dimension on the surface in the course of time. The Calligraphic brush technique is the only artistic technique, which can effectuate the projection of the three-dimensional space so vivid onto the surface (without self being space).

## 5.2 Gestic Signs

The gestural-procedural sign aspect is another important feature for the Calligraphic Informel of the West. Because of this basic phenomenon of the expression of personality and life situation is, at least in principle, also in the Western writings, and - at least intentionally - to be found in the General Informel,



it has been for the Western artists not something incomprehensible but quite tangible. In addition, the emblematicness has as such, as an alternative means of representation and expression for the Realistic as well as the Idealistic Art and the existing varieties of Abstraction another dimension and alternative means of the experience in art, and it was, as signs due to an almost magical power contained in them, already have always been of interest for the Informel Painting. The symbolic-semantic character aspect of the Calligraphy was for the Western Painting, in contrast to the gestural-procedural aspect, due to a lack of common understanding, of minor, purely associative evocative importance.

### 5.3 Gestic, Rhythm and Movement: the Movement as basic creative Element

The fundamental attribute of the projection of a three-dimensional movement onto the surface was, as mentioned above, the central element of the Calligraphic expression, to which all other aspects are subordinate. The element of movement is particularly decisive in the Ts'ao Shu and leads, particularly in the Kuang-ts'ao ( 狂草), the "crazy" or erratic Concept Script, to a reversal of the relationship between form-structure and movement to its elements. At the K'ai-Shu the character and expression are more defined by the shape and arrangement of the elements, as Sun Kuo-t'ing noticed, so through their materiality and order; the movement is mainly included in the directions of the lines and their relationship to each other, as well as in the sequence of strokes.

At the Ts'ao Shu the moving element is still complemented by rhythmic forces of wavy lines and curves and arcs, as well as by centrifugal and centripetal forces of partial elements or the whole character, especially the bow lines and curves, which also encompass space particles spatially, from whose relationship to the line dynamics another motion moment emanates. The structure of the sign is thereby a more or less complex reference system of movements, the lines lead as carriers of forces through their interaction in the body of the character to an endlessly variable interplay of forces. A specific movement course and showing most typical and repetitive elements can either be the decisive stylistic feature of an artist, which is dubbed and varied by temporary influences. The shift of emphasis in the expression of the structural elements of Calligraphy from the K'ai-Shu to Ts'ao Shu Sun Kuo-t'ing had already described:

"In the Chen-Shu (K'ai-Shu 楷書) points and lines are that, what constitutes the (phenomenal) form, but movement and rotation of the brush are that what gives the character.

In the Ts'ao Shu, however, dots and lines determine the character, while movement and rotation of the brush induce the shape." (Shu-P'u 書譜, line 103-107)<sup>406</sup>

Even rhythm and movement of Calligraphy show some recurring basic elements. One, for example, the occurrence of a parallel rhythm, so the repetition of the same or similar direction tendencies of the line course, alternately in different directions. Another common phenomenon is the occurrence of intersecting or crossing line courses, that bring the characters through an opposition of the visual elements and the movement forces to a tense balance. Wavy lines cause in the directions alternating force movements, curves and loops have centering effect, but, caused by strongly embracing curves, still develop centripetal and centrifugal movement forces.

"Through the visible in-itself-closed of their motion sequence and their 'physicality', loops are particularly suitable as components and constituent elements in the Ts'ao-Shu"<sup>407</sup>,

means Goepper to the element of movement; they give the characters in addition to their linearity and physicality still an element of the surface space-physicality. Another major force distribution is that, which is caused by lines in a specific direction and not very strongly differs from the initial direction. This overall mark includes a term, which is determined by the direction and strength of these forces.

Phenomenal appearance and expression of the character are therefore largely determined by a diverse differentiated and flexible procurement system of directional centric and rhythmically alternating force-gradients, which are complemented by the simultaneous projection of the height-movement in the physical line on the surface, wherefor the Calligraphy Huai Ssu's , Fig. 50, can give a distinct example because of its enormous dynamics. By connecting characters and character groups these movement forces are then continued in the area of the surface.

#### 5.4 Structure and Composition: successive Flow Structure and Moving Focus (Allover and Moving Focus)

The consideration of the compositional and structural conditions of the Calligraphy shows at once, that two essential features of the art of Tobey, which also appear with Masson as well as in Pollock's and other Informel art, are already included in the Calligraphy as original and fundamental formal attributes, which have enabled the linear flow-structure and its movement: on one hand the "All-over"-structure of linear elements covering the entire surface or the image , and dependent this the lack of a fixed viewpoint, which in contrast is replaced by a permanent, the course of the lines following eye movement, that means a so-called "moving focus".

Before discussing it, however, some more general structural and compositional

characteristics should be mentioned, which for the sake of Western art just were as important. As Sun Kuo-t'ing had found already, the determining and structure-forming compositional element of the K'ai-Shu is the shape and direction of their lines and their resultant arrangement on the surface (an imaginary square, according to tradition). The composition of the character is thereby also determined by the ratio of the resulting empty space between them and the line form. As a general compositional principles must be observed:

- avoidance of similarity and recurrence of line shape and line directions,
- avoiding uniformity,
- avoidance of symmetry.

The asymmetry is important, it is even a basic feature of East Asian Art and had already caught the attention of the Impressionists and their successors, which had not eased up to the Informel. Since the symmetry tends to rest, immobility, the deliberate asymmetry of the composition is an early recognized means to avoid stiffness and to enhance movement. The asymmetry and dynamism of the composition, however, have always, both in the individual characters as well as in the sequence, to subordinate themselves to the general principle of East Asian Art and worldview: the principle of Harmony (ho 和), which does not mean symmetry or equality or rest, but which is always understood as a dynamic equilibrium.

The theory of composition of Calligraphy knows a large number of rules and principles, which we can not discuss here, but which always take into account the principles of dynamic vitality and harmonious balance. An important compositional element for the structure of the entire sign relates to the so-called sign center, which does not mean the geometric center, but the center of gravity and balance point of the centrifugal and centripetal forces of line movements, the surface-compartments formed by them, and the force directions. Its position is crucial for the stability or instability of the character, which is generally seen in an idealized way, exists in an unstable, highly sensitive aligned balance.

Besides the gravity-center of the character, the overall structure and weight distribution of the physical lines and the surface parts they produce play a role, they too have to become integrated, so that the sign remains in an unstable but harmonious balance, which as final compositional feature has to bring its forces and mass weights in accordance with the other characters and the overall picture.<sup>408</sup>

An important feature of Calligraphic structure and composition, not explicitly mentioned by the Chinese Aesthetics but important for the Informel Painting, is the connection of successive flow structure in the course, direction and ratio of linear elements and the synesthesia of the surface-spatial elements on one hand and the simultaneous structure of the character on the other hand.

In the K'ai-Shu this ratio is more balanced than in the Ts'ao Shu, which clearly is

dominated by the successive structure of the movement sequence and so determines the overall appearance. Nevertheless, the dialectic of successive and simultaneous structure is also present here, another interesting fact for Western art. The frequently asked question in Western art about the hierarchical or non-hierarchical structure of the work is therefor to be seen in another definition of hierarchy as in the West. While it there relates to the hierarchy of three-dimensional space scaling and orientation of things in the perspective space, which of course is missing in the Calligraphy, it is here, especially in the Ts'ao Shu, a different kind of hierarchy given in terms of a principally defined motion sequence of linear elements, whose successive sequence can indeed be partially varied, but whose basic hierarchy is fixed. A to Western understanding something even nearer hierarchy is also given by the composition of the character and the relation of the character groups to their balance-center, but the center is not produced by more or less objectively visible forms, as in the West, but by the invisible, but equally significant, partly objectively comprehensible force-lines and power-relations. Therein lies a fundamental difference to the traditional Western painting, and in this sense the Calligraphic Art is also non-hierarchical, just like the Western Informel Art, because both lack the constructive perspective hierarchy.

The Calligraphy has instead principally, as already mentioned above, an "all-over structure", important for the painting of Tobey, Masson, Pollock and others, and directly connected and dependent with it a so-called "moving focus", which belongs to the new features of Informel Painting. Unlike the one fixed focal point of traditional painting, which was compositionally continued partly to the non-figurative painting, the spectator's viewpoint in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting was not fixed, but followed in the Calligraphy the movements and rhythms of the brush lines and caused by this space crystallizations and form complexes.

The linear flow structures also cover potentially the whole surface and fill it in extreme cases with their exceptionally excited line movements, such as at Huai Ssu, Sun Kuo-t'ing and others. Therein the allover-structure of the new image-order as well as the moving focus is enclosed, and were acquired by Tobey and Masson. Pollock, in connection with whom mostly is spoken from "allover" and "moving focus", has taken over these formal aspects only after Tobey and under his influence in the years 1943 - 1946, as well as by the participation of Masson's art, which at that time, also under the influence of Chinese Calligraphy, showed the beginnings of a moving focus and allover. Since there were virtually no other sources in the context of Western art development of these two important aspects of the new image order, and because the referring back to the East Asian Art is relatively clear detectable, it can be assumed that the new formal aspects of the "allover" and "moving focus" were introduced under the decisive participation of the influence of Chinese Calligraphy into the Western Informel Painting, a fact that so far hardly has been taken into account. The two main persons, who were as pioneers active for the penetration of this new image order, were Mark Tobey and

André Masson, who both were under the direct influence of Chinese Calligraphy, and who also took part in an influence on the development of Action Painting, particularly of Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists on one hand, and the Informel Painting of Europe on the other hand. The relations of Tobey and Masson to the Abstract Expressionism and the European Informel Art are well known and are also not within the ambit of this work.

Tobey has experienced these characteristics of the Calligraphic structure for the first time in 1922/23 and then deepened in 1934 by his lessons with Teng Kuei in Shanghai and his exercises in Japan. So it is understandable, that his discovery of the ability of linear movement for form and space formation, which he made in 1922/23 during his education at the Cornish School one evening, as he traced and recorded the flight of an imaginary fly in a self-portrait (Fig. 55), (the drawing was, however, only in 1962 carried out in New York), under the influence of the just learned Calligraphic laws and principles, which already contained the formal elements of the "allover" and "moving focus" for a long time, came to the development and subsequent consistent application of these pictorial elements to a new and completely different picture order. In the year 1935, so about a year after his trip to East Asia, "Broadway Norm" (Fig. 56) was created. A comparison of this work with the sketch "Personal Discovery of Cubism" (Fig. 55) of 1962 and a Calligraphy of Huai Ssu (Fig. 57) makes it clear, that Tobey's "allover"-structure and his "moving focus"-principle mainly were caused, developed and influenced by the influence of Chinese Calligraphy.

## 5.5 Light

The element of light is in the art of Calligraphy of secondary importance, in contrast to the Chinese Painting, where it does play a certain role and is an image immanent intrinsic light, generated by the shades of the ink and the empty ground. Nevertheless, the influence of Calligraphy in the Calligraphic Informel in terms of the light plays a role through the mediation of transparency as the light factor, and the factor of linear movement, which is the effect of transparency and light, the white lines at Tobey, in whose works light plays a special role, strengthened and supplemented. Also at Masson can be found a not inconsiderable number of works with a figure-ground relationship, in the kind of the white lines of the "White Writing" of Tobey.

Transparency as a light-factor of Calligraphy is a function of the ratio of ink and water, in some cases of the brush movement, such as in the Fei-Pai-effect (飛白), the "overflowed white". Ink and water are related to each other like the primal forces Yin and Yang, their mixing ratio determines the light effect of the ink trace. The "Hua-fa yao-lu" (畫法要錄) describes this relationship with

"Pi-mo hsiang-sheng" ( 筆墨相生 ) = "brushwork and ink complement each other."<sup>409</sup>

The in Western art history important ratio of illumination light, sacred light and image intrinsic light need not to be discussed in more detail in this context, as in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting neither an illumination light nor a sacred light have existed in an essential sense, but always a picture immanent intrinsic light - relatively little paid attention to and analyzed - was simply present. In the Calligraphy this results in a reciprocal relationship of light and dark, Yang and Yin: when written directly with brush and ink, the brush traces were dark on a bright, lightbearing ground; but in the course of time also a great fundus of Calligraphy compilations had been formed, which show the scripture in white or light on a dark, mostly black ground, which goes back to old stone rubbings. Here the lighting effect goes out from the lights of the Calligraphic white lines, as in the works of Tobey and Masson. In any case, it must be said that the lighting conditions in Chinese Calligraphy are marked by a strong light-dark contrast, which significantly again appears at Tobey or Masson, either in one or the other (reciprocal) relationship, but which also can be observed in one or the other artists of the Calligraphic Informel. It is also important, that the Calligraphic Influence over the awareness in the handling of chiaroscuro caused even greater transparency, which is effective as light factor in the picture again, and what is particularly noticeable with Tobey, who preferred the lighter and more transparent processable tempera painting, and who thus, in conjunction with the white base color and consistency of the linear Calligraphic ductus could create extremely strong, vibrant light effects.

The similarity of the reciprocal light-dark ratio of Chinese Calligraphy, such as a sample script by Wang Hsi-chih (Fig. 59) to the light-dark conditions of Tobey in "Untitled" from 1954 (Fig. 38.2) (and others ), or with Masson in "Acteurs Chinois" or "Venice" (Fig 58) is striking and suggests, that for both of them in formal terms an inspiration from Chinese sample scripts were of considerable importance (like Fig. 59), and has contributed to form this from the General Informel quite different consequence of the reciprocal light-dark relation. Further image comparisons would confirm that.

The role of the linear Calligraphic dynamics with respect to the light at Tobey and Masson (but also Graves and some others) is based in the amplification of the original lighting effect of the bright or white color in the linear elements, which through the smallness in cooperation with an extremely high frequency series of light-dark impulses - from bright to dark lines or of bright lines on a dark background - creates a more or less vibrant overall effect of the image light, since the viewer perceives this high frequency sequences no longer as the individual jumps or oscillations, but - depending on the distance -as a vibrating continuum. The original line dynamics, caused by the space-plastic ductus, plays an important

catalyzing role, as a uniformly bright ground - and this can also be found at Tobey and therefore allows a comparison - is lower in the overall intensity of the light, as the continuum of the variety of elementary bright Calligraphic particles. Herein, and in the greater sensitivity for transparency and in the strong light-dark contrast in the sense of a reciprocal ratio of polar opposites, lies the effect of the Calligraphic Influence with respect to image light. Other contexts and the specific lighting conditions and their significance for the image statement will be discussed in detail further in Chapter IV.

#### 5.6 Image Ground and linear Movement as Elements of the spacial Effect: indefinite Space, linear Oscillation Space and the Principle of "Multiple Space"

The space in Chinese Calligraphy is not, as in the traditional Western painting, a "hole in the wall", as Tobey's friend Teng Kuei described it, but, as at Tobey and Masson, the event field for the artistic action and the fluctation of linear brush-movements and their forces. Tobey's remarks on the pictorial space partially fits to the Chinese calligraphy:

"I try to extend the space into the depth, not on the surface. In my paintings I extend the outer space to that extent, until I can intrude into the interior space, with which I want to bring life into the picture. Through various movements, opposite directions, I can create the illusion of large dimensions. ... sending my formative elements out in all four corners. Everything moves,...."<sup>410</sup>

These statements identify the space as an event field of emanations from the inner world and their appearance in the artistic movement, which fills the whole painting ground with life and movement. This conception of space of Tobey is a consequence of the Calligraphic impulse.

The room is in Chinese Calligraphy formally a function of the (usually evenly empty) pictorial ground and the linear character structure and its dynamics. The image area is for the artist because of his universalist way of thinking at the moment of writing (and painting) the event space, which through the projecting of the three-dimensional brush movement in the consciousness of the artist is no longer felt as a surface, rather than a surrounding-space of the brush movement, the empty pictorial space area in the artistic consciousness as the acting emptiness of the Tao, whereby this notion can by the viewer of the work certainly be retraced. Formally the room sensation in a Calligraphy is supplemented by the dynamics of the lines and their forms, which by their course, their rhythms and vibrations, their parallels and overlaps and by the forms of surface parts bounded by them, as by

the kind of their Fei-Pai-effects ("overflowed white") produce room-compartments. The origin of Tobey's and Masson's idea of space and modes of their visual spaces is to be found here. These effects give the viewer an impression of closeness and distance, depth and flatness, over and under one another, of movements parallel to the painting surface and into the depth in and out - a process that Tobey characterized with:

"by various movements in opposite directions, I can give the illusion of great depth".<sup>411</sup>

As a result, it never provides a holistic and consistent impression of space, but a permanent vacillation and a back and forth swing of room-compartments. In the Calligraphy the perception of space also is defined substantially by the dynamics of the linear motions, moved rhythmically and unstable, in the type of a linear vibration-space, prevailing with Tobey and Masson, which in frequency and origin of the Chinese Calligraphy becomes confirmed by Masson:

"The space is for the Asian painter neither outside nor inside, it is a game of forces -. It is pure becoming, undeterminable."<sup>412</sup>

In extreme cases, such as in the area of space-filling and in the linear movements sweeping K'uang-ts'ao ( 狂草 ), the image space surface may be completely filled with intersecting and interfering swinging movements, and the resulting visual "allover" of the linear vibration transforms the empty surface space per se into an oscillating continuum (see Fig. 48 Sun Kuo-t'ing and Fig. 57 Huai Ssu). Here lies the origin of the "Allover" of Tobey and Masson, who have given this formal attribute further to Pollock, as has already been pointed out. Since the Calligraphic signs are an expression of an inward movement of the artist, so the by them animated image space as the medium, in which they exist, is necessarily a real symbol of the human inner space, in which the internal forces manifest themselves, "a magnetic field", as André Masson says, "where magnetic forces meet and entangle".<sup>413</sup>

The feature of the "multiple space", which exists in a variety of different partial compartments or room-compartments, and which build themselves up as a whole from their specific partial phenomena, an important formal feature of the art of Tobey and partly Masson; this element of a new picture order, as previous explanations have already made clear, is already present in the Calligraphy. Due to their weight as a linear-figurative drawing element in relation to the empty space around, the 'surface-compartments' occupied by the respectively characters perceptually get a 'gravity bulge', which comprises the direct vicinity of the sign or signs with little bulges and separates the optical sensation of the whole room a



little, similar to the curvature of the space around the matter, which Einstein verified in the nature. This applies to the K'ai-Shu, but especially to the Ts'ao Shu (see. Fig. 57), where this effect is exacerbated and clearly through the merging of the line movements and the resultant, by circles and crossings of the linear motion separated and partitioned compartments or surface-compartment, are formed, which nevertheless form a unity with the whole space. This characteristic of the Calligraphy has also been taken over by Tobey and Masson, and received by Tobey the term "multiple space", which characterizes it as an essential element of the new image-order of the Calligraphic Informel.

### 5.7 Time: successive Flow Movement and Permanence of the global Movement

Lionel Feininger noticed the aspect of time in Tobey's paintings:

"Like poetry and music his pictures contain the moment of time, they unfold their content gradually".<sup>414</sup>

Temporalness and time-shape, " which belongs to the most difficult philosophical tasks" because " the time evades each immediate access", is in Tobey's paintings also partly a function of the Calligraphic Influence. In the Calligraphy time is substantially connected to or almost identical with the process and the movements of the linear elements. Time-form or time-shape are identical with the movements of the linear elements in the form of calligraphy; its rhythm and dynamics, by whose nature the essence of Calligraphic time is determined, also determine the perception of time by the observer. The viewer has almost never only the impression of duration or persistence, of a non-flow, i.e. the abolition of the time, but always first an impression of the linear sequence of movement and flow. The course of the writing process and the in it expressing itself time-feeling of the artist is transferred as sensation to the viewer.<sup>415</sup> Time in the Calligraphy is time-experience and exists in the experience of the viewer.

Through the close interweaving, almost identity, of flow motion and time per se is in the Calligraphic works, where the flow movement of the main elements is also a quasi-identity of the course-shape and space-shape on one hand<sup>416</sup>, and time-shape on the other hand given, as Klages also formulated generally.<sup>417</sup> The rhythmic time-shape of Calligraphic Art is depending on the time experience of the viewer, whose predominant feature is the motion, the time-course.

On the other hand, the oscillating overall field and its continuum forms by the incessant recurrence of movements, that are never finished and never lead anywhere towards a goal (as in the hierarchy of the traditional image-order on a focus or a center), an element of permanence, persistence and timelessness, because the perception is focussed on the overall vibration, which is not seen any more in succession, the succession of the process, but experienced simultaneously and can

abolish the perception of time. However, this is also not a lasting impression, but jumps back to the renewed perception of the moving-course, so that ultimately a permanent oscillation between time perception of the movement process and timelessness in the perception of the permanence of the movement and the swinging of the total field determines the phenomenon of time in the Calligraphic works. As will be seen later, this time response has been received partly in the art Tobey and Masson.

### 5.8 Control of the artistic Means as Basis of creative Liberty

Unlike many artists of the General Informel, which sought the greatest possible speed and spontaneity without any control, the awareness of the need for mastery of the pictorial means was given to the artists of the Calligraphic Informel, who had seriously dealt with the Chinese Calligraphy and all the options, grown on the experience of its historical development. Their comments and explanations about give us information.

So had, as already mentioned above, Degottex seen the difference of pure Automatism and Calligraphy therein, that the Calligraphy presupposes "control options obtained by exercise" and requires "a masterly skillful execution", which addresses... "at the same time different skills".<sup>418</sup> Also André Masson's statement, that he could not follow the pure Automatism a long time, as it often brings only insignificant results, and that one could indeed "obtain by the unconscious strong remarks", "but not without selection"<sup>419</sup>, is aimed at the same problem, whereto Tobey adds:

"Work without any artistic and spiritual prerequisite, such an attempt is doomed to fail. Because if you do not have a model ... you can not create a work. ... For where is without the tradition yet a scale?"<sup>420</sup>

Herein lies a difference in the understanding of the so-called "creative void", which in East Asia by no means is meaning the absolute emptiness and freedom from "ability", as it is understood by many Western artists - whose professional title is in close connection with the term "able" - but which is the fullness of the all-encompassing acting reality-ground (Tao), and only proves to be an emptiness from the targeted, owning the "will to power" (Masson), the dominating will. Taking this into perspective, it is obvious that only the absolute mastery of the visual means, materials and all its possibilities in the sense, that they do "not stand in the way" (Tobey), allows a maximum artistic freedom and creativity, while allowing the greatest possible spontaneity. Freedom is also understood differently, namely not as freedom from everything, but as freedom for everything, on the basis of an internalized expression potential. The decisive difference of Calligraphy

and free Western improvisation so lies in the much higher sensitivity and coordination of multi-dimensional movements and their nervous and motoric control, by mastering the means, with a simultaneous increase of the directly available freedom and potential-volume of pictorial possibilities in the field of gestural-actionell and non-constructive painting. These options would not have been achieved without the influence of Chinese Calligraphy.

### 5.9 The Role of the Spectator

In Chinese Calligraphy the viewer had always played a greater role than in the traditionell Western Painting, namely, first as an observer in the sense of a connoisseur, and on the other hand as a contemplative artist himself. The role of the observer in connection with the Calligraphic works of art was from the beginning considered to participate actively. Here André Masson's remark is true, which said:

"A painting is the product of an imagination: that of the painter. It addresses another imagination: that of the viewer".<sup>421</sup>

The Chinese calligrapher wrote his works in the mind of potential criticism of an interested and even skilful audience, he so had the social resonance, that often lacked the Western Informel, and he was also aware of the competition for the championship in the execution, as well as the ever-present criticism of works of his predecessors in the imaginary museum of history, which had a positive impact on the critical faculties of the audience and on his own ability and was a stimulus to make it even better. The scale, which Tobey mentioned here, was that what had been achieved to date, whose ubiquitous measure viewer as artists were conscious of and in every moment and permanent, deliberately or unconsciously, used for comparison, whereby the codified rules and the mastering of the methodology and their consequent opportunities for both, artists and viewers, were always available and effective. This was not a restriction, but on the contrary, by the incentive to competition, to make it even better, a drive to free development.

And it was also, in contrast to the feelings of the artists of the General Informel, who unceasingly were exposed to the pure chance and the chaos of a lot of confusing impulses and impressions, which in some cases - as in Wols, Pollock etc. - also widened to a tragic development of their lives, a viable base, which the mankind needs, due to its disposition in the conquest of the often chaotic diversity and complexity of the world, in order not to lose its footing, and which nevertheless gave it the freedom for creative associations and further developments of the fundamental tone. The role of the observer in the Calligraphy therefore is also determined by a balance, namely the compensation of pure reception and creative participation, of freedom within the order.

## 5.10 Ch'i-yun (氣韻): Measurement and Expression of Creativity and Liveliness of the Artwork

Ch'i-yun (氣韻), the "spirit of life", the "lively spontaneity" or the "resonance of the mind", which is identical to the "essential" of André Masson, is not only a metaphysical given, transcendent something, but if a certain degree of internalization of Calligraphic Art and its principles has been reached, the "mastery", which Degottex mentioned, a feature of Calligraphic expression, originality and creativity of the work, and for the viewer a means of assessing the level. Ch'i-yun is the degree of intuitive experiential spontaneity, dynamism and liveliness of Calligraphic works and corresponds to the "immediacy of the Spirit" at Tobey. The difficulty to understand and grasp the Ch'i-yun rationally, conceptually and analytically, can therefore be overcome in addition to these general rules only through a supplementary examination and analysis of the relevant art, and this is now done in the following chapter, concerning the Calligraphic Influence at Tobey and Masson, whereby first will be entered on Masson and finally on Tobey as the main representative of this influence phenomenon.

Before we begin in chapter IV, a Chinese verse shall here illustrate the even after Chinese conception not small difficulties in determining, formulating and understanding the "ch'i-yun":

"Difficult are the "Six laws of painting" (Hsie Ho Liu-fa 謝赫六法); the most difficult is the 'Echo of Spirit' (Ch'i-yun 氣韻): Before the brush work comes the thought, beyond the Lines lies the wonderful thing."<sup>422</sup>

Despite these difficulties is to state, as had been shown, a certain understanding of the "ch'i-yun" by André Masson, which he designated by the term of the "essential", or based on the translation of French sinologists, as "tone of the spirit, which animates the movement of the soul".<sup>423</sup> His pictures also show, such as "Entanglement" (touch), a strong motion and "lively spontaneity". Masson has here tried to integrate Calligraphic lines and methodology into his art, in order to overcome such restrictions he had seen in the pure Automatism, and thus found in the connection of cubist and surrealist origins with the Calligraphic Art a new style, as a comparison with his works from before 1942 / 43 shows. The development and the features of this new style shall in the next chapter be studied briefly.

#### IV. Analysis of the main Calligraphic Impulses and Characteristics in the Art of Tobey and Masson

##### 1. The Calligraphic Influence and the Understanding of the Ch'i-yun (氣韻) in the Concept of the Term „Essential“ by Masson

The previous explanations made it clear, that Mark Tobey is that artist of the Western Calligraphic Informel painting, who was most deeply influenced by Chinese Calligraphy and has dealt with it and the "six principles" most intense. Besides Tobey Masson has also, after 1943, engaged himself a long time with the art, aesthetics and philosophy of East-Asia<sup>424</sup>, but his works and his principles, views and remarks, written down in several publications, show that the importance of Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Aesthetics were for him not insignificant, but that the principles and techniques of Calligraphic Art were comparatively not mastered so deeply and comprehensively by him as by Tobey; especially the treatment of lines by Masson shows a relatively lower familiarity and mastery of the typical Calligraphic ductus. Nonetheless was the Calligraphic Influence on Masson of considerable importance for the development of his work, and beyond it for the origin and development of the work of Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists in the USA and the Informel Painting in Europe, as it has already been confirmed by Clement Greenberg in the case of Pollock.

The influence of Chinese Calligraphy on Masson can be seen under four aspects, which each should be addressed in the following shortly, whereby the explanations, due to the aforementioned comparatively low mastery of the Calligraphic means and methods, are not necessary in the same detail as with Mark Tobey, which can be regarded as the main representative of the Calligraphic Informel Art.

First of all the Calligraphic Influence on Masson is to be seen in connection with the use of the "Automatism". After that Masson relationships and knowledge of Chinese Philosophy and general aesthetics, which primarily relate to Taoism as well as to the Ch'an-Buddhism, are to be discussed shortly. Following the consideration of the intellectual bases, the integration and implementation of linear elements of Calligraphy into Masson's works is to be considered, and to be pointed on the relationship between the concept of the "essential" at Masson and the "living spontaneity" (ch'i-yun 氣韻) of the Chinese Calligraphy. Before discussing these aspects of the Calligraphic Influence, a short overview shall below provide some brief general remarks.

##### 1.1 General Remarks on the Calligraphic Influence

André Masson, whose art is also called an "Abstract Surrealism" (Haftmann), can due to certain formal aspects also be counted to a certain extent to the Informel.

Like Baumeister, Hartung, Bissier and Tobey, Masson had early sought to give the sign in Western painting a new meaning, wherefore he received, among others, a stimulation from the expressive power of the Chinese Calligraphy.<sup>425</sup>

"The colored élan", Masson wrote, " must connect to the discovery of new ciphers: characters, ideograms, which awaken an unexpected consciousness of man, who is conquering his universe".

In the character Masson found the possibility to integrate his "excited humanity" into the image.<sup>426</sup> The character of Calligraphic origin leads him on one hand to brace the surface in terms of a structural allover, similar to Tobey; on the other hand to subjective symbolic significance, symbols of dynamic forces of growth and decay, which move the world in Masson's view, and which he let take effect in a constant metamorphosis, a central concept of his thought and his art. Masson tried like Tobey, Baumeister and others to involve viewers in the creative act, to activate it:

"A painting is the product of an imagination: that of the painter; it addresses another imagination: that of the viewer",

and he is concerned to,

"depart from the everyday life to hear the unheard, to expect the unexpected, to be with the unspeakable in connection, in short: to break the reality".<sup>427</sup>

Masson's art is, in the words of Haftmann, "the image of an excited humanity", which only comes to speak in the work. His imagery comprises in the works inspired by the Calligraphy sensitive stroke figures and emblematic line-assemblations, which have the psychographic sensibility and sensitivity of Chinese Calligraphic characters; long dance lines, short commas, often written in an automatistic ductus of the hand.<sup>428</sup> This sign- and line-world is a direct reflection of the inner world of Masson, the "anatomy of his universe," as he calls it himself.

The knowledge and a certain mastery of the Chinese Calligraphy have inspired the formation of these signs; images like "Acteurs Chinois" of 1955 (Fig. 60) and others show that quite clearly, because they are made up from lines, which can not deny their origins from the Chinese Calligraphy, and which form sign figurations, that are both similar to Chinese characters, but on the other hand are used for figurative purposes, but always bear a certain resemblance to Chinese Ts'ao-Shu lines. Even the Title of "Acteurs Chinois" takes this relationship into account.

The influence of Chinese Calligraphy has by Masson entered into the development and application of the linear Automatism, because the ability of the Calligraphy, to be spontaneous writing and convey inner conditions and movement, touched unmistakably with the nature of Automatism. Moreover, Masson has also adopted the belief and the aesthetic ideas, which underlie the Chinese Calligraphy. This becomes particularly clear in his book "An Art of the Essential (Une peinture de l'essentiel).<sup>429</sup>

The "essential" (l'essentiel), which has preliminarily been linked to the "spirit of life" or "living spontaneity" of the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics, is according to Masson for the Chinese a kind of existence, by which the unity and the merging into universal life is sought, for the Westerners, however, a kind of acting.<sup>430</sup> This finding led Masson to the remark:

"The most beautiful line is interrupted - wiped out -from the lure of an extraneous filling, which is to reconcile the all too casual observer. The spirit of the painter: the form itself. Eternity of the ephemeral. The breeze, shivering at the tip of a leaf, that is our life."<sup>431</sup>

The aesthetics of Calligraphy is well known to Masson, the "spirit of life", which is transmitted through the mind of the painter or calligrapher using the brush to the ink line, its shape, its course, its dynamism, is also ephemeral and essential. But the creative emptiness of the primal force Tao<sup>432</sup>, the principle of "naturally being realized" (tzu-ran 自然), the "élan vital", the insertion in the natural course of events, but not the use of violence against nature, the meaning of the fugitive (ephemeral), which is more real being as the dead, unchanging thing, the contemplation of the meditation and the inner recollection before the creative act, the assignment to the natural laws of the universe.<sup>433</sup>

All these principles of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics were known to Masson, and have also consciously or unconsciously been integrated in addition to the purely technical handling of the brush and the Calligraphic lines. This also applies to the concept of space, to which he noted:

"The space is for the painter of Asia neither outside nor inside, it is a game of forces - pure becoming, It is undeterminable."<sup>434</sup>

Painting is for Masson therefore "magical wandering through the room, the painter himself becomes room". The principle of natural self-fulfilling Masson formulated so:

"Some people say, we can let the nature speak. And the others: Let the nature speak through us."<sup>435</sup>

Concerning the Calligraphic ink line, which he made to his own, Masson says:

"The line in freedom, never free enough, never open enough, is movement. When closed, it is only an outline, academically."<sup>436</sup>

The dynamic Calligraphic line as an embodiment of acting forces is for Masson the main expressive medium of his art, whose goal he outlines in the following words:

"One scoop nothing from the outside world, unless to exhaust it. In this debility alone, from this point on the emptiness governs, to find thus the impetus for a work - and the main argument is, to overcome the world of appearances and to reach the essential."<sup>437</sup>

But the essential in the Calligraphic brushstroke lies in the incarnation of elemental forces:

"This brushstroke is the spirit of the branch, this other the spirit of the emergent flower."<sup>438</sup>

## 1.2 The Calligraphic Influence and the Use of the Automatism by Masson

### 1.2.1 The Fundamentals

The importance of the linear Automatism for the emergence and development of Informel Painting, particularly the Action Painting, is well known, and this connection has already been pointed out. Masson played in the developing of this automatistic process the most important role, since he used it most consistently, critically examined it and then changed it under the influence of the Calligraphic impulses, because the pure Automatism did not appear sufficient to him. The conversion of the original Automatism by the Calligraphic Influence in his American period, and especially the so-called "Asian" period, which lasted from about 1947 to 1960 and shortly thereafter, demands a brief consideration of the characteristics of Automatism and a comparison of its affinities with and differences to the Calligraphy, to make this process more clearly.

The beginnings of Masson's art were determined by Cubist influences and his connections to the Surrealist movement. On this shall here only as far been referred by a few brief remarks, if the correlations of Automatism and Calligraphy, whose interaction is one of the main features of the Calligraphic Influence on Masson, makes it necessary.

In Masson's art we find influences and stimulations from the Cubists, the



Dadaists, the Surrealists, the 'Pittura Metafisica', by Poussin, Delacroix, Monet, Cézanne, but mainly Turner and the Chinese Art<sup>439</sup>; initially, however, dominated the Cubist structure, as it can be seen for example in "The wing" of 1925 (no Fig.), a strictly abstract formal structure, in whose image the figurative references are integrated. But even in this image and others, that are still connected to this style, two important trends of Masson's art express themselves: on one hand the tendency to a dramatic, tragic art, standing opposed to Tobey, and which is determined by pathos, anxiety and suffering, and the other, a curvy game of the contours or limitations, in linear dynamics and rhythms bounding the forms, which can set the whole picture in motion and thus stand out from the more static Cubist pictures. This linear trend should become independent soon and lead to the "Automatism" and form the basis for the Calligraphic Influence.

Masson could with the Cubist method, which was built on forms, not reach the directness and spontaneity of expression, that he sought, he could also not translate his quite aggressive, destructive and erotic impulses, that dominated him a lifetime. So he began to draw more and more, because also the technique of oil painting stood in the way of the spontaneity of finding images, and this eventually led him to a persistent testing of automatic techniques, that he developed particularly in linear drawings, such as in the famous work "The birth of birds" from 1925 (Fig. 62), executed with pen and ink, so a more sensitive medium than oil, but he also tried to execute on canvas in oil, as "Children of the Islands" from 1926 (no Fig.) shows.

The for the Calligraphic Influence basic method of finding images was the linear Automatism, which Masson researched some time, and from which later benefited artists such as Pollock and the Abstract Expressionists. The Automatism of Masson based especially on the application of linear elements, wherein already exists an affinity to the Calligraphy, and which brought about a great technical and expressive freedom of pictorial means. Masson has addressed the linear Automatism used by him on various occasions:

"The material: some paper, some ink. Psychic: You have to create emptiness in yourself; the automatic drawing, that takes its origin in the unconscious, appears as an unpredictable birth. The first graphical rainfalls on the paper are pure gesture, rhythm, incantation.... Result: pure spots (mess). This is the first phase. In the second phase, the latent present image claims its right. Is it detached, one stops. This image is only one track, beachcombing"<sup>440</sup>

In his book "An Art of the Essential" Masson gives further explanations to this artistic process:

"Allow me now to talk about strange things. (An attempt to retrieve the state of mind, in which the first episode of automatic drawings began, ...).

- a) The first condition was to establish the emptiness. the spirit freed from all visible bonds. Entry into a state, which is close to the trance.
- b) surrender to the inner turmoil.
- c) the speed of handwriting"<sup>441</sup>

This linear Automatism described by Masson, from which he soon turned away in favor of a re-integration of control, that led him to the Calligraphic Influence, originally had as main content the "dictate of the unconscious", as the formulation of the Psychic Automatism by Breton in the Surrealist Manifesto described it. The Automatism should make the world of dreams true and, at Masson, the experiences of the subconscious mind without any control by reason and experience immediately visible. Eduard Trier emphasizes the importance of the linear Automatism for the graphical expression:

"Substantial in the sense of the Surrealists is ... the self-experience of the soul, whose unexplored depths in the 'écriture automatique' spontaneously will be brought to light and to the informed reader make hidden secrets of the subconscious of man known. In no other art form could the automatism, the fruitful discovery of the Surrealists, be applied so authentic, as in the abstract or representational drawing.. While in the painting and sculpture the controlling mind can not be so easily 'absent', nor the processing of the material allows a continuous automatic design, is the pen, as has been repeatedly also said regardless of Surrealism, for some artists a fine-reacting, so to speak directly connected instrument, which, comparable to the cardiograph, transfers the internal vibrations as graphic signs onto the paper."<sup>442</sup>

The relationship of the automatic drawing to the writing Masson has also verified:

"It is also a kind of writing. What I used to do was to throw a line on a white sheet of paper. What you see appear, are movements of undoubted grace. Every time."<sup>443</sup>

The automatic drawing was for Masson the appropriate means to resolve and to overcome the previously solid construction of the cubist image order:

"We were all obsessed with the desire to go beyond the 'plastic integrity' of Cubism ... I remember that Miro said.. 'I will break their guitar' ".<sup>444</sup>

Masson's painting is here the method of inquiring the searching for images in the unconscious, which set signs for the conditional, found images, which appear in front of us, out from an inner psychic movement as partly figurative, partly abstract signs of a previously unknown, spontaneously emerging mythology. In the works incurred in the automatic writing process is one of its aesthetic as well as artistic principles represented in pure culture: the metamorphosis, the principle of formal conversion, which has a certain affinity to the process of Calligraphy and the Chinese Ideology and Aesthetics.

The pure linear Automatism so thoroughly had demonstrated its usefulness for the dissolution of the solid image forms and the creating of a livelier and more spontaneous imagery, but it lacked, as Masson soon noticed, the possibility of guiding and artistic control, that only turns out the really artistic moment, the true creative capacity in opposite to the pure coincidence, which, as we have seen, is the case in the Calligraphy.

The attempt, to bring the element of ordering and therefore creative control into the automatism, Masson describes as follows:

"In the beginning .. I let me only guide by my impulses. Gradually I also consciously see in the characters, that I have set, hints of figures or objects. I let them become more prominent, I try to work out their meanings and also try now to bring order in the composition."<sup>445</sup>

Masson maintained the pure automatic drawing technique only for a short time, because he soon noticed its shortcomings, which handicapped him in his goals:

"Concerning the probation possibilities of this prestigious method of Surrealism," says Eduard Trier, "soon among the Surrealists themselves came up doubts. So André Masson, who in 1929 departed from the by André Breton leaded movement, expressed that the Automatism only delivers the materials and the technology."<sup>446</sup>

Masson confirmed these doubts about the usefulness of this method, if it will be used solely:

"I have dedicated myself to it with passion, but only during a very short time, because my faith to the pure Automatism has gone very quickly."<sup>447</sup>

Despite these doubts about the retaining effectiveness of the automatistic method, whose shortcomings Masson then later sought to compensate by the means of Calligraphy, Masson's first drawings, such as the "Birth of the Birds" and others, have because of their freedom and spontaneity been of great importance as inspiring stimulator for the further development of modern painting.

### 1.2.2 The Relation of Calligraphy and Automatism: Affinities and Differences

Between the influence of Chinese Calligraphy and the method of linear Automatism at Masson exists so far a relationship, as the already existing interest of Masson for linear handwritten expression and image-finding brought about his openness to the influence of Calligraphic aspects, and helped him to overcome the soon by himself recognized one-sided uncontrollability, based on the moments of the random and irrational emanations from the unconscious. This possibility is due to some differences, but also affinities, which the Chinese Calligraphy has compared to the pure Automatism.

The affinities between the linear Automatism and Calligraphy include the fact, that both are based on the use of lines, and these lines have a certain freedom and dynamic spontaneity, which does not underly the control of the intellect, but write themselves down spontaneously and without conscious reflection on goals and intentions. Moreover both have no service function in the sense of illusionistic or imitative imitation of the phenomenal world of objects, but they are at first pure movement, whose residuals both are. Another affinity is the rapidity of their execution, which contrasts sharply with the slow modeling process of traditional, classical Western art, which emphasizes the form in the space, thus the division or separation of the unity of subject and object. Another similarity lies therein, that both are produced and influenced at the moment of execution by the intuition and unconscious impulses. Another affinity is due to the fact, that both potentially can form or may be a sign, thus bear significance and at the same time may be a residual sign of a gestural movement.

But the most important difference between the two methods is, that the pure Automatism almost exclusively is dependent on the element of chance, randomly emerging movements and so consequently is dependent on "alms" from the subconscious, which may be significant, but not always. The pure Automatism also demands in no way a mastery of the means or knowledge of artistic and aesthetic procedures and principles; in this sense would even every aimless doodling an Automatism without possessing however artistic value, a fact, that Masson criticized with Breton, who could not draw.

The Chinese Calligraphy, however, has its spontaneity and rapidity of expression on the basis of a technology mastered by the Calligraphers, i.e. the internalization of certain principles, which already includes an optimal mastery of the means and instruments through long practice and experience. As above mentioned, the technical and aesthetic mastery of the means by long practice is so internalized, that they constitute no obstacle any more, so they "do not stand in the way", as Tobey formulizes it, but on the contrary constitute the media base for greater artistic freedom, because the from the unconscious appearing impulses no more have to overcome the sluggishness of the means, but by the already present control of these, which represent a wealth of potential forms and movement elements, contain a much larger reservoir of artistic possibilities of expression. Freedom of expression, which here is the issue, is not the failure to comply with basic productive conditions due to the nature of the artistic means, but the overcoming of the restraining forces, which exist in the case of disregard.

The spontaneity and ease of expression increases with increasing control of the means, lack of mastering and lack of control possibilities of the pictorial productive forces leads to a state, where the artistic statement and its formal appearance will not be viewed as effected from the artist, but in an extreme case, by a power standing outside the artistic will, which here becomes evident. The artist then no longer exists as an artist and is possibly only a will-less medium; so such an art is no longer art, because it no longer refers to man, as the man as artist is completely eliminated. Neither the Chinese Art or Masson or Tobey have that ever accepted.

This fundamental difference of pure Automatism and Calligraphy, which is present in spite of the affinities and limits the possibilities of Automatism, is confirmed by Jean Degottex in an interview with Julien Alvard. When asked, whether he, who has also been inspired by Chinese Calligraphy, sees a relation (rapport) between Automatism and Calligraphy, he replied:

"The automation is based on the weakening of control options, the constraints (contraintes) strictly speaking, and the Calligraphy on the other hand is a discipline. It presupposes possibilities of control obtained by exercise. ... The Calligraphy requires in no way a maximum of attention (notations), but a masterly skillful (maitrisée) execution, and it turns to the same time on different skills."<sup>448</sup>

These findings of Degottex confirm the existing arguments and also confirm the claims of the aesthetic theory of Chinese Calligraphy for a control of the means and the presence of a certain willful, substantive basis as a condition of Calligraphic works, which in China is described with the already known principle of the "inspiration is described before the brush" (i tsai pi hsien 意在筆先):

"The inspiration (I意) will be there first, and the execution of brushstrokes follows thereafter"

it is said by Sun Kuo-t'ing (孫過庭) in the Shu-P'u (書譜).<sup>449</sup>  
Subsequently Goepper confirms the findings we made above:

"An essential condition for a free move in the realm of Calligraphy, which is considered as the reflection of a natural and uninhibited wandering of the mind, are an almost instinctive familiarity (ching 精) with the technical laws and a mature proficiency (shu 熟) in the handicraft. Then only that transparency of technology and that somnambulistic security of the artistic process adjusts, which is the foundation of the mastership in almost all oriental arts .... The formulation of a conception in an almost meditative process and its final elaboration in the spirit, before one lets it take shape in the work of art, is one of the characteristic factors of Chinese artistic creation, whereby this clearly differs from the pursuit of composition during the work at Western artists."<sup>450</sup>

The Chinese aesthetics of Calligraphy has defined for this difference to Automatism, which corresponds in the field of Calligraphy to the difference between a poor, arbitrary and primitive ugly writing to that of a master, the term "from the concentration freely out" (ch'en-cho t'ung k'uai 沈着痛快). A passage from the Shan-ku t'i-pa (山谷題跋) illustrate that:

"When Shan-Ku (Huang Ting-chien 黃庭堅) lived in Chien-chung (= Ch'ien-nan), his characters were wrong and crooked, as it just came. The brush did not follow his will. When he by ship came to P'o-tao (that is Jung-chou) came, he watched the team of old experienced boatmen, how they moved the rudder. Now he felt an improvement in the target direction of his will, and all of a sudden he mastered the brushwork. He compared this with (the Calligraphy) of the ancient men: when they 'entered', they did it with a lot of multiple-precision, when they 'came out' (from the character and the brush motion), they did so with the utmost speed."<sup>451</sup>

Feng Fang ( 豐 坊 ) comes in his Shu-Chüeh ( 書 訣 ) also to this view:

"When the ancients talked about the wonderful beauty of poetry, they surely said ch'en-cho t'ung k'uai (沈着痛快). In the art of writing there it is also: If the (handscript) is ch'en-cho, but not t'ung-k'uai, then (the result) is plump and dingy; lightness and charm are inadequate. If the (handscript) is t'ung-k'uai, but not ch'en-cho, then (the result) is timid, and the regularity is lost."<sup>452</sup>

The similarity of this resume to the ideas of Masson is obvious, because he was not satisfied after only a short time of application with the results of the Automatism and doubted its artistic value in its pure, uncontrollable form:

"Basically, I am more of a sympathizer of Surrealism than a Surrealist or a non-Surrealist. In the beginning I tried to satisfy myself with the automatic method. Then I was the one, who was the most serious critics of Automatism. I still can not match with the unconscious method. I do not think you can get in this way to the intensity, which is essential for a painting. I know that you can get through the unconscious strong statements, but not without making a selection. And in the fact I am not orthodox. Only as much of what the automatic method gives, is to be used, can be absorbed aesthetically. For the art has really an own value, that can not be replaced by psychiatric interests."<sup>453</sup>

Masson is here mainly against a surrender of the specific artistic means and against the psychoanalysis, which is embodied in a pure automatism, so against a certain anti-art attitude, and those, who glorify the child's clumsiness and the utterances of the mentally ill (Art Brut ), following thoughts of Dada, and which often up to the present exaggerate polemically the outermost freedom and the primitive as "beauty of ugliness", to give it recognition.

This is an attitude, which is not only alien to the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics, but also to Tobey, Masson and others, and which finally led the Informel Painting by the qualitative dilution of its epigones to its early end. Masson did not condemn free associations and the exclusion of intentionality and domination in the sense of exclusive application of claims, but he rejects a pure Automatism without reference to art-immanent means and to the artistic tradition:

"The risk of Automatism is in no doubt, to associate often only insignificant relations, whose content, as Hegel said, 'do not go beyond that, which is included in the images'. However, it is cheap to add, that even if there is a basic law of the philosophical effort to beware of the association of ideas, it nevertheless, by no means, is it the same in the artistic creation, which is essentially sensitive intuition. The developing of the images, the astonishment or the fear of the meeting, open a way, which is rich in plastic metaphors: a fire of snow. Therefore its attraction and its weakness: to be satisfied too easily and to move away both from the diversity and from the tangible knowledge of the world."<sup>454</sup>

The implication Masson's of this is a compromise, a balance between the conscious and unconscious forces, the combination of both elements in a super-conscious unit is his goal. Realizing this, his later fascination for the Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Aesthetics can be understood, in which the trial of a harmonious unit of conscious and unconscious forces is made. The Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics helped him to purify the concept of Automatism and its application, and to give him the appropriate artistic means in the hand, similar to how Tobey undertook it.

The most important factor was a certain emphasis on the "conscious" in the artistic action, but that is not to be understood in the sense of rational thought, but as an sur-conscious clarity and presence of the action, which corresponds to the "concentration" of the Chinese Calligraphy and is based on a kind of unintentional, yet highly conscious action, which corresponds to the "inaction" (wu wei 無為) of Lao-tzu, the total dissolving in the action with a maximum of clarity, a state in which forces of conscious and unconscious elements come together in the artistic inspiration and its performance.

Unlike the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics, which demands almost meditative devotion to the artistic act, Masson's nature and art is characterized by his own strong restlessness and aggressiveness, which he tried sometimes to over-irritate, to force the inspiration in an automatic drawing, with which he did not succeed very often. Recognizing soon the need to find a middle way, he noticed similar to Tobey:

"I have not always followed this path, and with reason, because it is impossible for me to stand every day 'on the other side', every day being tumbling, every day to be an exalted. If that would have continued regularly, I would already long be dead."<sup>455</sup>



The pure associations of Automatism are still no art for Masson, and therefore it is necessary for him to have also a meditative and conscious selection and processing, so that conscious and unconscious, rational and irrational are connecting each other:

"The unconscious and the conscious, the intuition and the mind must make do their transformation into the super-conscious (sur-conscience), in the radiant unit."<sup>456</sup>

The meditative attitude is for Masson the 'establishing of the emptiness' before starting the painting process, an attitude which, already discussed in detail, can be attributed to the Chinese Aesthetics, which Masson could only formulate after being acquainted with it. The establishing of emptiness as access to the productive unconscious does not mean the absolute emptiness of all intellectual content, does not refer to the absolutely empty nothingness, but an emptiness of the outer appearances of things and the goal-oriented, dominant will. The void causes, "not to interfere", "not to stand in the way", as Tobey formulated it, forgetting one's own subjective personality and listen to the inner impulses and give them room to coming up in oneself:

"The first condition," Masson said, "was to create the void. The spirit freed from all visible bonds. Admission to a state, which is close to the trance."<sup>457</sup>

While Masson at the beginning of the Automatism, to which he responds here, still demands the "surrender to the inner turmoil" and "the speed of handwriting"<sup>458</sup>, he finally after learning about the Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Aesthetics came to a moderate understanding of the conditions of work. He asks for:

1. The intensity of the previous meditation,
2. the freshness of the vision of the outside world,
3. the need of knowing the means of the art of this period.<sup>459</sup>

The need for the mastery of the means, as well as the knowledge of one's own tradition, the inclusion of the outside world into the artistic ideas and the importance of a meditative self-opening before and during the creative process, are as well elements of the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics, through whose knowledge and practice Masson was able to avoid the negative aspects of the automatic process and overcome them in a synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements.

### 1.3 The Spiritual Basics of the Calligraphic Influence: The Meeting with the Chinese Taoism and the Ch'an-Philosophy

#### 1.3.1 Taoism and Ch'an-Philosophy

As with Tobey also at Masson the meeting with the Calligraphy and Painting of East-Asia has been accompanied by a study of the intellectual foundations of these arts. Masson has repeatedly made remarks, which shows that he has dealt mainly with the Taoism and the Ch'an-Philosophy of China. The basic ideas of this way of thinking have already been explained in detail.

Although the influence of East-Asia, especially the inspiration by the Calligraphy, in Masson's work proved to be relatively constant since 1942/43, albeit with brief interruptions, the involvement with the East-Asian thinking was mostly sporadic, and his remarks thereto appear in different writings, often randomly, and do not form a unified complex. The most frequent comments on his conception of East-Asia, which has been represented for him mainly by the Chinese Culture, and there especially by an identification of Taoist and Ch'an-Buddhistic thoughts with the Chinese Culture in general, can be found in his book "An Art of the Essential", which has already been mentioned. The effects of this spiritual relationship with China and the Chinese Calligraphy can be seen in various aspects of Masson's works and thinking.

Two important concepts for Masson's art and the assimilation of the Calligraphic elements go obviously back to the influence of the Taoist thinking and were encouraged by the Ch'an-Philosophy, which derived from the Taoism: on one hand the dominant element of movement and metamorphosis as a fundamental principle of the world, as Masson sees them, and as an analog expression in his works, where it is to find in the permanent fluctuating, rhythmic restlessness of many works and the Calligraphic style of his linear elements, and in the permanent form changes, where part to part adjoins each other and emerge apart; on the other hand the element of the transitional, evanescent ephemeral, the qualities of the allusion and transparency (effusion). These elements clearly go back to Taoist thoughts, its foundations have already been discussed in detail in Part II.

Another aspect of Taoist thought, which is related to the Calligraphic methodology and effective in his work, and which has effected his attitude of "non-interference" in the creative process, similar to Tobey's "not stand in the way", is based on the "non-action" or "let happen by itself", the Wu-Wei (無為) of the Tao-Te-Ching. Here at Masson as well as Tobey a mental attitude has intervened, which pushes back the will to power of the European thinking, and thus became an important aesthetic principle of modern Western art.

Finally, Masson's turning away from the European substance-thinking, which seeks to isolate and to dominate the objects in space, towards the relationship-thinking of East Asia, in which the true being alone is to be looked for in the

relation between the things and phenomena, which corresponds to an emphasis on relationship and relativity, which are embodied in the act or action; this thinking also goes back on the influence of Taoism and Zen. Therefrom directly dependent is the emptiness as emphasizing of the creative basis, as internal constitution in freedom of the rational compulsion and the logical-analytical thinking, as openness to all impulses, an impact of the Chinese Philosophy, a condition, requested as a precondition of automatic drawing by Masson.

Masson's search for balance between the rational, conscious, and irrational, unconscious forces in the world and the works of art must not least be seen on this basis. Although due to his impulsive and aggressive character the importance of unity, harmony and balance thinking is by Masson far lower than by Tobey, but his remarks to resolve the Automatism issue make his willingness for a balance and combination of these antagonistic forces significant.

Like Tobey was Masson concerned in his thinking and in his art about to search the "élan vital", the all governing and pervasive life force of the universe, and to bring it in his art to expression, that power which is equivalent to the Ch'i-yun (氣韻) of the Chinese Aesthetics, and which comes in the antagonisms and permanent changes of the being constantly to a phenomenal appearance, whose symbol and manifestation are the change and the movement, are the "metamorphosis" of the forms and elements in the artistic work. The assumption of a universal spirit, which as the spirit (ch'i 氣) becomes evident in the phenomenal appearance, is, among others, of Taoist origin. What fascinated Masson at the East Asian thought and the East Asian Calligraphy and Painting, was the emphasis on the possibility of immediate experience of mystical depth as a path to the ultimate truth.<sup>460</sup>

For his art that did not only mean the use of the Calligraphic method and the integration of elements of Chinese Painting of the Sung period with Impressionist elements, but also to create in his paintings the emptiness, space, openness and volatility, movement and change, which he admired in the arts of East Asia, and which already express themselves in his works from 1943 until about 1965. The movement and metamorphosis of his works are for him, like those of the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, an ontological analogy to the gestures and movements of the universe.

"Masson himself" Lachner wrote in this regard, "knew well that he, as a European and as an artist, who had passionately busy with that for over thirty years, could not achieve the spiritual emptiness or passivity of the creative Zen or Ch'an painter. In practice, the evocation of emptiness brought in his art a spontaneous penetration of his own art of the past, whose tides originate from or can be attributed to the formal concerns of the cultured European artist. What Masson actually did, was to take

the concept of the 'unlimited and vivious Chinese space' and to make therefrom the respective ground for his painting. Temperamentally completely unable to achieve the Zen ideal of a harmonious identification of his consciousness with the creative principle, Masson made deceptively decorative images, which recourse to his old idea of the conflict as the center of creation, but with the difference, that he wanted to leave the surface of the canvas represent the void itself. This blending of Eastern and Western thought brought forth an increased abstraction and associated with it the urgent need to escape from the tyranny of the quadrangular frame. This tendency is demonstrated in the three series, which numerically are the largest of several major groups between 1954-60: the 'Migrations' 1955-59, the 'Feminaires' 1955-59 and the 'Sand Pictures' from 1954 - 1960."<sup>461</sup>

Masson has repeatedly confirmed to have dealt with the teachings of Taoism, even very early, and certainly earlier than with the Zen Buddhism, whom he met in 1930. In a conversation with F. Will-Levaillant confirmed Masson that he already, as he recalls, with 17 years (i.e. around 1913-14) has read the text of the Tao-Te-Ching of Lao-tzu. He also confirmed in this interview, to have read the texts of Chuang-tzu ( 莊子 ), Meng-tzu ( 孟子 ) and Han Fei-tzu ( 韓非子 ), of which Chuang-tzu and Han Fei-tzu are Taoists and Meng-tzu a Confucianist, read in the into French translated transmitting of Arthur Waley (A. Waley: *Trois courants de la pensée chinoise antique, Tchouang-Tseu, Mencius et Han Fei Tseu*, Paris 1949); as well as in the translation of the Father Wieger SJ (*Les Pères du systems taoiste*, 1 re édition, Hsien-hsien, 1913). He also became acquainted with the profound knowledge and understanding of Chinese Philosophy and Culture in the work of the French Sinologist Marcel Granet (*La Pensée chinoise*, Paris 1934); also published in German: *Das Chinesische Denken* (The Chinese thought)).<sup>462</sup>

Animated therefrom Masson pledged to illustrate an album, containing texts of Chuang-tzu, who particularly attracted him; It is called "Sur le vif (About the Life)", published in Paris in 1950; a copy of which is located in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and had been available to see by the author (Fig. 63 + 64). Masson himself observes:

"On the other hand I have, when I was very young, read Lao-tzu and the fathers of Taoism, I came back especially to Chuang-tzu, whose stories are admirable, and whose doctrine is of considerable spatial interest. I have

therefore, as I was under the impression of the effects of Asian holiness, made an album of lithographs, which I called 'Sur le Vif', which based on a text of Chuang-tzu. I had put myself under his protection."<sup>463</sup>

The impact of this interest Masson has reported us also:

"I had trained myself not to make bankrupt before the terrible spectacle (of the war, for example), to control myself and to meditate, to attain an inner peace, and that even within the war scene."<sup>464</sup>

In a certain ignorance of the basic identity of Taoist and Zen-Buddhist thinking, and possibly due to his changeable character, Masson noted elsewhere:

"The two (Daumal and Artaud) were interested in Asia as I myself. But while Artaud was Taoist, I was for Zen. ... Taoism interested me, but I realize no profound influence on me, except for the fact, that I always instinctively have practiced the doctrine of the Tao: beware of too much routine (pouvoir)".<sup>465</sup>

A relativation of this finding, that the Taoism had allegedly no deeper influence on him, is done by Masson himself elsewhere, when Masson himself indicates on the importance of the "not interfere", the Wu Wei ( 無 爲 ) of the Taoism and the "volatile intimation" (ephemere) as an expression of the totality of the being, which lets in every case assume some familiarity with the main principles of this doctrine:

"Do not support', the volatility of the reflex is a characteristic of the Tao, is a true picture (vgl.TTCh.14). Those yielding volatility is more complete, than the impression (l'emprunt); lifeless thing without meaning. One moment (l'instant); instantaneously caught, combines and let us recognize the totality."<sup>466</sup>

On one hand, Masson sees pure artistry and inspiration as routine without constriction or oppression, but

"Of course, the Tao requires to apply no compulsion to the routine, to go no crooked way, do not fool it ... On the contrary, the Confucianism is particularly socially. Lao-

tzu and the others, especially Chuang-tzu, are wonderful."<sup>467</sup>

Elsewhere, in his book "An Art of the Essencial", Masson enters even further upon his knowledge of and influence by Taoism, and the ideas and principles he has assumed:

"Put one's character on all things, to do to them violence, in order to own and to dispose of them easier, we must renounce from. 'To defeat the things, but not to hurt them', this Taoist precept (Chuang-tzu) the (Ch'an-) Buddhist painters will never disregard. A master like Liang K'ai ( 梁楷 ) sometimes is violent, but it is the imperious force of the lightning (the painter has become an elemental force), and if Ying Yu-chien shows us a mountain village as seen through the fog torn gap, then he is himself a meteor. ... In the wake of serene contemplation, which brings about the void, the vision comes. ... the Great Way: pure concentration, perfect contemplation before the work and during the execution."<sup>468</sup>

The earlier findings, that Taoism and Ch'an-Thinking are fundamentally identical, make it clear, that in the following explanations of Masson, which themselves give us a rich insight into his relationship with the Chinese Worldview, both of them can not be clearly separated:

"I had in 1930 the opportunity, to know a young Japanese, Kuni Matsuo, who was writing at that time, together with a German Orientalist, Oberlin, a book about the Buddhist sects in Japan, .. And before this work was to be published, he had talked with me about Zen .... One can ... ask why a so agile person like me ... searches the total reassurance. This is a paradox, but this paradox is perhaps creative. When I arrived in Aix in 1947, I have decided to recall my personal mythology, and I have just gone to the contemplation of nature. It turned out, that I was surrounded by books about Zen, Suzuki and others, of notes that I had made in them, and that I finalized these in an essay, called the 'moment' (l'instant), ... I have tried to apply the method of Zen in my own way, and ... I have arrived in calming down. But strangely enough, I

have also arrived in an easing of the will. ... I had really reached the unconscious. And suddenly I make pictures ... in which I had sensed a moment of nature. ... Those moments of nature, where one thinks neither about the past nor about the future, where the moment is sufficient to itself. I believe that this is the peculiarity of Zen. From there it gets a value for all people of this earth. ... A touch of holiness, applied to daily life."<sup>469</sup>

Also in his book "La mémoire du monde (Memories of the World)", Masson continues to enter upon the context of his thinking and his art with the East-Asian thought and the East-Asian aesthetics, which gave the general basis for the effect of the Calligraphic impulses, and which he dealt with in the chapter titled "Imitation de la Chine":

"Humble confession. I do not pretend to have been introduced into the Zen. The introduction, which demands a master, a guru,... Meanwhile the revelation of that 'way of being' by a Japanese friend in 1930 took its way into my spirit. (The way of painting, I studied in Boston at the Museum, which is rich in East Asian paintings).

So, after so many dramatic pictures I am looking for some rest, and think to have found it in 1950 - to 55 by an even deeper approach to the Zen teachings. Its conquest: the abolition of all separations, understand that it is the wind, which gives its form to the branches of the tree, saying: Wind Tree, Tree Wind. And so of all things ... to do my best to practice the innocence, have I reached this state? In this case, I have subsequently obtained a peace and a happiness, which seemed impossible in a West, which is captured by the matter. ... The Heidegger's concern is defeated by a total taking possession of the experienced moment. The Latin formula 'Here and Now' (hic et nunc) is, oddly enough, close to the vision of the Zen of a life on a completely different basis. For the Latins it is an imperative formula and comes from the war area, for the Chinese or Japanese it is the hardest peace to be obtained, that, which one must obtain in oneself. Zen is the opposite of an escape from the time. The event and the deep presence of being is itself the fact of the enlightenment. ..., the teachings of Ch'an or Zen do

not separate the spiritual from the corporeal ... - The emptiness, considered by the Europeans to be negative, is for the East-Asian painting the fullness, the fullness of being, which is emptied of any distraction of the waking consciousness."<sup>470</sup>

### 1.3.2 Aesthetic Aspects

The aspects of Chinese belief and Chinese thought presented herein were the necessary foundation, which made the understanding of Calligraphic elements and their aesthetics possible; conversely, however, was the Calligraphy, even more than those by him more often mentioned painting of China, the basic pictorial means which wore his relationship with East-Asia, as remains to be seen, and which established the relationship with the world in an artistic manner, superelevating the pure philosophy. But the formal elements of Calligraphy, as the linear ductus and the strong dynamics and the expressive ability of expression enabled the application of general mindsets as Ch'an philosophy and Taoism initially only are. The sole influence of East Asian thinking would, as became evident at painters such as Rothko, Reinhardt and others, bring very different visual results; only the art of Calligraphy brought to the art of Masson as well as Tobey and others the dynamic, linear-expressive medium of sensitive seismographic expression.

Based on this understanding of being, the meeting with the Calligraphy and Painting of China took place, which therefore, for Masson more or less identified itself with the Ch'an-Painting, of which he particularly admired and quoted the Sung-Painters, as Liang-K'ai ( 梁楷 ) (1140-c.1210), Mu-Ch'i ( 牧溪法常 ) (1210?-1269?), Ying Yu-ch'ien and after the Sung period Tao-Ch'i ( 道濟 ) or Shih-T'ao ( 石濤 ) (1642–1707) and the Japanese Sesshu ( 雪舟等楊 ) (1420–1506). Masson's interest in Painting and Calligraphy of China began in 1925, whereby his interest in the Calligraphy mainly started after his visit to the Museum in Boston, which owns a number of calligraphies. This becomes, among others, significant from the sudden appearance of strong Calligraphic elements in his work after his visit to the Boston Museum, that can come from no other source. The first contact took place with the paintings of China and had as a result an attempt Masson's, to catch the élan vital, the Ch'i-yun of the Chinese Aesthetics, which Masson referred to as the "essential", and furthermore to liberate his painting from the solid object and the separation of space and object, to a painting of the movement, of change (metamorphosis) and the suggestive lightness (effusion), in a pictorial space of great depth and breadth (profondeur), which is filled with life and permanent movement of forces, the Zen room (espace zéniste), as Masson calls it. In his book "An Art of the Essential", more or less a collection of essays, Masson enters on this closer:



"Honorable approach. Around 1925 - if I remember correctly - a young Parisian painter could only from a distance get in contact with the ink paintings of the East. Since there were no originals, exemplary pieces, he could at most consult a few works of a German (Münsterberg) or Scandinavian scholar (M. means O. Siren) with sufficiently numerous and quite appropriate reproductions to get an idea. That was little and was by no means 'in the air'. However this tiny seed should for my part not remain barren, because since then my interest in this fine art has not diminished, on the contrary! In Boston it was, thanks to the exile, where I expanded my knowledge. It is known that the museum of this city takes the glory in claim, to own the most comprehensive collection of Chinese masters, which can be seen outside the temple and collections of China and Japan, mainly from the Sung period.

I used once to describe the tough exam and the shock I felt, given the intellectual and artistic distance, separating a Western man of this art of the essential, even if he was prepared by his inclinations in the best way.

Needless to want to penetrate into such an art, as long as one does not understand, that the essential for the Zen painter in nothing seems like that, what the Western painter means by this word. For the Chinese or his Japanese disciples, for Mou-Ki (Mu-ch'i 牧溪) or Sesshu (雪舟等楊), it is a kind of existence - in a deeper sense - and not, as for us, a kind of doing. For them it is a way to emanate in the universal life, for us a form of summary. For the Asians a vital decision, for the Europeans an aesthetic opinion."<sup>471</sup>

Masson had repeatedly, as mentioned above, stressed the need "not to offend" and "not to stand in the way" (Tobey), and thus addressed a state and a mental attitude towards the creative process, which may be considered as a preparatory meditation to achieve the void from the disturbing rational spiritual contents. Masson here also enters on this closer:

"The internal constitution:.. to imitate the Chinese with his clear and subtle heart ... Because from this transparency of the being it is necessary to start, to feel, what such a perfect expression of soul force and

penetration requires. Yes, emanating from the transparency of the heart, from the infinite *détachement* of the artist, from the knowledge of the 'emptiness', which is so alien to us (nothing in common has with our conception of nothing)."<sup>472</sup>

In order to create this void, the event field for the manifestation of the *élan vital*, the *Ch'i-yun*, as to Masson's experience it needs a particular meditative behavior, which he mentioned elsewhere:

"You know that in the Far East one recognizes a real artist hereby: Before he goes to work, he remains silent and focuses during a sufficiently long time to himself. This is a preparation for the work. It is about to create the emptiness, just to give the, let us say supernatural activity, space, which represents the creation of the artwork. ... it is a question of penetrating into another world. ... the East-Asians take that into account: to prepare the ink well, to look upon one's brushes with pleasure."<sup>473</sup>

To this meditative, inspirational emptiness must supervene, as Masson has recognized, the for the Chinese Calligraphy obvious absolute mastery of the means; a need that had made him be aware of the exercise and learning of the Calligraphy:

"In the Zen practice of the archery the student is going up after a long learning time so completely, that he finally comes to the threshold of the 'art without art'. Everything is now as if it were the bow, which is using the student, rather than vice versa. Likewise with the painter of the same emptiness: It is the *élan vital*, which takes him to reveal itself."<sup>474</sup>

The will of Masson to overcome the pure Automatism and its distance from the real human existence, gave these features of the Chinese creative behavior the ability to penetrate into Masson's thinking and pictorial action, and to compensate the aggressiveness of the turmoil through contemplative preparation, as the Chinese painter and calligrapher exercises it. They also gave him the chance to lead out the painting of the movement sought by him from the pure impulsive emotionality and make it artistically meaningful, by trying to make his pictorial process under the influence of the Calligraphic method "natural", to make his trials

less restraint, and instead let the artistic transcript through the achieved mastery of the pictorial means be naturally and take place by itself:

"... So that itself finds its form and its way -work in the way of nature - and as if it concerns itself."<sup>475</sup>

Masson here follows the Chinese concept of the "naturalness" (tzu-ran 自然) of the creative process, which brings the "conformity of heart and hands" (Hsin-shou hui-kuei)<sup>476</sup> or (Hsin- shou hsiang-ying)<sup>477</sup>, and goes on to:

"Some say: we can let the nature speak, and the others: Let the nature speak through us."<sup>478</sup>

Painting is for Masson as for the Chinese calligraphers and painters a creative action, analogous to and in accordance with the universal nature:

"The effusionist finds in himself the actual source of his painting. He seeks from the inside out: he creates nature."<sup>479</sup>

This sounds very much like the words of Chang Huai-Kuan:

"What concerns the art of writing, so it is the track of the heart. That is why it has its seat insides and takes shape to the outside."<sup>480</sup>

As in the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting it concerns Masson, as opposed to the reference of the pure subjectivity of the individual by many painters of the Abstract Expressionism and Tachism, about the mysteries of the universal nature:

"We envisage the overcoming of the materiality of the work, the image as an object. What remains hidden to inattentive people, we want to show. Germination, sprouting, the dark heart of the sources, the secrets of nature, so close that one does not notice them; cosmic spaces, horrifying infinity, so far, that one can recognize them only in spirit ... search for the unexpressed, the prohibited .. Does it not give in the being and in the hidden depths of the Universe states, that would be worthy, to make them visible, without resorting to tried and tested forms?"<sup>481</sup>

For the Chinese painters and calligraphers, whose objective is also to present the secrets of nature, it depends on the acquisition of the spirit of things and its movement (ch'i-yun sheng-tung 氣韻生動), a target that Masson under the influence of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics called, "to achieve the essential":

"One scoop nothing from the outside world, unless to exhaust it. In this debility alone, from this point on the emptiness governs, to find thus the impetus for a work - and the main argument is, to overcome the world of appearances and to reach the essential."<sup>482</sup>

Masson himself leads the search for the essential back to the first principle of Hsieh Ho (謝赫), the achievement of "living spontaneity" of the work, the "resonance of the spirit" (ch'i-yun sheng-tung 氣韻生動):

"For an aesthetician of the 5th century is the main thing: the 'vibrations of the mind, which are giving life to the movement', and which set the passive imitation of appearances immediately boundaries. And five centuries later, around 1000 of our era, worked Che-ko. (Shih-k'o 史可法), Grand Master of the 'raw style', exclusively with spots, in a freedom that has never been surpassed. This method leads to the most beautiful times of the Chinese and Japanese painting. Up to Sesshu and to Tao-chi (Shih-T'ao 石濤) and beyond them thousands sources of the 'boneless' painting are exploited - la tache en expansion."<sup>484</sup>

Masson was in comparison to many other painters, also to Tobey, in his temperament much more literary, and has therefore throughout his painterly career not only painted, but written or said quite a lot about his art or general questions. A recourse to his own opinions is therefore often most revealing, because in this way his views can be known most originally.

The importance and artistic significance of the Calligraphy and Painting for himself and his contemporaries, Masson gives us to understand in various explanations:

"If now the question arises, what significance for us young painters the ink art of the Far-East had, so it behooves, to respond carefully. ... There is no denying, that only few of us European painters turned the spiritual view to the Far-Eastern light. On the north-west

coast of the Pacific the American painters recognized for several decades earlier the possibility of fertilization, Several went to the spot, in order to learn from those, who were masters in the art of ink painting, using the examples of the great paragons from the T'ang to Ming period and the School of Ashikaga. Not only their art but also their life was determined therefrom. In such an extent, that far from the colorful chromatic show and away from the noisy arenas, where countless formalistic acrobats cavort, their works seemed to recover this moonyard of silence, which surrounds the Sung-Paintings -an indispensable condition to see them and truly to 'hear' them."<sup>485</sup>

While Masson in his writings and talks comparatively more deals with the Chinese Painting, especially that of the Sung-Period and less with the Calligraphy alone, are in his works conversely the Calligraphic elements and practices of the Chinese Calligraphy stronger than the purely painterly; especially the continuous and intensive use of the space-plastical Calligraphic linearity is from 1943 - 45 and after 1952 remarkable, which determine the character of a large part of his works. Although the mastery of the Calligraphic ductus and the "Six Principles" is not as intense as by Mark Tobey, but the Calligraphic element of the dynamic, vibrant line is the predominant and determinant expressive pictorial element. The fact, that Masson has also sought to learn the rules of Calligraphy, clearly show such works as the "Wild Boar" from 1946, "Chinese actors" from 1955, "Kabuki No. 1" from 1955 and others, wherein the linear emblematically-figurative or partly abstract elements are clearly influenced by Calligraphic characters in the kind of Chinese teaching templates, on which will be entered hereafter with examples.

While more painteresque works prevailed under the influence of Chinese Painting and the Impressionism of Monet and Renoir only from about 1946 to 1952, dominated from 1942 - 45 and 1952 and after 1960 the linear Calligraphic element. The discrepancy between the relatively few remarks to Calligraphy and its long-term and intensive use as pictorial means can be explained so, that the qualities of Chinese Painting especially for a painter like Masson were more apparent and could therefore be addressed more easily in spoken form, while the procedure and the technique of Calligraphy indeed, even without a teacher, was technically and artistically familiar to him, so that he was also able to apply it artistically, but as at that time due to the lack of knowledge of the theoretical foundations and the low level of research of this art in Western languages, he was not able to give general theoretical statements and explanations. This situation, however, is not so important for the assessment of his work, because different features and aspects of Calligraphy are also embodied in the painting and aesthetics, to which Masson

often referred, as had already been shown (Chapter III), and because the assessment of the Calligraphic Influence in the work of Masson has in any way initially to go out from the phenomenal appearance of this work and the therein self-revealing Calligraphic qualities, wherefor theoretical or aesthetic expressions of the artist can serve as confirmation and affirmation.

Nevertheless it does not lack explanations of Masson on the Chinese Calligraphy and the importance it had for his work. In "An Art of the Essential" he remarks:

"The character (le signe). One knows how much in China as in Japan the writing is connected with the exercise of the great painting. There is no example, yes, it is inconceivable, that a great painter is not also a great calligrapher. And he is almost always a sage and an aesthete (he writes not only artistically, he must also be able to write about his art). Precisely said: the most admirable of the Chinese conceptual painting is its pictorial nature."<sup>486</sup>

And elsewhere it is said in the same context:

"The colored élan must connect to the discovery of new ciphers: characters, ideograms, ... awaken an unexpected consciousness of the man, who conquered his universe."<sup>487</sup>

This process of using characters or signs and their elements, the living lines, shall now be demonstrated with a few examples from the works of Masson.

#### 1.4 The Integration and Implementation of linear Elements of K'ai-Shu- and Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy during the "Asiatic Period" and their Effect on formal Content and Message

The origin and significance of the Calligraphic element and his interest in Chinese Calligraphy Masson proves in an explanation from 1967, written in Aix-en-Provence and quoted by Clébert:

"What concerns the drawing in the true sense (dessin), the importance of the graphic element in my painting is actually observed of all the analysts of my work. Gertrude Stein, the first, qualified it as a 'restless, roving

line' (ligne errante) Giedion-Welcker as line in freedom, Robert Delevoy as 'script-like hurricane' (écriture-cyclone). This drawing in a painting appeared, as I believe, with an image, such as 'Les Constellations' (1925), and it continued in countless others. In that first phase of the application of Calligraphy, it is a more two-dimensionally significant part, which is in an ensemble of three-dimensional parts (Masson means the Cubist composition), but it became more and more important, as in the 'Soupiraux' or in the 'Nus et Architectures'. The graphic element was important in the first Sand-Paintings (1927) and initiated the second stage. The emancipation in that second stage is, that the Calligraphy covers the whole surface (parcours). The line is no longer essential significant (significantive); it is pure motion (pure élan); it follows its path (or its trace). It no longer has the function of an outline (contour). But nevertheless it can go together with a part of the color field, which responds to the signification (signification). Since the beginning of the American period this method is realized in full expansion, it alternates as always in some images with the reference back to the classical tradition of the volume, which is bounded by the contour. This alternation has hardly changed since 1941. 'Le Couple' (in the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris) is a recent example of the game with the colored spots - Calligraphy - demonstration.

If one would separate in some way the colored part from the Calligraphic elements, these two parts, separated seen appear absolutely 'abstract'. It is only by recognizing the two elements in some places of the color field, that the designation (signification) (lyrical, well understood) appears. So like a couple of forces, which is made of hieroglyphics.

The origin of this aesthetic, and this is one, grew out of the practice of automatic drawings. There is no doubt in the Sand-Paintings of 1927, that its Surrealist application is the most striking. And here lets the monochrome (ocher color of the sand and sepia color of the traces) think of Chinese Paintings, which are most deprived of color.

This similarity was enough inspiring, because the

Chinese Calligraphy had attracted me very early, and with it all East-Asian and oriental 'writings'."488

This interest in the Chinese Calligraphy, which Masson expressly confirmed here, was deepened and manifested by the visit to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston<sup>489</sup>, which took place in November 1942, and according to which Masson's pictorial expression partially changed abruptly and highly visible. The influence of Chinese Calligraphy from 1942-43 was not felt immediately in all works, the telluric and other images are still underlying other formal principles and intentions. However, Masson created a series of very dynamic and lively works mostly manufactured in ink technology with brush or pen, which both show the reference back to the automatic drawing, as well as an antagonistic image structure, comparable to the Cubist-Surrealist works of the twenties and thirties. But obviously is here also the application of Calligraphy to the type of lines, which developed from the relatively lifeless, wire-like lines in the automatic painting "Children of the Islands" from 1926 (no Fig.) to a much livelier, dynamic space-plastical, Calligraphic line, as in "Multiplication" of 1943 (Fig. 65), and which there, in a similar automatic manner, but without the hesitant nature of the "Children of the Islands", by "multiplication" of themselves in the course of dancing and rhythmic movement fully writes the image space area.

A comparison makes it clear, that "Multiplication" possesses far more calligraphic, space-plastical ductus and dynamic freedom of movement, which require a minimum of calligraphic practice and understanding of the principles. Ductus, rhythm and expression of linear "multiplications" of Masson meet here the Ts'ao-Shu style of the Chinese Calligraphy, as applied for example by Huai Su (怀素) (Fig. 66), except that the filling of the surface area and the tendency to a structural allover are stronger and figurative elements or emblematicness at Masson are less than in Calligraphic works.

The first phase of conscious analyzing and dealing Masson's with the specific means of Chinese Calligraphy still took place in the US, during and shortly after his visit to the Museum of Boston. The effects are clearly visible in the pictures of 1943 - 45. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston has not only landscapes from the Sung-Period and other periods, which Masson admired, and what still has to be referred to briefly, but also Calligraphy- and Bamboo-Paintings, which played a major role for the implementation of Calligraphic elements by Masson. One of these pictures in the museum of Boston is "Bamboo in the Storm," by Wu Chen (吳鎮) (1280-1354) (Abb.67), now assigned to the 17th century, that on the right side shows three rows in a powerful Ts'ao-Shu, which are similar in their ductus and dynamics to the dynamic movement of lines of Masson's "Multiplication" (Fig. 65). Masson has also resorted again later on this type of Ts'ao Shu.

In the direct consequence and under the influence of this work by Wu Chen (Fig. 67) and others developed in the years 1943-46 some characteristic works in



Chinese ink, partly in oil, which consist of linear elements of Calligraphic quality, modifications and metamorphoses of the Calligraphic basic stroke in various straight, bent and curved forms and overlay the entire surfaces, and fill them with a buzzing and vibrant allover, similar to Tobey, and where partly figurations evolve from. A key work of this phase is the "Selfportrait" Masson's from 1944 (Fig. 68). The head of the artist is not as previously formed by modeling surface parts to corporeal forms, but arises solely from the the location, the course and the type of Calligraphic, relatively straight and simple strokes. These lines have the form structure and the ductus of the basic Calligraphic K'ai-Shu-Stroke, especially in the Liang Tso-style ( 棕 琢 ), as we shall see it also with Tobey and has been discussed in detail above; they have therefore in itself only a moderate dynamics compared to the Ts'ao-Shu elements. The strong motion of this portrait and the other works of this phase result from this ductus and the direction dynamics of concurrent or mutually crossing and intersecting lines, which also cover the entire screen and structurally coat it with an 'allover'. Important here is the fact that the relative suggestive execution of the portrait can be seen as a compensation of two tendencies; one which abstracts from figurative motifs through simplification, thus aiming towards complete abstraction, and another which, according to the "one-line" principle of Shih-T'ao builds up the figurative appearance with the simple basic elements, by multiplying of one element creates from the simple the complex and superordinate.

Here also obviously the bamboo picture of Wu Chen in Boston (Fig. 68) has been the model for the type and application of the Calligraphic strokes. The almost complete identity of the lines of Masson's "Self-Portrait" and Wu Chen's bamboo leaves (Fig. 67) can not be overlooked. A visually trained painter like Masson is easily able to see shapes and figurations of another kind, which the image is showing at first in the bamboo leaves of Wu Chen by imaginative variation, which corresponds to his principle of metamorphosis; a method which constantly inspired virtually every artist.

Further works under Calligraphic Influence of this first phase are "Bison on a Brink of Chasm" from 1944 (Fig. 69) and "Haystack" from 1946 (Fig. 70), which, although carried out in France, show the same style, however has in the Calligraphic structure also elements of van Gogh's drawing technique, that relates well with Masson's stay in the Provence, and which besides at van Gogh also go back to Calligraphic elements from East-Asia.

Originating also from this phase are two other works, "Entanglement" (touch), allegedly from 1941 (!) (Fig. 36.2) and "The Kill" from 1944 (Fig. 73.1), both almost completely abstract, in tempera and oil. "Entanglement" is for two reasons of particular importance. Firstly, Masson succeeded here, to connect strong colors, red and green tones, with Calligraphic movement, which has been rejected by Tobey, since he had no sense for strong colors. In addition, doubts about the previous dating must be held in this work, by which the image is, as by Rubin and

Lachner<sup>490</sup>, dated to 1941. In the year 1941 Masson was fleeing from France. The flight lasted over Martinique to New York for several months. The circumstances of his life, the fact that he has visited the museum in Boston in November 1942 and the clearly strong Calligraphic image structure, which shows a certain acquaintance and mastery of Calligraphic Art and is so different from all previous works, compared with all other work productions in 1941 and before it is unlikely that this picture was created in 1941. Incorrect datings due to poor memory and other circumstances are not rare with all artists, and it is therefore more reasonable, that as the year of creation 1943 to 1944 will be recognized.

Entanglement also has a large dynamic spontaneity and is made up of different types of lines: straight, curved, some loops and zigzags, which appear repeatedly in various combinations and form the basic elements of the Calligraphic impulse in his works. Although Masson's elementary lines do not have the same structural strength (ku-li 骨力) as those of Tobey, but they have as well a great rhythmic dynamism. Ductus and consistency of Masson's lines in "Entanglement" and other works of the first phase, i.e. from 1942 to 1946, partly show a similarity to the writing in the style of Wang Hsi-chih, they are determined by a certain softness of forms, which can also be found at the "General on the right" (Fig. 71).

#### 1.4.1 The Relation of K'ai-Shu- and Ts'ao-Shu-Lines in Masson's Art

Masson does not use the lines and style-type elements of the Calligraphy exclusively in one style. K'ai-Shu elements flow into one another and can often not be clear separated, however, it can be stated, that by Masson, unlike by Tobey, elements of Ts'ao-Shu easily outweigh: strong motility and frequent changes of direction in the course of line, connection to long polylines, swinging, rhythmic patterns with many waves, curves and loop lines, roundness of the changes of direction rather than square zigzag lines, as they often occur by Tobey, and greater softness of the typical space-plastical ductus. But here at Masson also applies the dictum of Chinese writing aesthetics, that "Ts'ao-Shu in the K'ai-Shu and K'ai-Shu in the Ts'ao-Shu" should be found and also are found. There are at Masson the "twists and turns of the brush", of which Sun Kuo-t'ing speaks, which determine the "form" of his work; the element of movement dominates a definite structural order. Separation of Ts'ao-Shu- and K'ai-Shu elements is at Masson hardly possible, however some works show more Ts'ao-Shu elements, such as "Orage" from 1951 (Fig. 75), "Couple" from 1958 (Fig. 74), "Abbyss" from 1955 (Fig. 76 detail), "Poursuite d'automne" from 1962 (Fig. 78) and "Multiplication" from 1943 (Fig. 65). Comparisons with works by Huai Ssu (Fig. 77) and Li Tung-yang (李东阳) from the Ming dynasty (Fig. 79) show that clearly. There Masson quite changes the 'writing style', if you will; "Abbyss" (Fig. 76), "Orage" (Fig. 75) and "Couple" (Fig. 74), and "Multiplication" (Fig. 65.2) are more like the erratic style of Huai Ssu, "Poursuite d'automne" (Fig. 78), however, matches in the line curves, the ductus of

raising and lowering and in the structural arrangement more with Li Tung-yang (Fig. 79). Especially this work (Fig. 78) shows a certain mastery of the brushwork, which can not be achieved without a minimum of exercise, and which was even made with oil on canvas.

In some other works are also found K'ai-Shu elements, recognizable by their square, their more clearly structured design, lack of flow and transitions, isolation, better "readability" in the sense of structural identification, and greater resemblance to the individual Calligraphic stroke. Such works are "Forgerie" from 1953 and "Fight in the mountains" from 1956 (Fig. 83) and some others (for example, Fig. 81). Comparisons with calligraphy in the K'ai-Shu style-type of Ts'ai Hsiang from the Sung-Dynasty (Fig. 82) and Wang Shu (王澐) from the Ch'ing-Dynasty (清朝) (here the Chi Shu Yen from 1729) (Fig. 84) make this clear.


Striking in some works Masson's is the recourse to some specific line combinations as symbolic elements that appear again and again: Sign structures that resemble the Chinese character for "Tao" (刀), knife; "Li" (力), force, or "ch'e" (车), the short form of (車), which means 'car/wagon' (see, Fig. 83 and the character next, but also in some other works). In particular, the shape of the angle stroke (丿) appears repeatedly, usually similar to the character "li" (力), "power", a phenomenon that can also be found at Tobey. Tobey as also Masson certainly have known the meaning of this simple but important character used it both for formal reasons, as well as because of its meaning, because the square shape with its sudden change of direction, which the aesthetics of Calligraphy denotes with *tun-t's'o* (頓挫), is inherently extremely dynamic and also formal some representation of power.

#### 1.4.2 Calligraphic Elements as Signs, as abstract Elements and as a Medium of Figuration

##### 1.4.2.1 Signs and signlike Elements

In Masson's images Chinese characters still appear in their original form, that means still linguistically "legible", but similar to Tobey, not often. One of these images is "Luis", a portrait of one of his sons, from 1943/44, that emerged shortly after his visit to the Boston Museum. Masson has integrated into this some characters almost in its original form; one is integrated into the figuration (no. 1), the others float freely and without figurative or significative binding as structural form elements in the image field (the nos. 2-4). Remarkable here is the parallel to Tobey, which discloses a typical basic behavior. As in Tobey's "Broadway" there are also only simple characters, that are mainly composed of vertical and horizontal, but rarely diagonal strokes. There are characters, that are usually learned because of their simple structure at the beginning of the learning process, and, significantly, both, Tobey's "Broadway" from 1936 and Masson's "Luis" from

1943-44, both emerged very shortly, between one and two years, after the first deep contact with the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, both as images whose characteristic features are the dissolution of the previous representational-illusionistic form, using original "readable" Chinese characters. Both Masson as Tobey have had, so at least temporarily, the same kind of learning and association process. The characters in this picture Masson are: "ch'ü" ( 曲 ), crooked, (no. 1); "Yüe" ( 月 ), moon (no. 2); "mi" ( 米 ) Rice (no. 3) and "ching" ( 井 ), fountain (no. 4). The arrows indicate the position in the image.

Some pictures from 1946 are also characterized by elements of a learning process. In "The Boar" from 1946 (Fig. 86), there are peculiar, comma-like black strokes, which have the basic shape of the Calligraphic Liang-Tso ( 棕 琢 ) stroke-type  and wear a white thin line as a trace in the middle. This element has only one origin: Chinese Calligraphy. Masson has here integrated lines into his work, such as those used in Calligraphic exercise books for beginners to demonstrate the brushwork and the course of the brush tip. The white lines are the track of the tip end of the brush and are the exact course of each movement. A comparison with Fig. 87 from the Lan T'ing-hsu ( 蘭 亭 序 ) by Wang Hsi-chih ( 王 羲 之 ), which is designed here as part of an exercise, as well as with Fig. 89 illustrate this relationship. Later works, such as "La Guerre des Paysans" from 1963 (no Fig.) show, that Masson takes up this element yet again later, because here the black bars and sections contain the fine white track lines as a contrast.

In "Message de Mai" from 1957 (Fig. 91) and "Vortex" from 1956 occur linear formations, written with a few bold strokes, whose Fei-Pai-like effects occur especially in "Vortex", that convey a sense of speed, which is similar in appearance and structure to Chinese characters, such as the large initial character of the scroll of Huai Ssu (Fig. 90), a Ts'ao-Shu character, which similar to the initials of medieval manuscripts is written especially large and emphasized decorative ,

The affinities of the linear character of "Kabuki No. 1" from 1955 (Fig. 88) to a Calligraphy by Wang Hsi-chih (Fig. 87) and also others, as well as the well-known picture "Chinese Actors (Acteurs chinois)" from 1957 (Fig. 95) with a Calligraphy of Mi Fu ( 米 芾 ) from the Sung-Dynasty, here to be seen as a stone rubbing (Fig. 96), are obvious, whereby in all the pictures of Masson the mastery of the ductus is not as pronounced as at Tobey.

The remuneration to East-Asia Masson has often placed deliberately into the title. The linear elements at Masson show here both K'ai-Shu as well as Ts'ao-Shu elements, movement and rhythm as well as significant structure. This applies equally to the "Chinese Actors" of 1955 (Fig. 95+98) in comparison with the Calligraphy in Fig. 96+97. The linear or dotted decoration of the white lines prove, that Masson had known the above-mentioned Calligraphy teaching-templates, and he draw as aids brush traces, the white lines, as an invigorating and complementary artistic means in his characters. Even a return to Japanese methods of decorative-playful loosening of Calligraphy, mostly by colored or golden points,

is possible at Masson. Images of the "Féminaire" series from 1957 (Fig. 94) or "Venice" from 1965 (Fig. 99) have in the delicacy of the 'characters' and the discreet, decorative color of the ground, above which the characters seem to float, as well as in the dark contrails, which are scurried with a broad brush across the image, a strong resemblance to the delicate Ts'ao-Shu writing of a Huang Chi-shui (黃姬水) of the Ming Dynasty (Fig. 93), but especially to the already mentioned Japanese (Hiragana 平仮名/ひらがな)-Calligraphy (e.g. Fig. 100), like the Ishiyama-Gire (石山切) of about 1112; which were mostly album sheets.

Finally shall here still pointed out on the also unique "character"-ness of Masson's "Suppliante" from 1957 (Fig. 101), an elegant Ts'ao-Shu, which characteristically has a great similarity to the style of Calligraphy, that Masson, however earlier, has seen in the Museum of Boston: the inscription of the bamboo painting of Wu Chen (吳鎮) (Fig 67.2 detail).

There are not only characters or character sequences of Chinese Calligraphy, that Masson has integrated into his paintings, but also often parts of characters or character elements. One of the most common and most striking is a zigzag line with dot above it and a longer leaking down stroke (↘), which, like the various attached characters next to the pictures show (in the style of Wang Hsi-chih), often occurs, and is very similar to the character "yen" (言), speech or word, in Ts'ao-Shu form. This zigzag line with point and straight or curved foot is next to the Calligraphic stroke (↘), the Liang-Tso-Stroke (掠琢), which usually is used either purely abstract as an element of a vibrating oscillation field of forces or as a basic element of figuration after the "One-Line method", that part which most often bears the Calligraphic impulse at Masson.

Striking examples of this are images of the "Migration Series" like "Migration III" (Fig. 104, 1957) and "Migration V" (Fig. 105) or "Nocturnal City" from 1956 (Fig. 103), detail and "Fantômes des Oiseaux (Phantom of the Birds)" from 1956 (no Fig.). The Calligraphic character elements in these are from the Ts'ao-Shu type and show a clear affinity and similarity to the Chinese Calligraphy, such as those in the style of Wang Hsi-chih (Fig. 87), which can interestingly often be used for comparison. The images put on the side to it are original Chinese characters in the style of Wang show some possibilities for the frequent occurrence of the element of alternating change of direction of the brushtip, such as in "yen" (言), language or word; in "wei" (为 / 為) when, for; in "chih" (之), a genitive particle.

In some works Masson also shows reminiscences to the Li-Shu-style (隸書), for example in Fig. 106, in which sign-like elements occur, which consist of relatively straight and slightly elegant lines, and which resemble the Chinese character "mu" (木, tree, wood or "ben" (本), a unitcounting word, or even with "tzu" (子), son, and which let resonate the typical hook line of Calligraphy in the middle. Even more significant is the Li-Shu-style in comparing "Visage dans la nuit des fleurs (View at the Night of Flowers)" from 1959 with the Li-Shu of Figure 107; here also

the not rare hook element ( ㄅ ) is appearing.

The previous studies showed, that Masson has different elements and aspects of Calligraphy integrated into his work, but it has also to be stated, that in all of these elements and types of Calligraphic characteristics the most important feature of an influence, the mastery of the typical space-plastical ductus of the Calligraphy indeed is available, but has been apparently not internalized to the same extent, as it is the case with Tobey, because Masson's characters and character elements and linear image elements show a certain lack of "structural force" (ku-li 骨力) in terms of the Chinese Calligraphy, which let appear his lines softer and less powerful than those of Tobey or the Calligraphy.

#### 1.4.2.2 Abstract elements and pictures

In addition to "readable" signs in the sense of structural identification possibility, Masson created under the influence of Calligraphy a series of works, which are almost completely abstract and composed only of partial elements of Calligraphic character after the "One-Line"-method of Shih-T'ao. It involves copying the Calligraphic basic stroke, predominantly of the Liang-Tso-Stroke ( 棕 琢 ), by varying its thickness, length, its ductus, by color changes, etc., whereby images are formed, which in their dynamism, their all-over structure and through the vibrating and oscillating surface area have a great resemblance to the pictures of Tobey.

It is striking, that both, Tobey as well as Masson, primarily use a form of Calligraphic basic stroke, namely the beginning by strong pressure Liang-Tso-Stroke ( 棕 琢 ), as Fig. 40/41 shows it, which then expires pointed (tun-t'i-movement 頓 提). The reason for not to use other strokes, such as the horizontal or vertical line (Fig. 43), is among other things probably, that those are most difficult to draw, since they require a double pressure and lifting movement, while the Liang-Tso-Stroke only requires a one-time pressing (tun 頓) and then a decline to the lifting (t'i 琢). In addition, the comma-like Liang-Tso-Line adheres a far larger dynamic of their own as other lines, except the hook-stroke.

The extraordinary dynamism and restlessness of Masson's paintings, where it "is not permitted to rest", as at Tobey, is already to be found in the paintings of the forties, even if they still show figurative elements, and they have thus made Masson besides Tobey one of the great inspirers of the Abstract Expressionism, Action Painting and the European Informel Art, which is well known. Striking examples of the highly dynamic images and connected to a structural "All-over" painting types are "Multiplication" from 1943 (Fig. 65), "Haystack" from 1946 (Fig. 70), "The Kill" from 1944 (Fig. 73), but particularly the paradigmatic work "Entanglement" (touches) from likely 1943-44 (Figure 36.1-3.), further "Abbyss" and "Animal labyrinth" and "Foundation of Flowers" (1955 - 56) (no Fig.).

### 1.4.2.3 Figurations

A last group of pictures finally, which are based on the Calligraphic-linear effect, are those, which have figurations of all kinds. Originally, the Chinese characters were figuratively, by simplification and abstraction of natural motifs and gestures (allegedly by Ts'ang-Chieh (倉頡) at the time of the "Yellow Emperor" (Huang-ti 黃帝) invented, ca. 2650 BC), so that this step of Masson is quite natural.

The earliest figurations of Calligraphic kind by Masson are from the years 1943-45, i.e. from the first assimilation phase, which are extremely active and unite figuration intention and abstraction trend with a structural allover, whereby clearly the close relationship between figuration and emblematicalliness is proven. Examples include "Maple in the storm" from 1943-44 (Fig. 109) and the "Self-portrait" of 1945. Another type of figurative and Calligraphic images, which are created all after the "One-Line"-principle of the Calligraphy, are those with free Calligraphic white lines on a dark background, such as "L'Oeuf Cosmique" from 1941 (?) (Fig. 108) and "Caprice" from 1955, both graphics in snapping technique and in effect like Calligraphic stone cuts or sample scripts.

Overall it can be said, that in the work of Masson, unlike at Tobey, the figurations of various kinds dominate over the pure abstractions; a phenomenon associated with Masson's stronger link to the European culture and its literary inclination, compared to Tobey. Even where the Calligraphic Influence is noticeable, the figuration is strong, but lets comparatively a bit more room for abstraction tendencies.

## 1.5 Effects of Chinese Painting

As mentioned earlier, Masson had in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston not only admired the Calligraphy, but also Chinese paintings, from which he especially highly esteemed the landscapes of the Sung-Period; their width and delicacy of allusion, the fog, which he then in the Provence in the Valley of the Arc again found in natura, by which he was inspired to paint landscapes, around 1946 - 50, some of which even under the influence of a recollection to the Impressionist painting style of Monet, Renoir or Cézanne.

Although he appreciated the Sung-Paintings, like those of the Ch'an-painters Mu-ch'i (牧溪), Liang-K'ai (梁楷) or Ying Yu-ch'ien (e.g. the image "Mountain village in the mist"), his own landscape paintings are stylistically less inspired by the Sung paintings, but rather by the somehow dry technology of Ni Tsan (倪瓚), Shih- T'ao (石涛) or Wang Yüan-ch'i (王原祁) affected. The Calligraphic element and its structural brush force (ku-li 骨力) can be found here, for example, clearly in Figure 112, an image, in which Masson paints the trunk of a tree and the underlying grass, etc. all in the Calligraphic style of Chinese brushwork technique,

as it is used specifically for such motifs, and wherein a minimum of practice and mastery of this technology by sufficiently long and intense preoccupation manifested itself. The frugal and somewhat dry execution by parallel laid lines is somehow similar to the Chieh-tzu-yuan (芥子園畫傳) (Fig. 111).

Significantly Masson chose here the tree painting as motivic reference point, which is usually at the beginning of the path when learning Chinese Painting, as the Hua -Fa Yao-Lu (畫法要錄) it explains:

"If one learns the painting, one starts first with painting trees. If you want to paint trees, you must first be able to paint the dry tree trunk. Only when you have well painted the trunk, you can paint the leaves."<sup>491</sup>

But beyond mastering this technique also equally important is the strong sensationell and interest impulse, which Masson has gradually received and passed on by learning and processing of this "painting of the essential", as he calls it.

## 1.6 Effects of the Calligraphic Impulse

The effects of the Calligraphic impulse on Masson in formal terms refer to the following formal aspects:

- 1) resolution of Cubist and Surrealist forms by using Calligraphic lines as a sign, abstract elements, or as a means of figuration or figuration resolution and the liberation and spontanitation of the act of painting on one hand and the intrinsic value of pictorial means on the other hand;
- 2) The Calligraphic line becomes with Masson a sign or symbol of forces and also conducts formally a painting of movement;
- 3) The effect of the Calligraphic lines, as with Tobey, effect by "multiplication" (comp. the title) according to the "one-line-principle" (Shih-T'ao 石濤) the special (Masson) and general (Informal) tendency to a non-hierarchical "Allover" as compositionell and structural principle, which is usually accompanied like at Tobey by a "moving-focus"-principle; and
- 4) in many artworks the Calligraphic line is the basic dynamic element of a "new space" in the painting, of the indefinite, linear vibration space as a symbolic form of a force-filled universal space.

This formal and content change in his work, derived from the Chinese concept of space and the Chinese thought, supported by the impulses of the Calligraphy of China (and partly by the painting). Masson addresses himself, by trying to explain to us his concept of space as a result of this influence:

"Paintings: Magical wandering through the space, the



painter himself becomes space."<sup>492</sup>

And elsewhere he states:

"The room is for the painter from Asia neither outside nor inside, it is a game of forces - pure becoming. I is indeterminable. ...

The western painters ... are still enslaved to the perspective of the Renaissance, whereas they think yet to sacrifice the illusionism no longer and call themselves abstracts. ... It is another matter, if it is agreed to consider the space as a magnetic field, where forces meet and entangle - as a place, where the keel waves and trajectories romp, and to refrain from the one point of view.

The Chinese painter, familiar with the infinite, severs the hawsers. Successive stockening, successions, fluidity, cosmic breathing: place all extensions, sanctuary of the open.

Note: These considerations about the emancipation of the space and the emphasis on the elemental forces are not limited to ink or watercolor painting, they also extend to the oil painting in the sense of flow and effervescence. As the Turner of the last period was there in."<sup>493</sup>

The image space (and the concept of space) in Western painting, which Masson, through his effect on Pollock and other painters, co-determined, so evolved under the influence of Chinese Calligraphy to an indefinable linear vibration space, characterized in the extreme by an oscillating or vibrant allover. This is one of the important innovations, that are due, among other things, to the influence of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics.

#### 1.7 The "Spirit of Life" or the "Vital Spontaneity" (Ch'i-yun 氣韻) of the Calligraphy and the Term of the "Essential"

The foregoing explanations have shown that the "essential", as Masson calls it, is identical with the "breath of life", the "spiritual resonance" or "living spontaneity" (Ch'i-yun 氣韻) of Chinese Calligraphy. It is the "élan vital", which is to be recognized in art and in life, and to whom one should not oppose, but let it "naturally" (tzu-ran 自然) exercise, by giving up the active will and the mastery of things in favor of a natural and fully conscious action and behavior, which lets the natural forces take their course (wu wei 無為), and which "does not hold" (Masson) and "does not stand in the way" (Tobey). Such an "art of the essential"

dispenses the coordinated space of the perspective and its solid bodies and reaches a space as a symbolic form of freedom, indeterminacy and openness, as a place for the forces that represent the universal life, whose picturing is done by the patch and the "living line".

The "essential" thus is the accordance with the universal forces and principles, ie. a "kind of existence in the deeper sense", as Masson says, "to dissolve in the universal life, ... a vital decision" and recognizing the "eternity of the ephemeral".<sup>494</sup> The essential or Ch'i-yun in art therefore is the visualization of vital universal forces, representing themselves in moments of movement and change, and this change of the static, object-bound traditional Western art to a painting of the forces, the movements and the permanent change is one of the effects of the Calligraphic influence in the works of Masson, which he has passed on to the Western art, and particularly in the work of Mark Tobey, who will be discussed in more detail below now.

## 2. Mark Tobey's meditative Art and the Technique of the White Writing (Application of the „Six Principles“ (Liu-fa 六法))

In the life and work of Mark Tobey (1890 - 1976), the influence of Calligraphy and Aesthetics of East-Asia, particularly those of China, have been most extensively and intensively, and have had about the inspiration, which his work in turn was for others, probably the most far-reaching and profound influence of East-Asian Art in the West:<sup>495</sup>

"My sources are the Orient, the Occident, science, religion, the room; the desire, to 'write' an image rather than to build it up in the tradition of the Renaissance."<sup>496</sup>

says Tobey himself to the aims and origins of his art. Eduard Trier writes then, connecting to this remark of Tobey:

"It requires no notice, that he has put in the place of the classical form a new form: the spatial moved painting, caused by an infinite number of neutral or colored lines, as an expression of the universality he has seen. He early had already realized, that our time with its fluctuating exchange of ideas is no longer determined by national or regional meanings; that it now matters to make the great similarities visible. Mark Tobey has implemented these new horizons as a painter. In his quiet power busting the rigid boundaries, in the overcoming of the materialistic narrowness, in his commitment to the movement in the

infinite space, Tobey is one of the great innovators of the art of our days."<sup>497</sup>

In this concise characterization of Tobey's work, two features already become clearly expressed, which are connected to the Calligraphic Influence: the use of the linear element and the movement as a formal and content feature and their implementation in a meditative experienced symbolic form of intuition for his universal worldview.

Tobey comes from the American Midwest and spent the first years of his life in the provinces along the Mississippi River, wherefrom his universalistic love of nature originated. In 1918 he met the painter Juliet Thompson, a follower of the Baha'i teachings, which wants to unite the major religions. The Baha'i teaching has since become a major feature of his universalist thinking and acting. In 1922, while working at the Cornish School in Seattle, the for his art most important encounter took place: he made friends with the Chinese painter Teng Kuei (Teng Baiye)(1900-1980) and became through him acquainted with the spirit and the art of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting.<sup>498</sup>

Tobey realized that for him in this art routes were mapped to his own statement and image form. Until 1930 he lived alternately in Seattle, Chicago and New York, at times together with Teng Kuei. In 1930 he became a teacher at the Dartington Hall School in Devonshire in England. This school had set itself the task of connecting Western and Eastern thinking; here he met important personalities of both hemispheres, such as the Sinologist Arthur Waley, and here Tobey recognized the need to get to know Asia.

Therefore, in 1934 he went to Shanghai, where he met again with Teng Kuei and further learned Chinese Calligraphy with him. From Shanghai, he went alone to Japan, where he spent one month in Kyoto in a Zen monastery and practiced the Zen-teaching, -painting and poetry and continued his Calligraphic studies. The acquaintance with Teng Kuei and his stay in Japan gave him the all-important art impulses, that led to the development of his "white writing".

From the art criticism Tobey has once been called "un Pollock intime", which was meant as praise. It should mean that everything, which Pollock has done for the liberation of painting from a constructive force, for the appreciation of the gesture and the spontaneity of the act of painting, for the expression of a new dynamic spatial experience, that all that already was implemented by Tobey, even at smaller sizes than Pollock, often only on a small piece of paper, and instead of the strong gestures of Pollock through the Calligraphic movement, coming from the wrist and the arm, and all this much earlier than Pollock, who was inspired by Tobey. The following considerations prove this context and quite clearly show, that the influence of Calligraphic elements from East-Asia over Tobey have essentially determined the history and development of Western Informel Art.

Tobey's achievement is an attempt to convey insights and experiences of Chinese

and Japanese Calligraphy, as well as painting and aesthetics to the West, and especially the recognition of the dynamic nature and plurality of the world and its adequate representation and expression, which for Tobey was the way of Chinese Calligraphy and its dynamic, space-sculptural line.

## 2.1 Origin and Development of Tobey's Art before his Meeting with the Art of East-Asia

Tobey's development towards the style of his later work, which established its significance for Modern Art, was not very consistent and fed from different sources and origins. It should only be discussed here, insofar as it is necessary to understand the development of his work towards the meeting with the Calligraphy and under its influence, whereby is to be looked for the causes and principles of this development. His artistic production until 1935, when he with pictures such as "Broadway" or "Broadway Norm" (Fig. 116 + 56) succeeded with the step into a visual world of a new spatial and dynamic linearity and thus overcoming the illusionist realist subject imitation and its followers, was contradictory in style and of uneven quality. His solitary nature and his frequent experimentation prevented a consistent and rapid development to a particular style, but held him thus also open to a variety of influences and suggestions, which he took willingly and consequently processed, and finally allowed the transformation of his work through the influence of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics.

In this early period came different aspects, partly consecutively, partly at the same time, to be more or less characterizing his work: the study of man in portraiture and some other early works, where there is still a certain provincial realism significantly; the impression that the knowledge of Art Nouveau works left behind, the admiration of Turner and Monet and the confrontation with Cubism, and ultimately the experience of metropolitan life in New York, which let him not go a lifetime, even though he did not love the cities.

The portrait and the representation of human Tobey had always resumed, as the many drawings and sketches show, that he made at the Public Market in Seattle (no Fig.), and which show people of all types in a variety of everyday situations.<sup>499</sup> The image of a man reading a newspaper from 1941 (no Fig.) shows by the way of the spontaneous and sketchy execution, which nevertheless meets the essential, the characteristic expression values of the situation and the person, already deep influences of the Calligraphic impulse, especially in the powerful, dynamic lines, which can not deny the training of Chinese Calligraphy.

Man and life always remained one of the main themes of his art, an art related to humans and their relationship to the universal life was one of his main goals for Tobey. But in his major work after 1934 this topic is not tackled by means of figurative representation, but with the dynamic, living, space-plastical line originating from the Chinese Calligraphy. Works with figurative elements, such as

portraits and costume drawings as well as the scenes of the market, should therefore not be discussed further here, but they already show the preference Tobey's for dealing with people in great numbers, so in the mass or quantity and the aspects of the movement, the unrest and the interaction outgoing from them, which had become a dominant theme of his main work.

An event, which aroused Tobey's interest in the dynamic line and strengthened the trend to use linear pictorial means, took place in Chicago, where an older friend took him to the local German bookstore, where he in magazines such as the "Simplicissimus" and "Youth" saw paintings and drawings by Franz von Stuck, Lenbach, Leo Putz and other artists of the German and Austrian Jugendstil.<sup>500</sup> Pictures of Tobey, like "Moving Forms" or "Modal Tide" from 1940 clearly show, inspired by the Art Nouveau, a tendency to dissolve the separation of form and surrounding space and to a linearization of the picture elements, wherefrom the whole picture event is set in motion, and more and more becomes a play of interlocking forces and movements. Forms and rests of objects turn into flowing, almost incorporeal currents.

Subsequent statements Tobey's, from which his admiration for Rembrandt, Turner, Monet, but also Cezanne was apparent<sup>501</sup>, when he was questioned about his links with the past, explain his interest in the resolution of the illusionist subject image and the use of a freer brushwork, which he already earlier expressed, because all these mentioned artists, as has already been shown, contributed to this trend and inspired and broad forth the development of modern Abstract Painting, particularly the informel expression. Remarkable here is the fact, that it are precisely these artists, particularly Turner and Monet as well as the Art Nouveau, which Tobey got to know almost simultaneously, that had been under the influence of East-Asian Art, as has also been indicated. That this is no coincidence but an encounter of affinities of the fundamental characteristics, which, once they come together, are almost by themselves coming to an appearance, was already evident.

These relationships confirm the assumption, that not random mental arbitrary acts or playful exoticisms are at work, such as still partly in the Chinoiserie, but that this coming together of creative forces of different cultures due to the similarity or identity of fundamental human attributes beyond the boundaries of cultures was possible.

The paragon of the works of Turner and Monet, as well as the knowledge of the art of Sorolla and Sargent, American painters of his time, who used a freer brushwork, reinforced Tobey's rejecting of the classical academic tradition of painting and their solid form and composition, and put him on the side of the "picturesque" style in the old opposition of Poussinists (picturesque) and the Rubenists (plastic-sculptural).<sup>502</sup> Cezanne fascinated him, because he produces a "Calligraphic" image area, which is full of movement and each brushstroke is vivious.<sup>503</sup> His desire for a freer, more spontaneous brushwork is herfrom

understandable, as well as the already during his time at the Arts Institute of Chicago from 1910-12 obtained knowledge, that it is for the art classes and the artist himself most important to learn "how to be aware and remaining aware".<sup>504</sup> Even more important was for Tobey the confrontation with Cubism, which he took on in his specific manner, and which despite the at first striking dissimilarity to the Chinese Calligraphy prepared him for the influence of this "Art of the Essential". Between 1919 and 1921, he became under the influence of Cubism, with whom he grappled especially during teaching at the Cornish School in Seattle, for the first time fully conscious of the possibility of a differently ordered perspective room, and he reacted violently against the "conception of the Renaissance of space and order" (Tobey), feeling that the forms" should be freer and not so disconnected from the space around them."<sup>505</sup>

Herefrom also developed the indispensable desire, to dissolve and eliminate the entrenched, sculptural form dominating the picture since the Renaissance, that separated due to its solid materiality thing and space, objects and the world and led to rigidity and immobility of the composition, and he wanted to merge it with the surrounding space area, as the Impressionism, Cézanne and the Cubists had done it already in approaches. "I wanted to break the form, merge it in a more lively and more dynamic way"<sup>506</sup>, formulated Tobey this from then on governing him demand, and elsewhere:

"The only goal that I can remember definitely was in 1918, when I said to me: 'If I will not do anything else in my painter life, I yet will destroy the form'.<sup>507</sup>

The liberation of light as an essential and autonomous means of expression was already included in this confrontation:

"I wanted to destroy this idea that was in the room there, and I wanted to liberate the light, which was in the forms in space."<sup>508</sup>

The dissolution and destruction of the central perspective image order and the image object, which already begun by Impressionism, is attributed to the Cubism. From the picture, which carries its meaning in the illusion of something else, becomes a work with autonomous being qualities, a "thing "sui generis, determined by its own laws and qualities, a "harmony parallel to nature" (Cézanne):

"The Cubist image is a representative and independent entity at the same time, it arises simultaеously from a visual and a spiritual experiece."<sup>509</sup>

The harmonic order discovered in the visible world and supplemented in the spirit is no longer represented by illusionist objects in an illusionistic space, but on the surface as the essential appearance place of the image. The surface

"falls into a rhythmic movement by an aperspectival and discontinuous spatial diversification of plans (autonomous pictorial space), by filling the atmospheric blank forms (between the objects). by formal diagrams (force fields), by self-guiding of light from color and tone (picture interior light) ". The surface "is a kind of writing tablet ... This transaction is taken place by analytical approximation of the object forms to the requirements of the surface: they become spread out flat, broken down into area plans, faceted in terms of surface motion and the facets ordered according to the surface rhythm". This is based on "an enhanced experience, which also takes the experiences of structural, harmonic, abstract nature lying beyond the visible seriously." (Haftmann).<sup>510</sup>

For the space, which is carrying the pictorial event, it is important that the difference, the separation of thing and empty space disappears, both merge into one another, the continuum of the emptiness is broken up, it becomes solidified and inserted into a whole area filling rhythmic order structure, symbol of the connection between space and thing. Thus the light finally loses the function of an illuminating light and becomes an autonomous inner-image light, the fixed position of the viewer is lost and is movable, figure and space-compartments lose their representational icon character and become signs<sup>510</sup>, often a symbol, so that the value all the picture elements is leveled, as equal autonomous entities on one hand and as a unifying symbol of a comprehensive "one" on the other side. The merging of former physical forms on the surface, whereby an alternating, rhythmic structured, non-measurable indefinite surface space is created, has on one hand through the rhythmic surface structure a stronger vitality, emotion, more dynamic surface order as result, and, in it included, an equally strong tendency to an autonomy and dynamism of the line, which in Cubism, however, still remains bound to the surface area form as a boundary line, but which as parallel rhythms, overlays, changes in direction or contrary direction curves provides for motion effects.

In this context a certain limited similarity or affinity between Cubism and Chinese Calligraphy is to be mentioned, which contributed to introduce the Chinese Calligraphy into Tobey's work: both try, but each through their specific resources, to visualize spatial and three-dimensional objects and relationships,

whether body or forces, on the two-dimensional surface, but without having to resort to the means of illusionism. The Cubism succeeds thereby with the dissecting, analytical, thus also dismembering method of faceting and subareal division; Chinese Calligraphy and painting accomplish the same thing many times with a single stroke, a single space-plastic movement of the round, flexible brush, which, as shown above, transposes the three-dimensional spatial movement into the surface area, holds it there and brings it again to life in the viewer, so in a direct and immediate way. This partial affinity between Cubism and Calligraphy has caused, that the confrontation Tobey's with the Cubism has also prepared the ground for the Calligraphic impulse, whereby the connecting elements were the desire to form destruction, the affinity of the picturing of three-dimensionals in the two-dimensional surface-area and the linear movement.

This namely was it, what helped Tobey to carry out the penetration and unification of space and thing, of "mass" and "emptiness". Thereby the already mentioned experience of Tobey at the Cornish School, which he recorded only in 1962 in the sketch "The Personal Discovery of Cubism" (Fig. 55), was crucial. The movement of the imaginary fly in the image space made Tobey clear, that space, structure and form elements can develop by movement and the therefrom nascent linear movement track, created by the mutual relatedness of the lines, by superimposing and by their movement rhythms, whereby simultaneously forces are captured and manifested in the picture. This is, however, as it turned out, also a key feature of the Chinese Calligraphy, especially of the Ts'ao-Shu (see. Fig. 57 and others). This connection between Cubism and Calligraphy lies perceptually among others in shifting the weight away from the surface pieces to the line allusions contained in them and around them, and vice versa at the Calligraphy in the shift from the pure linearity towards the surface forms produced and bordered by the lines. Both times it comes to a synthetic relation, which as such has the potential final goal of the unity of the particular elements. The "unit" is a principle, which, as we shall see, plays an important role for Tobey.

As a last influence before the acquaintance with Chinese Calligraphy finally is the cosmopolitan urbanity of New York to mention, which he learned to know from 1913 on, and which fascinated and repelled him, and which was a real manifestation of universal life movement for him, that he throughout his life regarded as the main theme and variously visualized, and wherefrom he said:

"... Through the calligraphic line I was able to record the restless pulsation of today's large cities."<sup>511</sup>

Images like "Broadway" (Fig. 116) and "Broadway Norm" (Fig. 56) and others are examples of this; the connection between Cubism and Calligraphy is especially to see in the picture "Rummage" from 1941 (Fig. 115).



## 2.2 The Influence on Tobey on the Level of ideological-philosophical Fundaments: Zen-Philosophy and the East-Asian Worldview as basic Elements of the meditative and dynamic Elements in Tobey's Art

### 2.2.1 General Remarks

The influence of Chinese Calligraphy on Tobey took place not only by means of acquisition and processing of formal elements, such as the dynamic, vibrant line and the gestural flow of the creative process, but was also determined by the underlying ideological, philosophical and aesthetic principles and peculiarities. This concerns primarily the already initially in detail explained Chinese Philosophy of Taoism and partly also the Confucian thoughts, as well as the teaching of Zen-thinking. To a lesser extent, some thoughts of the Baha'i teachings were involved here, which should first be briefly mentioned.

To the Baha'i teachings and Taoism Tobey owes his belief in the unity of all life, of all cultures and the whole universe, which is also emphasized by the Chinese Worldview repeatedly. The basic idea of the Bahai, the concept of unity, progressive revelation and humanity, are in a slightly modified form also conceptions of the Chinese thinking.

"I have been influenced by the Baha'i faith," says Tobey, "which believes that there is only one religion, which renews itself under different names. The roots of all religions are based on the view of the Bahai on the assumption, that mankind will gradually understand the unity of the world and the unity of mankind teaches that all prophets are one -.. that science and religion are the two major forces, that must be in balance, if humanity wants to reach adulthood. I think that my work has been influenced by these beliefs. I have tried to decentralize and to penetrate (interpenetrate), so that all parts of an image have the same value (related value). Maybe I have even managed to penetrate the perspective and bring the distant closer to another."<sup>512</sup>

The basic idea of unity and balance contained therein are, as we have seen, even thoughts of the Chinese worldview and led Tobey to maintaining the Baha'i faith as a religious belief, but to deal also intensively with the Chinese Worldview.

As a result, Tobey repeatedly emphasized the necessary unity of nature, art, science, religion and individual life, because all people are like "waves of the same sea".<sup>513</sup> The belief in the all-encompassing unity becomes in his pictures significant in the decentralization and the "moving-focus", the dissolution of the form, which

indeed combines the things of the image into one unit, the integration of linear elements into a unified vibrating continuum, which is based on the multiplication of living calligraphic lines according to the "One-Line"-principle of Shih-T'ao. Images like "Within itself" from 1959 (Fig. 118) and "Multiple Voyages" of 1957 (without fig.) are pronounced examples of the extensive processing of the principle of "unity" in the Calligraphic network, which provides the viewer without having to resort to literary or illusionist means, by the elementary experience of a single vibrational space a direct and immediate symbol of universal principles. In the form of the linear vibration space and the sphere of a single colored ground, as well as in the still short to be discussed "one-line" principle, with which Tobey builds the world of his images, appears in his works always again this universal principle as a continuous basic feature. In the words of Tobey that "all parts of the image the same value" have, and that he would "penetrate perspective", by which he wants to resolve the entrenched static form and the associated construction of space, this idea of unity is clearly expressed.

The for many aspects of Tobey's work true identification, that the Bahai as a faith, which is "active, vitalistic, flexible and progressive", and which with "no movement and no progress" would be "without divine life" and therefore "dead", corresponds again with the principles of the Chinese philosophy and has contributed to the development of Tobey's linear script, in which the antithesis between the world of objects is revoked in a multiple use of single, dynamic lines. The often use of circular or oval shapes in Tobey's images is owed to Chinese thinking, but also to the Baha'i teaching, since in both the round is a symbol of the original or divine unity and perfection (such as in "World" from 1959 (Fig. 121)), whereby the influence of Chinese thinking was more determining as that of the Bahai. The idea of the "progressive revelation, accordingly to the "ever-swelling" of the Tao-Te-Ching, was one of the causes of Tobey's incessant search and experimentation and for the constant confrontation with the unknown in front of him:

"In a time when the experiment is expressed in all forms of life, searching becomes the unique valuable means of expression of the spirit."<sup>514</sup>

The balance of rational and irrational in the works of Tobey, of thought and pure spontaneous gesture and action, has one of its origins in the belief in the equal rights of science and religion, of reason and faith, whereby Tobey sets a special emphasis on the equalization of both, on the balance:

"Science and religion are the two major forces that must be in balance, ... <sup>515</sup>

While a small part of the basic notions of Tobey were caused by the early influence of the Bahai, the Chinese thinking caused supplementing, deepening and strengthening. Tobey confirms that in some way, when he says that "Baha'i has been looking for him, but he had searched Zen", which here does not mean exclusively the Zen-Buddhism and with which, as already mentioned in the introduction, Tobey never has fully identified himself, but more the whole complex of Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics as spiritual foundation of Calligraphy.

Like Bahai the Zen-thinking also is per se not a medium of art, but a philosophy of life, a belief, and no more and no less than pure thought. A Baha'i art does not exist, and the Zen-Art is no more than a part of the general Chinese Art, and it uses only certain specific means of expression as its dominant elements. Neither by the religion of the Bahai, nor by the Chinese Worldview alone Tobey would have been able to visualize ideas, such as unity, movement, life, etc., and to create a new spatial and structural image order; he succeeded only through the art of Chinese Calligraphy, which only had the artistic means which enabled him

"to paint the frenetic rhythms of modern cities,  
something I could not even try using the techniques of  
the Renaissance",<sup>516</sup>

as Tobey himself says. Even more than the ideological influences befits the concrete art medium of Chinese Calligraphy the power to a fundamental change in Tobey's work, which gives it also the merit of having attributed to the change of the history of Western Art, which Tobey has not insignificantly affected, an aspect, which has hitherto been considered relatively little.

As for the influence of Chinese Philosophy and Zen-thinking, these are connected in contrast to the Bahai in a comprehensive cultural unity with the art of Chinese Calligraphy, in whose aesthetics they appear manifold. It can therefore be assumed the fact, that aspects of Chinese Philosophy will be taken over solely by the study of Calligraphy and its principles.

## 2.2.2 Characteristics of Chinese Worldview and Aesthetics in Tobey's Art

### 2.2.2.1 General Description of the Calligraphic Influence

In a brief overview, first the most famous aspects and implications of the ideological and formal influence of Calligraphy are shown, with remarks by Tobey himself, from letters, articles, or statements to exhibitions etc., which can prove and illustrate this:

"In China and Japan, I was released from the form by the influence of the Calligraphy. I knew this expression already in Seattle. I have studied this calligraphic method with a Chinese painter, Teng Kuei, ... I received there, what I call the calligraphic impulse, which has opened up to my work new dimensions, ... always in search of new horizons through meditation and contemplation ... ."517

During these meditations Tobey became conscious of the importance of the unity of man and nature and the role of nature in the creative process:

"Let nature take the lead in your work, that means, 'you must not stand in the way', ...."518

an important finding, that differed completely from the previous ideas of European civilization from the essence of the creative process, and which had come in the same way to Masson, as he dealt with the East-Asian Aesthetics ("not interfere", "do not detain"), according to the Chinese "not acting" (wu-wei 無為).

"A spiritual gathering is a prerequisite, from here the process must begin. Mental balance is another ideal ... immediacy of the spirit will be a new point of view for us as the arts in the East and West grow together more closely."519

His specific technique of the "White Writing" Tobey owes to the method of Chinese Calligraphy. This "White Writing" appears on closer inspection as a plurality of fine, small and short brush strokes, which have the typical rising and falling ductus of the living, space-plastical line, as it was discussed in detail in Chapter III, and fill the whole picture with a network of filigree fine lines, that transforms the scene into a vibrant medium of light and space (see Fig. 117 and others). In this fine network of lines initially appeared still identifiable images of the outside world, landscapes, city and street images or imaginary scenes, such as in "Western Town" in 1944, in "Arena of Civilization" or "Forms follow Man" (Fig. 120). They shine through as dematerialized phenomena through the vibrating filigree and show a strong mental self-motion, by which they could serve Pollock as an immediate precursor to his free expression signature.<sup>520</sup> The fine filigree of Calligraphic brushstrokes dissolved at Tobey always more from the motifs of visible object forms, it became a formal equivalent of an inner expressive movement and a symbol of fundamental universal forces, because Tobey's goal always remained to attain through pictorial meditation the harmony between

inside and outside, the conformity between the individual of man and the general of the world around him.

Through the "living line" or the "moving line", as he himself called them, and which corresponds to the above in detail analyzed fundamental Calligraphic line of the K'ai-Shu or Ts'ao Shu, mainly in the shape of the Liang-Tso-Stroke ( 棕 琢 ), Tobey learned to break up the solid forms of the past, to dematerialize, dissolve and make them transparent for other, underlying new forms, to merge the volumes of emptiness and transparency with the space and to let the things breath.<sup>521</sup> He was interested above all in the space, which is with him no longer static and perspective and in which room and thing can not connect. Tobey understands the space among others as the multiplicity of fine writing lines, the line fabric or line net lying at different levels, the tissue of moving vibrant lines, that often form an atmospheric or ethereal fine substance, thereby bringing the pictorial space to vibrate, let it breathe and vibrate and often consist of several layers. It is the linear vibrating oscillation space, which the use of Calligraphic lines created in Tobey's works. Thus it often achieves a multiplication of the number of spatial plots, the compartments, which he calls "multiple space".<sup>523</sup> The moving white lines forming this linear vibration space symbolize, as Tobey says

"light as a unifying idea, that flows through the separate units of life and brings to the human spirit a dynamism and opens his energy to a larger reality. The multiple space, linked by white lines, symbolizes the highest states of conciousness".<sup>524</sup>

The multiple linear vibration space ("multiple space") and the consequent "moving focus", are a direct result of the Calligraphic impulse. The white, in some works also black lines, merge into a vibrant and oscillating space of great visual freedom that includes all time and it also eliminates it in a moment of duration.<sup>525</sup>

The decentralization of his images and the variable, moving focus can, among others, be compared with the direct order tendency of the Chinese syntax and the non-hierarchical structure of the Calligraphy. The thereby resulting space is lacking the traditional center, but just that Tobey has intended, he "does not allow the viewer to rest", the viewer must move along, constantly adjust him self optical, psychic and spiritual to individual space cells of the vibrating surface of the painting. This ever-changing optical adjustment, to which Tobey forces the viewer, creates the dynamics of his images. The significance Tobey's lies in the processing of the formal Calligraphic possibilities to his non-hierarchical, polyfocal "Allover", with which he anticipated or influenced trends and characteristics of the Action Painting, which was also the case with Masson.

The development of a new painteresque space concept, the polyfocal linear vibration space, is not the only achievement that is due to Tobey. He also has found

therewith a new type of form, that no longer consisted of the individual, but is to be equated with parts or the whole of the vibrating, crystallizing painting surface. The activation of the painting surface and thereby forming crystallization of the movement, which is called by Tobey "moving vortex", a term by Tobey and an element of his art, which has been largely ignored in the literature, develops out of a variety of moving form particles, that combine to build a spatial continuum and so express the dynamics of the world. The opening vibrating linear oscillation space, which is no longer opposed to filling forms, is itself the form.

Tobey was not interested in the individual subject, but in the spatial appearance; form, object and spatial depth are constantly in motion and isolated for him not comprehensible. They are only tangible in a room, which is filled with energy, forces, tensions, relationships etc. - a space in which the opposition between thing and emptiness no longer exists. This pictorial space is the figuration and symbol of that of our inner world, our consciousness, the space which the artist creates in himself. This inner space is closer to the unlimited space of the universe, which is according to the Chinese conception identical to the Tao, than to the outer space; but it is only experienceable through concentration and meditation ("concentration and consecration"), an idea Tobey's learned through the Chinese aesthetics of Calligraphy and the beliefs of Taoism and Ch'an.

This low emotionality differentiates Tobey significantly from the Action Painting of Pollock or Mathieu, wherefrom the latter (Mathieu) elevated alone the speed of execution to the sole art scale, in a misunderstanding of the Calligraphic Aesthetics. Tobey's painting is not the result of recorded fears and emotions, but the expression of a pantheistic openness and boundlessness and freedom, it is searching for the inner and yet universal truth, the search for the innermost, only susceptible, all-encompassing nature of things, it's "essentials" (Masson), the "Ch'i-yun" (氣韻) of Chinese Art, which manifests itself in a permanent creative movement, in the "living spontaneity" of the work.

## 2.2.2.2 Elements of Chinese Worldview and Aesthetics in Tobey's Art

### 2.2.2.2.1 Unity - Roundness – Perfection

One of the main objectives of Tobey was the constant search for the absolute, all-encompassing ultimate truth. With this aim, a key for his thought and his concept of art is connected, which he had deepened through the study of the Chinese Worldview, especially the Taoism, Ch'an-Buddhism and the aesthetic principles of Calligraphy: the term or the principle of unity, the "one" or uniformity. Tobey's belief of the unity of all people, cultures, the whole universe, has already been discussed, as well his relationship with nature, which already in his youth made him conscious the unity of man and world.

"I wanted in my work to search a unified world, and I use a moving vortex to achieve that,"<sup>526</sup>

says Tobey. Both through his acquaintance with Teng Kuei in Seattle, his trip to China and Japan, as well as by his stay in Dartington Hall in Devonshire, where he met with the Sinologist Arthur Waley and other Orientalists, Tobey got to know the Chinese Worldview, which earlier has already been explained in detail, and which had been fully incorporated by the Japanese, so that it is unnecessary to differentiate. The acquaintance of Tobey with the Taoism is also apparent from a remark Tobey's, in which he speaks about it in connection with Japanese art, but this is irrelevant in this connection:

"The old Japan with its Zen teachings and its philosophy of the Taoism felt the content of an empty cup more attractive than that of a full one."<sup>527</sup>

In this thinking the unity of the universal Tao is a key principle, which covers all areas of the East-Asian life, including Calligraphy and Aesthetics. Tobey had later also repeatedly dealt with the views of East-Asia and both texts of Confucius as well as other classics in translations by Arthur Waley among his books, including the Tao-Te-Ching by Lao-tzu.<sup>528</sup> So the thoughts of the Tao-Te-Ching and the principle of unity certainly were well known to him, and they always again have met him in the context with the East-Asian culture, where they are still commonplace. In this connection it is said in the Tao-Te-Ching:

"Non-being I call the beginning of Heaven and Earth, Its what I call the mother of individual beings. Thus the direction to the non-being leads to a look of the wonderful nature, the direction towards the being to the viewing of the spatial limitations. Both are one in origin and different only by name. In such unit it is named the secret"(TTCh. 1).

About the unit and the relationship of the world and the transcendent being it goes on to say:

"The Tao ( 道 ) creates the one (unity), the one generates the duality (Yin and Yang). The duality generates the Trinity (Yin and Yang and the unity of the two). These three create all things. All things have in the back the dark (Yin) and strive for the light (Yang), and the flowing force gives them harmony (ho )"(TTCh. 42).<sup>529</sup>

Essential for Tobey's art here is the conviction that both "the wonderful nature", i.e. the transcendental eternal beings and truths of all things, as well as the real being, the "spatial limitations", can be detected in a view, what for Tobey was one goal of his constant "searching". But equally important for Tobey is the sequence of the creative process: from the transcendent being, the unknown, the Tao emerges the One, the unit as a first setting and as a basic artistic element in a fundamental, not (meaningful) divisible unit. This is where the previously mentioned "One-Line"-principle of Shih-T'ao as a method of pictorial form-creation starts, which is consistently used by Tobey, as remains to be seen. From this unit caused by duplication and opposition the duality arises, that is according to the Chinese conception always of polaristic nature and is understood to be interrelated, as the in everything contained forces of Yin and Yang. The interaction of these forces always takes place in a unity of the two, so that the Trinity is created. From this then the variety of all things is produced by multiplication. We have already encountered this principle at Masson, and it is also a fundamental element of Tobey's art.

These fundamental relationships are still valid today for all aspects of East-Asian culture. In the relational thinking of Zen-Buddhism, which Tobey sought to understand in Japan in the Zen monastery, this has been replaced by the concept of "Nothing", which was already used by Lao-tzu.

The aim of Zen to replace the substance thinking through the relationship-thinking, and to restore through a spritual jump into the "Nothing" the original unity of man and the universe, has also become decisive for Tobey. Like the Zen art Tobey also tries through his art to rediscover this lost unity of man, things and universal nature by the special nature of his art.

In Chinese Calligraphy the principle of unity is not only active by the "One-Line-principle" or by the conception of the character as an entity, as a living entity, but also in the postulation, which Fiedler for the European art repeatedly stressed, of the need for "correspondence of heart and hand" (hsin-shou hui-kuei 心手會歸), the cooperation of mind, spirit and physical activity in the (perfect) artistic process. Its concrete expression the principle of unity finds in Tobey's work in different ways. Probably the most important and most continuous artistic realization form is the often uniform linear vibration space, formed from many Calligraphic lines, the unity of the multiplicity of elementary particles, which creates by opposite and corresponding movements and directions a dynamic, vibrant continuum (e.g. Fig. 118). Also the mostly monochromatic image ground corresponds with this principle, it also corresponds with the "void" and the "nothing" of Zen.

The use of certain symbolic forms, such as in particular the roundness of circular or oval shapes takes its foundation from the principle of unity. Examples include "Centre Agité Dominé" from 1960 (Fig. 123), "World" from 1959 (Fig. 121), "Oval in Square" from 1958 (no Fig.) and "Untitled" from 1954 (Fig. 38), the latter a yet not published and therefore little known gouache on paper, formerly owned by



the Galerie Beyeler Basel, now a private property. Also one of these image types is the aquatinta "There was a door, for which I found no key" from 1970 (Fig. 122), which connects the roundness and perfection of circular shape with the strong movement of a spiral of a single quick and spontaneous Calligraphic brushstroke, and thus is a striking example for the remark Tobey's from the beginning of this section, in which he says that he wants to reach the "united world" by means of a "moving vortex". Unity of form, linear medium and uniform movement combine to form an imago of extraordinary strength and depth. Perhaps in this context pictorial formats, as shown in Fig. 126, a circle with characters and symbolic fishes from the Han Dynasty, that vaguely also possess sign character, have been known to Tobey and have served as inspiration for paintings like "World" (Fig. 121 ) and "Oval in Square" (o. fig.). Not only in the West the circle is the symbol of perfection of the transcendent being, but also in Chinese thought:

"There is a thing that is indiscriminately completed. Before heaven and earth were, it was already there, so quiet, so lonely. Alone it is and does not change, in a circle it runs and does not endanger itself; ...; I call it the sense (Tao). Arduous giving it a name, I call it: great. Great, that is always moving, always moving, that is far away. Far away, that is returning "... (TTCH. 25)

The circle is therefore in the Chinese and Japanese Zen-Painting, usually drawn with a single powerful stroke, also a symbol of the Tao and the concentration and an important training tool for the meditative experience of the Being, both by its creation with the means of the writing brush, as well as by its viewing (Fig. 52). The experience of the Calligraphic transcribed circuit symbol has impressed Tobey and found in this way the entrance into his art:

"When I lived in the Zen monastery, they gave me a picture, painted with sumi-ink, a large circle, freely applied with a brush, to meditate on it. What was it? Every day I looked at it. Did it mean self-emptying? The universe in which I was able to give me up? Maybe I did not recognize its aesthetics and overlooked the delicate strokes of the brush, which the practiced eye of the Orientals reveals so much about the nature of the man, who had painted it. But after this visit I discovered, that I had new eyes, and much of what seemed of little importance began to increase, that I made observations about things that I had previously not even perceived."<sup>530</sup>

While the Zen image of the circle, as well as in the spiral of Tobey (Fig. 122), the circular shape obtains its polaristic opposition through the Calligraphic ductus and the brush impetus, and so the imperfections of everyday objects and the perfection of the transcendent are combined, this is done in "Oval in Square" (no Fig.) and "World" (Fig. 121) through the animation of the whisking and whirring of the elementary particles of the "White Writing", which form the balancing polar contrast to the perfect harmony of the ideal form.

But roundness and circular shape are symbols of an inner world and perfection, which man has neglected for too long, and which also other artists and thinkers of the West set in relationship with this inner existence.<sup>531</sup> The thought of returning to one's origin, as it already is voiced by Lao-Tzu in the Tao-Te-Ching as a fundamental movement of universal forces, sees Tobey included in the renewed relationship with the Far East:

"The art of the Far East reaches our shores as perhaps never before. The gap which the Pacific meant earlier is closed. All Oriental We is no longer a mystery for us, that exists in a dim and distant past. The old line of hikes completes its circle, the serpent has seen its own tail."<sup>532</sup>

The negligence of the inner world and the - more perfect - truths contained in it, which Tobey criticizes, he wants to revoke in his works:

"The Earth is now round for quite a while, but not in the relations between people and nations with each other, and not in our consciousness of their art as parts of the roundness. We have too much dealt with the outside, the objective world, at the expense of the inner, where the true roundness is."<sup>533</sup>

Tobey's paintings are, even if they are rectangular, formally still governed by the principle of circularity and centeredness, which are usually not included in the images in the ocular structure or a distinct form, but after some time of looking evolve as an autonomous forcefield, formed by the pictorial elements. Works like "Space Rose" (Fig. 128) and "Centre Agité ..." (Fig. 123), in which both centering on a point deep down inside, as well as by radial outward radiation are distinctive features, are unquestionable examples, also "Untitled" (Fig. 38). This also applies to flat and square images with uniform structural all-over of the Calligraphic line weave, which, like Fig. 118, have a suction inwards as well as a radiation to the outside, sometimes show also forces that are organized differently, such as vertical, horizontal or diagonally, but they are always felt as force fields.

Besides the use of symbolic forms as a symbol of the unity principle is mainly

the consistent use of Calligraphic strokes, especially the several times already mentioned Liang-Tso-Stroke of Calligraphy, so basically a few, occurring in many variations linear element in the sense of the "One-Line"-method of Shih-T'ao the equally consistent picturing of the unity principle by means of pure Calligraphy. Tobey is building his dynamic imagery almost exclusively from this linear basic element and generates "from the one the two, from the two the three and from the three the multiplicity of all things," as it said in the Tao-Te-Ching, and he has continuously applied this method, which formally corresponds to the creation process of Chinese Calligraphy, successively putting line by line to the entity of the lively character together, like no other Western artists.

Finally, the principle of unity also relates to the relationship between form and content, of suggestive execution and completeness of the statements and vitality, which have gained in Chinese Calligraphy and in the painting of the Ch'an utmost balance and unity. The absence of this unity, the lack of inner, richer perfection complains Tobey, intuitively drawing a comparison with the East-Asian Art, when he says:

"A lot of pictures today are mere fragments and therefore only just promises without fulfillment. The now so popular cursory methods are indicative of this haste. I believe, that painting should come through the channels of the meditation, rather than through the streets of action. Only then can you have a conversation with a painting. If I can find no content, there is no communication."<sup>534</sup>

The balance of suggestive method and perfection of the substantive connections in the allusion sees Tobey therefore only be met, if the work, as it is decisive for his art, is created both by action as well as by meditation in the execution.

#### 2.2.2.2.2 Polarity of Contradictions

Another for the art and thought Tobey's defining attribute is the principle adopted from the Chinese belief of the polarity, of the balancing opposites, which is embodied in the Chinese thought of the polar primal forces Yin and Yang, and which also is reflected in the aesthetic principles of Calligraphy and Painting, based on ideas, that the Tao-Te-Ching expresses as follows:

"All things have the dark in the back (Yin) and strive for the light (Yang), and the flowing force gives them harmony (ho 和)." (TTCh.42), and elsewhere it says:

"What you want to press together, you first must have to let it expand; what you want to weaken, you must first make really strong." (TTCh. 36)

As already explained in the section on the Calligraphy, the polaristic principle is also for the Calligraphy of importance, such as in the interaction between brush (Yang) and ink (Yin), the ratio of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao-Shu, of which Sun Kuo-t'ing said, that one is contained in the other, and that its artistic principles, such as form and structure on one hand and speed and spontaneity of execution, i.e. the gestural action, on the other hand, must mutually penetrate. Also the interaction of the "cautious hesitation" (yen liu 淹留) and the "speed" (hsün-su 迅速), and the rising and lowering of the brush, contain the attribute of a polar interaction, contain Yin and Yang; and not least the introduction of a line by rotation and stopping the same also with a rotation of the brush tip. The great importance of the polar interaction is emphasized again by Shen Tsung-ch'ien (沈宗騫):

"In the Calligraphy rules the principle, to start a vertical line with a horizontal and a horizontal line with a vertical. The same applies to the introductory and decaying movement in painting. For example, you make a downward movement before moving upward, and go upward before a downward movement. The strong pressure goes ahead of a light one, and the light one a strong. Let loose the reins, before tightening them, and tighten them before letting them loose. These are all variations of the initial and final principle. Regarding the composition lead in a crowded scene with a previous poor surface; before moving on to a flat and open terrain, create a few pillars of emerging strokes. Before a blurred part make solid masses. Before a deep dark area set as contrast something bright and clear. The same principle is applied everywhere."<sup>535</sup>

The importance of the polaristic principle of interaction, in East Asia symbolized as a circular symbol with two interlocking halves<sup>536</sup>, at the beginning already discussed in detail in connection with Taoism, sees Tobey to be extremely relevant both for the history of art in general, as well as for his own art, and he attributes, postulated consistently in this work, this principle of rational and irrational, conscious and sub(sur)conscious awareness embodied in the currents of the Classicism and Romanticism:

"I have, however, read a lot, and since I found out that there have been since the event of 'Cubism' thirty-two 'isms', I came to the conclusion that there are actually but only the two old currents, which there always have been: the Romantic and the Classic."<sup>537</sup>

This polaristic contrast appears to Tobey like a Janus head:

"The two faces of Janus can be seen everywhere. I have the most trouble, when I try to get my two faces in a focal point."<sup>538</sup>

These two opposites of Yin and Yang, which in the West carry Classicism and Romanticism and substantiate in China Taoism and Confucianism as irrational and rational-organizing forces of the culture, appear in the work of Tobey in many ways. They are contained in his relationship with East and West, religion and science, tradition and modernity, metaphysical and realistic references, personal and impersonal or supra-personal features of his work, in spirituality and materiality (mass), evolution and timelessness; in the formal properties of expansion and contraction, improvisation and a considered approach; in the tension of Calligraphic lines and their dynamics and the uniform and restrained ground of light color, contrast and interaction of movement and space, light and dark, black and white and color, as well as in the thematic area in the opposition and the unity of man and nature, object and universe, which are tried to keep all of these in his work in a harmonious balance. Tobey himself demonstrates, that he became aware of the work of polar opposites already at the beginning of his learning of Chinese Calligraphy:

"I just had my first lesson in Chinese brushwork with my friend Teng Kuei. The tree is no longer firm in the ground, it breaks in less solid spheres, bathed in chiaroscuro. There is pressure and release. Each movement is like footprints in the snow, kept and loved for its own sake. The great dragon breathes sky, thunder and shadow; wisdom and mind invigorated."<sup>539</sup>

Works as "Calligraphic Dance" from 1963 (Fig. 127) and "Space Rose" from 1959 (Fig. 128) embody these polar opposites as a means of balanced generation of tension in the form of contrasts of light and dark, line to surface, whereby as in the Calligraphy the opposites are intertwined, like the white in the dark, Calligraphic lines of Fig. 87 and Fig. 89. Also "Trio" from 1970 (Fig. 130) and "Yea, the first morning of creation wrote..." from 1970 (Fig. 129) embody the application of the

polar principle, whereby the fine side lines of "Trio" include and show the interlocking and intertwining of contrasts. It is unnecessary to cite even more examples, since the engagement of the polar opposites in Tobey's work is consistently implemented and obvious.

#### 2.2.2.2.3 Harmony - Balance – Center

Also from the Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics of Calligraphy comes the idea of the need for a "balance (equilibrium)", which Tobey repeatedly emphasized and searches and realizes in his paintings:

"It is a state of equilibrium, which must be preserved if the humanity wants to move, to go forward."<sup>540</sup>

With the principle of balance almost identical is the concept of "harmony" (ho 和), cited more frequently in Chinese aesthetics, a central principle of Chinese culture, philosophy and world order, and also associated with it is the concept of "center" (chung 中), one of the main principles of the thoughts of social order and philosophy, particularly of the Confucianism.

Already the young Tobey had a strong sense of a state of harmony and balance of the whole, which he saw realized in nature, and which the humanity had, in his opinion, lost and was therefore to regain, what he regarded as a contribution of his art. The Bahai-Faith was the first step towards this goal, the Chinese Philosophy and Art, especially the Calligraphy, gave him the full understanding of the principle of harmony and the Calligraphy gave him also the artistic means to achieve that.

The Tao-Te-Ching already emphasized the harmony (ho 和) as compensation of contrasts and so as the unifying, cohesive, consummating, the function of the Tao:

"All things have the darkness in the back and strive for the light, and the flowing force gives them harmony."  
(TTCh.42)

The force or energy, which is manifested in the movement, is here inextricably linked with the harmony. In the Chinese Aesthetics of Calligraphy as well as Painting the principle of harmony plays an important role, for example in the demand going back to K'ung-tzu, to bring and keep form and content in balance:

"With whom the content outweighs the form, he is uncouth, with whom the form outweighs the content, those is a writer. With whom form and content are in balance, that one is a noble." (Lunyu 6.16).<sup>541</sup>

This requirement of K'ung-tzu Sun Kuo-t'ing had adopted in his remarks on the aesthetics of Calligraphy.<sup>542</sup> Also the for the writing and aesthetic of painting repeatedly demanded "conformity of heart and hand" (Hsin-shou hsiang-ying 心手相应)<sup>543</sup>, i.e. the correspondence of spiritual conception and execution of the work, emphasizes the principle of harmonic balance, as well as the formulation Sun Kuo-t'ings of the "five kinds of harmony" (wu ho 五和) and the "five deficiencies" (wu ping 五病)<sup>544</sup>, which latter are negative formulations of the harmony. For the painting the balance of forces, harmony and the center/middle are no less important and resonate in explanations of Shen Tsung-ch'ien again and again.<sup>545</sup>

Tobey's efforts to balance in his thinking and his painting are for him the criterion for universal life and wholeness, for the unity of human and universal life. Harmony and balance are, as he always stresses, a prerequisite for the solution of human problems, the preservation of peace and the unification of mankind. Balance and harmony are necessary for him both in life as in art, and in his view to achieve mainly through the rapprochement of science and religion, the two large opposing areas of human cognition:

"We have just been blown away by the storm," says Tobey, "that's all. Science and psychology have done theirs ... .. where we barely remember, that there might today be great men in the religious field, which had in our time to tell the people as much and more, because in almost narcissistically delusion he is overwhelmed by the wonders of science .... Have we really believed we had the whole under control. But that is not like this. Religion and science must be kept in balance."<sup>546</sup>

Furthermore, Tobey says:

"Just kneel on Sunday or even denying the existence of a Creator, is not a solution. The solution is to balance the forces that bring people to a state of mental equilibrium, and the will to do so, and only this will mean peace. ... It is a state of mental balance, which has to be obtained, if a person is to move forward in the right sense of the movement, in the balance of a man on a horseback. ... The cult of the room can be as boring as that of the object. The dimension that counts for the creators is the space he creates within himself, this inner space is to the infinite closer than the other, and it is the privilege of a balanced

mind - . and the attempt to achieve this state is necessary - to become aware of the inner space so deliberately, as he is aware of the outer. If he endeavors the one and neglects the other, he will fall from his horse, and the balance is lost."<sup>3547</sup>

The importance of the Chinese thinking for the development of the harmony principle in Tobey is evident from one of his remarks, in which this principle is directly linked to the Calligraphy; it is introduced with the learning of a sign, whereby, as shown above, a whole complex of ideas reach the consciousness and get into the visual appearance:

"When I was in China, I learned the character 'Chung' (中), which means 'center'. The Chinese have a saying, that 'the center of it all is the best'. We have absolutely no sympathy for the center anymore, because we either race forward too fast or react reverse too fast, whereby extremes meet. And then there is no more movement in the circle;.. the intentions are the same."<sup>548</sup>

The "middle" or "center" (chung 中) is the central principle of the Confucian doctrine and recorded especially in the work of the "Doctrine of the Mean" (Chung Yung 中庸), one of the "Four Classic Books" (Szu Shu Wu Ching 四書五經), which based on statements K'ung-tzu's and was compiled by Tzu Sse (子思), one of his students and his grandson, and which demands the balance of thinking and acting as one of the appropriate behaviors to universal harmony.<sup>549</sup>

Tobey was also aware of the need for harmony and balance in art, his remarks make it clear, that it mattered to him avoiding extremes, that dominate the present. In this respect he differs greatly from painters of the Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting, as Pollock, Wols, Mathieu and others, which often emphasize only one feature and apply it to the extreme (such as the cult of speed by Mathieu). The balance of his paintings is evident at Tobey and hardly needs a detailed exemplification. Light and dark, color and monochrome, movement of linear particles and tranquility of the gentle colored surfaces, form and content, expression and meditation, rational and irrational moments are balanced and give each image a vivid and moving equilibrium. Nowhere is immobility or mechanical rigidity to feel, but equally also lacks explosiveness or a state "shortly before the abyss", as Haftmann stated for Wols, whose result is the destruction or selfdestruction.

From the principles of harmony, balance and the middle derived at Tobey some formal peculiarities, which will be discussed further below; there are features such as the dissolution of the solid static image form and its associated hierarchical



structure, resulting in an allover of the small lively elementary particles and the decentralization of the pictorial order, and which also results in the moving focus, which detaches the formerly fixed position of the viewer with respect to the unambiguous composition of the traditional perspective image by a number of points of view with equal rights.

#### 2.2.2.2.4 Ch'i-yun (氣韻): "Vital Spontaneity" or "élan vital"

One of Tobey's main concern is to capture and express in his paintings "the spirit and rhythm of life", the "lively spontaneity" or the "élan vital", the "ch'i-yun" of the Chinese Calligraphy. His painting is not a compulsive trace of his individuality, but an expression of a pantheistic dissolution and opening of boundaries. Like the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, he wants to express the vision of the cosmos as a "greater unity" or "comprehensive unity", and of the life as a self-renewing, permanent movement. Heraclitus' "Pantha Rei", "everything moves", was also involved, as the Chinese Philosophy of Taoism and the Ch'an-thinking.

For Tobey life includes not only human life, whereby he lays the main emphasis on the unity of all people and the different cultures in the sense of general humanity, a world citizenship, but also on the movement of the entire universe, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, which he like the Chinese Philosophy considers as a continuous unit, from the chaos to perfect order, wherefor his art is supposed to be a spiritual counterpart. So also the least perceptible and smallest, which is normally overlooked in everyday life, often has for him vital importance:

"When I was in Japan sitting on the floor of a room and looking out into the small garden with blooming flowers and dragonflies fluttering through the air, I felt that this little world, almost under my feet, I should say, had a value for itself, but had to be seen and appreciated by its own level in the room. I suddenly felt, that I have been too long solely only over my boots."<sup>550</sup>

Most-smallest and most-greatest are equivalent for Tobey and connected to a large unit by the movements ruling in all of life. In a world, that seems to get out of balance, Tobey sees the solution of the problems therein to explore and to conquer the inner world of man and the realm of his mind instead of the outer world and the outer real space:

"If we are to escape the inherent risks, then towards a renewal of the spiritual forces, or at least that man should wake up from the depths of materialism .... The true

world of man is his spirit, and his thinking is reflected in his art".<sup>551</sup>

The degree of "lively spontaneity" or "spiritual resonance" of an artwork is as higher, as deeper and more comprehensive thinking and the consciousness of the people are. Supreme consciousness, as it characterizes the meditative devotion to the creative process, and which is a continuous feature of Tobey's art, also causes the highest spiritual resonance in the work or the highest level of "ch'i-yun" according to Chinese understanding. In Chinese Calligraphy, this maximum consciousness and the "lively spontaneity" of the Calligraphic work is depending on the concentration and in addition to an existing natural talent, on mastering the methods of raising and lowering and the other of the "Six Principles", which beyond the by the General Informel used forces of the random also bring access to the universal creative forces and their harmony, expanding the intellectual horizons, as Tobey remarks:

"Mankind is broken up to expand its mental and spiritual horizons. The art of the future can not germinate in antagonisms and national rivalries, but it will make a great step forward, with a renewed growth, when the humanity in general grows into a state of world citizenship."<sup>552</sup>

This spiritual inner world proclaimed by Tobey, which brings cosmopolitanism for the humanity, is based on a from our previous thinking completely different attitude of consciousness, which Tobey saw already realized in Eastern thought; which sees the world as a whole, as a unit, and acts in a balance of rational thinking and intuitive knowledge, the predominant form of cognition of Taoism and Zen-Buddhism, so in a spiritually holistic attitude. In this holistic being the mankind has an understanding of the equality and universality of all being, as an expression of the all-embracing unity of the world spirit, the Tao of Chinese Philosophy and the emptiness of Zen, whose essential feature is the permanent movement of the dominant forces of change and evolution. The task of man in this world is, therefore, to hold nothing and to move with the world, whereby the only permanent precisely is the constant change. The aim of his art in this process sees Tobey in the conscious-making of these relationships and in the paradigmatic aesthetic experience, which are mediated by it to the viewer. Through the influence of Chinese Thinking and Chinese Aesthetics can in this art be found a strong sense of the ephemeral, transitory, the parable of all phenomena, which is based on the knowledge of being as something that unfolds itself in perpetual motion. Tobey sees the highest life not only in the broad context, the large scale, but also in the smallest, the microworld, and also in all the insignificant things of everyday life:

"I have discovered many worlds on paving stones and tree barks ... In recent years I have borrowed something from Leonardo's visions; I felt attracted to the leprous walls, attracted to bend down in order to pick up from the cobbled alleys of American cities thrown away remains of food cans and discarded stuff, that have been run over by countless motorists, who unaware of knowing, that they have contributed to my participation in these things, pressed them into charming new shapes."<sup>53</sup>

and:

"My sources of inspiration are from those of the Midwest, where I was born, and from those of the microscopic worlds."<sup>54</sup>

The small and inconspicuous is just as inspiring for him and also embodies the reality of the transcendent being as the great, radiant and sublime. This is a view that for thousands of years determined in East-Asia the aesthetic thinking, and which Tobey meant with his unspoiled love of nature.

"Great perfection must appear as inadequate, so it is infinite in its effect",

it is say by Lao-tzu (TTCh 45) and applies also to Tobey's work, which does not manifest itself in the large formats and powerful gestures of Abstract Expressionism, but in small formats with soft colors and light materials, which nonetheless appear sensitive and extremely dynamical at the same time. The spirit of universal life, the "élan vital" (Bergson), from which Masson speaks, the "ch'i-yun" (氣韻) of the Chinese Calligraphy, which Tobey seeks to transpose in his works into the appearance of the phenomenal being, correspond in its essence more to the fine signs and structures of Tobey, as to the large and heavy gestures of the actionel Informel. The "élan vital" is often only intuitively to grasp, one has to "sense" or to "smell" (scent), and art and artists should after Tobey's view more "breath" again, when they want in their works to communicate the intricacies of the universe, which are but basically the true reality and remain hidden or are moving in the relationships of the things, almost like "between the lines", and convey themselves (what Masson calls the "ephemeral") in the inconspicuous.

As already stated, these are thoughts, which dominate the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, and which are responsible both for their sensitive appearance as well as their great vivacity, and which are already addressed by Lao-tzu:

"The most softest on earth overtakes the most hardest on earth; the no-thing even penetrates into what has no gap"(TTCh 43); and

"Return is the movement of the sense (Tao), weakness is the effect of the sense" (TTCh 40);

and elsewhere similarly:

"You look for it and do not see it, its name is the bud,  
one listens for it and does not hear it, its name is fine,  
one grasps for it and does not feel it, its name is small.  
...That is the formless form, the imageless image."<sup>555</sup>

The similarity and accordance of items and categories of Chinese Philosophy and Calligraphic Aesthetics with the modern scientific worldview, that Tobey indicates both as sources of his art, and the characteristics of his works are obvious.

Movement, force or energy are one of the fundamental elements of the universe, another is the spirit (Chin. Ch'i 氣), the all underlying essence or sense. The light causes due to its experienceability for humans the relationship between human life and the universe, it is also due to this not all kinds of energy and movement own quality the connecting medium in the real universe. The mind is according to the latest scientific findings docked to the smallest elementary units of the universe, whose permanent movement carries the life of the whole, where the light is the linking and unifying element in the rooms.

Space is for Tobey not only the outer space, but even more the interior space of the human being, which is the possibility, the potency of the spiritual movement, which once it manifests itself in things and events, it merges into the real space. His paintings are therefore also "inner landscapes"<sup>556</sup>, in which the light acts as a unifying symbol.

"Light as the unifying idea" leads the image through the various stages of contemplation and calmness to the peace<sup>557</sup>, in which the original unity of man and nature is restored. Already the Taoists sought, as Trauzettel remarks, "the harmony between human beings and with the universe".<sup>558</sup> Tobey's works show a strong affinity for these contexts, which are included in certain basic features already in the Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics, and his art thus becomes a visual analogy to the life rhythms of the universe. The manifesting of human unity and universal nature in his pictures presupposes both for the artist a special way of the creative process, as well as for the viewer a special way of reception, which is determined by the concept of "spontaneous naturalness" (tzu-ran 自然) and an attitude of "not to stand in the way" (wu-wei 無為).

#### 2.2.2.2.5 "Spontaneous Nativeness and "Not stand in the Way (wu-wei 無爲)" and the Role of the Accidental and Experiment

Even Tobey's attitude towards the methods of the creative process and the reception of art is determined by the aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy and its underlying Taoist thoughts.

To the combination of pristine love of nature, a transcendental human consciousness and the influence of Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics owes Tobey these special characteristics of the creative process. As the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting is his art also a search for inner perfection and tries by forming visual analogies to capture the categorical principles of nature and the world, and to come through their application in the work in accordance with them: movement, rhythm, vibration, oscillation, light, are elements of nature as well as of Tobey's art. Images, such as "Broadway", are like a river; cultures are separated by a channel, a city is for Tobey like a crystal.<sup>559</sup> Tobey symbolizes in this way the often vague and conceptually barely detectable qualities of the universe, and tries to make the incomprehensible comprehensible, to bring the unknown into the phenomenal appearance and to reveal the secrets of the universal nature. Unknown and mysterious sees Tobey in the most insignificant parts of nature:

"There is a mystery in falling leaves, although we are told, that the tree is trying to get rid of the toxins in them; but the knowledge of a thing is one thing - how we feel for the leaves is something else. I think that most artists deal with this mystery."<sup>560</sup>

Since the unknown is hidden in the depths of the mystery, to bring its forth into the appearance often is a manifestation of the chance, and thus a manifestation of the unconscious. Unlike for the Surrealists and other Informels, the element of chance is for Tobey only of secondary importance:

"I do not deny the element of chance, but I do not make it my main thing," says Tobey. "Even more than the Chinese, the Japanese love the random moment, revere it, respect it and look for it even at times. I personally take it more indicative, but often just to incorporate it into the determined elements."<sup>561</sup>

The importance of chance in his art led Tobey himself among others back to the influence of Oriental Aesthetics, when he was asked what he had received there:

"Much of what is not necessarily closely related to painting, the work of chance maybe ..."562

The value of the chance and inconspicuous is here again attributed to a long tradition, Lao-tzu said already:

"Great perfection must appear as inadequate, so it becomes infinite in its effect." (TTCh 45)

A picturing of chance and the ephemeral especially requires a special productive and receptive attitude; which causes the necessary sensitivity. A for this reasonable and appropriate attitude is characterized by "spontaneous naturalness" (tzu-ran 自然) and "not stand in the way" (Tobey) or "not interfere" (Masson) (wu wei 無爲), the most important characteristics of a behavior standing in accordance with the universal nature.

This attitude causes an intuitive, spontaneous action, which is not disturbed by a too long and rigid discursive thought and dissecting, which thus gets easier access to the unconscious universal forces in the creative process. A precondition of such a creative process, which is to be extended into individual transcendental areas and at the moment of correspondence between artistic behavior and the universal categories transposes these into the phenomenal appearance, is on one hand to be permanently searching for the unknown, and an experimental attitude and openness for all events, also of the chance, and on the other hand a state of meditative contemplation, concentration and devotion, aligned only to the opening to the inner unconscious world spirit:

"When I was in the early thirties in Japan, appeared to me to emerge in Japanese art ... two features particularly: concentration and consecration. If nature does not have to be shown as a stuffed bird, remains more room for the imagination."<sup>563</sup>

As in Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, the artist puts himself into the inner essence of the to be painted and tries to capture the spirit, which he then brings in an intuitive spontaneous act into the appearance. The artist brings himself into a state, in which the targeted, conscious and rational mind is partly disconnected, and the "nature" of the unconscious or conscious world spirit "does all the work".

"My work is inner viewing," says Tobey.<sup>564</sup> "I never tried to find a particular style and to pursue in my work. For me it was a zigzag path in ancient civilizations and out, always in search of new horizons through meditation

and contemplation."<sup>565</sup> "One accused me many times before, I had been experimenting too much, but what else should I be doing in a time, when the whole of humanity is subjected to the same conditions ... I bump into the space in front, just like the science and all the rest."<sup>566</sup>

"In a time in which the experimenting expresses itself in forms of life, the searching is the only valid expression of the spirit."<sup>567</sup>

This fundamental openness for everything new and unknown, these seekers attitude is also confirmed by the attitude of the mystic John of the Cross:

"Without unconscious belief San Juan de la Cruz would never started his journey," says Tobey; "his search leads him in a direction he does not know, in a way, he does not know, it is not necessarily a question of whether or not a search is fulfilled. - The search is an internal condition, which is connected to the unconscious belief. The decisive thing is to keep ones eyes open for new experiences. Perhaps the Orient includes everything, what we call the random. The random can, if one accepts and uses it, be a back channel to consciousness;.... it can lead to art."<sup>568</sup>

The need for a meditative attitude in the painting process, which stands out Tobey from the pure action art of Pollock, Vedova or Mathieu, he often emphasized:

"I like to see in nature, what I want in my work. I do not do it often enough. To do it, you have to be awake and alert in nature. Then you have to sleep, at least the conscious mind has to sleep. Because if the artwork is quite consciously, it can not be true."<sup>569</sup>

From these remarks of Tobey an attitude becomes clear, in which the Calligraphic Aesthetics of China has contributed, as for it the the starting point is always the (universal) nature, so that such art is not pure abstraction, which Tobey refuses:

"Pure abstraction would mean a style of painting, which has nothing to do with life, which I can not accept."<sup>570</sup>

The reference back to the universal nature and the visualization of the essence of all being, the "ch'i-yun" of Chinese Calligraphy, Tobey herewith also addresses. The therefore necessary psycho-mental attitude Tobey calls "not to stand in the way", which corresponds to the "wu wei" of Chinese thought, the spontaneous natural emergence and growth or outflow, an act or behavior, which is in accordance with the universal nature and therefore active "by itself" or "naturally" (tzu-ran 自然).

"Let nature take over the leadership in your work," cites Tobey. "These words of my old friend Takizaki confused me at first, but then cleared up for that: (Chin.=Wu Wei).. You can not stand in the way. Some artists speak today of the 'act of painting'. If you take this in the best sense, this could include the idea of my friend. But a spiritual concentration is the precondition, from here the process must begin. Mental balance is another ideal, perhaps the perfect condition, that one should seek in painting, and definitely preparation for the real action."<sup>571</sup>

This attitude, which Tobey himself referred to the East-Asian origin, has already been mentioned in the T'ang Dynasty by Yu Shih-nan (虞世南) (558-638 A.D.) as a condition of the creative process:

"At the time one intends to write, one has to withhold the activities of seeing and hearing. One must stop one's thoughts and concentrate one's mind. If one makes one's heart straight and brings one's vitality to harmony, then it coincides with the miraculous (being of nature)."<sup>572</sup>

This distinct emphasis of the spiritual disposition runs like a red thread through the Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Aesthetics, as well as through Tobey's work and thought. From Tobey's remark, first to look in the nature and only then let the conscious mind sleep, is also a reference to the Chinese concept of the "inspiration before the brush" (i tsai pi hsien 意在筆先), the mental preparation of the composition and the artistic intentions and goals, i.e. the formulation of a pictorial conception in an almost meditative process before executing, resulting from the Chinese Calligraphy and Aesthetics, and different from the struggle with the means and the struggle for expression and formation of Pollock and other Western painters, whereby Tobey also differs from the pure Action Painting. Tobey's formulation, "to let nature take over the leadership in the work", which goes back to the Chinese concept of the "compliance with the wonderful existence of nature" (tzu-ran chih miao-you 自然之妙有), such as had been expressed by Sun Kuo-t'ing in the Shu-P'u<sup>573</sup>, and the thought, "not to stand in the way", which



Masson formulated similar as "not interfere" or "not hurt", has its roots in the "Wu wei" (無為), from which the same Sun Kuo-t'ing says:

"This becomes effected without (deliberate) activity (wu-wei 無為) and corresponds with the work of the nature (tzu-ran chih kung 自然之功). The things take the form corresponding to their kind, and thus comply with the principle of creative creation (tsao-hua chih li 造化之理). For all of this one does not know, why it is so. One can bring oneself spiritually in correspondence with it (hsin-ch'i 心契), but it is impossible to express it in words".

and it follows that then

"Heart and hand are in correspondence" (hsin-shou hsiang-ying 心手相應).<sup>574</sup>

This attitude of the non-interventional omission, letting happen, the passive attitude of waiting, that enforces nothing, but does everything, is going back as almost all the fundamental ideas of Chinese Aesthetics on the Tao-Te-Ching, which states:

"To conquer and treat the world, I have witnessed that it fails. The world is a spiritual thing, that one can not treat. Who treats it spoils it, who wants to hold it, loses it." (TTCh. 29)

and elsewhere:

"Who collects much, necessarily loses important. Who can satisfy himself, does not come into disgrace. Who knows, how to put a stop, does not come into danger and may last eternal." (TTCh. 44)

The necessity of having to put a stop in the creative process and halt the artistic activity, if the image is fully there and will give nothing more, was known to Tobey in the same way:

"If one does not know, when to stop, and the image carries too far, one has a (imperfect) corpus in one's hand."<sup>575</sup>

Here, too, manifest itself again the Chinese idea of harmony and balance, which must be recognized intuitively, while the picture is still breathing and lives. If the point is exceeded, then the image is static and dead and no longer responds. Tobey's dislike of the expression of purely personal feelings and existential problems, as they determine certain parts of the Informel Painting, is apparent from his temperate, balance-seeking character. As a result, he classified some of his works as Dionysian, such as "Forms follow Man" (Fig. 120), and other images, like his meditative series (eg Fig. 118) as Apollonian, referring to the old opposition between Classical and Romance.<sup>576</sup>

The early abandon of the in 1957 briefly used pure, explosive and dynamic Sumi-technique (Fig. 54) is an indication, that Tobey's temperament and his art go "rather through the channels of meditation than the action", to attain so the access to the universal truths, which has already been postulated by Laot-tzu as the only correct attitude of cognition, whereupon as well the aesthetics of Chinese Calligraphy, as also Tobey are in succession:

"Complete emptiness to the highest! Keep silence until  
the ultimate! All things may then rise at the same time!"  
(TTCh. 16)

This emptiness of the meditative process is a release from the purely rational will to power, from the conscious and purposeful thoughts, a waiting for impulses from the superconscious, which is also the organ of a world spirit, and thus again represents the highest objectivity. The proportion of purely subjective unconsciousness and its relationship with the rational mind on one hand, and the proportion of the objective world-spirit in the creative process on the other hand, the *élan vital*, is different at each artist and also difficult to detect. For Tobey's work, however, can be assumed on the basis of the previous studies, which will yet be supported and confirmed by the following explanations, a harmonious balance between conscious, subjective-unconscious and sur-conscious, universal forces.

The process of Chinese Calligraphy, which has become an integral part of Tobey's creative process, has three stages, which sets it apart from the purely unconscious and based upon the pure random process of many artists of the General Informel. Starting from a state, in which - without the control of the means, that were hitherto not yet internalized - chance and arbitrariness dominate the spontaneous creative process, through the conscious learning of the Calligraphic technique and methodology and the pictorial possibilities inherent in them, the chance and the - non-personal, not belonging to the artistic I - arbitrary action be pushed back, and finally, and that is the crucial difference, internalized in a super-conscious synthesis and coincidence of control capabilities, so that from the conscious learning of the method a sur-conscious mastery of all potential abilities has become achieved, in a total, unlimited freedom and spontaneity and

manifold openness, which accepts all impulses from the unconscious and conscious in a highly conscious sensibility and freedom, includes and let them be effective, so that "nothing stands in the way", as Tobey calls it. This is one of the main results of the Calligraphic impulse, which has already been seen by Sun Kuo-t'ing:

"When exercise and application of the brush completely are saturated with versedness (ching 精) and proficiency (shu 熟), and when the rules are firmly closed resting in the chest (=subconscious), than the unencumbered mind will rove in a free and natural way back and forth, the inspiration will be there first and the execution of the stroke follows then, the technique will be transparent and fluid, the brush ductus will be unique and the mind will be soaring."<sup>577</sup>

Tobey's works, such as "Untitled" from 1954 (Fig. 38) and others highly bear, by mastering and integrating the Calligraphic impulse, these features of an unusual freedom and spontaneity combined with the highest spirituality and "lively spontaneity" (Ch'i -yun).

### 2.3 The Influence of formal Principles and Means of Calligraphy and their Use, Modification and Effect in Tobey's Art

After an overview of relationships and influences between the Chinese World-view, as well as the aesthetics of Calligraphy and Painting of China on the one hand and the opinions of Tobey and their manifestation in his work, his content and formal design were discussed, shall in the following be worked out the specific formal elements and principles of Calligraphy, which determine the formal appearances of Tobey's work and transpose its statements and contents.

It is here about the characters and elements of K'ai-Shu- and Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy, their transformation in Tobey's work, their significance for movement and rhythm, form, structure, space and the relationship between time, light and colour in the image. The ideological influences in Tobey's work and also in the work of other artists, such as Masson, Bissier etc. would not have such importance, if not at the same time the influence of formal elements of the Calligraphy, especially the element of the dynamic space-plastical, vital line would have made the artistic, more specifically, visual means available, which Tobey had clearly recognized:

"The 'white writing' emerged in my art like flowers, which huddled in due course from the earth. This

method allowed me to paint the frenetic rhythms of the modern metropolis, what I even would not have been able to try with the technique of the Renaissance."<sup>578</sup>

This statement Tobey's, which he confirmed repeatedly, allows us to view the year 1922-23, in which he made the acquaintance of the Chinese Teng Kuei and undertook the first experiments in the learning and understanding of Chinese Calligraphy, as an important date in the history of modern art, which Tobey, after a certain 'incubation period' has affected not negligible, and as the beginning of the emergence of modern 'informel' painting (not as wide style, which began around 1945, but as the first step of the development of its main features). Strangely, Hartung started at the same time with his informel experiments and Masson made in these years his first automatic drawings and began to deal with Chinese Painting and Art. The years from 1922 - 25 form the nucleus for the beginning of a universalist, dynamic painting of line and fleck (tache), and the formation of a new kind of indeterminate, irrational space in the picture. These years are also characterized through the beginning of the final dissolution and destruction of solid rational form, both in the sense of the traditional Realism, the illusionist Symbolism, as well as of the concrete abstraction of the Constructivism, towards a symbolic or analogous designating primary-realism. Both Tobey, Masson and again also Bissier, who entered at the same time into the world of the Far East, as well as possibly at Hartung, these events were under the influence of the participation of Chinese Calligraphy, Painting and Aesthetics. Perhaps here played the random a role, but it may also have been a higher historical necessity and inevitability, which is initially not scientifically explainable.

The following explanations therefore will not go further in detail on this first time of contact, but will try to work out the formal features of the Calligraphic Influence and its effects at Tobey since his trip to East Asia in 1934, and after the processing of the enhanced Calligraphic impulses to his typical "white writings" and to the features associated with them.

### 2.3.1 The Adoption of formal Elements of K'ai-Shu- and Ts'ao- Shu-Calligraphy and their Transformation into the "White Writing"

#### 2.3.1.1 Chinese Characters and their Line Form

One of the most immediately striking characteristics of a Calligraphic Influence on Tobey is the emergence of original Chinese characters in the pictures, be it in its original form, be it in a slightly altered one, but still fully readable by someone who knows what they mean. This is, moreover, a feature that can temporarily also occur at other from Calligraphy influenced or inspired artists, such as Masson, Wilke etc., but mostly is converted into not writing-like, purely artistic forms and

elements. This also applies to Tobey, by whom these original characters occur as image elements - among others - at the beginning of his Calligraphic magnum opus, i.e. about 1935-1942, due to the allure of the exotic and novel, that they still had for him at that time, and about 1957-1958, when he was hit by a sudden strong desire for gestural-spontaneous expression in the type of Ch'an-Calligraphy and Ch'an- Paintings and this recorded in his Sumi-Images. Compared with André Masson, however, the in the works of Tobey emerging original characters are fewer in number than at Masson, but are in some works clearly to determine. These include "Broadway" from 1936 (Fig. 116), also "Broadway Boogie" from 1942 (no. Fig.), "Pacific Transition" from 1943 (no. Fig.) and two Sumi-images, "Calligraphic Sumi -Stilllife" from 1957 (Fig. 155) and "Calligraphic Structure" from 1958 (Fig. 131).

In "Broadway" (Fig. 116) are a number of characters more or less clearly visible; they are included in the network of the lines of the image and form parts of the "white writing" suggesting and symbolizing houses lines, neon signs and road traffic, that still show figurative reminiscences, which are no longer picturesque, but more symbolically, as a symbolic representation of the swirling traffic and flashing and glowing billboards, as an epitome of human-urban life and its dynamics.

In "Broadway" can be found the character "chung" (中), which means middle or center, as an element of the right side housing flight. As already mentioned, Tobey had even noticed to have learned this sign in China:

„When I was in China, I learned the character 'Chung' (中), which means 'center'. The Chinese have a saying, that 'the center of it all is the best'.“<sup>579</sup>

About the importance of the "center" in Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics and its importance for the work of Tobey has already been discussed at length, and therefore it is from there no surprise, that Tobey just uses this sign, which means a lot to him, in his paintings (Fig. 116.1 + 116.8). In the same "Broadway"-image other characters appear embedded in the structures of the white lines, such as "ho" (和), which means together or suitable (Fig. 116.2), "kung" (工) or (功), which means work, service, fine or fineness (Figure 116.3.); "tao" (刀) or "ren" (刃), which are both knife, blade or cutter (Figure 116.4.); further, "wang" (王), the character for king or ruler, "nai" (乃), meaning is or 'that is' significant (Figure 116.7; and finally "t'ien" (田), the character for field or farm (Figure 116.6). Although there are still more characters used in the picture, but they are more difficult to identify and the examples mentioned may suffice.

It is similar with the picture "Pacific Transition" from 1943, where some characters in the style of Ts'ao-Shu, so more cursive written, appear, and thus symbolize the image subject, the relationship between the cultures that limit the

Pacific. Here, however, the identifiability is already difficult. Whole characters or character parts Tobey had actually still used at the beginning of the Calligraphic Influence, hence sometimes in the first learning and assimilation phase. These were then later with advancing proficiency changed, modified and reduced to the Calligraphic basic strokes as supporting elements of the visual order and the statement, which can be seen in the vibrant all-over of the Calligraphic linear structures as a symbolic contemplation form for the allembodiment movement in the world. Even in "Broadway Boogie" still appear some isolated characters. The identifiable characters form in these pictures naturally only the smaller part of the formal appearance, they seem to be more or less mysterious relics, whereas the actual image body is formed by the large number of purely artistic white lines, which here perform residual functions of form control and form definition.

It is different in the Sumi images from 1957-58 (Fig. 131 and 155), which seem to be more influenced by the Japanese writing, especially by the cursive syllabary 'Hiragana' (平仮名/ひらがな), which, however, are known to be based on shortened Chinese characters (Kanji 漢字); Fig. 155 as well as Fig. 131 contains the character for "no", a genitive particle. This character "no" (の) or rather its form, which can also occur as partial element of complex Ts'ao-Shu-characters, is to be found in Tobey's paintings frequently. It is a linear shape and movement, that by its centering momentum probably had caused Tobey's particular interest.

Tobey remembered from time to time again and again the Chinese characters, that he had learned:

"England collapses and becomes Chinese, with English and American thoughts. Thousands of Chinese characters twist and turn, every door is a shop".<sup>580</sup>

it is said in "Reminiscence and Reverie". The repetitive appearance of Chinese characters in dreamlike acts meant, that they have been implemented by Tobey from time to time into the visual appearance. Fig. 131 is also created in the style of Japanese Calligraphy, it possesses in the way of lines, their strength and structure (ku-li 骨力) and in their quite free course, as well as in the ink consistency and color consistencies (rou-fa 肉法) similarity to the "Aphorisms of Ts'ui Tzu-yu by Kukai (空海) (774-835) (Fig. 132). Also the empty ground as a background, as well as placing the characters in a format similar to a painting- or calligraphy-scroll, indicates the Calligraphic kind of these characters by Tobey.

A different reminiscence to the original script character of his pictorial means gives Tobey in "Untitled" (no Fig.) and the aquatint "They've come back" from 1971 (Fig. 133), whose composition and expression of the Calligraphic elements is based on the vertical lines form, which the Chinese formerly used, and which Tobey has used deliberately as a structure tool and composition basis for the picture surface, in which the format and its slightly elongated shape rather correspond with

Calligraphy and Painting scrolls of East-Asia. These kinds of works appear like Japanese (and to some extent also Chinese) short-calligraphy, often poems, sayings of Zen Buddhists or invocations of gods or spirits, which were often written by high-ranking personalities, like the Emperor himself. In Japan and China are often used particularly good, valuable papers and decorated with gold dots, whereby the image ground obtains a different, loosened and much livelier appearance, which in "Untitled" are suggested by bright lines, which seem to float on an image layer spatially raised through the dark main elements, and yet are connected with the image, as if they were a material part of the paper.

A comparison of "They've come back" (Fig. 133) with "Five Syllable Quatrain" (五言絕句) from Mi Han-wen (米漢雯) of the Ch'ing Dynasty (清朝) (Fig. 134) clearly shows Tobey's referring back to the compositional kind of Calligraphy in the form of vertical line series, which often give a coherent impression of the individual characters, due to the shape of the characters and the direction gradients of their writing, which indeed connects the characters by imaginary force lines. While the two long right final lines can be as text interpreted, the shorter, second from left, takes the function of the finalizing name of the artist, and the even shorter, more compact, most left line that of the seal of Chinese Calligraphic Art, which is compositionally formal balancing the image equilibrium (Fig. 134). In fact, the image lines that float in front of a light green light gray ground of indeterminate depth and plastically take off from it, even possess plasticity, caused by the polar black and white contrasts, originated from a successive linear writing process. Successive movement sequence and simultaneity of the resulting forms are balanced and go inextricably into one another; an example of the ambivalence of the expression, that determines Tobey images.

In his important image "Untitled" from 1954 (Fig. 38), former belonging to the Galerie Beyeler in Basel (now in private property), which was not yet been published and therefore is not known so well to the general public, there is an interesting combination of a round, flat circular shape as ground, which through the darkness in the middle induces a strongly spatially suction effect expanding into the image depth, and which is superimposed by concentrically arranged rows of Calligraphic character lines, which aim at the same time inside and radiate outward, like a sun. In this important work Tobey's appear, as often with him, again the manifold characters of Chinese Calligraphy, as if Tobey from time to time reminds himself of their Chinese origin, whereby the once learned characters and their formal order are urging like living entities repeatedly into the appearance. Thereby the strokes and characters take the typical form and movement of the Chinese Ts'ao-Shu, merge visibly into each other and have also as single elements a strong linear dynamic, which the viewer's eyes must follow along the radial guidelines as if under a compulsion.

### 2.3.1.2 Living Lines (moving Line) as basic Elements

#### 2.3.1.2.1 General Aspects and the Balance of 'graphic' and 'painterresque' Lines

The insight into the dynamic, never static character of the world, mediated by the acquaintance with the Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics, led Tobey also to an attempt to represent the world through the living line, the "moving line" or "living line", the moving, animated and inspired line<sup>581</sup>, which "symbolizes light",

"the unifying idea, which flows through the compartments of life, and these encourage the mind and constantly renew their energies, so that a greater understanding of life is possible" (Feininger).

Lines are the primary means of Tobey, and they are also the main medium of artistic drawing in general. The lines are, before color and form or other materials, the primordial means of human-artistic activity, since it is given to every man to scribble and to draw; it is one of the basic human activities. However, whether something is art or not depends "from the original idea and the force to realize it figuratively", as Eduard Trier<sup>582</sup> comments it, what is equivalent to the "Ch'i-yun" (氣韻), the "living spontaneity" of Chinese Calligraphy.

In the European art there are according to Trier two tendencies in the conception of the drawing, which correspond to two types of lines, or ways of carrying out the linear elements; on one hand the difference of drawing as "lucidly made thinking" and automatic drawing, on the other hand the contrast of graphic and painterresque style of drawing, both available at Tobey. For the "drawing as lucidly made thinking" Trier mentions Cézanne as key witness:

"Cézanne and other contemporaries, for example, agree that the essence of drawing lies in abstracting and leaving away. This process requires a keen intelligence for detecting the quintessence ahead (the 'essential' of Masson and the 'Ch'i-yun' of the Chinese Calligraphy, the author). The hand must not write out in the drawing, it is rather controlled by the eyes and artistic sense. In the scarcest form, leaving aside everything negligible, the greatest truth is to be included."<sup>583</sup>

The aesthetic contrast hereto is according to Trier the automatic drawing:

"The spontaneous train demanded by Rodin leads,



developed to the other extreme, to the method of the automatic-motorized drawing, that may be viewed as the antithesis of the intellectual, 'willed' drawing. In the automatic drawing the feelings, inner emotions, moods, experiences in the subconscious and visions transfer directly into the hand, determine its speed, rhythm, direction and thus its expression.

This alternative simplifies of course the real situation with its many liners and transitions, but it clears by its polarity the major problems in the field of contemporary drawing. ... From both sides can "approximations to the opposite pole" be observed." In the mechanism of drawing, which must continuously be practiced, and which repeatedly was demanded by all great artists, the oppositions, which beyond the specialties of the drawing are making the style duality of the 20th Century visible; because the differences between drawing as a spiritual order and an expression of the psyche correspond to the two major currents within the art of our time."<sup>584</sup>

In this antithetical contrast mentioned by Trier is again included the already several times mentioned and repeatedly by Tobey addressed comprehensive contrast between rational and irrational, which are the two spheres of cognition of human-spiritual existence, and that occurs again and again in the history of art, so for example in the by Tobey detected contrast between Classicism and Romanticism. As stated above, this opposition is also a basic element of Chinese Calligraphy, Painting, Aesthetics and Philosophy of life, where it comes to a harmonious balance of these two polar forces. Also in Tobey's works in total, as well as in the nature of each item, especially its lines, this polar contrast is approximately in balance; just this is a feature of Tobey's lines, which he owes, among others, to the influence of Chinese Calligraphy.

The contrast of "graphic" and "picturesque" lines, also mentioned by Trier, is in some way also characterized by this polarity of rational and irrational. The type of graphic line is more wire-like, as if drawn with a ruler, uniformly thin, an exclusive track of a linear movement, so two-dimensionally in the main character, in extreme cases, the mathematical line connecting two points. It is often used for hatching, but also for the purposes of surface-modulation in the sense of spatial-plastic body illusion, and therefore also has for the unbiased viewer no life, but acts mechanically and lifeless.

The type of the painteresque line, this also a trace of a two-dimensional movement, can easily spread to the area filling, thus already contains dimensional features, can be to spot and specify dimensional body shapes, but generally

remains also bound to the twodimensional surface, although it appears also irregular and does not act constructed.

However, neither of them has the qualities of the living space-plastical line of the Chinese Calligraphy, which Tobey has integrated into his work, as they both lack the element of a projection of a spatial movement onto the surface area. In Tobey's work are, in different weights, both poles inherent in both painteresque as well as graphic qualities, both "drawing as lucidly made thinking", as well as automatistic aspects. The totality of his work, often also the individual work, brings these polar elements in a balance constantly aspired by him, whereas certain individual works can tend quite focused to one side or another. So shows "Gothic" from 1943 (no fig.) extremely graphic line elements and also acts as a complete picture more graphically and hard; "White Island" from 1960 (Fig. 135) in turn is the exact opposite and based on almost purely painteresque elements, which have, however, still not quite lost the connection to the line. A pictorial balance of both tendencies can be found however in "The Void Devouring the Gadget Era" from 1942 (Fig. 136).

Through the influence of living Calligraphic lines, representing the opposites of painteresque and graphic, uniting the contrasts of rational and automatic, and which through the projection of a space-creating moving line into the surface-area represents the paradigm of the "living" line, are also Tobey's lines more or less "alive" and in a balance of these opposing forces. "Drum Echoes" from 1965 (Fig. 33.1-4) and an excerpt from "Written over the Plains, No. 2" from 1959 (Fig. 37.3) clearly show the unity of graphic and picturesque aspects in the lines of Tobey, precision of the trace and the ability to spread in the area, mastered and controlled execution and the ability of spontaneous and direct form form-creation according to the "One-Line"-method of Shih-T'ao. This antithesis can also be seen in the following statement Tobey's:

"During the forties and fifties my work varied between the use of the direct dynamic brush and the use of white dynamic line-flashes, which were associated with a geometry of space."<sup>585</sup>

The importance of the line as an artistic medium, which became the main agent of his meditative art, Tobey repeatedly emphasized; also their origin from the East-Asian Calligraphy:

"I made a trip to China and Japan, where I learned the brush technique and introduced me to some Far-Eastern masters. ... In the early twenties I had studied the brush technique in Seattle with Teng Kuei, a student at the University of Washington, and I found out that one could

explore a tree as well through the dynamic line as by mass and light. ... lines became dominant instead of mass, but I still intended, to penetrate (the line) with a spatial existence. To 'write' the image regardless of whether in color or in neutral tones, became a need for me. I often thought of this operation as an event, because it had to be carried out in one or not - the exact opposite of what I had done until then."<sup>586</sup>

And elsewhere says Tobey says:

"In the forties, I created a sensation of mass by the overlap of myriad independent lines. In the dynamics and tempo, that I gave the accents within the lines, I intended to create a world of finer substance."<sup>587</sup>

The line is in Tobey's work as a "moving line" or "living line", as it was often called, not only a "symbol of light as the unifying idea", but it supports at the same moment also the image light, as the white line of the "White Writing"; it is by multiplying the creative element of form, structure, space, for time perception, and especially the "symbol of spiritual enlightenment, human communication and migration, natural form and natural processes, and the symbol of the movement between different consciousness levels" (Seitz).<sup>588</sup>

#### 2.3.1.2.2 Phenomenology of Calligraphic Lines

The appearance modes of Calligraphic lines and their impact and transformation in Tobey's works is diverse and differentiated. In "Broadway" (Fig. 116), it serves to dissolve the forms of stone gorges of skyscrapers and their solidity, and to transform it into light phenomena, that reflect and visualize the vibrant life of the metropolis, they have both form resolution as well as converting attributes. The ductus, however, is not yet fully developed and is somewhat obscured by the form designation function, which still exists. The same applies to "Broadway Boogie" (no Fig.) and others. The image "Forms follow Man" (Fig. 120) from 1941 is one of the first showing an intensive confrontation with the Calligraphy, but whereby still "the old and the new lay in battle" (Tobey).<sup>589</sup> The picture is obviously a symbolic illustration of the internal conflict, that Tobey is going through, which the title also indicates. "Forms" are on the one hand elements of older art and the outer world of appearances, which Tobey wanted to overcome in their static appearance by the Calligraphic impulse. The "persecuted person" is Tobey himself, on whom the diversity of experiences of Calligraphic elements and forms, which they also own, and their options assails, and what is yet to respond.

The fact that he conceives this onslaught as persecution, indicates in turn an unresolved conflict. This still existing conflict between traditional Renaissance forms and Calligraphic elements becomes formally distinctive, and that in two ways.

Once the "Forms" are actually still identifiable, clear-cut shapes, some even with a geometric structure, but all clearly in the basic form of the Calligraphic brushstroke, that Tobey has used the mostly, namely, a hybrid of the strokes Liang (棕) and Tso (琢), which begins as a bone at one end and then pointedly expires toward the other end. If they are shortened, there arises the point Tse (側), which he also used frequently. "Forms follow Man" is entirely constructed by variations of this basic Calligraphic Liang-Tso-stroke, as a comparison clearly shows (Fig. 40 + 120), whereby these variations reach from purely geometric shapes, particularly triangles, to a first try of free, linear brushstrokes, top right and top left and bottom of the image area. The left lying stroke acting as single line form at the bottom center is clearly executed in the form of the Liang-Tso-Stroke and almost modeled three-dimensional.

In spite of these back references to traditional "forms" the dynamic and energetic moment of movement is already strongly experienceable, it is inherent in the cusped basic form of the Liang Tso-Stroke, which the eye is forced to follow by the heavy broad beginning, as well in the inclination of the forms right towards the persecuted "man", especially well in the many acute angles that, as a sudden change of direction, whereby the eye has to make a sudden and violent movement, and the sensation is connected with considerable force, and which so is spontaneously projected into the picture elements as power or dynamics contained therein. The inherence of force and movement in the sudden acute angled change of direction is evident in zigzags, it appeared both by Tobey and Masson, as has been seen, as well as repeatedly in the Chinese Calligraphy, and is, as already mentioned, been analyzed in detail by the Chinese Aesthetics; it corresponds to the Chinese term "tun-ts'o" (頓挫), "abort a movement suddenly to gather strength", and then to continue it into another direction<sup>590</sup>, while the shape of the Liang-Tso-Stroke, depending on the viewing direction, embodies a movement "with falling and rising cadence" (i-yang 揚仰).<sup>591</sup> In the outer periphery of the image Tobey has tried to supplement antithetical the partly still traditional way of picturing by a genuine Calligraphic use of the brush, which in part Fei-Pai-like transcripts in rapid brushstrokes a first idea of the coming repertoire.

Another aspect of Calligraphic Influence can be found in "Calligraphic Dance" from 1963 (Fig. 127), where on an beige, ocker ground excited brushstrokes with quick-drying synthetic resin colors dance and, although no longer may be read as the original Chinese character, clearly demonstrate their Calligraphic origin. Brushwork, the rhythm of the movements and their residual forms, their crosses and loop formations and their dance on a uniform, quasi empty ground are unquestionably of Calligraphic origin, as a comparison with a Calligraphic work

(Fig. 57, detail Huai Ssu) shows, and as the title also proves. The relative softness and roundness of the movements and the resulting from them direct line shapes and the indirect surface forms, which arise by enclosing the base of the linear movement, show strong resemblance to the Ts'ao-Shu type of Huai Ssu ( Fig. 57).

In other pictures, such as "Sagittarius Red" from 1963, for Tobey an unusual large image of 213 x 388.5 cm (no Fig.) (Basel KM) are mixed forms of Ts'ao-Shu and K'ai-Shu-lines to find, that particularly occur as a hook or curve hook and fill the whole screen with a swirling and shimmering movement.

Different again is the appearance of the Calligraphic impulse in "Written over the Plains, No. 2" from 1959 (Fig. 37.1-2-3), a work which particularly succinctly elucidates the Calligraphic influence, and also brings the shapes and movements of the Calligraphic strokes to appearance, particularly evident in layers one above the other, but not so matted as in other works,. Also in this image is again a hybrid of K'ai-Shu and Ts'ao-Shu-elements dominant, both round as well as angular elements can be found. These line types are very similar to the Ts'ao-Shu Sun Kuo-t'ing's in the Ch'ien-tzu-wen ((see Fig. 137), but especially to the Hsing-shu (行書) in the style of Wang Hsi-chih, as a comparison with Fig. 138 and 102 shows, that were written in the style of the General-to-the-right (Wang Hsi-chih). One of its main features is the balance of powerful movement (ku-shih or ku-li 骨勢 / 骨力), proportioned consistency of the ink (rou-fa 肉法) and a still continuous lightness and elegance of composition and process structure (chin-fa 筋法), the characteristics which caused the quality of the scripts of Wang Hsi-chih and his style, and show a balance and harmony of classical rigor and romantic spontaneous originality, attributes that characterize Tobey's work as a whole and also his brush lines.

These attributes are also supported by other comparisons, such as between "Targets" from 1959 (Fig. 39.1-2) and writings in the style of Wang Hsi-chih, such as the famous "Lan-t'ing-hsu" (蘭亭序), the "Preface to the cleaning ceremony at the orchid pavilion" (Fig. 102 + 138) or others. "Targets" from Tobey is stylistic more squarely and the changes in direction of the lines are abrupt, more pointely and emphasized by consciously used means of pressure boosting effected 'nodes'. The lines tend comparatively more to the K'ai-Shu, especially to the style of the painter Emperor Hui-tsung (徽宗) (Fig. 144, detail), but they also contain Ts'ao-Shu aspects.

In contrast again more to the Ts'ao-Shu tends "Red Prairie" from 1964 (Fig. 139), which due to the lower filling of the surface area, the prevalence of curved lines and rectangular shapes has a strong resemblance to the Ts'ao-Shu like that of Sun Kuo-t'ing in the Shu-P'u (Fig. 140). While in "Prairie Red" (Fig. 139) the dynamic element of Calligraphic movement dominates, comes in "Aerial City" from 1950 (Fig. 141) the element of a structural sign order in a rectangular execution of the linear elements to bear and is therefore similar to the K'ai-Shu-style, as it is represented by Wang Shu (王澐) in his Chi-Shu-Yen from 1729 (Fig. 84).

In "Drum Echoes" from 1965, owned by the Greub Gallery in Basel (Fig. 33.1 f), Tobey uses a combination of large black or dark brown black lines, that appeal to the type of the great individual character of Chang Chi-chih (張卽之) (1186 - 1266) and others (Figure 142) in the field of the Ch'an-Art, or the highly individualistic unclassical script of Sengai Gibon (仙厓義梵), and superimpose a second layer of thin red brush hooks, bows and ribbons, which show more a K'ai-Shu type and only occasionally a Ts'ao-Shu style.

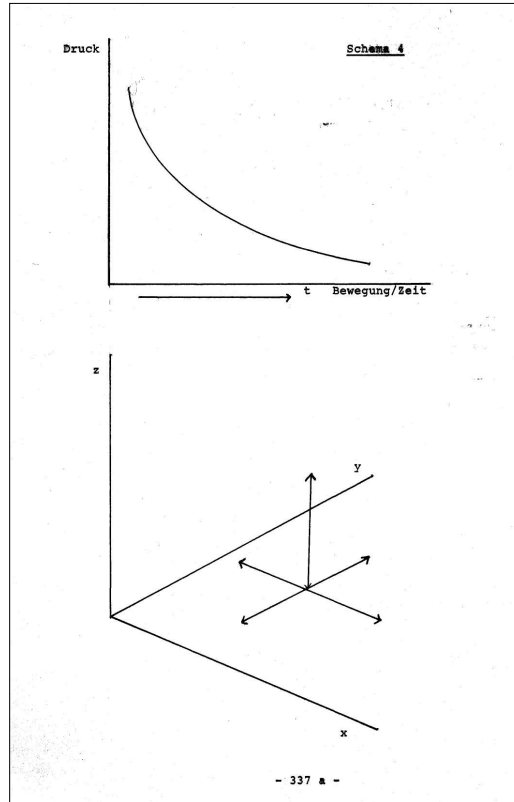
Striking is also that Tobey repeatedly uses K'ai-Shu elements, such as pointed hooks of a strong in the nature of the "Gold Line style" of the painter Emperor Hui-tsung (徽宗) from the Sung dynasty, as the pictures 39 and 141 show, but as well "Natures Path" from 1965 (Fig. 143) compared with Hui-tsung (Fig. 144, detail). The special features of this style is the sharpness of corners and line ends, an extreme thinness of the lines and a certain overlength, which give the script a graceful, elegant, but also slightly exaggerated character, a slightly feminine elegance, which dominates Hui-tsung, while they are at Tobey, since these lines are only one element of many, always balanced.

Particularly strong to the Ts'ao-Shu-style tends the publicly little known work from 1954, called "Untitled" (Fig. 38.1), which is covered from a radially delicate brushwork, arranged like a sun, and which resembles both Chinese Ts'ao-Shu as well as the Japanese scripture, a combination of Chinese Kanji characters (漢字) and of syllabary Hiragana (平仮名ひらがな). A comparison of Fujiwara no Toshinari (no Fig.), Emperor Go-Mizunoo (後水尾天皇) (Fig. 148) and Figure 137 with "Untitled" by Tobey makes that clear.

While Tobey mainly integrated and transformed attributes and elements of the Ts'ao-Shu and K'ai-Shu in his work, shows "Bars and Flails (Rails)" from 1944 (Fig. 146) notwithstanding clearly elements and characteristics of the Chinese "Small Seal Script" (Hsiao-chuan 小篆) from the time of the Han-Dynasty (漢朝) (221 -. 206 BC.), as it becomes clear from a comparison with the figures 23 and 147. What makes this script so special is its formal and hieratic character style, which emphasizes the clarity of the structure and the definitive stroke order, what is also the determining impression of Tobey's picture. Nevertheless are in Tobey's lines clear signs of faster writing movement by Fei-Pai-effects to see, which let the definitive structure of the icons appear not static, but quite movable-alive, even though to a lesser extent than in other works.

This first general comparative analysis shows, that Tobey knew both K'ai-Shu elements and K'ai-Shu attributes as well as features and elements of the Ts'ao-Shu, mastered and used them alternately or together as pictorial means, whereby these elements, except for some a few times repeatedly emerging examples, mostly do no longer appear in the original imitative writing way or even are readable in the sense of Chinese characters, but are embedded in networks of vibrating and swinging energy fields.


pressure



time


### 2.3.1.2.3 Types and Characteristics of Tobey's Lines

The characteristics and types of Tobey's lines and therefore the effects and transformations of Calligraphic elements in the works of Tobey have already been touched at certain points. Tobey's lines and brushwork in many cases have the same or very similar qualities as the lines of the Chinese Calligraphy: The Calligraphic line as pictorial element is at Tobey a projection of a three-dimensional spatial movement into the two-dimensional surface area, a fundamental difference to the lines of the traditional Western Art, which almost never meets these conditions, and almost always are a relic of a two-dimensional planar movement, so on the surface. Tobey's Calligraphic lines so are gestural residuals and the space-plastical acting trace of a free three-dimensional brush movement. Therefore the factor of spatial plasticity is inherently visual, which is necessarily empathized and comprehended by the viewer, thus causing the extraordinary dynamism of its lines. The brush movement is here the same as in Chinese Calligraphy and proceeds so as the figures 38.1, 37.1, 39.1 and some others show, when compared with the figures 40 - 42; the line elements of Tobey's

paintings allow an imaginary tightening of the brush movement and make this clear. Figures 40, 41 and 42 illustrate the principle of equality of basic Calligraphic strokes, such as the dot (tien 點) or (tse 側) (see. Fig. 40), the Liang-Tso-Stroke (  ) (Fig. 41) and the hook stroke (kou 勺) (Fig. 42), with typical lines of Tobey, which are very particularly evident in Figures 37, 38 and 39.

The brush-holding is due to the appearing ductus according to the so-called "vertical brush-holding" (cheng-pi 正筆) of the Calligraphy, and twists and turns (huan chuan 還轉) are also similar or identical, their operations are clearly in Figures 40 + 41 + 42. The pressure distribution on the brushtip is at Tobey mostly hyperbolic, as shown in the adjacent drawing (Scheme 4), it decreases after a vigorous pressing in an extended drawing, the brush movement can be seen from the other adjacent drawing, it is also the same as in the Chinese Calligraphy. Of course, these assessments serve only as basic characterizations, indicating the basic brush behavior, but which can be varied in many ways; either because the lines are compressed to points, or is it that they are protracted and highly diluted, or that the pressure differences are varying.

A special feature of Tobey's lines is its origin from a movement, which originated as to Chinese Aesthetics, when it concerns the hook lines (Fig. 37 + 38 + 39, etc.), from a "tun-ts'o-movement" (頓挫), i.e. a "movement, which suddenly breaks off to gather strength", a movement that embodies the character "li" (力)(=force) also in its form and sequence of movements, and which therefore is often used by Tobey (and, as we saw also Masson) in the basic form of its movement.

If Tobey, however, uses the comma-like, cusped Liang-Tso-Stroke (  ), he then follows the already mentioned "i-yang"-principle (揚仰), which means "falling and rising cadence", and goes from the "tun"-movement of the brush, the "restrainedness" or the "be collected in itself" over to the "t'i"-movement, the lifting of the brushtip and the thinning leakage of the line. This movement and its significance as the actual difference to the Western lines Tobey has learned from Teng Kuei, and he documented this with the following words:

"I just had my first lesson in Chinese brushwork with my friend Teng Kuei. ... There is pressure and release. Every movement is like footprints in the snow, detained and often loved because of itself. The great dragon breathes sky, thunder and shadow; wisdom and mind enliven."<sup>592</sup>

An understanding of the application of the "tun-ts'o"-movement becomes from this remark of Tobey clearly and shows and confirms the formal pictorial findings. Another important feature is apparent from this remark, it concerns the use of one basic element, the Calligraphic stroke, with which Tobey builds up his images. The



phrase "every movement accounts ... for its own" defines this correlation to the smallest, so to speak, 'atomic' unit as the starting point of his visual world. This will be briefly responded. Through an overview of Tobey's work several categories of different lines and element types are emerging:


- Points and spots,
- Short and long straight lines,
- Curved lines, spirals, swirls,
- Hooks of various kinds,
- Zigzag and wavy lines,
- Crossings and loops,
- Transitions, connections and signlike structures.

In addition it is to question about the dominant line or transaction types and groups of specific overall appearance. Some of these elements can be traced back to such, which are included under the sign "Yung" (Yung-tzu pa-fa 永字八法), others show only a distant echo with basic Calligraphic strokes,. Together they form a repertoire of a fundamental language of comprehensive options. The individual picture elements are independent entities, such as atoms or molecules of an artistic cosmos, which by moving analogous to the naturally-real cosmos, form shapes, structures and phenomena.

In many of his pictures appear points and spots, which have a similarity to the point of Chinese Calligraphy and are derived from this (Tse 側 or also tien 點) (Fig. 27, 123, 150), which is possible in many variations, as from the scheme illustration becomes apparent. The images 27 and 123 + 150 show different ways of appearance of dots or points at Tobey, mostly variations of the point of the Calligraphy. The graphics, as "Lafranca 670" from 1970 (Fig. 27), "Forms in Progress II" from 1971 (no Fig.) or "On a Holy Day" from 1970 (Fig. 150) the points are unconnected and float over a uniform or differentiated, from them contrasting ground. Tobey used herein the brush technique in a synthesis with the aquatint. It is clearly to see that the linear Calligraphic point elements were produced with the brush, and since they do not completely close the surface, their individual shapes are clearly visible. At some distance from the image they emerge visually more together and combine to form a larger unit, but the autonomous individuals are also still recognizable. In the painted pictures on the other hand, as in "Celebration" from 1965-66 and in "Int. Space", in which the dot shape is half or full round and in the form more deviates from the point of Calligraphy, is the image density and amount of selective elements such, that the entire image area and surface closes to a, but not completely, uniform continuum, in which the dot elements are no longer perceived as a form, but mainly in their movement and restlessness; on one hand through the, given by the rotation of the brush, forminherent elemental movement and, at a sufficient distance, a vibration or oscillation of the entire image.

One of the most common types of lines at Tobey is the straight line, which goes back to the perpendicular "Nu"-Stroke (努) or the horizontal line (heng-hua 橫) of the Calligraphy (Fig. 43). It can be found in distinct, almost exaggerated form in "Old Cow Path" from 1954 (no Fig.); but symptomatic for Tobey's adaptation of this line style are images, like "Electric Dimensions" of 1960 (Fig. 151 As.), "New York Tablet" from 1948 (no Fig.), "Nature's Path", "Edge of August" and many others, often in combination with other types of lines. A characteristic feature of the application of this line style for Tobey is, that the pressure distribution in the execution of this brushstroke is lower differentiated from the beginning to the end, as in other species, and that the vertical line is intertwined mostly in a dense, crystalline net or fabric, which fills the whole surface area.

Relatively rare appears the right oblique "Chieh"-Stroke (磔) of the Calligraphy (Fig.41) with Tobey, in which the pressure is not strong at the beginning, but at the end, and which therefore becomes broader. One example is the aquatint "Blossoming" of 1970 (Fig. 149, As.), in which this Calligraphic line style forms are clearly identifiable, comma-like shapes. Due to the reverse pressure distribution, which is contrary to the natural human tendency to prefer the strong initial pressure with the following relaxation, this line type is found less frequently in both the Calligraphy as with Tobey.

Very often, however, is at Tobey, just as in the Calligraphy, the with a lot of pressure starting and then tapering ending "Liang-Tso"-Stroke (棕琢 ) to find (Fig. 41), which shows the most strongest dynamic behavior of Calligraphic elements and, at least in terms of its visual efficiency, applies as the Calligraphic stroke par excellence. Although the horizontal straight line is with its two-time pressing at the beginning and the end difficult to write, but it does not have the same dynamic qualities as the Liang-Tso-line. This therefore acts so dynamic, and is also in possession of a distinctive shape, because with it both the brush movement as well the residuing form most strongest embody the element of three-dimensional spatial movement, and which by a tapering end shape following the strong initial pressure, complemented by visual transmission, allows the pressure movement to be empathized by the viewer.

Tobey has embedded the Liang-Tso-line mostly into the arc or hook shape, as images like "Written over the Plains" (Fig. 37.1-4) and "Targets" (Fig. 39.1-3) show clearly. Two Liang-Tso-movements often merge into square or semicircular hooks (丿 = kou 鉤), what can be seen clearly through the respective (double or multiple) initial pressure-thickening. Other works, such as "Summer Breeze" (no Fig.), "Drum Echoes" (Fig. 33.1-4) and "Red Prairie" also include the Liang-Tso-Stroke, which thus became the main Calligraphic medium of Tobey's meditative art. When using the Liang-Tso-Stroke in its distinctive form, it is striking that the surface-filling then is less dense, than with other types of lines, and that in each case the same or similar types of lines are then stored as a floating surface layer in the image area on the same level, so that results in a significant layering of the image space.

Tobey also very often used the arc line or hook line, which goes back on the hook stroke (kou 勺) of Chinese Calligraphy, which occurs by Tobey in two main types (Fig 42 r.+ l.); once as the left embracing and ending, polygonal hook line (nu-kou 努鉤) (Fig. 42) and also as the above incipient, but then into the reverse direction right bowing and in the lower bend softer "Phoenix-Wing-Hook" (Feng-chi-kou 鳳翅鉤) (Fig 42 r.), or - without straight top approach - as "Yuan-kou"-Stroke (圓鉤) Figure 42, left, center).

This line forms appear at Tobey in "Targets" (Fig. 39.1-3), "Canal of Cultures" from 1951 (no Fig.) and the figures 143, 145 and others as "Nu-kou"-Stroke (努鉤). The "Nu-kou"-Stroke is the basic form of the character "li" (力), which means power or force, and which repeatedly appears rudimentary at Tobey and Masson. In addition, the repetition of this movement also produces the highly dynamic zigzag -lines. "Drum Echoes" (Fig. 33.1-4), "Written over the Plains" (Fig. 37.1-4), "Red Prairie" (Fig. 139) and others, as Figure 141, are showing the "Phoenix-Wing-Hook" (Feng Chi-kou 鳳翅鉤), and most often the round hook (yüan-kou 圓鉤). Again applies here that the lines are stored in layers.

Tobey used these linear means in very individual ways, but without ever being purely imitative. In "Awakening Night" from 1949 (no Fig.) distinct hook lines (nu-kou) are associated with zigzag lines and spiral-like loops, whose main character, however, is always square-shape and creates the character of a disintegrating knitwear. "Coming and Going" from 1970 (no Fig.) and "Underneath the Moments" from 1970 (Fig. 154) are predominantly formed by zigzag rhythms, that also in "Mystery of the Light" from 1969 (no Fig.) and similar works are accompanied by the same rhythms, both of which create a strong rhythmic alternating movement, due to the mutual reinforcement rectified multiple movements.

This rhythmic movement is dominant in "Aerial City" from 1950, where parallel processes with hook lines and extensive arches are connected (Fig. 141); in "Homage to Rameau" from 1960 (no fig.), and "Ritual Fire" of 1960 (no Fig.), in which wavy lines move parallel or slightly cross, but where the parallel oscillating rhythm predominates and associations with lambent flames are not far off.

Finally is with respect to the large structure still to determine, that in addition to the parallel rhythms, which usually cover the entire picture space area, reticulated or crystalline ties and tissues are common in Tobey's works, such as in Figures 145, 151, 154 and others; mostly formed through straight or slightly curved fine lines, and also occur matting or similar tight linkages, whereby the curved lines or wavy lines dominate and are entangle with each other, so that the view can hardly penetrate the flickering and vibrating tissues (eg Fig. 151 As. and others).

In addition to these relatively easy to determine line types and their uses and modes in the image, where the Liang-Tso-Stroke of Calligraphy prevails, there are many other, often very individual and sporadic types of strokes, some of which Seitz mentions:

"..., miniature plus and minus lines, such as those that were once used by Mondrian, broad undulations, reminiscent of the Art Nouveau, electric tremors and vibrations".<sup>593</sup>

and others, that shall not be considered further, because of the low frequency of their appearance.

#### 2.3.1.2.4 The Relation of K'ai-Shu- and Ts'ao-Shu-Lines in Tobey's Art

As already indicated, both K'ai-Shu as well Ts'ao-Shu elements can be found in Tobey's work, something which recalls the opinion of Sun Kuo-t'ing (and the Chinese Aesthetic in general), that in the K'ai-Shu elements of the Ts'ao Shu were included, and vice versa. The statement Sun Kuo-t'ing's in the Shu-P'u (書譜) allows us here also a comparison with the relations in Tobey's art:

"In the Chen-Shu (真書) points and lines are that, what constitutes the (phenomenal) form, but movement and rotation of the brush are that what gives the character. In the Ts'ao Shu, however, dots and lines determine the character, while movement and rotation of the brush induce the shape."<sup>594</sup>

The expression values and characteristics (shih 勢) of the K'ai-Shu or Chen-Shu (真書) are for Sun Kuo-t'ing "austere rigor" (tuan-chuang 端莊) and "balanced straightness" (p'ing-chih 平直) and also "balanced harmony" (p'ing-ho 平和), those of the Ts'ao-shu in contrast "spiral thither running" (p'an-hsing 盤行) and "moving agitation" (t'iao-tang 跳蕩).<sup>595</sup> Tobey's pictures contain both features, but with a slight predominance of the features of K'ai-Shu, so a certain rigor, clarity and balanced harmony of form and structural movement rhythms and overall a continuous order. The weighting and distribution in the work is different; in one work outweigh elements of Ts'ao-Shu, such as movement and roundness, in others that of the K'ai-Shu, like straightness and angular movements and precision of execution. Overall Tobey's "Calligraphy" tends therefore to the intermediate type of "Hsing-shu" (行書), from which Chang Huai-kuan in the Shu-I (書議) says:

"The cursive (Hsing-shu 行書) is not yet Ts'ao neither Cheng-Shu (正書); it dispenses both pronounced angularity (fang 方) and exclusive roundings (yuan 圓), but moves in the middle between the two extremes."

In the Shu-tuan (書斷) the same Chang Huai-kuan says:

"It consists of a slight modification of the correct written form (Cheng-Shu 正書); it should be based on shortening simplification (chien-i 簡易), but also run in a liquid way (liu-hsing 流行).<sup>596</sup>

Both individual works as well as the entirety of his art agree with these features, as they both have neither pronounced K'ai-Shu neither just such Ts'ao-Shu attributes, but in most cases both and connect them. The use of elements of both Calligraphic styles in the work of Tobey corresponds entirely with his attitude, to search the "middle" (chung 中) of everything and to strive for balance and "harmony" (ho 和).

### 2.3.1.3 The Implementation of the „One-Line-Principle“

The previous explanations as well as an in-depth analyzation of Tobey's paintings convey the realization, that Tobey builds his pictorial universe from only a few, really only one basic element and through the use of the Calligraphic basic stroke, especially in the Liang-Tso-form and that he creates by variation, multiplication and modification of a Calligraphic brushstroke the diversity of his pictorial manifestations. This principle, which is based on the succession movement of the Calligraphic process, was recognized and formulated in Chinese Aesthetics already by Shih-T'ao (石濤) (1641 -1717):

"With the introduction of the one-line method (I-Hua 一劃) a method of non method is created. The whole painting has its roots in the recognising mind. Now, if an artist does not understand the inner law (wu-li 物理) and reproduces ... the external impression then it is because he has not understood the underlying principle of the one-stroke-principle. Just as one starts to a long journey with the first step, this one-line holds the universe and everything in itself, ... The man should be able to reproduce that universe with one single stroke, ... Vitality and gloss is achieved by circular movements and curves, and wideness is achieved by inhibiting the movement. The stroke shoots out, stops, it can be square or round, straight or twisted, run up or down, left or right. So it rises or sinks in a sudden change, breaks free and hits a shorter distance, like the gravity of the water or the flare of a flame, all by itself and not in the least anxious to effect. In this way, it detects the inner nature

of things, expresses everything and fills all with life....  
For when the primeval chaos began having differences,  
the one-line-method developed. ... Thus, I say, this  
principle holds everything in itself."<sup>597</sup>

In these words of Shih-T'ao, written long before Tobey's time, lies an amazing resemblance to the creative approach of Tobey, and it includes sometimes almost an exact description of Tobey's art. Tobey has insights, that Shih-T'ao and other Chinese Calligraphers and artists had made about the nature of the creative process and expressed them with the above words, continuously used in his paintings and elevated the "one-line method" as his creative principle. Tobey himself called this method once the "overlaying of myriad independent lines":

"In the forties, I created a phenomenon of mass by  
the superposition of myriads of independent lines."<sup>598</sup>

This creative process was also inherent to the Calligraphic method, as it turned out, and was therefore recognized by Tobey and developed for his own art to the method of "White Writing".

"If one has understood it," Shih-T'ao continues, "falls that what opposes the imagination and insight away, and one can paint freely according to one's will. ... Because painting means to represent the forms of the universe. ... One should know the principle and its flexible application, according to the functionality, just as one should know the method and apply it flexibly.  
For what is the painting, but the great method of changes and developments in the universe? Spirit and inner being of the mountains and watercourses, development and growth of the creation, the potency of Yin and Yang, everything is revealed through brush and ink, for the representation of the universe and for us to be happy."<sup>599</sup>

And Shih-T'ao concludes:

"The one line is the origin of all Calligraphy and Painting, which represent, as it were, the substantial application of the main principle."<sup>600</sup>

As in these remarks of Shih-T'ao and in the aesthetics of Calligraphy, is also Tobey not about the external manifestations of the things, but of their inner being;

more specifically his themes are the visualization of universal basic elements: Movement and forces, spirit, light and space, which express themselves in the fundamental phenomena of nature, as the linear movement, the vibrations of the picture surface area, in cooperation and conflict, equality and polarities, strength and tenderness and all other basic states, and bring the one basic principle into appearance, whose main characteristics are: all-encompassing unity and everlasting change.

### 2.3.2 The Calligraphic Lines as elementary Signs

Tobey has used the characters of the Chinese Calligraphy very little in their original form and meaning, but transformed them into a new alphabet, in signs of a new pictorial language. Tobey's statement, to "write" his paintings, indicates to the "sign-likeness" of his images and their white lines and other elements, to a new language of direct and immediate symbols of universal and human categories, sensitivities and relationships, namely a human-natural universe, but not to an abstract and after Tobey lifeless, purely intellectual world, as the constructivists but also some Informel describe it.

Tobey's symbolic signs, that start with the elementary lines and by the formation of complex characters and super characters, as the spatial phenomenon, the vibration state and the visual vibration of the whole work and which can also express comprehensive and universal, are no intellectually and rationally derived signs based on general agreements, or which need a conscious consensus, but they are immediate, direct real-symbols representing or designating universal realities, through the intrinsicness of their original appearance, may it be by the means of analogy or identity to or with primary universal phenomena and categories. In this respect, they are in accordance to the above mentioned definition of the symbol by Warburg (polarity theory) and Vischer, which attribute the symbol direct, quasi magical efficacy on one hand (magic-binding) and intellectual designation (logic-segregating) attributes, by Vischer called "reserving", a stage of understanding of the symbol, whereby on one hand the man still believes or she feels the magical efficacy of the sign, but on the other hand also the clarity of the designation is to be exposed.

The "magical" efficacy of Tobey's "signs" lies in their identity or analogy to original universal conditions, such as movement, light etc., which they do not refer to in an intellectual way, but directly and immediately through their nature, to have themselves been originated by movement, to contain themselves light forces, which is transmitted to the viewer. These attributes of symbolic meaning and effect transfer are already included in the characters of Calligraphy, which not only rational designate by their linguistic meaning, but themselves are movement, tension, life. This equally applies to the world of Tobey's signs, which itself is the signifier of its fundamental-ontological characteristics, and through this being

symbolically expresses what is meant and larger contexts; an ability that the means of the Renaissance in fact not met. This unity of fundamental ontological characteristics and meaning is, and that gave rise to the extraordinary potency of Tobey's images, to sense directly by most people. As Tobey uses direct and non-intellectual sign, these signs hence are not to experience through the intellect, but by feeling and intuition, therefore his quotation of a Chinese wisdom:

"It is better to feel an image as to look at it (as to try to understand it rationally)."601

Tobey's signs or symbols of original and fundamental universal realities, essences, categories and relationships concern those polar phenomena, like spirit and matter, human and divine, personally and superpersonally, improvisation and preparatory planning, expansion and contraction, freedom and force, man and the world (whereby man and the world face each other antagonistically only in the Western thoughts).

The smallest elements, his "one-line-sign" or primary "white lines", are signs for themselves, through their status as residuum of a gestural movement, but at the same time a sign or symbol of this movement, by their lightness a symbol of the light, so a symbol of a light-containing, energetic movement, its directionality, force etc.. In the co-operation of many micro-characters to sign complexes or super-characters, such as larger picture elements, or the light and space of the appearance of the picture as a whole form, as well as the vibration and oscillation of the image space, which themselves are symbols of a specific worldview of Tobey, of a world of permanent motion, in which the light is the unifying medium, and the appearance of the uniformity of the image organization symbolizes the unity and harmony between man and nature and the universe. But also more specific can be expressed: moods, which were caused by seasons (like "Edge of August"); impressions, caused by the pulsation of the modern world cities ("Broadway", "New York Tablet", etc..

All these possibilities of symbolic relationship are contained in Tobey's line-ensemble. The appearances of his works are also a symbolic expression of his inner world, which can in turn resonate ideas of inner worlds to the viewer, which are very close to universal truths. In this sense, Klee's remark is to understand, "in Tobey's paintings we have the genesis of writing"602, and Feininger's recommendation for the dealing with Tobey's images:

"..., They unfold their inner self only gradually. They must be read, one must try to interpret their symbols ... one has to approach them with waking imagination. To him, who knows to listen them with the inner ear, they reveal their true character."603



In this sense Tobey's art also is a kind of realist art and not only pure abstraction, as he himself always emphasized, but, if you will, fundamental-ontological realism, which paints the reality, without copying it externally, a realism of the inner being- relationships and thus "an art of the essential" (Masson).

### 2.3.3 The Calligraphic Lines as Medium for the Dissolution and Dematerialization of Form and as Medium for the Creation of a new Conception of Form ("Smash Form" and "Allover")

One of the central problems Tobey's over his artistic development was the confrontation with and overcoming of the static presentation of the traditional image form.

"In China and in Japan" Tobey himself said, "I was released from the form by the influence of the Calligraphic."<sup>604</sup>

The obstruction of a dynamic representation in art through the traditional illusionistic painting Tobey became early aware of and he often talked about it:

"If you compare the Eastern and Western art, one could say, that the artists in the east were more interested in the line, and the west they were more interested in the physicality. Certainly the artists in the east were far away from the spirit of the Renaissance, including my Chinese friend, who once remarked: 'the pictures of Western artists are framed holes'. Of course today the illusionistic style is dead, and it has actually already been a long time."<sup>605</sup>

Tobey's early expressed distaste for all solid and physically-stiff awakened already as early the desire to free himself from the rule of the previous form of painting:

"The only goal that I can remember definitely, was when I said in 1918 to myself: 'If I get nothing else to do in my painting life, so I will after all destroy the form (smash form)'.<sup>606</sup>

In this venture, that he approached gradually, but held consistently, the Chinese Calligraphy again was the only viable artistic medium, that alone allowed him this

step, as he had repeatedly emphasized. Tobey was conscious about this at the beginning of his confrontation with the Calligraphy:

"I just had my first lesson in Chinese brushwork with my friend Teng Kuei. The tree is no longer firm in the ground, it breaks in less solid spheres, bathed in chiaroscuro. There is pressure and release. Each movement is like footprints in the snow, kept and loved for its own sake. The great dragon breathes sky, thunder and shadow; wisdom and mind invigorated."<sup>607</sup>

Due to this employment with the question of the image form, Tobey was for the first time clearly aware of the difference between the substance-thinking of the West and the relationship-thinking of the East. The emphasis on the strong and clear image form, which stood in the imaginary and empty perspective pictorial space, corresponded with the solid substance, which was one of the main problems of Western thought since the Middle Ages. The question of the substance, whereon at the beginning has already been entered, is the question of what maintains itself in all changes and transformations and allows to recognize always the same original essence, it is the lasting and resistant, it is also that, which from itself is the way it is; which actually is only in thought possible. With the search for the remaining substance is closely linked the search for the consistent and remaining I, for one's own solid personality, which led to an exaggeration of the ego and egocentricity, with the claim as a result of this thinking in the West: The Man is the measure of all things.

The result of this thinking was not only the necessary confrontation of self and world, knowing subject and objective entities, and therefore artistically the clear separation of the main subject and the surrounding empty space, but also the opposition between man and nature and the loss of the original unit of man and nature, man and the universe. The consequences thereof and problems are well known, and they were also aware to Tobey, when he tried to use the Chinese Thinking and Chinese Calligraphy to demonstrate a reversal of these conditions in his art, to lift the isolation and restore the original unit back.

The relationship thinking of the Far East, which Tobey learned about the Taoism and Ch'an-Buddhism, does not tend to separation of people and of things, but searches for unity and harmony, it emphasizes the relations of things and phenomena with each other and to the whole, the all-embracing unity of the Tao. Therefore, the emptiness of Zen-Buddhists or the "nothing" of Lao-tzu is the element for the event in the world, and the movement is the "form" of this event, through which world is created.

The importance of the movement as a "form" of an event of world-like modes of being is immanent to the Chinese Calligraphy. Sun Kuo-t'ing had this mentioned in

the Shu-P'u, when he then assigned especially to the Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy as "form"-element that category, that according to Chinese believes is the "essential", the "ch'i-yun" of the Ts'ao Shu: the movement.

In the Ts'ao Shu, however, dots and lines determine the character, while movement and rotation of the brush induce the shape."<sup>608</sup>

In this capacity of the Calligraphy, which in principle applies to all styles, including the K'ai-Shu, since they are all gestural residuals of a forming brush movement, was from the beginning the possibility of the "new" form Tobey's and his adepts founded.

The "destruction of the form" is for Tobey not only its complete destruction and elimination, but also the creation of a new form, that is equivalent to the activation of a variety of moving form particles, the "one-line"-elements and also their multiplication out and the resulting relationships of microelements in a dynamic structure of the whole, a vibrating or oscillating painting surface, or its compartments, or at least their movement crystallizations. This new "form" of the movement-structures and its superisation in the vibrating particle area as a whole was capable to symbolize the new worldview Tobey's in their dynamics, their permanent conversion. The dissolution of the traditional image form is evident in works such as "Broadway" (Fig. 116), "Forms follow Man" (Fig. 120), "Broadway Boogie" (no Fig.) and to pursue in other works from the early forties. In these images is through the resolution of the image shape using the Calligraphic brush line simultaneously achieved a conversion into moving lines and particles, in which the original shape and structure still shows through, but will be dematerialized and is increasingly merging into a state of surface-room filling linear motion, in which thing and space penetrate, dissolve and merge (Tobey calls it "penetrate perspective"). One result of this conversion process of form was for Tobey something he referred to as mass:

"In the forties, I created a sensation of mass by the overlap of myriad independent lines. In the dynamics and tempo, that I gave the accents within the lines, I intended to create a world of finer substance."<sup>609</sup>

Not the absolute emptiness thus was the target of form destruction for Tobey, because that would be the devoid of life, but a new transparent and in the eye of the viewer constantly changing and swinging physicality, whose "form"-phenomenon is largely determined by its movement and its lightcontaining, whose "form" so is the constantly vibrating, light movement. Physicality in terms of substance and the spiritual as movement penetrate each other in this new form and

become a unit, in which one is not without the other.

But in this new form of Tobey exist differences. Depending on the structure of the image and depending on the position of the viewer, can "form" appear both by the whole of the image, as well as in some pictures, especially in near vision, which is quite legitimate, through the microscopic or elementary formations in the way of crystallizing form-movements of the one-line-method and one-line-elements, or on a higher level through specialized sign-structures, that occur in the form of stroke clusters, light and dark formations, especially by the crystallization of most round or spiral movements of the elementary lines, which stand out significantly from the neighbors and yet remain in correspondence with them. Tobey himself calls this form crystallization "moving vortex",<sup>610</sup> something that had hitherto largely been ignored by the criticism and therefore had virtually no consideration in the literature, since one usually started from a distant view of his pictures and emphasized the total impression. This is insofar one-sided and restrictive, because Tobey himself demanded just with his "moving focus" the freedom of the viewer for an arbitrary position.

The existence of a "moving vortex" in his works causes a continuous connection of his works from the largest to the smallest, which, as in the natural universe, also creates forms, things, structures and systems by the means of superisation of smaller elemental units, which include not only complex structures, but also higher levels of being and consciousness.

These possibilities are included in the "forms" of Chinese Calligraphy from the beginning on, they range from the clearly defined individual structures and application of the element of the linear movement to complex entities as a structured movement-form or form-movement, up to the merger of large-scale oscillation- and vibration-processes on the pictorial space area, such as in the Ts'ao-Shu of Sun Kuo-t'ing (Fig. 140)<sup>611</sup> or particularly at Huai Ssu (Fig. 24)<sup>612</sup>, where also the movement is the forming element.

#### 2.3.4 Living Lines as Carrier of Movement, Energy and Rhythm in the Artwork

In the previous investigation appeared on several occasions the category of movement, energy and rhythm as a theme and as a pictorial means, which plays an important role in the work of Tobey. It is therefore in the following brief remarks on this aspect of the Calligraphic impulse also to distinguish between movement and force as a theme and movement as phenomenal appearance and pictorial means in Tobey's art. Thereby shall gone into this aspect only as far as the respective formal aspect, and the same applies to space, structure and time in Tobey's works, is related to the Calligraphic impulse.

As repeatedly mentioned, Tobey's art is a visualization of his dynamic conception of the world, which on one hand is based on the thoughts of Heraclitus and on the other hand on those of the Chinese Philosophy, especially the Taoism,

and in which all phenomena and relationships in the world depend and are caused by the permanent movement, change and transformation of the One, the all-encompassing basic principle. Tobey sees like the Chinese Calligraphers and Painters this permanent change everywhere, both in nature and in human lives of modern civilizations, which attracted him particularly in the form of metropolitan life with its traffic and its many people and lights on one hand, and which on the other hand repelled, or in the form of the whisking crowds of the public market in Seattle and other places:

"I can not be indifferent to the swarming crowds, diversities, neon signs, movie theaters and the noises, that I hate in the modern cities" says Tobey hereto.<sup>613</sup>

Movement is for Tobey not only a general world principle, given not only within the spheres or things of the world, but also between the spheres, meaning units, between all elements; a move he called migration, a topic that also employed Masson strongly, and which expresses itself as to Tobey's view in the hiking and movements between "microscopic life, electricity, spores and germs, birds and other animals,

"between people and their thoughts, their artifacts, their art and architecture, their religions and cultures. Movement lines can denote the transition of any of these levels to an other, or from one compartment of existence to an other."<sup>614</sup>

For Tobey as for Klee "the movement is that, what is given in the universe"<sup>615</sup>, and the movement of his elementary signs on one hand and of the entire surface on the other hand symbolizes the breaking of the rigid boundaries between human individuals and cultures and their future association, as in his images scattered elementary movements and the overall vibration of the surface area are simultaneously present and are perceived, and have a harmonious balance in the perception and sensation.

The realization that the movement and the changes are the "given in the universe", and Klee's view that the work of art is primarily Genesis and is never experienced as a product, Tobey for the first time became fully conscious of, when became acquainted with the Chinese Calligraphy, only which brought him this subliminal idea into the waking consciousness:

"Thousands of Chinese characters twist and turn ...., Everything is now motion .... A step back into the past, and the tree in front of my studio in Seattle only consists

of rhythm, lifting and upward jumping ."<sup>616</sup>

This considerably by the Chinese Aesthetics and particularly by the Calligraphy strengthened knowledge of a dynamic world and of an equivalent dynamic artistic expression brought Tobey to turn away from his previously realistic or cubist image forms to the dynamic action painting, which is formally based on the elementary artistic gesture, in which the individual and the super-individual unconscious of the world spirit express themselves. As already mentioned (Chapter II) in the gestural painting the painting surface becomes the movement area of the action, the image area an event field. The image obtains a spontaneous and open character, because it is not seen and felt as something solid, fixed, because the movement is also the visual predominant feature. Unlike at the Abstract Expressionists and the Action Painting the element of movement is in Tobey's paintings not so extremely dominating and imbalanced, but it is restrained and embedded in "a world of finer substance," as he says himself.

Tobey's works show two types of movement and visual dynamics based on the influence and the characteristics of Chinese Calligraphy: firstly, the linear movement of elementary particles, which arise from the gestural trace of the primary and sensitive basic brush movement in the Calligraphic space-plastical ductus, which by the means of the "One-Line"-principle in constant rhythmic movements, stroke after stroke, writes down the "world of finer substance". This elemental movement of the Calligraphic line produces a linear-residual trace of a certain speed, regularity and direction, which is expressively contained in it and can be experienced by the sensitive eye. The One-Line-Principle, i.e. the combination and multiplication of elementary Calligraphic lines creates now, at a certain moment and condition of the image, the second type of movement in the image: the vibration and oscillation of the total surface area, respectively the entire image field, or of large subunits.

These features, to contain and to unite successively flow movement in the course of the elementary lines and simultaneous movement in the appearance of an oscillating overall field in one, so individual, sporadic and complex, superordinate, universal to show in a harmonious balance, is one of the fundamental essential characteristics of Chinese Calligraphy and originally contained in it. Calligraphies of Huai Ssu (Fig. 24) or Sun Kuo-t'ing (Fig. 48) and others make this clear. The appearance of Calligraphic works fluctuates, as the works of Tobey, between successive flow movement of the linear drawing elements and simultaneous vibratory movement of the entire field, a condition which was not possible in the static-illusionistic art of the West, since the gradual movements of the elements and sequences of creative action were eliminated and extinguished by the aim of the illusion of outer appearances and their massive image forms. Only the absence of the illusion of outer appearance made it possible to end the movement of the creative process in a state, in which both types of movement could exist in a

harmonious balance, where the work appears neither as unfinished or poorly nor as a closed, finished final form. The importance of the Calligraphic Influence lies in the strong momentum of the space-sculptural ductus, which first manifests itself in the individual elements, and is then passed on by them to the overall appearance, so that the Chinese Calligraphy clearly of motion has a fundamental importance on two levels.

This ability to perceive successive individual movement and simultaneous field motion simultaneously or alternatively in one image causes the lack of a specified, explicit standpoint. The relativity of these opportunities demands and automatically causes a movable, variable focus, sometimes closer, sometimes further away, and the Chinese Calligraphy as well as the Painting therefore also already originally included this feature of the moving viewpoint (moving focus). A comparison of Calligraphic works with pictures of Tobey shows that the "moving focus", which Tobey introduced into the modern art of Informel, and which was used by Pollock, Masson and others as a compositional structure principle, clearly is based on the dynamic elements of the Chinese Calligraphy and the consequent structural and compositional characteristics. A comparison of Tobey's "November Grass Rhythms" (no Fig.) and the calligraphy of Huai Ssu (Fig. 24) and Mi Fu (Fig. 96) confirms that.

An important factor of the dynamic appearance of the line elements as well as the overall visual field at Tobey is the space-plastical ductus of his Calligraphic lines, which, as a residue of a three-dimensional movement, as already discussed, transposes this into the surface-area and transfers it to the observing eye. The sensation of movement, that is caused by this fact, affects both the appearance of the elementary lines as well as those of the entire field and its oscillation or vibration manner.

Another element of Calligraphic movement also provides similar effects in Tobey's paintings: the direction and the direction-dynamics of the lines, may they be straight, semicircular or curved, spiral- or loop-forming, which causes centrifugal or centripetal force development, be they crossings or parallel rhythms of lines. These moments of Calligraphic movement affect equivalent phenomena in Tobey's paintings. We find by Tobey mainly short straight or slightly curved movements, also semicircular or even spiral movements, which have a centering, hold the view and bring visual focal points and form generations, that are settling above the elementary line movement and often take the mediation to the overall vibration (moving vortex).

The same effect also causes crossing movements, grinding or parallel rhythms, so that one can begin from here an evaluation of the structural design of Tobey's paintings, which corresponds to the already explained "movement-form" or "movement-structure" of the Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy, mentioned also by Sun Kuo-t'ing in the Shu-P'u. The influence of Calligraphy therefore is not limited to the use of lines as picture elements, but goes about their properties to the generation of a

new form<sup>617</sup>, and the flow of movement as an essential pillar of the image structure, including, whereto vibration tendencies of color and light phenomena come accentuating.

Images, whose essential characteristics are all kinds of movement, must receive an additional receptive attitude of the viewer. The permanent movement of the individual elements as well as the total field give the observing eye nowhere a firm hold.

"It is kind of images," says Tobey, "where it is for the viewer not possible to rest on anything. They are thrown away or need to move along constantly".<sup>618</sup>

The viewer must thus behave opposite the image as it has done the painter in the production of the image, so visually constantly be on the move, "read" it and "interpret its symbols and with the inner ear" learn to experience it, like Feiniger formulates it<sup>619</sup>, so rather feel, perceive, imagine, as Tobey himself remarks.<sup>620</sup> It is known, that this view of receptive behavior goes in part back to the Chinese Aesthetic, wheron Tobey himself has based it. Equally also applies to the Calligraphic Art of China an equivalent reception performance, because even there it "is nowhere possible to rest" (Tobey) for the viewer, an attribute of the Calligraphic work, which was passed on by the Calligraphic impulse also to Tobey and his adepts.

The element of movement and its visual effects are at Tobey largely determined by the power of the Calligraphic brushstroke, its structural strength (ku-li 骨力), which cause the expression of the individual elements and the powerful movement and vitality of the whole picture. Tobey was this aware of, and this is one of the reasons, why he chose the shape of the hook or angle stroke ( 勺 ) as one of his most important formal elements, which matches with the sign for force, namely "li" ( 力 ). Meaning and formal appearance are here almost identical. This element occurs at Tobey, as we saw, very often.

The power of the Calligraphic brushwork goes over the handwrist and the brush, which is designated as "hsu-chang shih-chih (of energy) empty palm, stuffed (with energy) finger". Such a powerful movement (shih 勢) gained through practice and mastery goes as to Chinese view - an ideal condition- "(three tenths) into the wood" (ju-mu san-fen 入木三分). But it can only be achieved through the Calligraphic method and technology, as Tobey had recognized it, and which is also indirectly confirmed by Shen Tsung-ch'ien:

"The old are saying of a brush stroke also that it could 'raise a bronze tripod'. This is an allusion to the safety of the stroke and the strength of the line. If you use a brush,



power is the most important. From the force originates the strength of the stroke, each of such written line is powerful and alive."

And elsewhere it is continued to say:

"When one speaks of brush force (pi-shih 筆勢), one wants to say that the living movement of the brush brings the essence of the various items to expression."<sup>621</sup>

Also in the "Hua-Fa Yao-Lu" (畫法要錄) the importance of the brush force or structural force as basis of the pictorial expression is formulated in much the same way.

Tobey's works have undoubtedly received through the influence of the Calligraphic method of "raising and lowering, rotating and turning", i.e. through the Calligraphic ductus, the powerful movement, which characterizes each of his brushstrokes, and which created the whole, vibrant, energy filled continuum as an immediate symbolic form of a moving universe.

### 2.3.5 The non-hierarchical Structure and Composition of the Picture: (Decentralization and "moving focus")

The pictorial order of Tobey's works, so their artistic structure, is a function of their elements, the lines, the movement of light and organization of the pictorial space, which by Tobey is called multiple or "diverse space" (multiple space). The image structure is regarded as the most important means of expression by Tobey:

"The (formal) main problem of painting for me lies, I think, in the rhythm and in the plastic form, as in the sensation of the color application, what one might call structure or tissue."

This "tissue" is a sequence of Tobey's intention to maintain the unity of his painting, which has already been mentioned:

"I have sought to make my painting 'full', but to achieve that, I have needed a swirling mass. I even do not take a fixed position. This may perhaps explain a comment, that someone made, while he looked on my pictures: Where is the center?"<sup>622</sup>

The lack of a "center" in the usual sense, which necessitates a firm position of the painter on one hand and of the viewer on the other hand, is the cause of the "moving focus"<sup>623</sup>, which characterizes Tobey's pictures, and which is also a consequence of his indifferent attitude toward life. The "moving focus" is often caused by a nearly uniform oscillating and vibrating linear filling of the surface area, the "Allover"; it is its defining characteristic. Nevertheless, this "Allover" and the resulting "moving focus", i.e. the appearance of the entire image area surface, as it was always allegedly argued, are by no means the sole and all-pervasive feature of Tobey's image structure, - a one-sided view and emphasis of a feature -. The peculiarity of Tobey's structure appearance lies rather again in the harmonious balance of two characteristic attributes, but not in a single feature. Structure at Tobey is an indifferent or invariant bivalency of complex structure (oscillating and vibrating overall appearance) and individual form structure; thus a polar relationship, in which general or individual are in balance. Neither property dominates, they oscillate and urge for supremacy, but non of them wins. Experience (reception) varies continuously between the oscillating and vibrational states of the whole on one hand, and the form appearances of the individual on the other hand, which emerge as condensation, cristallisation or linear elementary movement, and which can be round and centering or angular or zigzag, or linear straight.

In this balanced structure ratio two opposing force tendencies are expressed: on one hand the fundamental tendency of striving for entropy, which focuses as ultimate objective a creation of a completely undifferentiated equal distribution of all the elements, and which, due to the theoretical equality of general principles of being, also applies to the visual phenomena in the field of aesthetics; secondly, the opposite tendency to primary morphogenesis, which calls for differentiation and development of certain forms, shapes and structural patterns as a basis of higher cognition.

These two tendencies are in Tobey's structure roughly balanced, so that the mode of structure at Tobey can be formulated as a polar balance of entropy-tendency (decentralization) and primary form-creation (concentration). Structure is indeed an important formal element of Tobey's art, but as it is also in every work of art and also an inherent category of all being, such as space and time, it is questionable whether this term is appropriate to be an eponymous name for Tobey's art, as 'structural art', as it has been done partly in the literature.<sup>624</sup> This issue shall however because of principle reasons here not be discussed further, and the problem of the structure at Tobey to be only taken into account, if it is linked to the Calligraphic Influence.

Structure may be defined differently, whereby the definition, if it is comprehensive for all realms has continuous validity, not only in the field of art. As the art of Tobey is in no way an "art for art's sake", but stands in relationship with all phenomena of the universe, as to nature, to the microcosm, the man and

his society, so is the most common definition, as it was exemplifying formulated by the bio-scientist Wolfgang Wieser, legitimate:

"Under structure to be understood a network of relationships of elements or elementary processes. Wherever elements combine into a meaningful whole, structures occur, whose construction follows certain laws. The totality, in which we discover and investigate structures we call 'system'. So there are inorganic, organic, sociological and technical systems",<sup>625</sup>

but also, of course, aesthetic systems.

"When we say, that the concept of structure in modern science is becoming increasingly important, so this means that even such natural phenomena which earlier have been conceived as linear processes, can only be understood in reality as a result of the complex linking of numerous elements. Detached particles or linear processes are the result of dissection and abstraction and never representative of the whole. What all this underlies is the phenomenon of organization. Organization is a principle, that can not be attributed to one of the two categories of force or substance, but is itself an independent size, neither energy nor matter, but a third thing, expressed by the measurement - and the nature - of the order (or negative entropy) of a system. This has been formulated by Norbert Wiener about ten years ago, but it can not be denied, that the basic principles of these ideas go back to the problem of form, as Plato and Aristotle understood it."<sup>626</sup>

Structure is therefore clearly a problem of order, which is the necessary precondition for everything that man wants to understand<sup>627</sup>, and insofar also valid for the Chinese Calligraphy. Order directs in art as in all other areas the attention to equalities and inequalities, on togetherness and independence.<sup>628</sup> Rudolf Arnheim remarked, that "order is a necessary condition for the functioning of each structure", and that "there is no survival without order," and that "to the human mind an indigenous all-encompassing quest for order is inherent."<sup>629</sup> -

After Arnheim one can "understand order in perception as the consciousness equivalent of a general physiological and psychological phenomenon".<sup>630</sup> The natural laws of the universe apply to the perception and also partly for art. The physical conception of the nature of an equilibrium says, that "in an equilibrium

processes and substances have a tendency to assume the most uniform and most regular distribution, of which they are capable under given circumstances".<sup>631</sup> This principle of the economy of order causes for instance, that visual perceptions organize themselves in a way, that leads to the simplest (visual) structure.<sup>632</sup> Arnheim explains further, that simple forms are the visible result of physical forces, whose equilibrium is reached in the best possible arrangement. This applies to organic systems and also to anorganic<sup>633</sup>, and of course also for visual systems of perception, such as the images of Tobey or the Chinese Calligraphy. In Tobey's work this principle leads to an equilibrium and entropy of elements, to a visual reception of an oscillating, vibrating or in extreme cases smooth surface space continuum, whose main characteristic would be the total direct order (but only occurs in the thinker's ideal case). A field of perception is like any other system "in balance, when the forces of which it consists are distributed so that they balance each other".<sup>634</sup> But balance, Arnheim remarked further, also leads to a standstill<sup>635</sup>, if it is static and without opposing forces, one must add.

All dynamic art immanent, as to the pictures of Tobey or the Chinese Calligraphy, is not only the striving for entropy, but, according to the principle of the polar interaction between the primal forces Yin and Yang, which determine both Tobey's art as well the Chinese Calligraphy, also exists a counterforce, which avoids the static equilibrium, and which we had initially identified as the tendency for primary form creation, and which in turn is prevented by the counter-principle of entropy-tendency against creating too much differentiated diversity and formal diversity, something that Arnheim calls "anabolic creation of a structural theme".<sup>636</sup>

Structure is in this view not the "antithesis" of matter and energy, as it is often formulated in the literature, both in reference back to the antithetic dialectical thinking, which goes back to Heraclitus' conception of the "struggle as the father of all things", but a realization of the Chinese thinking as well as of modern science, a complementary counterpart to matter and energy phenomena, something that effects the essence of the phenomena in an immeasurable and incomprehensible dimension in themselves, something that gives the things their meaning and significance.

A dynamic art, like Tobey's or the Chinese Calligraphy, appropriate is not a static, but only a dynamic structure, which does not include the static phenomena alone, but particularly the dynamic movements and interactions, that determine the work. The close relationship of structure and form is confirmed by Wolfgang Metzger:

"The structure or the construction (tectonics). This includes all properties of the arrangement or composition, three-dimensional form or figural-structure,

brightness and color profile, including the organization and weight distribution; rhythm, melody, course structures of the movement and changes. Examples:.. straight, round , square, elliptical, closed, symmetrical, pointed, wavy, jagged, legato, staccato, glissando, crescendo; steady, unsteady; the waking, shrinking, clambering, falling, streaming, jumping, short: any type of transition ... A particularly significant and distinctable subclass are the dynamic structures: the directionality, the distribution, the structure of tension, attraction, repulsion, pressure, urge, drive, including their changes in time: they arise, change, decay."<sup>637</sup>

All these structural features are equally elements of Chinese Calligraphy, as well as of the art of Tobey, whereby the dynamic structural features as a result of the Calligraphic Influence are particularly noticeable. The development of the structural nature goes for Tobey hand in hand with the Calligraphic impulse and the destruction of the perspective form and the space, and the development of a new space. Pictures such as "Broadway" and others clearly demonstrate this trend. The attitude of the search for unity, harmony and non-interference, caused by the East-Asian Philosophy and Aesthetics, which symbolize themselves in the Allover and the equal status of the pictorial space area, take him to a humanism, which corresponds not with the centeredness on the Homo Sapiens and his life as the highest standard of value, described by Panofsky<sup>638</sup>, but the integration and equality of mankind with the principles of the universal being as a benchmark of new humanity, as it is the basic attitude of East Asia, and which expresses as well in Tobey's structure as in the Calligraphic works of China. Although, to a lesser extent, the Impressionism with its allover of light phenomena of perceptions of the reality, and even further back Turner were involved a little in the formation of Tobey's structure, but essentially it were the structural principles of Chinese Calligraphy and the views of Chinese Aesthetics and Philosophy.

The most important aspects of Tobey's general structure, the "Allover" of the line items and their form creation, the "moving focus", allowing no adherence to a point, an image thing, or a center, and the decentralization, which arises from the relationship of the individual elements to one another and to the whole in the sense of a non-hierarchical equivalence and balanced status as an expression of the universal democratic principle, are just as essential features of the art of Calligraphy. Already a brief comparison of Tobey's "November Grass Rhythms" (Fig. 156) or other images with a Calligraphy, such as the Hsing-shu of Mi Fu (Fig. 96) or the Ts'ao Shu from Huai Ssu (Fig . 77), makes the basic similarity of the image structure significant. The Calligraphic works have no center, but a "moving focus" which is always where the view is, which is guided by the linear rhythms; in

Calligraphy all elements also are equivalent and lack a hierarchal network of elements, just like at Tobey, and a Calligraphic work has neither a center nor does it allow an adherence to a point or a line shape. Especially the works of Ts'ao Shu are similar structured by an allover of the oscillating line elements, as it is clearly demonstrated by Huai Ssu, and as it is also visible in Tobey's "Untitled" (Fig. 38.1-4).

To the Calligraphy therefore applies, as well as for Tobey, the observation of two polar opposite forces, of the entropy-tendency, which seeks to equality and balanced distribution and which is realized by the Ts'ao-Shu as more as it is moving (K'uang-ts'ao 狂草); and the principle of form creation, which is in reverse strongly embodied by the formal K'ai-Shu, or even by the Chuan-Shu (篆書). Both principles or tendencies are closely linked to the speed of execution, so to the element of movement and - indirectly - the time of the movement execution. The structural conditions of Calligraphy and of Tobey's work are equally a symbolic form for the underlying thinking of unity, equality and universal harmony of elementary movements.

The foregoing explanations so prove with fairly great certainty the realization, that Tobey's picture structure is going back to the Calligraphic impulse, because none of the other possible influences, such as Impressionism or Cubism, which were relatively little decisive for his main work, show the principles of absence of hierarchy, the Allover and moving focus in the same determination and intensity, and which also had not the dominant importance for Tobey's development, such as the Chinese Calligraphy.

In addition to these general structural contexts Tobey's pictures also show, which mostly also would allow back referrals to similar characteristics of the Calligraphy, aspects that concern more specific types or substructures, such as the relationship between individual form and weave type, between web and ground, the type of web and its vibration structures, formation of layers and space shifts, the importance of elementary shapes, small structures and large-scale structures and their relationship, fullness and emptiness, the effect of power lines and power fields, centering, direction, indifferences by repealing forces and much more, what here can not be discussed in detail.

Only one aspect has to be pointed, that the Feiniger and Naum Gabo<sup>639</sup> have shown for Tobey's work, and proves to be true also in comparison with the Calligraphy: the similarity of fundamental principles and elements to those of the music.

"Mark Tobey's (art) is closer to the music than that of anyone else in Abstract Art. A musical composition can only be absorbed and felt, by following the continuation of the basic pattern and the conductive rhythms in the changes, on which the whole work is built. Similarly, one can only learn very well the work of Mark Tobey, if one

seizes the base theme and follows the rhythmic changes of the waves, on which the whole structure is built."<sup>640</sup>

The same statement can be made for the structural design of the Chinese Calligraphy, which also is like the music a successive sequence of tonal (linear) elements with specific amplitude, frequency and duration, but which is only visually perceived, and which is experienced in the successive and simultaneous cadences, assonances, harmonies and discords with parallels, overlays, opposing forces etc., and which is read and revealing its rhythmic successive sequence and its meaning similar. Even the laws of its composition have correspondences. Expression and internal order show a clear affinity between the Calligraphy, music and the works of Tobey, as Naum Gabo describes it:

"When I look at one of his pictures, I always feel something cosmic in the structures of his ever-changing sets, which I would describe with visual counterpoints. At the same time I feel the beating of real life pulse in the intensity, with which he in his works uses the changing keys of the colors in his compositions. Mark Tobey's pictures can be fully felt and appreciated, when one with all one's senses receives the flow of the inner tissue of his basic design and rhythm. The reason for this is, that the element of time is always present, and the flow and the continuity of the rhythm both in design and in the color are similar to musical compositions."<sup>641</sup>

Tobey himself was very musical and confirmed the analogy to music:

"I often think of Chopin when I'm working. From time to time I have ideas, sometimes not. The ideas come in the creative work by themselves. A composer can, if he has only found a series of tones, therefrom write a whole symphony".<sup>642</sup>

And elsewhere it is said:

"The new images are contrapuntal, you might say. My interest in music comes out again. ... Everything that exists, every human being, is a vibration."<sup>643</sup>

### 2.3.6 The Line Network as Origin of an indefinite linear Vibration Space ("multiple space")

The dissolution of the form ("smash form"), the development of a new basic, dynamic form and the decentralization of the perspective space structure to a polar balance of entropy-tendency and primary form creation, whose main characteristic is the lack of a center and a fixed viewpoint ("moving focus"), are not the only artistic innovations in Tobey's work through the Calligraphic Influence, but they are necessarily accompanied by a new understanding of space. Form, subject, all things and image contents are for Tobey always in motion and isolated not tangible. They are only experienceable in a space, that is not just like an empty surrounding, but rather filled with tensions, energies, forces, relations, waves - a space in which the contrast of the materialistic form and the emptiness is no longer decisive, but the unity of all elements in their constant movement<sup>644</sup>; it is an imaginary and perceived space as a symbolic form of our inner space, the space of our consciousness.

"I advance into the space, just like the science and all the rest"

says Tobey.<sup>645</sup> The "multiple space", as Tobey calls it, the "diverse space, limited by a complex of white lines, symbolizes higher states of consciousness."<sup>646</sup>

"I try to extend the space into the depth, not on the surface. In my paintings I extend the outer space to such an extent, that I can bring in the inner space, with which I want to bring life to the picture. On the other hand the real surface of an image does not interest me. Through various movements in opposite directions, I can provide the illusion of large dimensions. So why should we really want to have them? I cover my canvas completely and send my formative elements into all four corners. Everything moves, bestirs oneself, is alive. Therein lies the size of a work and not in the number of centimeters of width and height."<sup>647</sup>

The attributes of space at Tobey are like in all art dependent from two basic possibilities, on one hand from the specific, definable and, at best, even in perspective constructed and measurable space as representation, illusion and symbol of the external appearance of the phenomenal world of objects, which includes the phenomenal appearance of man, and after Tobey had overcome this kind of conception of space and creation of room, the pictorial space as a symbolic



form for unlimitedness and infinitude of the universal all-room, which pervades all spheres of being and carries the substantive physical, the mental and the spiritual, in which each of them has qualities related to its specific spheres; so ultimately as a symbolic intuition form for the unlimitedness and infinity of the acting ground, the "nothing" of Zen and the Tao of the Chinese Philosophy.

The term "symbolic form" is here chosen for two reasons: one, because all visual phenomena, which goes beyond the purely phenomenal flatness, and is experienced as such in its original form, can be merely symbolic, as a mediatory sign, and secondly, because the "symbolic" experience induction is immanent to all existent, that means, the simultaneity and unity of pure existence and mediating function.

The experience of space in the painting, and the issue is always not the "space itself", but always initially a visual experience of space, so a process of cognition due to a communication process between work and viewer (after a creative process between artist and work). In this sense, therefore, the experience of space in art is first an empirical-phenomenal cognitive process. The idea, especially the rational idea, but also the intuitive, only take effect after. Space analysis of a painting must therefore come from the phenomenal appearances of the image.

This results immediately and imperatively therein, that the experience of space in the painting in no case may be that of an infinite space, because the Infinity, what Gosztonyi<sup>648</sup> has convincingly demonstrated, can not be experienced, is not clearly understandable or imaginable, and it is even intellectually only conceptually nameable, but whereby an intuitive suspectable, standing behind the infinite, can be assumed to exist, due to the constancy of the infinity thinking.

Since infinity and with it the infinity of a room or space so cannot be experienced and can not be presented, the term "infinite" here can not be taken in the concrete sense, but only as a "symbolic form of intuition" for something clearly not conceivable, so it has a deputy function in the sense, that certain artistic specialties, such as the evocation of width, depth and vastness, of their connection with the moment of incommensurability and indeterminacy, of which Masson also spoke, shall be make an idea of infinite space in the world approximately suspectable.

The aperspectival room, at issue in the modern art of Tobey, Masson and others, and which is also characteristic for the Chinese Calligraphy and Painting, is among other things, detected as a field of tension in the dialectic of sensual activity and activity of the consciousness, of awareness and meaningful expansion and classification of the individual, the space as a all-room acts itself as a tension, which the human is continuously exposed to. After Gosztonyi, the tension points away of him (the people) – from a non-spatial midst - and at the same time it points on it - on this midst. The experience of the 'side by side' (surface) and 'succession', also of depth, distance and size is secondary.

"Primary is, however, that the man is exposed to that 'size', that causes spatial and enables the space, perhaps even 'creates'. The experience of the effectiveness of this 'size' is reflected in the tension experience, that applies as 'original experience of space itself', the experience of spatial is then the refinement and differentiation of this specific tension experience."<sup>649</sup>

In this assumption of a spatially acting reality ground, which is effective in man himself, lies an affinity to Chinese thought, which characterizes the concept of the space of Calligraphy and Painting, and which assumes the Tao as this force. Gosztonyi, whose explanations are important for the art because of their clarity and precision, goes on to say, that the space as an acting force permeates all three spheres of reality of man: the physical, the mental and the spiritual (Gosztonyi, p. 1021). In all these spheres, the spatial experience is uniform, the space-creator, the Tao or nothingness or emptiness, as acting emptiness according to the East-Asian thinking, is in all spheres of reality the same, the particular reality sphere is the manifestation of the space creator. Perceptual space, intuitive space, action space and so are in their original essence little different; unifying of all is the space-creating, the Tao, the emptiness, the nothingness, God.<sup>650</sup> The distinguishing in the spatial experience, whether in reality, the art or the pure idea is the experience capability of man. This causes, that the person adapts oneself each on different manifestations: to experience space as tension, as vibration, as a cavity or a length. The consciousness is thereby usually exposed to a polar relationship between man and (world) space. The experience of space is accordingly based ontologically on the experience of the effect of a being generating potency (Gosztonyi, p. 1028).

These ideas are very close to the formulations of Lao-Tzu: "Non-being I call the beginning of Heaven and Earth, Its what I call the mother of individual beings. Thus the direction to the non-being leads to a look of the wonderful nature, the direction towards the being to the viewing of the spatial limitations. Both are one in origin and different only by name. In such unit it is named the secret." (TTCh. 1).

Again, the phenomenal spatial and therefore limited existence and the essence of things as non-spatial being is attributed to the effect of a force, whose nature it is to emanate all that exists in constant motion without spatial limits:

"The sense (Tao) is always flowing out, but it never overflows in its work." (TTCh. 4)

An abyss it is like the ancestor of all things, ... and yet  
how deep it is really." (TTCh. 4)

The conception of nothingness as acting, emanating, all-encompassing and all-present phenomenal spatial emptiness, which in Zen thought and Taoism is of fundamental importance and the philosophical foundation of spatial width of the Calligraphic works and the Ch'an- and Landscape-Painting, whereupon Tobey, Masson and other artists of the West related, is apparent from Laotzu's words:

"Thirty spokes surround a hub, in their nothingness  
consists the essence of the car,  
One scoops tone, making it to jars, in their nothingness  
consists the jars work, .... " (TTCh. 11)

The emptiness of the void is linked here with the infinity of the Tao, the reality ground, as kind of appearance, but it is not an absolute void, but an acting emptiness filled of forces. The space is in this idea, similar as Gosztonyi explained it, and as also Tobey and other Western artists imagine, who draw to East Asian thought, an existential acting ground and tension field of forces - Masson had, as it turned out, clearly pointed to this aspect, - to use Heidegger's terminology, an action field of the "Weltens" (creation of world) of the reality ground.

Tobey's picture space phenomenon therefore is an immediate or direct intuition-form of space as a cosmic universal event field and field of action, which also includes the field of human existence. The image space shall make the universal event space, which is essential vibration, present by symbolic expressions, by evoking a vision or idea, which causes, with the means of the pictorial reality, the concept qualities of the viewer to induce a conception of space, which is essentially vibration. Vibration or oscillation as a fundamental way of being of the world things and the space itself is a view, which is represented by both the ancient Chinese thinking as well of Sri Aurobindo, and is more and more confirmed by the findings of modern science.

Tobey's picture space is essentially vibration and so a symbolic form of the space as an event field of forces and dynamic relationships of universal principles and structures, for the human life, its inner and outer worlds. It is a symbolic intuition-form, which includes all temporality and at the same time time is ahistorical, which carries the notions and ideas of each present mind contents of all spheres and layers, and which enables their movement and transformation in extenso. It is the symbol of space as emanation-ground of all existence operations: "Everything moves, stirs, comes alive", Tobey himself describes this process, when he is covering his canvas completely and sends its formative elements into all four corners.<sup>651</sup> For Tobey the space is as in the modern natural sciences, as well as in the East Asian Philosophy and Aesthetics, not empty:

"Scientists say that there is no such thing as empty space. Space is always loaded with life ..., electric power, waves, rays, spores, seeds, with potential sighs, possible sounds ... and God knows , with which all yet."<sup>652</sup>

The infinity of the reality ground is in Tobey's picture space not experienceable as "infinite space", but conveyed symbolically. The important thing is the experience of space and infinity, as well as uncertainty, which in contrast to the concept of the space as a vessel, which after Gostztonyi just characterizes the perspective space, evocate that qualities of freedom, openness and unlimitedness, that can serve representative for the perception of infinity.<sup>653</sup> The sensation of open, free and indefinite and unlimited corresponds in the area of human experience opportunities the qualities of the infinite, the Tao.

Tobey's picture space can therefore be more accurately described as evocation of movement, space, infinity and freedom as symbolic approximation form of infinity, of emptiness, of nothingness and the reality ground. André Masson also stands close to this conception of space and confirmed it by identifying the relationship of the Chinese Painter to the space as his own:

"The Chinese painter, familiar with the infinite, severs the hawsers. Piling up, successions, fluidity, cosmic breathing:.. place of all expansions, sanctuary of openness."<sup>654</sup> and elsewhere:

"The space is for the painter of Asia neither outside nor inside, it is a game of forces - pure becoming".<sup>655</sup>

Masson mentions here three main aspects of the new pictorial space, as he and Tobey realized it: piling up, so the moment of superposition of room contents; successions, so the succession in the course of formation and appearance of visual elements in the space of the image; and fluidity, so movement and the lack of clearly identified breakpoints.

The constituent element of the visual experience of space at Tobey is the Calligraphic line braid and its movement, which has transferred the spatiality of Chinese Calligraphy, which is in principle the same as that of Tobey in his main work, into Western Painting. Like in Tobey's works the characters of Chinese Calligraphy can be found in front of an empty evocative ground as a symbol of nothingness or the Tao, and the actual spatial effect is achieved through the movements of the Calligraphic lines, which, how much they are moving, like the network of Tobey's lines allow the eye to perceive concrete spatiality. Calligraphies, as Fig. 96 by Mi Fu or from Huai Ssu (Fig. 77) make this clear. A comparison of these and other calligraphies with works of Tobey, such as "Untitled" (1954) (Fig. 38) or "November Grass Rhythms" (no Fig.) and others

show, that not only ideological affinities exist with respect to the understanding of space, but also that the basic formal and phenomenal picture elements or effects are matching. The ability of the linear vibration space to create room atmosphere due to superimposition of moving, calligraphic, living lines, applies not only to the works of Tobey or those of Masson, but is the Calligraphic work inherently by itself; it is particularly visible in the very dynamic type of K'uang-ts'ao from Huai Ssu (Fig. 77) and others.

In calligraphies of this type appears the ability of this art to create space through superimposing, transparency of lines and linear structures, by duplication and crossovers, as well as the choppiness of the lines, their rhythms and especially their enclosing of surface area, so compartments forming abilities. But equally important for this is the attribute of the Calligraphic ductus to be a residue of a spatio-temporal movement, the space-creating power of Calligraphy, which causes that space-plastical lines are not perceived in a two-dimensional plain area, but in a spatial volume. The use of color grades by Tobey, which is only secondary accentuating the spatial effect, corresponds therefore with the empty ground of the Calligraphy, since the actual room generating of both goes out from the linear motion structure, whereby in extreme cases, as already mentioned, the lines of Calligraphy can also become a ground-filling "Allover".

The development of this spatial process is at Tobey connected with the "dematerialization of form by penetration of space", as he called it, that is with the dissolution of objective representation by lines into transparent, dynamic apertures, which starts with pictures such as "Broadway" (Fig. 116), "Broadway Boogie" (no Fig.), "Forms follow Man" (Fig. 120) and others. The role of the Calligraphy as the sole agent which enabled him this resolution and the penetration of form and space, and which realized in his "Personal Discovery of Cubism" - experience (.. Cf. Figure 55 + 56 + 57), becomes more than clear from the foregoing explanations. The image space can pass in an extreme case into an all-filling oscillation and vibration, depending on the fineness and movement, the microstructure and the primary image form.

The "multiplication of space" (multiple space) is a phenomenon, that is caused both by the spatial or surface-embracing capabilities of linear oscillation elements, by their depth differences, as well as by stratum layers bearing the linear or punctiform elements. Stratifications and cellular compartments are as well existent perception elements, as part of both the undamaged whole, the unity of the pictorial space. This too is an aspect, which is originally intrinsic to the Chinese Calligraphy. Here again comes Tobey's preference of unity and harmony to bear. Space is for Tobey thus the symbolic intuition-form of the universal overall space, its forces and movements, a space that is both foreign and interior, but which can over the experience of the human inner world get access to the oscillating and vibrating forces of the universal space, which represent the universal life:

"The cult of the room," says Tobey, by which he means the illusionist space, "can be as boring as that of the object. The dimension that is counting for the creator, is the space he creates within himself. This inner space is closer to the infinite, than the other, and it is the privilege of a balanced mind - and the attempt to achieve this state is necessary -. to become conscious of the inner space, as he is aware the outer. If he endeavors the one and neglects the other, he will fall from his horse, and the balance is lost."<sup>656</sup>

### 2.3.7 Time Manifestation in Tobey's Art: the Unity of successive Time-Flow and simultaneous Duration

The element of time also plays in relation to the Calligraphic Influence in Tobey's works a certain role.

"Like poetry and music", Feininger says, "have his pictures the time element; they display their contents gradually. You have to approach them with an active imagination, read them and interpret their symbols..."<sup>657</sup>

A similar view testified Naum Gabo:

"Mark Tobey's art is nearer to the the music than that of anyone else in the field of Abstract Art. A musical composition can only be perceived and felt, by following the continuation of the basic pattern and the conducting rhythm of change, on which the whole work is build up. Equally one can feel the work of Mark Tobey completely only, when one grasps the basic motive and the rhythm of change in the waves, on which the whole structure is built .... The reason for this is, that the element of time is always present, and the flow and continuity of rhythm, both in design and in all colors, vies with musical composition."<sup>658</sup>

In these remarks of Feininger and Gabo there is some evidence for the occurrence of the time element in the work of Tobey, which can be discussed here only insofar, as it is linked to the effect of the Calligraphic impulse. The dealing with the time phenomenon in general and in art history is always be seen as extraordinarily difficult<sup>659</sup>, and also analyzed by different approaches.<sup>660</sup>

Gosztonyi emphasizes the need to distinguish two different kinds of time constraints:

"... That temporality that is to be captured in the image, and the time, which is perceived as a constitutive feature while looking at the image."<sup>661</sup>

He summarizes that as to the need, to distinguish between the time, that is necessary for the process of contemplation, so to speak, the external, measurable time, and the sense of that time, which is caused by the picture-inherent structure and organization as a sensation, so an experience of time in the viewer.<sup>662</sup>

A similar argument comes from Lorenz Dittmann, for whom especially rhythm, so moving and duration, are the aspects of time, whereby the ground is the bearer of the phenomenon duration, and the image objects and figures are the bearer of rhythm and movement. Dittmann mentions three levels in the relationship between art and time:

1. The historical time, which will be overcome,
2. the perception of time which is required to capture the whole and its parts, and
3. the time structures of motion- and rest-forms in the image.<sup>663</sup>

Dittmann modified this some time later and differs:

1. the historical time as assignment of historical data to artistic structures,
2. the represented time situation, and
3. the structure of the image "inherent temporality" with its own process of perception, which alone he calls "time figure".<sup>664</sup>

In connection with the Calligraphic effect on Tobey's work alone the "inherent temporality" in the painting is important, because all the historical aspects of Calligraphy, such as time-related style as an expression characteristic or personal styles and their historical and temporal changes, which the Chinese people were fully aware of, did for Western art play no role in the Calligraphy. So it is here mostly about the formal time structure and time appearance at Tobey, especially insofar as it is determined by Calligraphic elements. The diverse individual aspects of pictorial elements enumerated by Overmeyer<sup>665</sup>, which have to do with temporality, can be traced back to the two categories of movement and relation.

Tobey's works are through the Calligraphic Influence characterized by a picture inherent time sensation, which converts on one hand the movement of the Calligraphic line elements, their rhythms, turns, intersections and their space-plastic ductus in a variety of basic time sensation instants, which are stronger and more clearly, the stronger the separation of line elements is; on the other hand by the vibrations, which are also perceived as time form, the perception of time is greater, the longer the image structure vibrates and is in motion. However, the way this time feeling can certainly be very different, depending on the constitution of the spectator.

In many pictures of Tobey, especially those, in which the image space is very wide filled with the vibrating line-continuum and this tends to uniformity of vibration, so to speak, a constant frequency, an experience situation can occur, which changes the perception of temporality into the sense of duration or even a sense of timelessness, as elimination of all sense of time, and in which the viewer makes an experience of inner self-awareness, which, as in the landscapes or Calligraphy of Ch'an, transposes him into an experience state of reverie and immobility and therefore also timelessness, a timeless moment which corresponds with a sensation of eternity. At such a moment the man is in a placeless and timeless emptiness and unsuspecting openness towards all internal influences, in a state of oneness of self and the world, which the Chinese and Japanese Ch'an-Painting and -Calligraphie are searching. The image and its formal phenomenal appearance are present in this moment of experience in extreme actuality, this presence of the now- and such-being is the symbolic form, which as in East Asian Art sets off the experience of unity of the subject with the world and dissolves the separation of subject and object.

This experience of the abolition of perception of time and timeless - eternal - presence is in the Chinese Calligraphy then available, when it is applied in the manner of Ch'an-Art, is therefore even more relieved from the rational area of the general communication medium. The most important factor, which the Calligraphy has contributed in terms of the time-form and time experience in Western art, is the rhythmic sense of time, which is caused by the linear flow and the ductus of spatiotemporal surface presence, which manifests itself through continuous sequences, volatility, continuity and discontinuity, centering, comprehensive or directed movements, simple or complex structured movements, vibrations, separation or connection of elements and all characters, lightness or heaviness, static or dynamic appearance of the script or individual ductus. A more in-depth study can not be given here. It can be stated, however, that the time-related expressiveness of the dynamic Calligraphic rhythms is stronger, the more they come in Tobey's paintings individually to appearance. Generally Tobey's works fluctuate between moments of timelessness and duration, caused by the simultaneity of the uniform oscillations of the picture as a whole and strengthened by common grounds on the one hand, and time pulses that are perceived by the



succession of diverse, but sporadically perceived movement and rhythm sequences, i.e. between the current perception of time in succession and moments of timelessness and duration in the simultaneous sensation of the complete picture.

### 2.3.8 The Allover of Lines as Bearer of Light and the Use of Colour

The nature of light and color in Tobey's works in connection with the influence of Calligraphy shall be discussed here only briefly, because the color was by Tobey himself considered only as secondary, and the importance of light and color in the Chinese Calligraphy and also in the Painting was of minor importance.<sup>666</sup>

The light of Tobey's paintings is, in contrast to the illumination light of the illusionistic painting of all kind, a pictorial immanent light, which does not come from a fake light source inside and outside of the image, but at Tobey comes from two grounds or image areas: either from the brightly colored and often relatively uniform ground of the image, which evokes a kind of mood color and a kind of embracing lucid and transparent-looking room light, and which in many images causes the mood tenor, or as light effect of the linear Calligraphic elements, which especially as the "white writing" covers the whole picture surface with a shimmering and luminous fabric, which usually far exceeds the effect of light and lucidity of the ground (for example in "Untitled", "Awakening Night", "Illumined Way" and others). In most cases, the light effects of the lines and the ground are connected with the light, which the colors contain. Tobey has by this way succeeded "to create a world of finer substance"<sup>667</sup>, and to "penetrate" the linear image structure with a "spatial existence".<sup>668</sup>

The image light as an "own light" of the picture body and its formal elements was in the Middle Ages, such as Schöne has explained in detail<sup>669</sup>, is not like in the Impressionism the natural light of the phenomenal world of appearances, but similar to Turner, whose "lightcontainingness" Tobey admired; light as a symbol of the greatness and power of a superior force. Tobey's picture light is like in the Middle Ages the symbol of an all-pervasive and all-pervading primordial power, Tobey's picture light is just like in the Middle-Ages a symbol of an all-governing primordial force, the unity of the polar opposites, on which Tobey has pointed out at several occasions. The importance of the image light at Tobey for the appearance of his pictorial space and the dynamic structure has become sufficiently clear from the foregoing; oscillations and vibrations of the linear image structures form an inseparable unit with the light appearance of the white lines.

Light as a symbol of cosmic primordial power and the unity of opposites, which is called by Tobey "light as a unifying idea", goes back to an idea suggested by the Bahai faith, in which the light as an emanation of the Divine plays a role, which is a way of thinking, that goes back to the teachings of Zarathustra and even older Persian religions, which saw the light as a deity. Again, here have certainly contributed findings of the natural sciences known to Tobey. The connection of

these ideas with the philosophical views of East-Asia of the unity of nature and man, and the all-encompassing movement as elemental power and the formal attributes of the dynamic space-sculptural lines of the Calligraphy, which embodies this movement, have encouraged Tobey to a synthesis, which regards the white lines as a symbolic form of the powers of his dynamic universe. The light appearance of the white lines dissolves the objectivity and their form already in "Broadway" and others, and connected the individual elements to a vibrant, often transparent unit of "finer substance".

A possible involvement of Chinese Calligraphy, which is however not certain to prove, lies in the knowledge Tobey's of the large number of Calligraphic stone-rubbings and sample scripts, such as Fig. 59 by Wang Hsi-chih, in which the ratio of lines and ground is reversed, so that the ground is black and the Calligraphic lines are bright and lightcontaining and the lighting effect of the Calligraphic lines is considerable.

Just as in the Chinese Calligraphy the light modes at Tobey are characterized by a pronounced chiaroscuro contrast, which is based on the reciprocal relationship between line and ground of Calligraphy. The awareness in the handling of chiaroscuro effected by the Calligraphic Influence has at Tobey caused a greater transparency of the "White Writing" and slightly colored grounds, which the other light containing elements alternately support. The frequency of occurrence of bright lines to darker ground suggests, that the knowledge of the Chinese sample scripts (mostly stone rubbings) etc. in the same proportion of light script on a dark ground may also formally have had a triggering and intensifying influence, what the overall circumstances of the Calligraphic Influence also point out. Eleanor von Erdberg told the author, that in the knowledge of the "rubbings" by Tobey is to be seen a significant influencing factor of the Calligraphy.

Hereto may yet come, that the linear Calligraphic momentum causes a further strengthening of the lighting effect of the bright or white colors in the linear elements, which through the fragmented nature of the individual elements in conjunction with the movement dynamics of the lines causes an optical convergence of the individual phenomena and thus the vibrating lightcontainingness of the picture continuum. These formal possibilities intrinsic in the Calligraphic sample scripts, and their potential transfer to the "world of finer substance" in Tobey's imagery, makes a comparison of Fig. 59 (Wang Hsi-chih) and "Untitled" by Tobey (Fig. 38) significantly. The formal action of the Calligraphic impulse is here therefore mainly a strong intensification of the original lightcontainingness of the elements and of the complete picture, through the integration of the oscillating and vibrating single- and overall-movements of the Calligraphic lines, whereby an increase in the (visual) energy potential is taking place.

The color as chromatic value plays, as always emphasized by Tobey, a secondary role and he refers hereby to the same subordinate role in East Asia,

rather "for children" he calls it:

"Not the search for beautiful draughtsmanship or subtle color - perhaps no color -" is for Tobey important "but directness of the spirit will be a new point of view for us, as the arts in East and West grow together more closely."<sup>670</sup>

It resonates with the conviction, that color mainly touches the senses and the lower, undeveloped emotional experience possibilities of man, while for Tobey it concerns the highest degrees of consciousness, which includes the mind in all its forms, til the supernatural, and this is not to grasp through the color, but only through the much more subtle and more profound picture elements of the moving line and their liveliness and sensitivity. At the same time this remark of Tobey also makes the participation of East Asia in the formulation "directness of the spirit", which corresponds to the "Ch'i-yun" of the Chinese Calligraphy, clear.

### 2.3.9 Knowledge of Paragons and the Control of the artistic Means

The mastery of the pictorial means and the knowledge of paragons, which can convey the experience of the past, which in no way has become obsolete as a whole, but only in some aspects, has in the course of this investigation, particularly taking into account the views of the Chinese Aesthetics, been repeatedly addressed and need not to be repeated in more detail. It should be merely pointed out once again, that Tobey also argues in the same sense and regards the knowledge and experience of the paragons in no way as useless ballast, but on the contrary as the only viable basis for developing a personal style and expression vocabulary, quite in the sense of Chinese Aesthetics.

Only the experience hoard and based on them the developing of own pictorial language tools in conjunction with the absolute mastery of the pictorial means, as it is a matter of course for the Calligraphy, brings the freedom and ease of expression, which lets the living forces of the universal nature enter into the work, so that they "no longer stand in the way". This is the meaning of Tobey citing paragons:

"One can not be aware of the presence, if one denies the past. ... to work without any spiritual-artistic precondition, such an attempt is doomed to fail. Because if you do not have a paragon, ..., you cannot build a work. But today hardly anyone thinks of this any more. Everyone wants quickly to make big money, but not to use the time for training one's own form language. ... The

older we get, the more empty is the world, because it increasingly loses the substance of tradition. You can nowadays indeed draw what you want, but no one knows, whether this is good, because where is without the tradition a high standard?

... Nevertheless, there are far too many things, even or perhaps especially today, that we can not describe, can represent pictorially without presuppositions, which we rather are able to approach just on the way over the tradition, which we just so may be aware of."<sup>671</sup>

#### 2.4 The Painting "Untitled" (1954): Trial of an Interpretation

The painting "Untitled" from 1954, which is at the time (1985) located in Basel owned by the Galerie Beyeler (now a private property, 2015) is a – wrongly - little known image and so far hardly published, although it is in some way a paradigm for the creativity of Tobey, and also it particularly shows the Calligraphic Influence. Especially this work shows some peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of Tobey's art particularly clear and impressive, and elucidates the most important effects of the Calligraphic impulse forcefully.

The not particularly large image, which Tobey painted with tempera on cardboard makes at first sight a delicate and restrained impression, which is caused primarily by the moderate, brown beige to brown pink color of the image ground, with the dark, like an infinite depression in the space acting circle in the middle. This dark circle shape in the middle appears to the viewer as one of the most striking elements of the image and determines its overall character, as it dominates as a basic form the entire surface area. By the rectangular limited environment of the picture something like a unified universality is created, from whose center the vibrant linear elements of the image get into the appearance. The second important phenomenon in the picture is the large number of white or bright Calligraphic lines that all, especially more or less from the edge of the dark central circular shape out, are radiating outward like the rays of a sun, shooting out of the energy center outwards. But strangely enough results when viewing at once also a reverse effect: the radiation of the Calligraphic lines and character rows seem just running reverse from the outside towards the energetic center of the image, as if they were gravitated to it. In this case, the viewer's eye is often not able to distinguish, which motion dominates; both go alternately into each other, mingle, forming a new unit which let the view fluctuate back and forth, shows indecision, yet remains uniform as a whole. One feels immediately reminded at Lao-tzu, by whom it is stated, that "return is the movement of the Tao" (TTCh. 40).

The color of the image is restrained, almost tender, particularly by the muted, warm tint of brown-beige-pink-colored environment, whereas the dark, relatively

uniform color of the center circle remains neutral, and this impression neither hinders nor enhances the color in conjunction with the respective brightness or lighting effect of the area and linear elements, gives clear contrasts, but stays balanced. On the one hand there is a contrast of dark and light-colored center circle environment of the ground, which also in form is a contrast by its circular shape to the rectangular boundary of the image. In addition, there is a clear contrast between the smooth surfaces of the center circular shape, the bright environment and the white line elements, both by shape as well as by color and brightness differences.

The linear elements of the picture with no doubt go back to the Chinese Calligraphy; indeed predominates the lively-dynamic character of the Ts'ao-Shu in the expression effect of the Calligraphic line dance, but there also is no lack of characteristics of a symbolic-structural appearances, which are crucial to the character of K'ai-Shu. The linear elements in the style of Ts'ao-Shu seem clearly to hover at or above the light ground and the depth of the center circle form like in an indeterminable space, whereby especially the central circular shape causes the impression of a mysterious, unfathomable depression in a space of infinite, at least incomprehensible depth, whereby also the complete works receives an expression of mystery, which already by itself is almost set in connection with the secrets of the universe and the universal nature, which concerns Tobey always again.

Even between the dynamic, swinging, yes vibrating movement of Calligraphic lines, which seem to emanate from like a sun or a strong force field, and the calmness of the light ground with its gentle and tender, lucid color exists a pronounced and vitalizing contrast, as ever the antithesis of - complementary and not antagonistic elements - seems to determine the visual impact. Tobey could have referred here to Lao-tzu, who sees the unity of polar opposites Yin and Yang in the T'ai Chi (太極), the "Great polarity" united and effective.

Despite the importance of the formal - polar - antithesis for image composition and image statement, is the image strangely enough not inconsistent or imbalanced, but constantly maintains a strong tendency towards a uniformity of the formal image composition, as well as of the meaning and significance. This is not only caused through the, in a special way - even symbolically -, effective circularity of the central force field, but also by the continuous and dominating allover-oscillation of the Calligraphic line bundles, which overlay the picture as a whole, like the rays of a sun as a source of vibrating life and appearing like a transcendental lightfield.

The uniformity of contrasting, polar elements is supplemented by a further characteristic feature of Tobey's art, namely a steady tendency to harmony and balance. Nowhere occur abrupt or harsh contrasts that are incompatible, but all conflicting elements such as the Calligraphic force lines and the dark central circular shape, which looks like a magical power appearing out from the infinite depths of an universal space, or the ratio of lines to the surface-area carrying them ,

or the ratio of light and dark, etc., are always balanced and despite all the clarity of complementary opposites harmonious and balanced; here also manifests oneself again clearly the work of the East-Asian Aesthetics of Calligraphy, among whose basic features are the balance and harmony of the artistic forces. Just as Tobey here by the special emphasis and use of complementary forces leans to the Chinese Yin and Yang doctrine, which pervades all his work as well all other elements of the formal image construction, proves that he was heavily influenced by East Asian ideas, which reached him together with the Calligraphic impulse.

The picture has completely detached oneself from any traditional object form, yet, it is not just a purely abstract composition. The shapes of the image have primary-ontological character and are symbolic equivalents for Tobey's worldview; the variety of Calligraphic lines, that quite have a form - in terms of a movement-form or of a movement-course - as individual elements, as basic elements of a "world of finer substance", supported by the immanent "light as a unifying idea," which is its essential appearance feature, and the whole of the oscillating and vibrating, high-energy particles of Calligraphic lines, which are also to understand as primary-ontological symbolic forms of a permanently oscillating and vibrating universe, a universe of light, motion and energy fields. In addition then come as the all-embracing unchanging basic form on one hand the light colored and smooth ground, and the central circular form as a clear symbol of the active ground of the Tao of Chinese Philosophy, the divine emanation-ground of all life and movement, which are illustrated by the high-energy line elements emanating from the central active base, symbolically analogous in an immediate and most direct way. The movement and emanation of life, represented by the means of the Chinese Calligraphy, its space-sculptural lines and dynamic method of the three-dimensional brush movement in time, here peels itself out as a central theme.

The relation to the divine unity of the Bahai faith and the doctrine of the creative power of Tao in Chinese philosophy is clear here, in their visual implementation by the dynamic forces of the Calligraphic method obviously. Not only the "restless pulsation of today's cities" Tobey was so captured by the method of calligraphy, but different aspects and modes of pictorial dynamism and universal Lebens.

Balance and harmony of the work do not only lie in the swaying, which the viewer perceives between the appearance of the atmospheric surface area, the depth of the central force field and the vibrational field of the Calligraphic lines, but, possibly as referring back to the characterization of the movement of Tao by Lao-tzu as "returning", in the ratio of the emanation of Calligraphic ray forces from the central force field and in a - visually well perceptible - simultaneous return flow into this, as if a powerful vortex beams the energy back inward to where they came from, into the emptiness and the nothingness of the creative origin, which entails also "everything" in itself.

Tobey was able here to create a sensitive and yet clearly detectable optical balance between the emanation-movement and the suction-movement, which the

viewer can not lift even by great effort, so that, and this is one of the most intriguing effects of the image, the viewer's gaze constantly is kept in motion, never coming to rest, because he can never decide himself for one direction or force. Achieving this requires an extraordinary high sensitivity of the artist for the finest visual effects, which Tobey has not least received through the long training of the Calligraphic method of spatial movement of the brush, whose control addresses all senses and nerves, but which as well taught him extremely high sensitivity, aptness and coordination skills, one of the most outstanding effects of Calligraphic impulse in Tobey's painting and beyond in the Western Art.

The predominant structural characteristic of the image is again a balance of linear Allover and clear surface order of the ground, which also leads back to a balance of visual forces acting in the viewer, leading to a balance of attracting calmness and back pushing vibration, which would, if exaggerated, immediately reject every trial of visual proximity.

This balance attracts the viewer again and again, but lets him "never come to rest" as Tobey called it, so that the viewer is always held in expectant tension. Even the balanced space ratio endeavors that, through a relative equilibrium of atmospheric surface space, the infinite depth of the central circular force field and the spatial effects of linear Calligraphic radiation field, which unsettle the spatial setting of the gaze again. The main element is clearly the strong motion of the Calligraphic line elements, which is intensified by the light contained in them, which seems to come as from a distant, transcendent, real world.

Through this strong movement the universality of the movement becomes conscious to the viewer, and he is also referred to himself, as the movement takes, above all, place in himself, in his inside. Thereby the line for the viewer, despite the uniform vibration or oscillation of the image field, never loses the freedom of independence in relation to the painting surface.

The immateriell effect of the self-light of the image arises from a force immanent to the technology and methodology of Chinese Calligraphic brushwork, to be able to visually reinforce the original lighting effect of all elements by their energetic movement abilities. This results in the vibrating and unlimited space of the image for the viewer. Hereby he is attracted by an incomprehensible uncertainty, which curiously not only is focusing his perception on the visual experience, but also includes himself as perceiver, so also conditions an experience of presence or one's own existence. The image area is thereby a place in the room, which connects the pictorial space and the viewer's space, and so gives the viewer an even greater scope for his feelings. This liberty of sensations is that space "inside of man", from which Tobey speaks, when he says:

"The dimension that counts for the creative man, is the space he creates within himself. This inner space is closer to the infinite than the other" (Cat. Kestner-Gesellschaft, p. 31).

Here it is in the image of symbolic significance, that the Calligraphic line particles are hardly arranged within the central dark force field and almost run chaotic -symbol of the original pre-creating Tao as chaos, which is mentioned by the Tao-Te -Ching - and on the other hand on the brink of the central field, made clearly visible by reinforced pressing of the brush, suddenly find themselves in a radiating ranking and adopt an unambiguous order. The symbolic reference to his philosophical ideas is here clearly given, and just as clear is the considerable importance of Chinese Calligraphy as the pictorial means, which have enabled this sensitive painting of strength and movement.

This is the reason, why this little-known work should be seen as a paradigm, because it is a very good example for the peculiarity of Tobey's "Calligraphic" works, formulated by Eduard Trier: "the spatial moved image, caused by an infinite number of neutral or colored lines, as an expression of the universality seen by him."

## V. Summary and Conclusions

The influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy onto the Informel Painting of the West, as the previous investigations have shown, a section of intercultural relations between East-Asia and the West, and concerned the Informel Artists more or less intensely. This has let us deduce a distinction between the "General Informel" and the so-called "Calligraphic Informel", further let us differ between only "inspired" and "influenced" artists of the Calligraphic Informel, whereby to the "influenced" artists especially Tobey and Masson, but also Graves, are to be counted, from whom Mark Tobey showed the deepest Calligraphic Influence. The explanations showed, that the "informel" tendency in the sense, that an liberation from the classical rigor and a freer handling of the pictorial means up to a spontaneous, reducing brushwork and suggestive, more thrifty depiction was already since Turner effective, and almost always was accompanied by an influence of elements of East Asian art. The recent influence of Chinese Calligraphy itself thus represents the culmination of a long historical development, which concerns the interaction of two within the meaning of the Chinese Yin and Yang theory interrelated complementary forces of Western arthistory, actually immanent to all art forces: the antithesis of Classic and Romantic, which as Tobey recognized, pervades the whole art history, whereby the Informel Painting by referring to superordinate forces and the attempt to grasp these directly, immediately and spontaneously tended to the pole of the "romance" and the irrational. The carriers of this influence were primarily Mark Tobey and André Masson, who dealt intensively with the Calligraphy and had its procedures and methods internalized and integrated into their work, while the other artists, like Alcopley, Alechinsky, Bissier and others did not master them so intensive.

It was therefore to show, that the employment of these artists with the Chinese



Calligraphy and the pictorial possibilities of a very free and spontaneous and yet controlled expression lying in them, was less intense and led to a lower internalizing of their principles and pictorial possibilities, so that these artists can only be regarded as "inspired". The difference between these two groups is actually less absolute, but rather gradual, and concerns also the arthistorical significance of these artists and the nature and extent of the received and passed on visual impulses through the Calligraphy, which were most intense and far-reaching with Tobey and Masson.

The investigation revealed that the impact of an influence of East-Asian Art and aesthetics related both to formal and ideological and aesthetic aspects. It turned out, that a large part of those painters, who were counted by us to the "General Informel", had dealt with the Ch'an- or Zen-thinking of East-Asia and had received from it impulses for their work, especially the confirmation for the directness and spontaneity of artistic action, which led to the Action Painting, but also to the search for calmness and a deep meditative attitude and a picturesque meditation. Here, however, was merely an ideological aesthetic attitude at work, which still did not include in any way developed artistic means. These were introduced only by the consistent employment and appropriation of artistic methods of the Chinese Calligraphy (and Painting), which brought about the formal pictorial innovations in Western art (see Section IV.2).

Both influencing factors, ideological-aesthetical and formal, were most deeply integrated in the works of Tobey. Tobey's invention, the technique of the "White Writing", is the most immediate and far-reaching formal and technical effect of the Calligraphic impulse, which enabled him through this means of a linear painting of movement to express his dynamic worldview, the looked universality and the great similarities between the humans, and express the "overcoming of the materialistic narrowness" and the "commitment to move in an infinite space" (Trier), to explore the inner worlds of people and express the equivalence of all being and the movement of this being as a complex basis of all existence, which has its meaning in the multiplicity of the unity.

The "White Writing", based on the medium of the Calligraphic lines and their liveliness, also enabled him to capture and display the noise and rhythm of great world cities, as well as his conception of a dynamic, harmonious, living universe of moving complementary forces, which also determine the human being. Tobey's art elucidates this with visual means, based on the formal properties of the Calligraphy, an attitude, which wants to be related transcendental, be unifying and universal. The dynamism of his rhythmically swinging "Allover", the image structures and the "Moving Focus" are symbolic representations of an ever-changing world of motion, in which nothing can be kept fixed. His art is an expression and a means of conquest and exploration of the inner spiritual world and stresses the need for a meditative and harmonious attitude towards the world, whereby the formal means of the living Calligraphic line can express both

attributes - movement and stillness.

The basis of this thinking Tobey received, except by the Bahai faith, especially through contact and involvement with the Chinese Philosophy of Taoism and Zen-thoughts, which had also inspired other artists, but without that the Calligraphic impulse participated formally, what therefore at Rothko and Reinhardt led to very different artistic results. This thinking gave Tobey, Masson and others a deeper understanding of the world as a holistic being, for the equivalence of all that exists and the possibility of the expression of the all underlying acting unity in diversity in their art, which is particularly noticeable at Tobey.

Furthermore, they then recognized, wherefor the Calligraphic method of the living, space-sculptural lines served them as an equivalent means of expression, the movement of all that exists as a fundamental principle of being, and the constant change of all things and phenomena, and the need for the man and his art, to accept this movement and the change, to move along and to accept the world as energy, vibration and change. Unlike at Tobey, with whom the unity and harmony, balance and moderate middle dominate as targets and formal aesthetic principles of his thought and his art, we find at Masson an overemphasis of the movement with respect to these aspects, as well as the principle of artistic metamorphosis as a supporting formal and aesthetic principle. The Calligraphy is for both the only developed artistic medium, which was essentially appropriate to support these new concepts of dynamic ideological and visual thinking, and which by the means of the living, moving and seismographic-sensitive space-plastic line was able to express the impulses of the unconscious, whereto after the knowledge of both of them the resources of Western art, as they were prevalent since the Renaissance, namely the perspective space and the firmly fixed object in it, so the illusionist, imitating depiction of an external, statically conceived and represented reality, were unable.

The use of the Calligraphic space-plastical line and the painting of the movement and change carried by it, reformed also the art of other painters, like those of Alechinsky, Bissier, Graves and others; however, the Calligraphic method has not been mastered and applied by them in a same extent and in a comparable intensity. Only Tobey has learned and internalized the specific technique of the "rising and lowering" and the "twisting and turning" of Chinese Calligraphy for a long time. At Masson this mastery of the typical space-plastical ductus of the Calligraphy is less intense, since he had its techniques and methods not as intense practiced and internalized; yet we find at him a certain mastery of at least the basic technique of raising and lowering of the brush so the three-dimensional movement of the brush in successive temporal sequence.

In contrast to Tobey, to whom the color and chromatic relationships meant little, and applied them therefore only cautious, in a delicate and transparent manner, the color at Masson because of his impulsive and emotionally character is connected stronger with the use of the vivid Calligraphic line. At Tobey, however,

especially dominates the moment of linear movement over the problems of color. The mastering of the Calligraphic brush technique and the typical space-sculptural ductus is lower at the other, only "inspired" artists, than at Tobey and Masson, although with all, due to a differently long and intense dealing with this medium, a knowledge and application can be found in their works, and their works have a preferred linear-dynamic momentum, which at Mathieu mainly is reflected in the gestural movement and in his emphasis on speed, at Bissier more in the style of delicate, areal symbolic forms in the style of the Ch'an-Painting, at Graves, however more like symbols of a mystical worldview, symbols of light phenomena of a supernatural world (see chapter II.3).

The result is therefore very clear, that especially Tobey and Masson must be seen as the main representatives of the Calligraphic Influence. The Chinese Worldview and Philosophy overall was the philosophical base and worked both through themselves and without the Calligraphic impulse, as well as over the aesthetic principles of Calligraphy and Painting. The most important formal feature of the Calligraphic impulse is the preferred use of the living space-plastical line of the Calligraphy as a pictorial medium, whereby especially the dynamic qualities of the ductus, thus the "raising and lowering" and "twisting and turninger" or three-dimensional movement of the brush tip in time contributed to the movement painting.

The seismographic sensitivity of the Calligraphic -living- line and the spontaneity and immediacy of detecting and expression of the essential carried by it, called Ch'i-yun by the Chinese, which is worn and caused by an internalized technical and methodological mastery all creative possibilities of brush and ink and acquired through long practice, joins with what has been recognized and applied by artists like Tobey, Masson and others, the "One-Line"-Principle of Calligraphy and Painting, the creative basic principle of East-Asian ink art, which – through the internalizing and mastery of all possibilities – gave the simple brush movement and the resulting line the ability to be accurately and comprehensively, spontaneously and precisely, to be graphically and picturesque, and to express in a single movement directly the envision and nature and essential of all things and to reproduce them reliably, whereby the means are only used as sparingly as possible, yet appropriately and comprehensively.

The "One-Line"-Principle effected also the ability to build up the superordinate, all-embracing, complex from the simplest elements, in particular through the Calligraphic basic stroke, by multiplying and variation, a method whose continuous effectiveness and validity has also been increasingly recognized by the modern science as a fundamental principle of creation and construction of the whole universe.

Tobey and almost at the same time Masson were thus enabled to invent one of their most important formal innovations, namely the "Allover" structure of the pictorial composition and the "moving focus", which both are significantly

supported by the dynamic attributes of the vibrant Calligraphic line and its space-plastic ductus. The "linear infinite oscillation space" of the new image at Tobey and Masson has been considerably made possible through the dynamic qualities of the Calligraphic line, and could only, in cooperation with the structural "Allover" serve as a symbolic intuition-form for the movement and dynamism of a world of permanent change, recognized by Tobey and Masson.

Both, but particularly Tobey, also received through the study of the Chinese Worldview itself as well as over the aesthetic principles of East-Asian Calligraphy and painting an acknowledgment of their search for unity of opposites and polarities, which particularly at Tobey plays a role, as well as of the search for a balance of artistic forces of chance and artistic direction and control, an essential characteristic of East-Asian Art. Herein lies one of the main differences to the General Informel, which emphasized the chance and the linear automatism much more, as the by the Calligraphy influenced artists, who were more sensitized for balance. So the Calligraphic Influence caused not only the provision of new dynamic means, but as far as the Calligraphic method was learned intensely, also a harmonization and a balance of opposing pictorial forces, so a balance of spontaneously-automatic and guiding forces. The basic attitude of "non-intervention", which was associated with it, effected also the openness to all artistic impulses.

The main effect of the Calligraphic impulse can therefore, especially in contrast to the methods and practices of the artists of the General Informel, be seen in the exercise and an increase of the creative expression potential by internalized mastery of all formal possibilities of brush technique, and in the adaptation and conformity of the basic technical principles with the universal nature, whereby a lifting of their antagonistic opposition and a lifting of the antithesis of the militant nature, which dominated the Western Painting, and an overcoming of the fierce confrontation with the pictorial means and possibilities is effected simultaneously. Thereby the meditative attitude of the East-Asian Aesthetics had a significant share, which over the balance and harmony immanent to the Calligraphic method was particularly effective.

While the formal innovations of the "new form", which replaced the traditional static image form through the dynamic, vibrant and swinging "form" of the entire image area, as well as the structural "Allover" and the "moving focus" so far mostly were attributed Jackson Pollock, the investigations of this work have shown, that these actually had been invented by Mark Tobey André Masson, whereby the methods of the Chinese Calligraphy on one hand participated as a triggering and formal bearing media, and that on the other hand. through the influence of Tobey and Masson on him, only after that were taken up and further developed by Pollock. This therefore led to a revision of Pollock's importance in the development and dissemination of these new artistic methods. This is another not insignificant consequence of the Calligraphic Influence (see p. 80 - 86).

Finally, it should be pointed out, that in the course of the investigation of the opposition between "line" and "brush" at Tobey, indicated repeatedly by William C.Seitz<sup>672</sup>, which coincides approximately with the ratio of "graphic" and "picturesque" lines, in most works of Tobey resolved to the effect, that both attributes are dissolved in the, by Seitz not clearly formulated, dynamic space-sculptural qualities of the "living" Calligraphic line, in a synthesis, which constitutes the richness of Tobey's pictorial diversity of a single basic element - the elementary Calligraphic line (the Liang-Tso-line) - from whose transformation potential Tobey built up his imagery of universal diversity and beauty after the One-Line-Principle of Shih-T'ao, a principle which was also used by Masson.

The investigation thus shows that, without diminishing the importance of the independent Western development factors, the influence of Chinese Calligraphy on the Western Painting from about 1922 – 1960 has contributed significantly to the formation and development of peculiarities of the Informel Painting and has supported partly caused various formal and general aesthetic aspects and has overall had an impact in the following general aspects:

1. In the reinforcement of an intuitive-irrational and more linear-dynamic art over the logical-rational bodily-static and/or illusionist-realistic and representational-symbolic art of European modern time and the Concrete or Geometric Abstraction, thus in opposite to the classical tradition of Western Art.
2. In the further liberation from a serving function and to the development of the intrinsic value of pictorial means and exploiting of their expressive potential, especially that of the gesture and the resulting line as its movement and expression trace, and in the thereby resulting continuous total detachment from the illusionistic Realism or Symbolism of different kinds.
3. In the reception, development and integration of the Chinese Calligraphic technique of twisting and turning and raising and lowering of the brushtip, so the transposition of a three-dimensional brush movement in a time course into the surface-area as a previously not used creative means, and, thereby in the enlargement of the artistic potential through a part of existing and developed East-Asian expression assets, as well as in the accompanying enlargement and expansion of pictorial skills in general, resulting from the mastery and internalization of the Calligraphic method in all related pictorial means and possibilities.
4. This was associated with an increase in the tendency away from the imitation of reality towards the invention of an arbitrary pictorial reality.

5. The overcoming and exceeding of the limit, of the separation of art and life in the artistic action as an artistic pursuit of life and as its reflection in the gestural expression of the work, as a symbolic intuition-form of the artist's inner world and the ideas from the outside world and their relationships.

6. The emergence of features and elements of a more universal and cross-cultural, general-human art, which has been realized especially in the works of Tobey in a paradigmatic way, and which express the unity of mankind, its spirit and its culture.

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This context indicate both the image of a work by Cozens, as well as explanatory notes at: Werner Hofmann, Grundlagen, 1966., Pic. 10, (after: Alexander Cozens, A New Method of Assisting the Invention in Drawing, Original Composition of Landscape, London 1785) , which has a very close resemblance to works of spontaneous Chinese ink painting and shows an equivalent application of Chinese method of "Fei-Pai" ( ) ("overflowed White"). This section shown could be interpreted without the explanatory indication of origin as a section of a Chinese image.
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  48. Sun Kuo-t'ing (孫過庭) around 687 AD, Shu-P'u.(書譜), Treatise on the art of writing, detail, National Palace Museum, Taipei
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- Tokenkai-Federation, Tokyo
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  62. André Masson, Birth of Birds, 1925, Automatic Drawing, 16 1/2 x 12 3/8 ", Museum of Modern Art, New York
  63. André Masson, Illustration of Chuang-tzu, Sur le vif, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (title page)
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  65. André Masson, Multiplication, 1943, Ink on paper, 10 5/8 x 8 1/4 ", owned by the artist, Paris
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  68. André Masson, Selfprotrait 1944, oil on canvas, mounted on cardboard, 13 1/2 x 9 3/8", owned by the Artist, Paris
  69. André Masson, Bison on the Brink of a Chasm, 1944, Ink Painting with brush, 31 1/4 x 22 5/8 ", Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
  70. André Masson, Haystack, 1946 Chinese Ink, 23 x 18 1/8 ", Collection Amnick and Pierre Berés, Paris
  71. Wang Hsi-chih ( 王羲之 )(321-379) attributed to, Lan t'ing-hsü ( 蘭亭序 ) (Preface to the Cleaning Ceremony at the Orchid Pavillion), detail
  73. André Masson, The Kill, 1944, Oil on canvas, 21 3/4 x 26 3/4", Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of the artist
  74. André Masson, Couple, Oil on canvas, 1958, 110x140 cm, Musee National d'Art Moderne, Paris
  75. André Masson, Orage, 1951, mixed media, 65x50 cm
  76. André Masson, The Abbyss, 1955, Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 28 3/4", Collection

- Arturo Schwarz, Milano
77. Huai Ssu ( 怀素 ), Autobiographical Essay, Detail, (see also Fig. 24+57+66)
  78. André Masson, Poursuite d'automne, 1962, Oil on canvas, 55x58 cm, Studio C 2, Rom
  79. Li Tung-yang ( 李东阳 ), (1447-1516), Autobiographical Essay, Detail, National Palace Museum, Taipei
  81. André Masson, L'homme qui regarde, 1959, Oil, 38x46 cm
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  96. Mi Fu ( 米芾 ), Han-wen chung-kung shih No.9, National Palace Museum, Taipei
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  98. André Masson, Acteurs Chinois / Chinese actors, 1955, colour etching, 57x76 cm, Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris
  99. André Masson, Venice, 1965, mixed media, 49x32,5 cm
  100. Unknown Calligrapher, Fragment of the poem collection Ishiyama-gire, traditionally attributed to Fujiwara Sadanobu, (1088-1156?), (Heian Period), Collection Domoto Shiro, Kyoto
  101. André Masson, Suppliante, 1957, Lavis/Ink, 91,5x55,5 cm, Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris
  102. Calligraphy Template after Wang Hsi-chih

103. André Masson, Nocturnal City, Oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 31 7/8 ", Saidenberg Gallery, New York
104. André Masson, Migration III, 1957, Oil on canvas, Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris
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116. Mark Tobey, Broadway, 1936, Tempera, 66x48,9 cm, Museum of Modern Art New York
117. Julius Bissier, Ink Composition, 1955
118. Mark Tobey, Within itself, 1959, Tempera, 20,3 x28,8 cm, owned by the artist
119. L. Alcopley, Collage-Painting, 1954
120. Mark Tobey, Forms follow Man, 1941, Tempera, 14 1/4 x 20 1/2", Seattle Art Museum
121. Mark Tobey, World, Tempera, Ø 30 cm, Collection MarianWillard Johnson, New York
122. Mark Tobey, There was a door, for which I found no key, Aquatinta, 1971, 14,2x16,6 cm, Editions de Beauclair, Frankfurt
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137. Sun Kuo-t'ing (孫過庭). Page from the stone rubbing edition of the Ch' ien-tzu-wen (千字文) from the Yü-ch'ing fa chai fa-t'ieh, after the edition of the publisher Seiga-do, Tokyo
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148. Kaiser Go-Mizunoo, Japan (後水尾天皇), Yudasaki-on-kaishi. 1648, Edo-Time Hyogo, Collection Yamamoto Kiyoo
149. Mark Tobey, Blossoming, 1970, Aquatinta, Detail, Editions de Beauclair, Frankfurt
150. Mark Tobey, On a Holy Day, 1970, Aquatinta, 32x24,2 cm, (Detail) Editions de Beauclair, Frankfurt
151. Mark Tobey, Electric Dimensions, 1960 (Detail), Tempera, 24,5x17 cm, Galerie Beyeler, Basel
154. Mark Tobey, Underneath the moments, 1970, Tempera, 100x70,4 cm, Collection Dr. Jacques Koerfer, Bern
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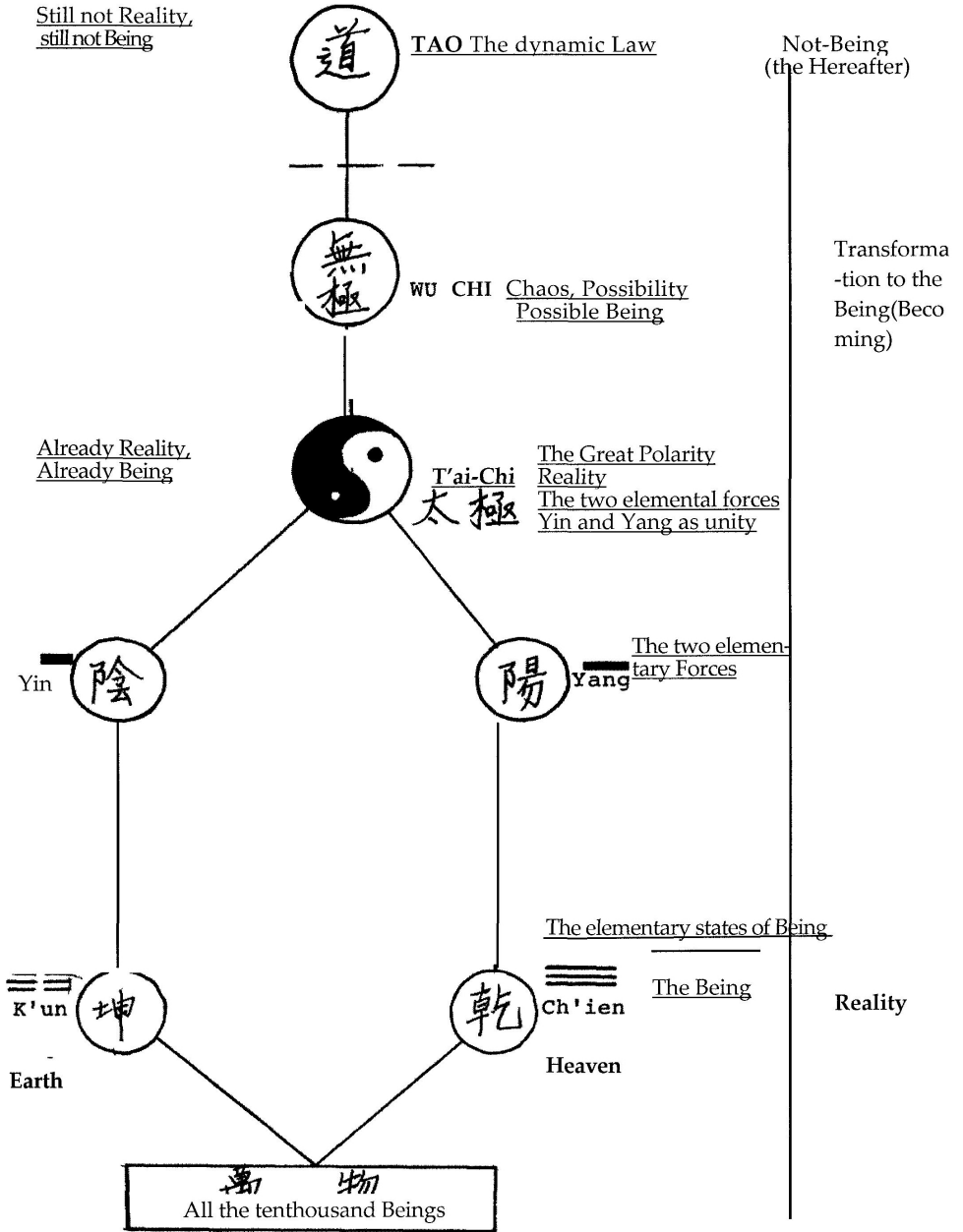
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Appendix 1

The Being-System of the I-Ching and the Tao-Te-Ching





## Appendix 2

### Additional Literature on Informel / Abstract Expressionism after 1985

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Baus, Christine  
Bayl, Friedrich  
Belgin, Tayfun (Hrsg.)  
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Appendix 3Chinese Names and Words

<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Pinyin</u> (Wade Giles)	<u>English</u>
本	ben	root, classifier
禪	Ch'an	Ch'an-Buddhism
車 or 车	ch'e	wagon, car
沈靜	ch'en-ching	deep calm
沈着痛快	ch'en cho t'ung k'uai	from the concentration freely out
氣	ch'i	spirit
越止	ch'i chih	touch down
起伏	ch'i fu	up and down
氣候	ch'i hou	atmosphere
擧	ch'ien	pull out, drawing
千字文	Ch'ien-tzu-wen	1000 Word Classics
氣韻	ch'i-yun	spirit of life
氣韻生動	ch'i-yun shen-tung	spiritual resonance
曲	ch'ü	crooked
戰國時代	Chan-kuo shih-tai	The Warring States Period 475-221BC
張卽之	Chang Chi-chih	Painter / Calligraph 1186 - 1263
张怀瓘	Chang Huai-kuan	Painter/Aesthetician 8.Cent. (T'ang)
张龍廷	Chang Lung-t'ing	Art Historian, Taiwan, presence
張龍文	Chang Lung-wen	Art Historian, Taiwan, presence
張大千	Chang Ta-ch'ien	Chinese Painter, 1899 - 1983
张彦远	Chang Yen-yuan	Painter / Calligraph 815- ca. 877
趙希鵠	Chao Hsi-ku	Painter / Aesthetician ca. 1190-1230
趙孟頫	Chao Meng-fu	Painter / Calligraph 1254 - 1322
浙江人民出版社	Chekiang Ren-min	Chekiang People's Publishing Co.
	Ch'u-pan-she	
真書	chen shu	Chin. Calligraphy, Regular Script
正楷	cheng k'ai	Chin. Calligraphy, Regular Script
正筆	cheng pi	Chin. Calligraphy, Regular Script
正書	cheng-shu	Chin. Calligraphy, Regular Script
姜夔	Chiang K'uei	Chin. Painter 1155 – ca. 1221
節如隸書	chieh ru li-shu	trunk portions like the Li-Shu-Style
芥舟学画編	Chieh-chou hsue-hua-p'ien	Textbook on Calligraphy 九如堂, 1879
芥子園畫傳	Chieh-tzu-yuan	Paintings fr. the Mustard Seed Garden
芥子園畫傳	Chieh-tzu-yuan   hua-	Textbook on Paintings from the Mustard
	chuan	Seed Garden
簡易	chien-i	simple / easy
紙	chih	paper

執	chih	hold
之	Chih	Genitiv particle
筋法	Chin-fa	Tendon method
勁	ching	upright
精	ching	familiarity
井	ching	fountain, spring
荊浩	Ching Hao	Ching-Hao, painter / theorist 855-915
經營位置	ching-ying wei-tzu	harmonious painting composition
周朝	Chou Ch'ao	Chou-Dynasty 1122 – 256 BC
朱駿聲	Chu Ling-sheng	Chin. Art-Historian
朱耷	Chu Ta	= Pa Ta Shan Ren, Painter, 1625 – 1705
轉	chuan	turning
莊申	Chuang Shen	Chin. Art-Historian
莊子	Chuang Tzu	Taoistic Philosopher 365 – 290 BC
莊萬壽	Chuang Wan-shou	Chinese Author (Philosophy)
莊子讀本	Chuang-tzu tu-pen	Reading Book on Chuang-tzu
篆書	Chuan-shu	Seal Script
中国書論集	Chugoku-sho ronshu	Treatise on Chinese Calligraphy (jap.)
中	chung	middle, center
中國畫史研究	Chung guo Hua Shih yen- chiu	Research work on Chinese Painting
中国历代名画集	Chung Kuo Li Tai Ming Hua Chi	Famous Chinese Painters of all Times Peking 1964, Chinese
中國美術史	Chung Kuo MeishuShih	History of Chinese Art, book
中庸	Chung Yung	Doctrine of the Mean, Confucian Text
中鋒	chung-feng	centered brush tip
中華藝術史剛	Chung-hua i-shu shih-k'ang	Treatise on Chinese Art History
中國哲學史	Chung-kuo chih-hsue-shih	History of Chinese Philosophy
中國繪畫史	Chung-kuo hui-hua-shih	History of Chinese Painting
中國古代書法藝術	Chung-kuo ku-tai shu-fa i-shu	History of Ancient Chinese Calligraphy
中国書法簡論	Chung-kuo shu-fa chien-lun	Treatise on Chinese Calligraphy
中國書法欣裳	Chung-kuo shu-fa shin-shang	Treatise on Chinese Calligraphy
中國書法史	Chung-kuo shu-fa-shih	History of Chinese Calligraphy
中國書譜	Chung-Kuo Shu-P'u	Collection of Chinese Calligraphy, ancient
出土文物二三事	Ch'u-t'u wen-wu erh- san-shih	Diverse Chinese Archeological Findings
法书考	Fa shu k'ao	Antique Book on Calligraphy
方	fang	direction, side
非	fei	flow
飛白	fei-pai	Flownover White (Call. Technique)
馮振凱	Feng Cheng-k'ai	Chinese Arthistorian
豐坊	Feng Fang	Chinese Arthistorian



峯杪	feng miao	with the entire brush (tip)
馮友蘭	Feng You-lan	Chinese Philosopher, 1895 - 1990
鳳翅鉤	feng-chi-kou	phoenix-wing hook stroke
拂	fu	whisk
傅偉勳	Fu Wei-hsun	Chinese Arthistorian
後水尾天皇	Go-Mizunoo	Japanese Emperor, 1596 - 1680
漢朝	Han Ch'ao	Han-Dynasty, 206 BC - 220 AD
韓拙	Han Cho	Chinese Painter & Critic a. 1121 AD
韓非	Han Fei Tzu	Chinese Philosopher, 280 - 233 BC
橫	heng	horizontal
平仮名/ひらがな	Hiragana	Japanese Syllable Script
和	ho	harmony
何政廣	Ho Cheng-kuang	Chinese Arthistorian
何恭上	Ho Kung-shang	Chinese Arthistorian
像外	hsiang wai	beyond the picture
小篆	Hsiao chuan	Small Seal Script
謝赫	Hsieh-Ho	Chinese painter and critic, 6th Cent. AD
謝赫六法	Hsieh-ho liu-fa	Six Principles of Hsieh-ho
寫意	hsieh-i	transcription of ideas
西方哲學史	Hsi-fang chih-hsue-shih	History of Western Philosophy
心	hsin	heart
心之跡	hsin chih chi	trace of the heart (mind)
心手會歸	hsin shou hui kuei	correspondence of heart and hand
心契	hsin-ch'i	spiritually in correspondence
行筆要快	hsing pi yao k'u'ai	the brush must be quickly
行書	Hsing-Shu	Running Script
形俗之外	Hsing-ssu chih-wai	beyond the (mere) form similarity
心手相應	hsin-shou hsiang-ying	Heart and hand are in correspondence
徐鉉	Hsu Hsüan	Chinese Painter, 916 - 991
徐邦達	Hsu Pang-ta	Chinese Arthistorian
許慎	Hsu Shen (Hsüan)	Chinese Painter, 58 - 147
續書譜	Hsu Shu P'u	Compendium of Calligraphy (ancient)
徐渭	Hsu Wei	Chinese Painter, 1521-1593
宣和畫譜	Hsuan-ho hua-p'u	Compendium of Painting (Sung-Dyn.)
宣和書譜	Hsuan-ho shu-p'u	Compendium of Calligraphy (Sung-Dyn.)
血脉	hsue mo	blood vessels (in painting)
迅速	hsun-su	speedy
畫法要錄	Hua-fa yao-lu	Compendium of Painting by Yu Shao-sung
懷素	Huai-Ssu	Monk and Calligrapher 737 - 799
還轉	huan chuan	twist and turn of the brush
黃姬水	Huang Chi-shui	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher

黃庭堅	Huang T'ing-chien	Chinese Painter & Calligraph 1045-1105
黃帝	Huang-Ti	The Yellow Emperor (2nd Mill.BC)
畫史	hua-shih	history of painting
會美	hui mei	understanding of beauty
徽宗	Hui Tsung	Chinese Emperor, 1082 - 1135
繪 畫 六 法	hui-hua liu-fa	Six Principles of Painting
藝 術	i shu	art
意在筆先	i tsai pi hsien	concept before brush
易 經	i-ching	Book of Changes
一 劃	i-hua	one stroke, one line
石 山 切	Ishiyama-gire	Book from Fujiwara no Sadanobu 1088 - 1151 (japan.)
藝 文 印 書 館	i-wen yin-shu-kuan	Book by Hsun Yue 148 - 209
揚 仰	i-yang	with falling and rising cadence (brush)
楷 書	K'ai-shu	Regular / Standard Script
狂 草	K'uang-ts'ao	Erratic Concept Script (Huai Ssu)
孔子學說	k'ung-tzu hsue-shuo	The Teachings of Confucius
孔子學說對世 界之影響	K'ung-tzu hsue-shuo tui shihchieh chihyinhxiang	The teachings of Confucius and its influence on the world, Book, Taiwan 1980
幹 如 篆 書	Kan ru chuan-shu	The stem is like Chuan-Shu-Calligr.
漢 字	Kanji (Han-tzu)	Chinese Characters in Japanese
鉤	kou	hook
勺	kou	hook , Chinese Radical Sign
骨 氣	ku ch'i	structural vitality
空 海	Ku Kai	Japanese Monk, Calligraph, 774 - 835
古 書 畫 鑑 定 概 論	Ku shu-hua chien-ting kai-lun	Book on Ancient Chinese Calligraphy
骨 法 用 筆	ku-fa yung-pi	bone method
骨 法 肉 法 筋 法	Ku-fa,Rou-fa, Chin-fa	Bone-, meat-, tendon-method
古 畫 品 錄	ku-hua p'in-lu	Book on Painting/Calligr. by Hsieh Ho
故 宮 歷 代 法 書 全 集	Kukung litai fashu ch'uan -chi	Calligraphy Book, National Palace Museum Taipei
骨 力	ku-li	brush force
功 / 工	Kung / kung	work, labour
郭 熙	Kuo Hsi	Chinese Painter and Critic, 1020-1090
郭 熙 林 泉 高 致	Kuo Hsi Lin Ch'üan Kao chih	The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams
郭 若 虛	Kuo Jo-hsü	Chinese Painter and Critic, 1075
郭 沫 若	Kuo Mo-jou	Chinese Archaeologist, 1892 - 1978
國 立 故 宮 博 物 院	Kuo-li Kun-kung Po-wu-yuan	National Palace Museum Taipei
蘭 亭 序	Lan T'ing-hsü	Prologue to the meeting at the Orchid Pavilion, by Wang His-chih
老 莊 哲 學	Lao Chuang chih-hsue	The Philosophy of Lao-tzu & Chuang-tzu
老 子	Lao-tzu	Chinese Philosopher, died 531 BC
老 子 道 德 經	Lao-tzu Tao-te-ching	The Tao Te Ching of Lao-tzu

理	li	reason, truth
力	li	power, energy
隸書	Li Shu	Book of Rites
李东阳	Li Tung-yang	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1447-1516
梁楷	Liang K'ai	Chinese Painter, 1140 - ca.1210
棕	Liang-tso	Liang-Tso-Stroke / Line
	Liang-Tso	Liang-Tso-Stroke / Line, sample
列子讀本	Lieh-tzu tu-pen	Reading book on Lie-tzu
連	lien	
靈氣	ling ch'i	spiritual forces
歷代名畫記	Li-tai ming-hua-chi	Famous Paintings through History
留	liu	connect, in succession
劉勰	Liu Hsieh	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 466 - 522
六書	liu shu	Six character categories
六要	liu yao	Six Inevitables
六法	liu-fa	Six Principles
流行	liu-hsing	run in a liquid way
馬叙倫	Ma Hsü-lun	Chinese Arthistorian, 1884-1970
毛筆	mao pi	brush
美術叢書	Meishu Tsung-shu	Compendium on Chinese Art
孟子	Meng Tzu	Chinese Philosopher, 370 - 290 BC
米	mi	rice
米芾	Mi Fu	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher 1051-1107
米芾選	Mi Fu Hsüan	Selection from Mi Fu's Works
米漢雯	Mi Han-wen	Chinese Calligrapher, Ch'ing-Dynasty
明清法書	Ming-Ch'ing fa-shu	Compendium on Calligraphy fr. Ming & Ch'ing Dynasty
墨	mo	ink
墨有五彩	mo you wu ts'ai	the ink has all five colours
模寫	mo-hsieh	ink writing
木	mu	tree, wood
牧溪法常	Mu Ch'i Fa-ch'ang	Chinese Monk & Painter, 1210?-1269?
捺	na	na-stroke
乃	nai	therefore, so
中田勇次郎	Nakata Yujiro	Japanese Arthistorian (Calligraphy)
倪瓚	Ni Tsan	Chinese Painter, 1301 - 1374
衄挫	niu ts'o	bending and turning over
の	no	Japanese Genitiv-Particle (hiragana)
盤行	p'an hsing	spiral thither running
潘伯英	P'an Po-ying	Chinese Arthistorian
撇	p'ieh	p'ieh-stroke
平直	p'ing chih	balanced straightness

八卦	pa kua	8 Trigrams of I-Ching
八大山人	Pa Ta Shan Ren	Chinese Painter (Chu Ta), 1625 – 1705
包世臣	Pao Shih-ch'en	Chinese Painter & Critic, 1775 - 1855
筆中藏鋒	pi chung ts'ang feng	tip is secured the brushstroke
筆法記	Pi-fa-chi	Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush, 855 - 915
筆力	pi-li	brush force
筆墨相生	pi-mo hsiang-sheng	brushwork and ink complement each other
平和	p'ing-ho	balance
筆勢	pi-shih	Brush force
刃	ren	knife
人民美術出版社	Renmin mei-shu ch'upanshe	Chinese Artbook Publisher
肉法	rou fa	meat method
入木三分	ru mu san fen	penetrate three tenths into the wood
三希堂	San hsi t'ang	Compendium on Arthistory
悟り	Satori	Enlightenment
仙厓義梵	Sengai Gibon	Japanese Monk & Painter, 1750 - 1837
雪舟等楊	Sesshu Toyo	Japanese Zen-Painter, 1420 - 1506
山谷題跋	Shan ku t'i pa	By Huang T'ing-chien
山水畫論	Shan shui hua lun	Treatise of Chinese Landscape Painting
商朝	Shang Ch'ao	Shang-Dynasty 18. – 11.Cent. BC
神明	shen ming	spiritual understanding
沈宗騫	Shen Tsung-ch'ien	Chinese Painter & Critic, 1736-1820
昇	sheng	rise, ascend
盛熙明	Sheng Hsi-ming	Chinese Arthistorian
勢	shih	power, force
使	shih	apply, envoy
史正中	Shih Cheng-chung	Chinese Arthistorian
似人而非	shih ren erh fei	like a human being, but is it not yet
石濤	Shih T'ao	Chinese Painter & Critic, 1641 - 1707
史可法	Shih-K'ao Fa	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1601 - 1645
新中國書道史	Shin Chugoku shodo-shi	Japan. book on Chinese Calligraphy
書道講座	Shodo koza	Treatise on Calligraphy, japanese
書道全集	Shodo-zenshu	Compendium on Calligraphy, japan.
熟	shu	proficiency
書訣	Shu chueh	Treatise on Call. by Feng Fang (豐坊)
書譜	Shu P'u	Treatise on Calligraphy, Sun Kuo-t'ing
雙鉤法	shuang kou fa	two-finger attitude
書法	shu-fa	Calligraphy
書法入門	Shu-fa ru men	Treatise on Calligraphy
書畫書錄解題	Shu-hua shu-lu chieh-t' i	Treatise on Calligraphy & Painting
書議	shu-i	Treatise on Calligraphy, Chang Huai-kuan

說文解字	Shuo-wen chieh-tzu	Ancient Treatise , „Explaining Signs and Analyzing Characters“, Han/Sung-Dynasty
說文通訓定聲	Shuo-wen t'ung-hsün ting- sheng	Treatise by Meng Kang, 220 - 254
書斷	Shu-tuan	Treatise on Calligraphy
磔	chieh	chieh-stroke
勒	Strich Le	le-stroke
掠	Strich Liang	liang-stroke
努	Strich Nu	nu-stroke
策	Strich Ts'e	ts'e-stroke
側	Strich Tse	point-stroke
啄	Strich Tso	tso-stroke
躍	Strich Yue/Yo	Yue/yo-stroke
蘇東坡(蘇軾)	Su Tung-p'o (Su Shih)	Chinese Painter & Calligraph, 1037 - 1101
孫過庭	Sun Kuo-ting	Chinese Calligraph & Critic, 648 - 698
宋蘇軾墨跡	Sung Su Shih mo-chi	Artwork of Su Shih, National Palace Museum Taipei
四君子	Szu chün-tzu	The Four Nobles
四君子畫譜	Szu chün-tzu hua-p'u	Collection of Bamboo & Flower Painting
四書五經	Szu Shu Wu Ching	The four Books and five Classics
太極	T'ai chi	T'ai chi
堂懷素書自叙	T'ang Huai Ssu Shu-tzu-shu	Works of Huai Ssu National Palace Museum Taipei
唐詩畫譜	T'ang-shih hua-p'u	Book on Chinese Paintin & Poetry
體勢	t'i shih	formal expression
挑	t'iao	raise
跳湯	t'iao t'ang	moving agitation
田	t'ien	field
道	Tao	Tao, the highest principle of Taoism
刀	tao	knife
道濟	Tao-Ch'i	= Shih-t'ao Painter
道德經	Tao-Te-Cing	Tao-Te-Ching by Lao-tzu
點	tien	point
第一集第三冊	Ti-i-chi-ti-san-ts'e	1. volume 3. booklet
蔡邕	Ts'ai-yung	Chinese Painter & Calligraph, 132 - 192
倉頡	Ts'ang Chieh	ca. 2650 BC, the „inventor“ of script
草書	Ts'ao-Shu	Ts'ao-Shu-Calligraphy, Concept-Style
側向	ts'e hsiang	vertical direction
側鋒	ts'e-feng	vertical holding of brush
清朝	Ts'ing-Ts'ao (Ch'ing)	Ts'ing (Ch'ing)-Dynasty, 1644 - 1912
蔡襄	Ts'ai Hsiang	Chinese Painter & Calligraph, Sung
造化之理	tsao-hua chih li	principle of creative creation

子思	Tse Sse / Zi Si	K'ung-tzu's grandson and pupil
渡	tu	cross, pass through
讀荆浩筆法記	Tu Ching-hao Pi-fa-chi	Treatise on the Pi-fa-chi of Ching Hao
端莊	tuan chuang	austere rigor
圖畫見聞志	T'u-hua chien-wen-chi	Treatise of Painting, ca. 1075 AD
頓	tun	restrainedness
頓挫	tun ts'ò	change of direction in brush movement
頓提	tun-t'i	pressure & release movement
子	tzu	Son, root, seed
枝如楷書	tzu ru k'ai-shu	branch is like the K'ai-Shu
自然	tzu-ran	natural
自然之功	tzu-ran chih kung	the work of nature
自然之妙有	tzu-ran chih miao-you	wonderful existence of nature
浮世繪	Ukiyo-e	Ukiyo-e, Japanese Woodcuts
王雲五	Wang Yun-wu	Chinese Arthistorian
王	Wang	king, name
王羲之	Wang Hsi-chih	Most fam. Chinese Calligrapher, 307 - 365
王羲之墨跡	Wang Hsi-chih mo-chi	Ink trace of Wang Hsi-chih
王澐	Wang Shu	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1668-1743
王原祁	Wang Yuan-ch'i	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1642 - 1715
王雲五	Wang yun-wu	Chinese Arthistorian
為 / 為	wei	for, why, be, become
文	wen	literature, culture
溫肇桐	Wen Chao-t'ung	Chinese Arthistorian
文徵明	Wen Cheng-ming	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1470-1559
文物出版社	Wen wu chu ban she	Cultural Publishing Company
文房四寶	Wen-fang szu-pao	The four treasures of the study room
文心雕龍	Wen-hsin tiao-lung	Treatise by Liu Hsieh (劉勰)(466-522)
吳鎮	Wu Chen	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 1280-1354
無極	Wu chi	The highest ontological point of the Taoism
無垂不縮無往不收	wu ch'ui pu so, wu wang pu shou	No hanging without pulling, no going forth without concentration
五和	wu ho	the five kinds of harmony
吳康	Wu K'ang	Chinese Arthistorian
物理	wu li	inner law
五病	wu ping	five deficiencies (illnesses)
五言絕句	Wu yen szu chü	Five Syllable Quatrain
無為	Wu-wei	Not acting
陽	Yang	The utmost (positive) force Yang
楊家駱	Yang Chia-lo	Chinese Arthistorian
楊維禎	Yang wei-chen	Chinese Arthistorian

楊 楊	Yang Yang	Chinese Arthistorian
葉如草書	yeh ru ts'ao-shu	leaf is like Ts'ao-Shu-alligraphy
妍	yen	grace
言	yen	speech, words
淹留	yen liu	restrained hesitation
硯台	yen-t'ai	rubbing stone for ink
陰	yin	the utmost (negative) force Yin
陰陽	Yin Yang	Ying and Yang dual forces
應	ying	respond
俞劍華	Yu Chien-hua	Chinese Arthistorian
余紹宋	Yu Shao-sung	Chinese Arthistorian 1883 - 1949
虞世南	Yu Shih-nan	Chinese Painter & Calligrapher, 558 – 638
于右任	Yu You-ren	Chinese Politician & Artist, 1879-1964
圓	yuan	round, circularity
元朝	Yuan Ch'ao (Ts'ao)	Yuan-Dynasty, 1279 - 1368
圓鉤	yuan kou	round hook
月	yue	moon
用	yung	use, employ
用筆	yung pi	brush-work
永字八法	yung-tzu pa-fa	Eight strokes of the character Yung

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**Dr. Marguerite Hui Müller-Yao 2000**

From 1964 – 2014 a Chinese artist was resident in Germany: Dr. Marguerite Hui Müller-Yao. She learned in China traditional Chinese arts - calligraphy, ink painting, poetry – before studying Western modern art in Germany. The subject of her artistic and scientific work was an attempt of a synthesis between the old traditions of China and the ways and forms of thought and design of modern Western culture.

In her artistic work she searched on one hand to develop the traditional ink painting and calligraphy through modern Western expression, on the other hand to deepen the formal language of modern painting, graphics and object art by referring back to the ideas of Chinese calligraphic tradition and the principles of Chinese ink painting.

In her academic work she was dedicated to the investigation of the relations between the Western Informel Painting and Chinese Calligraphy. This work, which deals with the influence of the art of Chinese Calligraphy on the Western Informel painting is an attempt to contribute a little to the understanding of some of the essential aspects of two cultures and their relations: the Western European-American on one hand and the East-Asian, particularly the Chinese, on the other hand. The subject of this work concerns an aspect of intercultural relations between the East and the West, especially the artistic relations between Eastern Asia and Europe/America in a certain direction, from the East to the West. The First Edition of this book was published in German in 1985.

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