in relation to each other. What accounts for the endless assertion of a feminine stereotype, a feminine sensibility, a feminine art in criticism and art history? Precisely the necessity to provide an opposite against which male art and the male artist find meaning and sustain their dominance. That there are Old Masters and not Old Mistresses and that all women’s art is seen homogeneously as inevitably feminine in painting and sculpture as much as in the crafts is the effect of this ideology. We never speak of masculine art or man artist, we say simply art and artist. But the art of men can only maintain its dominance and privilege on the pages of art history by having a negative to its positive, a feminine to its unacknowledged masculine.

Ideology is not a conscious process; its effects are manifest but it works unconsciously, reproducing the values and systems of belief of the dominant group it serves. As we have shown, the current ideology of male dominance has a history. It was adumbrated in the Renaissance, expanded in the eighteenth century, fully articulated in the nineteenth century and finally totally naturalized with the result that in twentieth-century art history it is so taken for granted as part of the natural order it need not be mentioned. This ideology is reproduced not only in the way art is discussed, the discipline of art history, but in works of art themselves. It operates through images and styles in art, the ways of seeing the world and representing our position in the world that art presents. It is inscribed into the very language of art. [...] 

5 Zen and the Art of Tea

Daisetz T. Suzuki

What is common to Zen and the art of tea is the constant attempt both make at simplification. The elimination of the unnecessary is achieved by Zen in its intuitive grasp of final reality; by the art of tea, in the way of living typified by serving tea in the tearoom. The art of tea is the aestheticism of primitive simplicity. Its ideal, to come closer to Nature, is realized by sheltering oneself under a thatched roof in a room which is hardly ten feet square but which must be artistically constructed and furnished. Zen also aims at stripping off all the artificial wrappings humanity has devised, supposedly for its own solemnization. Zen first of all combats the intellect; for, in spite of its practical usefulness, the intellect goes against our effort to delve into the depths of being. Philosophy may propose all kinds of questions for intellectual solution, but it never claims to give us the spiritual satisfaction which must be accessible to every one of us, however intellectually undeveloped he may be. Philosophy is accessible only to those who are intellectually equipped, and thus it cannot be a discipline of universal appreciation. Zen — or, more broadly speaking, religion — is to cast off
into the room is always soft and restful and conducive to a meditative mood. The breeze passing through the needles of the old pine tree harmoniously blends with the sizzling of the iron kettle over the fire. The entire environment thus reflects the personality of the one who has created it. [...]

When Dōgen (1200–1253) came back from China after some years of study of Zen there, he was asked what he had learned. He said, "Not much except soft-heartedness (nyūnan-thin)." "Soft-heartedness" is "tender-mindedness" and in this case means "gentleness of spirit." Generally we are too egotistic, too full of hard, resisting spirit. We are individualistic, unable to accept things as they are or as they come to us. Resistance means friction, friction is the source of all trouble. When there is no self, the heart is soft and offers no resistance to outside influences. This does not necessarily mean the absence of all sensitivities or emotionalities. They are controlled in the totality of a spiritual outlook on life. And in this aspect I am sure that Christians and Buddhists alike know how to follow Dōgen in the appreciation of the significance of selflessness or "soft-heartedness." In the art of tea the "gentleness of spirit" is spoken of in the same spirit enjoined by Prince Shōtoku. Indeed, "gentleness of spirit" or "soft-heartedness" is the foundation of our life on earth. If the art of tea purports to establish a Buddha-land in its small group, it has to start with gentleness of spirit. To illustrate this point further, let us quote the Zen Master Takuon (1573–1645).

TAKUON ON THE ART OF TEA (CHA-NO-YU)

The principle of cha-no-yu is the spirit of harmonious blending of Heaven and Earth and provides the means for establishing universal peace. People of the present time have turned it into a more occasion for meeting friends, talking of worldly affairs, and indulging in palatable food and drink; besides, they are proud of their elegantly furnished tea-rooms, where, surrounded by rare objects of art, they would serve tea in a most accomplished manner, and decide those who are not so skillful as themselves. This is, however, far from being the original intention of cha-no-yu.

Let us then construct a small room in a bamboo grove or under trees, arrange streams and rocks and plant trees and bushes, while [inside the room] let us pile up charcoal, set a kettle, arrange flowers, and arrange in order the necessary tea utensils. And let all this be carried out in accordance with the idea that in this room we can enjoy the streams and rocks as we do the rivers and mountains in Nature, and appreciate the various moods and sentiments suggested by the snow, the moon, and the trees and flowers, as they go through the transformation of seasons, appearing and disappearing, blooming and withering. As visitors are greeted here with due reverence, we listen quietly to the boiling water in the kettle, which sounds like a breeze passing through the pine needles, and become oblivious of all worldly woes and worries; we then pour out a dipperful of water from the kettle, reminding us of the mountain stream, and thereby our mental dust is wiped off. This is truly a world of recluses, saints on earth.

The principle of propriety is reverence, which in practical life functions as harmonious relationship. This is the statement made by Confucius when he defines the use of propriety, and is also the mental attitude one should cultivate as cha-no-yu. For instance, when a man is associated with persons of high social rank his
conduct is simple and natural, and there is no cringing self-deprecation on his part. When he sits in the company of people socially below him he retains a respectful attitude toward them, being entirely free from the feeling of self-importance. This is due to the presence of something pervading the entire tearoom, which results in the harmonious relationship of all who come here. However long the association, there is always the persisting sense of reverence. The spirit of the smiling Kāśyapa and the nodding Tsēng-tu must be said to be moving here; this spirit, in words, is the mysterious Suchness that is beyond all comprehension.

For this reason, the principle animating the tearoom, from its first construction down to the choice of the tea utensils, the technique of service, the cooking of food, wearing apparel, etc., is to be sought in the avoidance of complicated ritual and mere ostentation. The implements may be old, but the mind can be invigorated therewith so that it is ever fresh and ready to respond to the changing seasons and the varying views resulting therefrom; it never curries favor, it is never covetous, never inclined to extravagance, but always watchful and considerate for others. The owner of such a mind is naturally gentlemanly and always sincere—this is cha-no-yu.

The way of cha-no-yu, therefore, is to appreciate the spirit of a naturally harmonious blending of Heaven and Earth, to see the pervading presence of the five elements (wu-tai) by one’s fireside, where the mountains, rivers, rocks, and trees are found as they are in Nature, to draw the refreshing water from the well of Nature, to taste with one’s own mouth the flavor supplied by Nature. How grand this enjoyment of the harmonious blending of Heaven and Earth!

[. . .] Some of my readers may blame me for making a mountain of a molehill: “Tea-drinking is a matter of insignificant importance; to develop it into something of the highest thought that engages the human mind is altogether out of proportion; if we have to take up every little incident of life in this fashion, we will not have anything enjoyable, free from perplexing and wearing thoughts. What has tea-drinking, after all, to do with metaphysics of a most annoying sort? Tea is tea and cannot be anything else. When we are thirsty we have a cup of it, and that is enough. What is the use of making a strange art out of it? Oriental people are too fussy. We of the West have no time for such trivialities.” Now let me ask: Is a funeral ceremony a more significant event than tea drinking? Has a wedding a more moral or metaphysical meaning than tea-drinking? From the point of view of “God’s innocence” or “a flea’s innocence,” death is what inevitably follows from birth; there is nothing ominous about it. So with marriage. Why then do we make so much of it? If we wanted to, it could be reduced easily to the level of eating a morning meal or going to one’s business office. We turn it into a grand ceremony because we just want it so. When we think life is too monotonous, we break it into several occasions and get sometimes excited, sometimes depressed. [. . .]

As far as life itself is concerned, time and space are not of much consequence, though they are the mediums whereby life (expresses itself from our human point of view. Our senses and intellect are so constructed as to interpret objectivity along the line of space and time. For this reason, we are really interested in quantitative estimates. We think eternity is something beyond our sensuous measurements, but from the innerness of life one minute or one second is just as long, just as important, as one thousand years. The morning-glory lasting only a few hours of the summer morning is of the same significance as the pine tree whose gnarled trunk defies wintry frost. The microscopic creatures are just as much manifestations of life as the elephant or the lion. In fact, they have more vitality, for even if all other living forms vanish from the surface of the earth, the microbes will be found continuing their existence. Who would then deny that when I am sipping tea in my tearoom I am swallowing the whole universe with it and that this very moment of my lifting the bowl to my lips is eternity itself transcending time and space? The art of tea really teaches us far more than the harmony of things, or keeping them free from contamination, or just sinking down into a state of contemplative tranquility. [. . .]

6 Dressing Down Dressing Up: The Philosophic Fear of Fashion

Karen Hanson

Thoughtful feminists can find themselves concerned about matters of dress and appearance, provoked to attend to and theorize about the causes and consequences of fashion. This reflection may begin with a sunny spirit of analytical confidence and interest, or it may be undertaken with a glum sense of the pressing need to reexamine all aspects of women’s lives. Whatever the original mood, however, the enlistment of traditional philosophy as an ally in the exploration of this topic is likely to produce a sour and anxious state.

Feminism may suppose it shares with traditional philosophy an initial distrust of fashion, but this could prove poor ground for fellowship. Philosophy does indeed manifest sustained scorn for attention to personal appearance and fashionable dress, but there is a risk that a sympathetic response to that scorn may simply mean attachment to an unattractive and sometimes abusive partner. What is the character of the philosophic attitude? Whence the philosopher’s hostility to fashionable dress?

Beautiful clothes, up to the minute in style, carefully made and proudly worn, do tend more often than not to arouse the philosopher’s contempt. But why should this be? Santayana claimed:

Beauty is a value, . . . it is an emotion, an affection of our volitional and appreciative nature. . . . [And] this value is positive, it is the sense of the presence of something good, or (in the case of ugliness) of its absence. It is . . . never a negative value. (1961: 43)

And yet the changing modes of dress which are a source of pleasure to many, are appreciated and desired by most, are often seen by the philosopher as worse