

# CREATIVITY AS AN EVOLUTIONARY TOOL

I wrote an essay a few months ago that focused on the power of Aristotle's conception of Catharsis as presented in stories. Catharsis offers both the character and the audience an opportunity to evolve their consciousness by experiencing the story events that led the character to have a major revelation about themselves.

When viewing both story and life in this way, we can see that all suffering can be transmuted by directing it toward an evolutionary function, whether that be self-knowledge, a better understanding about the true nature of reality, or the internalization of a lesson through the experience of loss. In this way, storytelling, and by extension all works of art, are immensely powerful in that they represent a model for transforming suffering into something useful.

We've been collectively misled to believe that we must remain in this state of suffering to experience increased levels of awareness. What's worse, we've been made to believe that our creative inventions will appear less valid unless they're mired in despair and cloaked in the false guise of sensitivity and forlornness. In fact, we may have been conditioned to think that too much personal healing and success will dampen our product and harm our artistic reputation. Maharishi's counter to this misled popular belief is very satisfying because he demonstrates that creativity is manifest in the steps the artist takes to move out of suffering.

What establishes this process of creativity as an instrument of healing is best described in Maharishi's explanation that "life is by nature evolutionary." In this way, life wants to heal itself, or as presented in this instance, create more happiness; creativity is not a trait reserved solely for the sufferer to remain in pain, but instead serves as an opportunity to grow toward deeper levels of awareness.

Though suffering may be inevitable, I believe we've actually been gifted a great advantage in that our work, as artists, inherently requires us to reflect on both our own individual pain and oftentimes the immorality of the collective to such a degree that the exploration of healing becomes an inescapable task for us. When we approach our artistic work in this way, suffering creates a catalyst for creativity, while creativity offers an opportunity to heal suffering, such that we always grow with our work in some way, regardless of the outcome.

