Dynamism, Creativeness, and Evolutionary Progress in the work of Alexander Archipenko

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Guy Habasque, writing for *L'Oeil* in 1961, recognized Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964) as the leading revolutionary and guide for sculptors of the twentieth-century. At the same time, he acknowledges that history has failed to do the artist justice, forgetting and neglecting him even before his death in 1964. What Habasque wrote fifty-five years ago is doubly true today when the holdings of Archipenko’s work in public museums have been largely relegated to storage, along with many other significant works of the twentieth century, under the increasing pressure to create gallery space for contemporary works of art. To find space in permanent displays, modernist works must compete for significance, the power of which has apparently been lost in the few discussions that exist surrounding Archipenko’s work. This project draws attention to the neglected importance of Archipenko’s work. What is significant about this work is that it forms part of a counter history of early-twentieth century art as an alternative to the materialist-formalist history, which has held the dominant, discursive position. Archipenko’s biocentric, philosophical position presents an aesthetic that represents science and technology as organic, evolutionary extensions of a universal dynamism. Further, his emphasis on a creative spirit immanent in matter places him squarely within an alternate discourse prevalent in the first half of the twentieth-century.

This dissertation presents a fresh examination of Archipenko’s artistic production in light of recently discovered theoretical writings demonstrates a metaphysical approach
that undergirds his entire career including exhibitions, teaching, and lectures. His writing closely parallels the revolutionary philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941,) which was seminal to the movements of symbolism, cubism, and futurism in early twentieth-century Europe. Archipenko’s intellectual position places him at the forefront of an artistic discourse that turns away from a materialist focus on the self-sufficient art object and toward one that initiates an intuitive union with a universal and creative *élan vital*. This alternative discourse expands the margins of modern art to encompass a wider array of artists who have been neglected or misrepresented by traditional, formalist approaches. The present study combines theory and practice in the study of Archipenko’s art with the hypothesis that what appears to be a stylistic and sometimes perplexing diversity in the artistic practice of Archipenko is actually the working out of a consistent metaphysical position, closely aligned with the philosophy of Bergson. The philosopher’s rigorous, philosophical treatises serve as a foundation to Archipenko’s published and unpublished writings demonstrating where the two fall in line and where they depart. The goal of this comparative study is to clarify Archipenko’s complicated philosophical position in regards to metaphysics and phenomenology; situate the artist’s writing within a larger philosophical and scientific tradition; and indicate how he advances his position by incorporating principles of modern biology and philosophy into his philosophy. Of primary concern is how Archipenko’s theoretical position is exhibited in the artwork and, to that end, a thorough and detailed visual analysis of selected works is employed to demonstrate how the artistic practice squares with theory.
This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Mary Calhoun who taught me I could do anything I set my mind to and encouraged me to pursue my dreams.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Alexander Archipenko is perhaps the most forgotten and surely one of the most neglected among the innovators of the beginning of the twentieth-century. However, as the creator of resolutely new forms and techniques during the years which preceded the first world war, he was rightfully considered the progenitor of progressive sculpture and his submissions to the Salons roused much more passion than those of Brancusi or of Duchamp-Villon. Because, more than any of the others, he personified revolutionary daring and the break from traditional values.

-Guy Habasque

Guy Habasque, writing for L’Oeil in 1961, recognized Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964) as the leading revolutionary and guide for sculptors of the twentieth-century. At the same time, he acknowledges that history has failed to do the artist justice, forgetting and neglecting him even before his death in 1964. What Habasque wrote fifty-five years ago is doubly true today when the holdings of Archipenko’s work in public museums have been largely relegated to storage, along with many other significant works of the twentieth century, under the increasing pressure to create gallery space for contemporary works of art. To find space in permanent displays, modernist works must compete for significance, the power of which has apparently been lost in the few discussions that exist surrounding Archipenko’s work. This project draws attention to the neglected importance of Archipenko’s work. What is significant about this work is that it forms part of a counter history of early-twentieth century art as an alternative to the materialist-formalist history, which has held the dominant, discursive position.
Archipenko’s biocentric, philosophical position presents an aesthetic that represents science and technology as organic, evolutionary extensions of a universal dynamism.\(^2\) Further, his emphasis on a creative spirit immanent in matter places him squarely within an alternate discourse prevalent in the first half of the twentieth-century.

This dissertation presents a fresh examination of Archipenko’s artistic production in light of recently discovered theoretical writings and demonstrates a metaphysical approach that undergirds his entire career including exhibitions, teaching, and lectures. His writing closely parallels the revolutionary philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) which was seminal to the movements of symbolism, cubism, and futurism in early twentieth-century Europe.\(^3\) Archipenko’s intellectual position places him at the forefront of an artistic discourse that turns away from a materialist focus on the self-sufficient art object and toward one that initiates an intuitive union with a universal and creative \(élan\) \(vital\). This alternative discourse expands the margins of modern art to encompass a wider array of artists who have been neglected or misrepresented by traditional, formalist approaches.

The present study combines theory and practice in the study of Archipenko’s art with the hypothesis that what appears to be a stylistic and sometimes perplexing diversity in the artistic practice of Archipenko is actually the working out of a consistent metaphysical position, closely aligned with the philosophy of Bergson. The philosopher’s rigorous, philosophical treatises serve as a foundation to Archipenko’s published and unpublished writings demonstrating where the two fall in line and where they depart. The goal of this comparative study is to clarify Archipenko’s complicated philosophical
position in regards to metaphysics and phenomenology; situate the artist’s writing within a larger philosophical and scientific tradition; and indicate how he advances his position by incorporating principles of modern biology and philosophy into his philosophy. Of primary concern is how Archipenko’s theoretical position is exhibited in the artwork and, to that end, a thorough and detailed visual analysis of selected works is employed to demonstrate how the artistic practice squares with theory.

The current literature on Archipenko is sparse. In the early 1920’s a number of monographs, most notably those by Hans Hildebrandt and Ivan Goll, were written that introduced Archipenko but failed to delve deeply into his practice and were written too early to cover a significant portion of his production. These early writings, including several important articles in Der Sturm, certainly should not be ignored, though they shed little light on the subject.

Several books and catalogues produced by Donald Karshan require mention. While most exhibition catalogs contain only introductory essays on the artist’s work, Karshan, a collector and connoisseur, sought to promote Archipenko, both historically and in the marketplace, by championing the many innovations to modern sculpture attributed to Archipenko. While not primarily an academic approach, Karshan does enumerate and illustrate many of the areas where Archipenko provided a significant contribution to the field. His book Archipenko, the Sculpture and Graphic Art, serves as the only catalogue raisonné of the graphic work and elucidates the relationship between the graphics and sculpture. Karshan’s catalog for the 1969 Smithsonian retrospective exhibition called Archipenko: International Visionary is the first publication to attempt to
draw a larger image of Archipenko’s life and includes additional biographical information, photographs and archival documents, many of which are published for the first time. In later catalogs, such as Archipenko: Themes and Variations Karshan identifies several recurring motifs in Archipenko’s sculpture as elements of continuity that link the earlier work to the later. Karshan’s text, though often only a cursory examination of important aspects of Archipenko’s production, helps to shed light on Archipenko’s interest in the evolution of ideas and the relationship of works to each other in both space and time.

The most significant work on Archipenko to date is certainly Katherine J. Michaelsen’s Archipenko: A Study of the Early Works, 1908-1920, published in 1977. Michaelsen’s dissertation represents the first serious attempt to identify all of the sculptural work up to 1920 and uses a thorough stylistic analysis in combination with exhibition histories to accurately date the early works. The author’s thorough investigation has clearly identified many of the early dates and her work is still considered to be definitive except in cases where new research has since come to light. However, the book is limited in that it only covers the period up until 1920 and it also assumes a stylistic continuity in Archipenko’s work, which is a precarious way to date his work, especially in the later years where he would alternate styles, materials and motifs from one work to the next.

Anette Barth’s dissertation, Alexander Archipenkos Plastisches Oeuvre (1997,) picks up where Michaelsen’s study of the early works leaves off. Published in German, the dissertation is in two volumes. The first volume is Barth’s analysis of the sculptural
works, and the second is the first published, chronological catalogue raisonné of Archipenko’s sculptural oeuvre. Claiming that Archipenko’s work can only be properly understood when taken as a whole, Barth seeks to counter the idea that the later work is a demonstration of an artist in decline, demonstrating how the later work retains the character, inventiveness, and spirit of the earlier work. A significant portion of the text treats the lighted, Plexiglas works from the late 1940’s. In these, Barth sees the culmination of the inventive spirit as well as a demonstration of Archipenko’s philosophical understanding of cosmic forces and creative activity. In her formal analysis, Barth compares Archipenko’s Plexiglas works with similar works produced by László Moholy-Nagy, Naum Gabo, and Antoine Pevsner to demonstrate how Archipenko develops new techniques that truly capture sculptural values extending the artist’s investigations of matter and space. Barth attempts to level out the diversity and disjunction in Archipenko’s work by considering his entire oeuvre as a formal continuity based on a drive toward invention.

Alexandra Keiser, research curator for the Archipenko Foundation, recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation at the Courtauld Institute (2014,) entitled Alexander Archipenko and Cultural Exchange Between the Wars: from European Avant-gardes to Avant-gardism in the USA.¹¹ This work addresses the career of Archipenko as paradigmatic of the artistic practice of the modern avant-garde and examines Archipenko’s life and works within an international network of cultural exchange. Exploring his relationship to artists, dealers, museums, patrons and collectors, Keiser reveals the contributing forces that helped to form his reputation as an international artist.
and shape his career, including the factors that contributed to the artist’s outstanding position in the early 1920s and the processes he applied both to establish himself in the United States in the context of modernism and to re-connect with his prominent European status. Her dissertation encompasses the 1920’s through the 1940’s, considering the various cities in which he worked and resided, including Paris, Berlin, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Keiser has conducted extensive research into Archipenko’s correspondence with figures such as Herwath Walden, Katherine Dreier, and Katherine Kuh in order to investigate the complex interactions at play in the promotion and development of Archipenko’s work.

The dissertations of Michaelsen, Barth, and Keiser all take a comprehensive approach to Archipenko, seeking to broadly cover all periods or all the works within a particular period. These studies provide an excellent map for Archipenko’s career and place his work within the larger context of modern art. The biographical essays and catalogs provide important historical information situating Archipenko within modernist movements such as cubism, futurism, Ukrainian and Russian avant-gardes. Most, if not all, of the studies of Archipenko seek to restore him to a rightful position as a pioneer of modern art, but none position him as providing an alternative to positivism and materialism. In addition, the current scholarship does not address Archipenko’s writings as a serious theoretical endeavor based on modern science and directed toward a new conception of creative spirit, which this dissertation seeks to bring to the surface.

In the literature on Archipenko, Katherine Michaelsen’s biography of Archipenko forms the seminal essay for the 1986 retrospective exhibition *Archipenko: A Centennial*
Tribute at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. The biography delves deeply into the archival material and starkly reveals many of the issues that contribute to Archipenko’s present historical position. Michaelsen’s texts take a conventional, formalist approach to the artist’s work placing him squarely in a modernist milieu. Her careful and detailed studies lead her to the conclusion that Archipenko’s most significant contributions occur before his emigration to the United States in 1923 where his later career was eclipsed by the work of the earlier period. Michaelsen characterizes the work of the 1940’s as a mining of the past, and that of the 1950’s, arguably one of Archipenko’s most prolific periods, as a belated response to surrealism. It is precisely Michaelsen’s conclusion, arrived at through the application of external formal and stylistic criteria to the work, in comparison to an accepted modernist canon, that the present study rejects in favor of a new criterion, which views the work through the artist’s own theoretical concerns.

One need only read Michaelsen’s biography to discover the frustrations that any researcher of Archipenko encounters in trying to deal with the subject through a traditional, historical approach. The discussion quickly devolves into questions of the artist’s personality, disputes about pioneers and followers, issues of interrupted chronologies, and the production of replicas. Add to this Archipenko’s abrupt and seemingly capricious stylistic turns; a tendency to interrupt fertile lines of investigation when the solution is at hand; and a sheer volume of work, which always seems in need of a good editor. The result is a combination that seems to defy any unifying theme, logical analysis, or systematic approach.
What draws devotees in is the work itself. Encountering a work by Archipenko for the first time, viewers are struck by its expression, power, grace, and an ineffable spirit that even the artist’s detractors don’t deny. The sheer audacity of his inventiveness spanning a period of fifty years, including cubist-inspired geometric abstractions, sculpting space as the absence of matter, sculpto-paintings combining painting and relief, a reintroduction of polychrome sculpture and illuminated sculptures of transparent acrylic prefigures the kind of heterogeneous artistic practice that prefigures Postmodernism. Archipenko’s place in the history of art seemed, at one time, secure. In the *Archipenko Album* (1921), Iwan Goll claims, “Archipenko is of the same importance for sculpture as Picasso is for painting.” This claim, repeated endlessly in print, is meant to point to Archipenko’s singular role in revolutionizing sculptural form. Ironically, what is missed in this comparison is that Picasso’s later work, despite his pioneering role, was often denigrated by critics who believed that his early genius had fled in later years. Like Picasso, Archipenko’s artistic trajectory always places him outside the current of modern art, first as a revolutionary pioneer and now a relative unknown.

In *Other Criteria*, (1972) Leo Steinberg counters the detractors of Picasso’s later work, who believe that his genius dried up “after Guernica, surely, if not before,” pointing out that it is the criterion of the critics and not the artist that is primarily used to judge whether the work succeeds. Steinberg calls for a new criteria based on the artist’s aims and a re-evaluation of the work in a new light. What is needed in a study of Archipenko is a new criteria that closely examines the work in terms of the artist’s aims
and not according to the old, irresolvable problems, confusions, and criticisms. A new approach will allow us to see Archipenko’s work in light of his aims, which find their most logical expression in two unpublished manuscripts located in the Archipenko Papers at the Archives of American Art in the Smithsonian Institution. His two theses tentatively titled “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” and “Creativeness” present a thorough and sophisticated philosophy of art, and form the source material for Archipenko’s published monograph, *Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years* (1959).

"Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon" deals specifically with Archipenko's theory of creativeness as a universal or cosmic force that serves as an impetus for all living organisms, their evolution, and the conscious creativity of man that results in works of art. In support of his arguments, Archipenko relies heavily on both modern biology and physics to present creative spirit as equivalent to an atomic force that binds the universe and animates life. "Creativeness" was intended to expand upon the theoretical work of "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon" and provides a practicum for consciously utilizing this inherent creative force in order to promote the development of genius in others.

The question of creative genius and invention is central to Archipenko’s work, which revolves around the act of creation. In the same way that amoebae transform energy into movement, we consciously tap into the creative force that is spirit and fix the metaphysical into material form as art and invention. Archipenko conceives of the duality between matter and spirit as a binary relationship of dynamic interaction and constant transformation from one to the other. Life is an act of constant metamorphosis
from spirit to matter and vice versa. Art results from a dynamic, intuitive process that registers universal spirit through individual expression made manifest in material forms.\textsuperscript{23}

At the heart of Archipenko’s project lies a belief that art plays a vital role in society. The work of art not only materializes spirit through an interaction with the artist, but it also communicates this encounter to the viewer activating creative consciousness toward the progress of mankind.\textsuperscript{24} One of the arguments presented here is that, for Archipenko, the communicative effect occurs on both an intellectual and an intuitive level. Intellectually, the work of art communicates symbolically through a language of form that we possess as a result of the evolution of our senses. Intuitively, we form an immediate connection with the work that triggers an affective response. Appealing to both the intellect and the intuition makes the work of art a unique kind of tool, one whose purpose is to unite material form and spiritual effect to elevate consciousness and stimulate creative activity in the viewer.

Archipenko’s writings find confirmation in the revolutionary philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941), particularly his advocacy of a universal creative force that animates being, which has evolved into an aesthetic faculty inspiring man to create works of art that communicate the life of the spirit. Bergson and Archipenko both formulate Vitalism, the principle that life is fundamentally different than matter, in term of modern physics, biology, and psychology. This formulation relies on a scientific paradigm that posits matter and energy as two aspects of the same phenomenon. Re-conceiving the \textit{élan vital}, or vital impetus, as an immaterial force locates being as a privileged unification of matter and spirit.
The parallel between Archipenko and Bergson goes beyond the alignment of their thinking. Bergson was the foremost philosopher of the early twentieth century and no philosopher drew as much attention, or was more polarizing. Bergson’s philosophy was controversial, drawing supporters from all classes, including radical anarchists on the left, as well as detractors on the right. The Holy Office even put his writings on the Index of Prohibited Books for their alleged support of irrationalism and pantheism. In the years leading up to World War I, Bergson’s philosophy became a contentious platform for syndicalists, anarchists, and monarchists, each manipulating his philosophical writings to suit their own particular, polarized ends. By the end of World War II, Bergson’s influence had waned and his philosophy, while an important structural component of Existentialism, remained largely neglected until 1966 when Gilles Deleuze published Bergsonism.

For Deleuze, Bergson represents an absent signifier, a figure whose absence leaves a noticeable gap in the history of philosophy. The effect of this gap, though, not immediately visible, helped to structure that history. In Dialogues (1987), Deleuze categorizes Bergson as, “part of a ‘counter history’ of philosophy. A writer, ‘who seemed to be part of the history of philosophy but who escaped from it in one respect or altogether.’” For Deleuze, Bergson’s escape from the history of philosophy is a freedom from the stultifying constrictions of an academic discipline concerned with the preservation of traditions and habitual operations. Bergson’s emphasis on intuition runs counter to the habits of scholastic philosophy. Intuition introduces freedom into the world, as indeterminacy, whereas scholasticism creates fixed, intellectual structures that
regard everything in terms of what is already known. Escape is favorable and necessary, but has a downside in that Bergson becomes known through his many interpreters rather than directly through his writing.29

The argument put forth in this study is that Archipenko, like Bergson, is part of a counter-history of modern art. Archipenko presents a gap in the history of modern art, a conspicuous absence that can only be made present through a reconsideration of the work in relation his philosophical texts. Situating those texts within a similar history of thought, running counter to the dominant discourse, places Archipenko squarely within an alternate line of thought that performs an important structural role in modern art. Through his works, he seeks to counter materialism and the idea of the work of art as self-sufficient.30 The call of art for art’s sake, advocates a materialism that artificially divides matter from spirit, whereas a truly modern art reveals spirit as the creative center of science and technology.

Within the text that follows, Archipenko’s writings are parsed out in parallel with Bergson’s to both clarify aspects of Archipenko’s thinking that remain implicit within his texts, and to situate Archipenko’s writings within a counter-history of modern, philosophical thought.31 These parallels are played out in publications such as Bergson’s *Matter and Memory* (1896), which outlines the dichotomy between matter and spirit that forms Archipenko’s primary concern.32 In addition, Bergson presents a phenomenological model for perception that prioritizes spirit (as memory) over matter. This model dovetails with the creative process Archipenko describes in “Creativeness.” *Creative Evolution* (1907) Bergson’s third book, posits the intellect as an evolutionary
adaptation developed in accord with the material world. According to Bergson, the intellect allows us to represent the world symbolically through language, but this has the effect of giving us an imitation of the real. It is only through intuition that we come into contact with the unity of life. Art serves as the example of our intuitive attention to life. Archipenko lays out a parallel evolutionary development from cells to complex organisms that closely aligns with Bergson’s, but presents some important differences in regard to individuality, community, and our connections to a shared origin.

Viewing Archipenko’s artistic production within this previously unacknowledged history presents a new perspective on the work as an argument for elevating spirit over matter. Spirit serves as the driving factor toward the evolutionary progression and advancement of mankind through the development of creative consciousness. This focus on spirit over matter leads Archipenko to create material forms intended to transcend their materiality. Moving in this direction, Archipenko views subject matter as a necessary pretext that plays a secondary role to artistic expression.\textsuperscript{33} The mostly female subjects, always recognizable no matter the level of abstraction, are conceived as a psychological attractor intended to draw the viewer into a tense consideration between subject matter and creative expression.\textsuperscript{34} The material form serves as a temporary manifestation of the eternal, creative spirit. What appears to the intellect as a permanent, solid existence is revealed to intuition as ephemeral when compared to the eternal, dynamic spirit that remains as the effect of creation. As an approach to Archipenko’s work, this study seeks to go beyond an intellectual concentration on subject and material
form and toward an understanding of the intuitive effects that aim at immaterial, enduring spirit.

The second chapter outlines Archipenko’s arrival in Paris, his participation with an intellectual group of avant-garde artists, and their interest in the new physics, biology, geometry, as well as the neo-vitalist philosophy of Henri Bergson. Parallels are drawn between Archipenko’s treatises and Bergson’s writing to affirm Bergson as a structural support from an early period. The chapter draws out these parallels to highlight the role that creation plays in a dynamic, unpredictable universe, which is always in the process of becoming.

The first half of the chapter elucidates Archipenko’s neo-vitalist philosophy as a creative force that animates matter, introducing a progressive indeterminacy and freedom into the universe. This force is immaterial spirit, which Archipenko conceives as two different aspects of the same phenomenon united within the nucleus of atoms. The process of evolution serves as proof of spirit, as a creative force, acting through matter to invent new forms. Archipenko describes humanity as a privileged center of creative action, developed to the point where we are able to go beyond mere necessity and consciously seize the creative impetus to create works of art. The section, “The Cellular Basis of Creativity,” moves Archipenko from a neo-vitalist position to one I describe as biocentric, in which life is viewed as a primarily biological process. Archipenko posits the cell as the creative center and primary structural unit of all organisms. He asserts that cells contain the latent, ancestral memory within chromosomes and also register the creative energies that can be accessed through proper development of creative
consciousness. As receiver, transmitter, and storage system, the cell becomes a source of individual expression that remains bound to a larger commonality linking us to our primordial origins and to universal, creative forces. Like the work of art, the individual member of a species is only morphologically different to a slight degree, while the larger share is united through commonality. The reception of a work of art is filtered through personal experience, but remains tied to universal, creative causes.

The second half of the chapter deals with the evolutionary development of two different faculties, the intellect and intuition, which are an essential element of Bergson’s philosophy. While Archipenko does not emphasize the role of intuition to the degree that Bergson does, he adheres to a similar distinction between faculties directed toward external matter and internal spirit. Bergson views the intellect as an adaptation developed toward acting and responding in the world aimed at satisfying our needs and ensuring survival. The intellect gains a degree of freedom in that it provides an ability to choose and invent, but it does this by artificially dividing the world into representations, which it fabricates and reconstitutes into an approximation of the real. In order to gain contact with the unified continuity of life, to close the distance that the intellect places between us and the object, requires intuition. Intuition provides a sense of the whole, which hovers over what the intellect cuts up and reconstructs. It goes beyond the external relations that the intellect creates and places us back in harmony with life, which Bergson calls sympathy. Art engages both the intellect and intuition, prolonging perception into a deliberation that makes the viewer an active participant in the creation of the work. The
viewer reconstitutes the work of art through perception and in this process registers the creative spirit as a force that unites us in the present and to our primordial past.

The third chapter follows the path that the creative impetus takes through the metamorphosis from abstract ideas to materialization as a work of art. Bergson’s model of being is employed as a framework to demonstrate the role that memory plays in perception; the way that an intuitive leap leads to creative, indeterminate choices; and how being is a dynamic process that bridges spirit and the material world, leading ultimately to freedom from automatism. The art object provides this means of escaping automatism, conventions, and habits, by suspending action in a prolonged process of deliberation, which turns toward intuition and spirit. Art engages intuition bringing us closer to the creative potential of life. Bergson differentiates art from artifice, which is the intellect’s tendency to create symbolic representations that interpose between us and the world. His goal is to develop a method that finds its source in intuition and returns through the intellect communicating with others through the artifice of language. To this end he positions art as fully disinterested, directed solely at intuition, with no desire to engage in dialectic. Archipenko, on the contrary, argues for an art that necessarily engages in dialectic at the same time that it activates intuition. What is at stake for Archipenko, in a dialectical sculpture is that it utilizes a symbolic, visual language in order to have relevance within a social organization. Archipenko asserts that art activates creative consciousness through visual language as a product of sensual evolution. Language is an essential artifice in that it communicates the materialization of spirit to others through symbolic associations as an impetus for progressive, social evolution. The
attentive viewer, through a prolonged deliberation with the work, goes beyond conventional representations and engages with the spiritual element, which serves as the artist’s original impetus. This engagement with the spiritual puts us in direct contact with universal, creative forces increasing our creative capacity.

The final section of the chapter explores the role of metamorphosis for Archipenko. In the process of making a work of art, the artist transforms the immaterial energy of creation into material form. Archipenko defines this process as a metamorphosis that results in the materialization of spirit. This metamorphosis is an ordinary miracle that the cell repeats a thousand times in metabolism and mitosis. Mankind has evolved to consciously exploit natural creativeness to our own benefit and it is through this process that we progress to a higher level of expression. The materialization of spirit communicates to the intellect through symbolic language and associations with memory. Additionally, Archipenko indicates that the work of art undergoes a second metamorphosis in the process of its making – the spiritualization of matter. The spiritualization of matter incorporates the creative energy into the work of art so that it radiates the spirit of creation like an aura. Spirit, which exceeds the materiality of the work, is registered intuitively through a sympathy with the work. Art unites us with the larger community of being through the registration of spirit over and above its material conditions.

The fourth chapter examines how Archipenko puts his theory into practice by examining his artworks in relation to five sculptural problems the artist addresses in his monograph, *Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years.* Line, Space, Concave,
Reflection, and Light and Transparency each problematize a formal, binary relationship in the work by directing focus onto the secondary term of the binary as an absent or neglected constituent. The opposition characterized by these relationships symbolize the dichotomy between matter and spirit addressed in the previous chapters. Elevating the neglected, secondary term also serves to break from habitual perceptions and traditional conventions of sculpture in order to draw attention away from materialistic tendencies. In the section on Line, I demonstrate how Archipenko utilizes line to emphasize figure and ground as interdependent compositional elements and to disassociate line as a material boundary that directs attention toward the figure as a self-sufficient entity. The sections on Space and Concave both invert the relationship between matter and space. Using both the contour and the surface to shape space as a sculptural material, Archipenko disrupts the logic of the unified, sculptural surface and figures absence as the energetic potential of spirit that predominates the presence of matter. Reflection configures the sculptural surface as a dynamic boundary or energy radiating light as an effect united with material form. The final section, Light and Transparency, incorporates all of the previous elements with emitted light and transparent acrylic sculptures. The Plexiglas figures radiate with light as the energy of creation flowing through matter, which is dispersed into the surrounding environment as spiritual energy. Modern, technological materials and techniques are employed in the service of spirit to demonstrate how we employ creative dynamism to direct our own progressive course.

An analysis of the work in relation to the theoretical texts reveals a consistency of method that goes beyond subject matter and style to reflect an overarching concern with
the predominant creative forces that enable our creative progression. For Archipenko, spirit must be the victor over matter in order for a work of art to be universal and timeless. One could argue that his true medium is spirit, which is revealed through material form. What is at stake in an art that neglects universal, creative causes is a loss of spirit in favor of a dead materialism, which aims at mere novelty, engenders the atrophy of creative consciousness, and results in evolutionary stagnation. Archipenko offers an aesthetic that conceives of science and technology as creative endeavors revealing the universal spirit from which they originate.

This treatment of Archipenko reveals a constitutive gap in the history of modern art created by his fugitive reputation. Like the voids in his sculptures, Archipenko is an absence made conspicuous by the imprint he leaves on the history of modern art. He is a figure understood to be integral to the structure of that history, but who remains somehow largely unknown. Within the text that follows, Archipenko’s writings demonstrate a metaphysical understanding of spirit immanent in matter that not only governs his entire artistic production, but places him securely within a larger philosophical tradition. Utilizing his unpublished writings as a new criteria discloses his larger aim, which is to stimulate creative potential in others furthering genius and a higher, spiritual consciousness for human progress. The goal of this dissertation is to make Archipenko present as an artist whose role shapes the history of art in ways that go beyond material aesthetics toward the highest aspirations of the modern spirit.
Chapter 2: Archipenko and Bergson, a Metaphysics of Creativeness

In the infinity of time and space between planets, there was brought into being by cosmical dynamism, a specific order of right elements to constitute creation.
-Alexander Archipenko

The universe endures. The more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new.
-Henri Bergson

According to his registration documents, Alexander Archipenko took up residence in Paris in July of 1909 arriving from Moscow where the artist had worked and lived for two years. As Katherine Jánszky Michaelsen notes in her book Archipenko: A Study of the Early Works 1908-1920 his activities in what was then still the Russian Empire, and indeed in his native Kyiv, are not very clear. We know that Archipenko received his education in Ukraine and that he was the son of an inventor and engineer who was a professor at Kyiv University. In an early monograph, Hans Hildebrandt suggests that Archipenko received his inventive and experimental nature from his father, but rather than follow engineering he chose to study painting, and then sculpture, at the Kyiv Art School in 1902. Hildebrandt writes that Archipenko, "was not over enthusiastic about the Academic method of teaching which combined a formless naturalism with a dull idealism of misinterpreted Greek art," and that he found little to develop his talents at the school
or, later, at the Moscow Academy of Arts. In 1908, Archipenko received a Russian military exemption and emigrated to Paris, the center of avant-garde art in Europe.

In Paris, Archipenko lists his address as the Rue Dantzig in Montparnasse, and we know from many sources that he lived with other artist-émigrés from the Russian Empire in the building known as the beehive, La Ruche, an area of Montparnasse purchased by Alfred Boucher in 1900 and set up as inexpensive residence and studio space for artists. Archipenko remained at La Ruche throughout his stay in Paris until he relocated to Nice during World War I. In her memoir, Life with the Painters of La Ruche, Marevna notes that it was here that Chaim Soutine, "made the acquaintance of the sculptors [Jacques] Lipschitz, Archipenko, [Ossip] Zadkine, Oscar Mestranovic, and [Sergei] Bulakovky," when the painter arrived in 1913.

Archipenko's first recorded exhibition in Paris was at the Salons des Indépendants in March of 1910. He exhibited five sculptures and one unidentified painting. He was prolific in his artistic activity at La Ruche, and in her research Michaelsen records no fewer than thirty-five original sculptures exhibited in the three years between 1909 and 1912. The Archipenko Foundation records thirteen different sculptures dated to 1909 alone and nearly forty-five in total by 1912. For the 1911 Salons des Indépendants, infamous because the Cubists wrested control of the hanging committee and placed a majority of the cubist works in two rooms, Archipenko not only exhibited, but wrote a review in the local Russian language journal Parizskij Vestnik [Paris Newsletter], promoting the radical modernism and inventions of his cohort, writing, “passing tens of halls with decorative paintings, you get to the center of the exhibition where are
concentrated new works of modernism, and this the only thing that is interesting in this salon.” He goes on to specifically praise Albert Gleizes, Fernand Léger, Jean Metzinger, Henri Le Fauconnier among the French artists as well as Russian artists Wassily Kandinsky and Pyotr Konchalovsky. The next year he served on the hanging committee of the 1912 Salons des Indépendants and was one of the founding member of La Section d'Or in 1912.

Archipenko's residence and artistic activity put him in contact with an artistic circle that includes Léger, Metzinger, Gleizes, and the brothers Duchamp, as well as writer and thinkers such as Guillaume Apollinaire and Alexander Mercereau. Bruce Altshuler in The Avant-Garde in Exhibition writes that in 1911, after the Salons des Indépendents exhibition the Duchamps began Sunday afternoon meetings at their gallery in Puteaux and Monday meetings at Gleizes’ studio in Courbevoie, and that discussions at these meetings covered diverse topics such as the role of art in modern life, non-Euclidian geometry, spiritualism and, “Henri Bergson’s notion of perception involving memory of experience over time.”

The philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was already an intellectual sensation when Archipenko arrived in Paris. His third book Creative Evolution was published in 1907 and he had been giving public lectures at the Collège de France since 1900. According to Mark Antliff in Inventing Bergson, these lectures, “drew an educated public so numerous that it spilled out of the lecture hall.” Bergson’s philosophy was controversial, drawing supporters from all classes, including radical anarchists on the left, like George Sorel who used Bergson’s work to justify class warfare and oppose the
Republic, as well as detractors on the right, like Charles Maurras who believed Bergson undermined the rationalist, Cartesian and Thomist ideologies supported by the royalist Action Française. In the years leading up to World War I, Bergson became the rope in a tug of war between syndicalists, anarchists, and monarchists, each manipulating his philosophical writings to suit their own particular, polarized ends. In his book, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France, 1900-1914*, R. C. Grogin notes that many factions believed “there was no greater intellectual assault upon the rationalist basis of French democracy than Bergsonian vitalism,” because they viewed his vitalism as supporting irrationalism and anarchy. In fact, Bergson’s vitalism simply proposes that the reduction of living organisms and biological processes to constituent parts will never answer the question, “what is the difference between living and non-living systems?” For Bergson, life is irreducible to matter and mechanism because it belongs to a different order of reality. The idea that an opposition to scientific reductionism is, by definition, anti-democratic contrasts with the views of Bergson himself who, according to Antliff, “abhorred racism and defended republican and democratic principles throughout his life.”

Bergson’s philosophy, with its overt references to art as a vital, intuitional faculty and essential counterbalance to scientific rationalism sparked the interest of avant-garde artists, particularly those who opposed the academicism and Greco-Roman orientation of the French tradition. As Antliff notes, Maurras’ conservative Action Française opposed the Symbolist movement in art and literature as supporting anarchic individualism and for favoring a neo-classical French art rooted in Cartesianism and the Greco-Roman culture
of antiquity. Antliff describes how the members of Action Française “condemned the Symbolist movement as antirationalist,” and how the antirationalist position was, “exemplified by the Symbolists’ allegiance to the intuitionist philosophy of Henri Bergson.”

Bergson was not essentially opposed to rationalism, but to an outdated materialism of the late nineteenth century, which believed that the universe was a regulated, predictable, measurable mechanism. Grogan notes that these mechanists believed that the world no longer held mystery and points to people like Thomas Huxley who “insisted that is was theoretically possible to predict the function of the material world by mathematically charting the position and velocity of each of its parts at any given moment.” Bergson had no argument with positivist science as long as it was contained to the investigation of non-living matter, where it excelled, but the positivist orthodoxy left no room for change or progress in the universe. For Bergson, life was a force that not only introduced change and progress, but did so in a way that was indeterminate. His vitalist philosophy pointed out that positivism had failed to, in Grogan’s words, “unveil the mainspring in the clock,” and would continue to fail because the vital force belonged not to matter, but to spirit.

Bergson created a mystical philosophy of spirit that appealed to the contemporary revolutions in physics and mathematics - a philosophy that opened to the vast new world of energy dynamics and uncertainty in the physical sciences, while forming a critique of the prevailing mechanistic theory of heredity introduced by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. As Grogin explains, around 1900 Darwin’s theory of evolution was foundering
on the principle of natural selection, which was flawed primarily because it remained unproven. The idea that “genetic changes, totally unrelated to an organism’s needs, environment or well-being were supposedly produced in a random, accidental fashion,” seemed, on the surface, unscientific. In addition, he writes that the theory was so sufficiently attacked that Darwin turned to the Lamarckian theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics to help account for variations in nature.21

While Grogin speaks about the difficult acceptance of Darwinism in Europe and France in particular, Isabel Wünsche in an essay entitled “Organic visions and biological models in Russian avant-garde art” published in an edited volume titled *Biocentrism and Modernism*, records an equally difficult reception of Darwinism in Russia during the time when Archipenko would have been receiving his education. Wünsche’s article deals primarily with organicism as a basis for the art of Kazimir Malevich and the Union of Youth artists working in St. Petersburg at the beginning of the twentieth century. The vitalist, pantheist, and holistic approach of these artists parallels much of Archipenko’s views expressed in his own philosophical treatise. In terms of Darwinian evolution, which reached Russia in the 1860’s, Wünsche recounts that it was greeted enthusiastically by the Russian Realists, but that they believed it was strongly influenced by the socioeconomic conditions of capitalism in Britain.22 Russian intellectuals rejected Herbert Spencer’s interpretation of Darwin’s natural selection, particularly its emphasis on struggle, competition, and survival of the fittest in favor of harmony, cooperation, mutual aid, and the “active participation of the organism in its evolution.”23 To this end, Wünsche describes the idea that an individual has a symbiotic relationship with the
environment and actively participates in the future adaptation of the species as, “characteristic of intellectual and cultural activities in Russia at the turn of the twentieth century.” If this is true, then Archipenko may have arrived in France already with a view of the individual’s vital role in evolutionary adaptation. Certainly this is an idea that he expresses in his later work, particularly in his belief that exercising the creative faculty improves not only the individual but humanity as a whole, and also that personal experience can alter the genetic makeup of an individual toward a higher evolutionary attainment.

When Archipenko arrived in the United States, in 1923, he brought very little with him. Those works not already in museums or private collections were largely left with friends for safekeeping. His archival material in the Archipenko Papers at the Archives of American Art date almost exclusively from his American period, roughly 1923-1964. Beginning in 1935, at the University of California at Los Angeles, Archipenko delivered a series of lectures entitled "Creativeness." These lectures were given at many museums, universities, and art schools until the late 1950's. In a letter to the State Museum of New Jersey, in Trenton, Archipenko states that the lecture, illustrated with lantern slides from natural science, covers the topic, "Creativeness', explained as a cosmical phenomenon manifested in every living creature and crystalized in the form of Art and Inventiveness." Several references and letters of correspondence suggest that Archipenko had begun working on a book on creativeness, which encompassed the artist's philosophy of art sometime around 1942. Two undated manuscripts, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," and "Creativeness" exist in the
microfilmed material at the Archives of American Art. Given the numerous revisions included with the manuscripts, a date between 1948 and 1951 can be reasonably attributed to this material. "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon" deals specifically with Archipenko's theory of creativeness as a universal or cosmic force that serves as an impetus for all living organisms, their evolution, and the conscious creativity of man that results in works of art. "Creativeness" was apparently intended to expand upon the theoretical work of "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon" and provides a practicum for developing and utilizing this inherent creative faculty in order to promote genius. A 1951 press release in the Detroit Free Press quotes Archipenko saying, "people think that genius is a gift of nature and cannot be produced at will. I say it can." He goes on to stress that creativity is a state of mind that can be achieved through the right method, which he [Archipenko] will, "present in every detail in my next book called 'Creativity.'" These two manuscripts are the most thorough working out of Archipenko's metaphysics. Along with the monograph he published in 1959, Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years: 1908-1958 they serve as the basis of the present dissertation.

It is difficult to say what influence Bergson's writing had on Archipenko's early thinking. There is no evidence that the artist attended any of Bergson's lectures or that he read Bergson in the original French. Archipenko claims that his early work was largely influenced by the Symbolists, particularly Stéphane Mallarmé and Leonid Andreyev. Antliff, in Inventing Bergson indicates that the cubists, particularly Metzinger and Gleizes were first introduced to Bergson's theories through the Symbolists, particularly those writing in the journal Vers et Prose. Of these symbolist writers, Tancrède de
Visan wrote arguably the most influential article, “La Philosophie de M. Bergson et le lyrisme contemporain” in 1910, which aligns Symbolist poetry with Bergsonian intuition as opposed to the formal, intellectual poetry of the Parnassians. While there are no direct references to Bergson in Archipenko's writings prior to "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," there must have been an awareness of the philosopher's work.

Indeed, Archipenko's essay, "'Archipentura' A New Development in Painting," which the sculptor prepared as an artist's statement for the 1928 exhibition at Anderson Galleries, NY is full of oblique references and Bergsonian language. Archipenko describes his invention as "painting on the canvas the true action and not merely an immovable image – a snapshot like that of the kodak – of a moment given by moments." He goes on to claim that, "this is a new means of painting done direct by the artist, in perfect subordination to his will or his creative emotions." The idea of capturing true movement as opposed to the slices of time presented by the cinematograph addresses the same philosophical issues that Bergson raises in Chapter IV of Creative Evolution titled "The Cinematographical Mechanism of Thought and the Mechanistic Illusion." Later in the essay, when Archipenko claims, "it does not call for a philosopher to admit the idea that life is merely a form of energy, and that the only concrete form of energy is movement," concluding that, “consequently, movement is life," he truly could not be speaking of any philosopher other than Bergson. It is clear that, whether Archipenko read Bergson or not, he was clearly familiar with the metaphysical principles introduced by the philosopher.
Bearing in mind the predominance of Bergsonian thought in Europe of the 1910s, the goal of this chapter is not to demonstrate that Archipenko was a Bergsonist or that his work was directly guided by the principles found in the philosopher's work. Rather, inasmuch as Bergson serves as a foundational, intellectual figure whose work influenced the thought of a generation of writers and artists, the many parallels between Bergson's and Archipenko's thinking helps to situate Archipenko's thought within the wider field of modern philosophy in line with the theoretical underpinnings that united avant-garde artists of the early twentieth century—an approach to his work that has never been undertaken or considered heretofore. This Chapter seeks to disclose those parallels by focusing primarily on the legacy of the artist’s writings.

The Creative Universe and Cosmic Dynamism

Forcefully striding into view, virtually emerging from the inky, dark background, the figure Walking (1912)\(^{38}\) appears to concretize before one’s eyes, as though the flux of the universe is coalescing around the movement itself. A photograph, likely taken by the photographer Ernst Wasmuth, ca. 1914-1918 (fig. 1)\(^{39}\) shows the only extant example of an early version of the work. The balance of proportions, rough-textured terracotta, and unrefined forms of this earlier version have a spontaneity, rhythmic fluidity and dynamism lacking in later editions of the work. The composition is in classical contrapposto with the weight shifted to the right leg as the figure of a woman steps forward. The torso twists and the left arm is brought forward to compensate for the
weight shift. The left leg is bent, carrying no weight and the right shoulder is back mimicking the natural movement of the human body as it moves through space.

Archipenko gives us this sense of a woman walking, but he does it in a way that is unprecedented. The weighted, left leg is a thin plane of rolled out clay arranged to provide the strength and rigidity of a wall. A semi-circular cutout delineates the thigh from the shin providing the sense of an articulated knee. The left leg is a similar slab, but the lower leg is a bisected cone serving as a tapering calf and ankle. In place of a left arm is a scrolling shape that resembles the head of a fiddle and the right arm is missing entirely. The torso itself is shaped like the body of a cello. Everywhere something unfamiliar takes the place of something known, but the articulation of the whole presents enough to experience that we identify the figure almost reflexively.

*Walking* exemplifies Archipenko’s primary belief that the essential function of the universe is creation. The walking woman emerges wholly formed, a creative arrangement of matter organized in a way that is unpredictable – indeterminate until fully realized in perception. In the artist’s view, the universe is not the predictable co-ordination of perfectly honed parts, a giant clockwork automaton generating endless automatons that click away in a complex but ordered manner, nor is it the unfolding of a precisely calculated series of subroutines, like some giant computer program which we could encompass in its entirety if we could just zoom out far enough in space and time. Rather, the universe is a flux of pure potentiality\(^40\) that resolves into states, moments, and things only when perceived. This view of the universe is more clearly expressed by Bergson who imagines, “if you abolish my consciousness, the material universe exists exactly as it
was … Matter thus resolves itself into numberless vibrations, all linked together in unInterrupted continuity … and travelling in every direction like shivers in an immense body.”

In consciousness matter coalesces, creating objects that we identify through an association with memory. The voids that form the torso and head in *Walking*, are made whole through the merging of perception and memory. We identify this figure as female through curves provided almost entirely by the contour, outlining the space of the torso in a curvilinear fashion indicating hips and breasts. Though flat and strictly frontal, the head appears to turn to one side, an effect provided solely through the arrangement of form and the adjustment of light and shadow produced by the halved and offset plane, creating a deep shadow. This shadowed line enforces the sense of bilateral symmetry, which allows us to determine the angle and position of the face. It is consciousness reaching into past experience that allows us to assemble these subtle clues and to see, in place of a lump of clay, the abstracted figure of an approaching woman.

Consciousness is implicated in matter, for without it the universe remains an undifferentiated field of energy. For Bergson and Archipenko, the universe itself is a kind of consciousness, but, unlike our own it belongs to spirit, a kind of consciousness where every action and reaction is balanced. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson goes further, saying that supra-consciousness is at the origin of life. He describes supra-consciousness as a “rocket whose extinguished fragments fall back as matter.” Consciousness passes through the fragments, “lighting them up into organisms.” Consciousness is an impetus
and source for creation. Thus our individual consciousness, deriving from universal consciousness and made material, is also a source for creation.

Archipenko begins at universal consciousness, a point reached by Bergson only after a long process of reasoning and argument. On the very first page of “Creativeness,” Archipenko says that the creative characteristics exhibited by mankind, animals, plants, and minerals “reveals to us the omnipotence of the universal mind that we express through arts and inventions,” and that man, “conscious of many sources of his creativeness… extracts energies and ideas, inserting them into concrete forms according to his wisdom and desire.” Further, in a handwritten note at the end of the section, he writes:

Spirit is the universal mind. It is there in space, matter, infinity, and in eternity. It is the latent force. It is perpetually evolving from itself, progressing for itself and incessantly present in the disposition of cells and of all that exists or may exist in the future.

Expressing the universe as both a kind of consciousness and spirit reveals a deep vitalism in both Bergson's and Archipenko's ontology. Since Aristotle, vitalism has existed as the philosophical proposition that life and life processes are essentially different than physical or mechanical ones and cannot be explained through a reductive approach. As Olivar Botar defines it in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, vitalism is the belief that powers or principles, which are neither physical nor chemical are at work in living organisms. For Bergson, the primary role of life “is to insert some indeterminacy into matter. Indeterminate, i.e. unforeseeable, are the forms it creates in the course of evolution.” Life is a creative force that counters entropy, acting as the mainspring that keeps the universe from winding down.
Bergson’s form of vitalism is often described as a neo-vitalism, which emerged at the turn of the century parallel to the paradigm shift from matter-based to energy-based physics. Rather than positing some vital substance, neo-vitalism visualized life as an animating force or energy – in Bergson’s terms an *élan vital*. What separates life from inert matter is that being is the current, the creative energy, an immaterial spirit, already loaded with matter. The material and the immaterial are bound together in being and cannot be reduced to mere matter alone. As Grogin explains it, “the life force is an elemental universal force immanent in nature which purposefully strives to fulfill itself.” For Bergson, the *élan vital* is universal spirit, a second nature that runs through the material world in opposition to it. There is a tension between spirit, which is creative and progressive, and matter, which is static and entropic. Being is the hyphen that binds matter-spirit as a binary pair. What the evolution of life achieves is the unification of matter and spirit: "We are not the vital current itself; we are this vital current already loaded with matter, that is, with congealed parts of its own substance which it carries along its course." Consciousness arises in living beings as a result of the tension between spirit and matter, which pulls in opposite directions.

In his first book *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889), Bergson articulates this division between matter and spirit in terms of time and space. The steady stream of consciousness constitutes real time, a continuous, uninterrupted duration, whereas time conceived as discrete moments, like the divisions of a clock, is a function of matter and space. Being, as the conjunction of spirit and matter, is in a constant tension between duration (the internal sense of time) and
space (the external division of time into discrete moments and of matter into things). Matter and Memory (1896) explores this tension in terms of perception; it investigates how matter and spirit are unified in being through a constant oscillation whereby memory (spirit as individual character) combines with matter in perception in order to insert indeterminacy into the world. Being is a constant negotiation between matter and spirit. The material world is the arena in which we act reflexively and habitually, but through contact with spirit we insert something new and indeterminate into the world. Fredrick Burwick describes this tension in The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy: “The ‘living and concrete self’ is always striving to slough off the ‘crust’ of rationalization it constantly exteriorizes (in the name of survival).” Bergson’s Creative Evolution (1907) aligns organic evolution with the evolution of consciousness, presenting evolution as a vital function that is the expression of spirit acting upon matter in a way that is holistically organized and not rationally determined. With the publication of Creative Evolution, it becomes clear that, for Bergson, evolution is the creative expression of spirit – a universal consciousness, acting upon matter in a manner that goes against mechanical repetition and entropy. Human consciousness is the direct result of that creative progression, and the tension between matter and spirit drives individual creation further. In his treatises, “Creativeness” and “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” Archipenko expresses a vitalism that largely builds off of Bergson’s philosophy, making Bergson an excellent comparative for the analysis of Archipenko’s metaphysics.
Notwithstanding the fruitful connections, Archipenko’s vitalism departs in important ways from Bergson’s *élan vital* making it more biocentrist than neo-vitalist, in the sense that the sculptor views the vital, creative force in terms of organic functions.\(^ \text{57} \) Archipenko is not as strictly dualistic as Bergson. The sculptor does not divide matter and spirit into distinct realities that differ in kind, rather he is inclined to see them as different states co-existing at an atomic level. Where Bergson speaks of spirit and consciousness as waves and currents that flow through life in general, Archipenko is more deeply invested in energy-based physics and relativity, which sees matter and energy as two sides of the same coin.\(^ \text{58} \) In the same way that light can be observed as both a wave and a particle in physics, matter and spirit are distinct, indivisible aspects of the same phenomenon. We may largely perceive the material world in one aspect as a world of things, to which we react and on which we act, yet we also register the latent spiritual energy that is its other aspect. It is important to contend, therefore, that Archipenko’s universal, creative force is bound to matter at an atomic level, which places it within the material world, and therefore not outside the realm of science.\(^ \text{59} \) Archipenko pushes this notion that being is the unification of matter and spirit further asserting that, in the act of creation the two are united: “one may believe that materialism cannot be united with spiritualism, but in the creative process their unity becomes inevitable, because abstraction must be fixed in a concrete, optical, audible, or associative way in order to be transmittable.”\(^ \text{60} \)

Archipenko views creativeness expressed by living beings as a primarily biological process. Creative forces are received and metabolized by the cells in an accumulative way. The results of creative energies acting on an organism are diverse and
unpredictable, but its organic function is no more (or less) mysterious than metabolic regulation or mitosis. Metabolism is the metamorphosis of matter into energy that the cell uses to move and regenerate. Through a similar metamorphosis, living matter becomes self-determinant, self-regulating, and self-replicating. The same impulse that drives individual cells also drives evolution toward the creation of more and more complex organisms. Evolution is not mechanistic or accidental, but is vitalistic – finding its source in the same creative impulses from which life originates. Spirit arises in us and drives us to produce artworks and inventions. Abstract ideas must be sublimated into material form, a literal metamorphosis from an immaterial state to a material one, in the same way that cells metabolize energy into matter. The mind reacts to the universal spirit and produces a masterpiece, which incorporates and radiates that spirit to other minds.61

The work of art is both organic and natural, the result of a long and on-going process of evolution, which has resulted in conscious beings, capable of self-reflection and creative activity that is not exclusively based on the necessities of life. The work of art extends the vital impulse, which has become a conscious urge to materialize new forms from the abstract ideas of experience. Walking communicates the artist’s personal connection to universal forces not through conventional or dogmatic signs, but by combining diverse elements from experience into new forms. The unusual combination of forms, including those that evoke a musical motif (the cello shaped body and fiddlehead scroll,) combine with the rhythm of alternating matter and space to activate corresponding associations in the viewer. Archipenko views this process as parallel to the activity of cells, which transform chemicals into electrical signals that can be distributed
to other cells and activated into movement. The creation of works of art like *Walking* become part of our evolutionary progress because they extend our ability to process formal associations.

For both Bergson and Archipenko, evolution is a primary life process that is creative and irreducible to matter. It is a creative force acting through animated matter, inventing new forms adapted to act and react to the environment, and introducing continuous change in the universe. They regard evolution as the presence of universal spirit acting in the material world. Spirit, the whole of life and the whole of consciousness, flows, settling and adapting to matter, in the form of individual organisms that rise and fall, divide and subdivide, but always carrying forth freedom and indeterminacy. Bergson describes the act of creation saying, it "seizes upon this matter, which is necessity itself, and strives to introduce into it the largest amount of indetermination and liberty." Thus, evolution introduces indeterminacy into the material world. All life seems like an effort to accumulate energy and then let it flow in directions unforeseen and variable. Life is a current sent through matter, drawing from it what it can. A being that evolves more or less freely creates something new each moment. Archipenko, in turn, defines evolution as universal dynamism and creativeness expressed through living beings. He calls this impetus to create something new in each moment, forwardness. Forwardness is not the result of the intellect and the will, but is an automatic expression of nature about which the individual can become aware through his wakening desire to create.
Humanity, the evolutionary point at which freedom has reached a pinnacle, is able to go beyond material necessity and to create works of art that express the whole of life. Bergson claims that, of the few highways of diverging evolutionary paths “only one, that which leads through the vertebrates up to man, has been wide enough to allow free passage to the full breath of life.”67 What Bergson means by this is that only humans have developed the ability to access the past in the form of memory and to project that past as experience in order to prolong the present moment and to consciously create, innovate, and invent. Our survival necessitated an ability to foresee future consequences. By abstracting and generalizing memories we make them fit the present perception, allowing us to predict the next moments with a sufficient degree of accuracy. As Bergson conceives it, “spirit borrows from matter the perceptions on which it feeds, and restores them to matter in the form of movements which it has stamped with its own freedom.”68

The presence of individual spirit - consciousness endowed with memory - draws on a constant stream of perceptions, and chooses from a range of possible actions, rather than reacting reflexively or mechanically.

The complexity of the nervous system allows for a lag between perception and reaction, a moment to reflect and, in that moment, to choose. It is in this opening, this moment of reflection, that consciousness is awakened. With consciousness comes the freedom to choose among a range of possible actions, including inaction.69 For Archipenko, the ability to consciously orient ourselves according to our will carries mankind “beyond a seemingly culminating point of [our] evolution.”70 We tap into the latent creative forces lying deep in the unconscious and in combination with experience,
introduce something entirely new into the universe. As Bergson writes, “Every human work in which there is invention, every voluntary act in which there is freedom, every movement of an organism that manifests spontaneity, brings something new to the world.”71

In the process of creating a work like Walking there is a tension between the clay on the pedestal and the image that the artist has in his mind that requires constant negotiation, oscillating between the concept, which is an agglomeration of abstract ideas, and the physical interaction with the plastic material. The alternation of voids and saliences in the figure require a balance and harmony that comes through the fine-tuning between the eye and the hand. In that moment, between the seeing of the eye and the action of the hand, consciousness makes a free choice, a voluntary act. For Bergson, these are the moments where life inserts spontaneity and brings something new to the world.72 A work of art may contain millions of these free, spontaneous moments, these choices, which arise not out of necessity but from that creative impulse flowing through the artist. For Bergson, this process within each individual recapitulates the whole of human evolution.73

Walking is the product of creative forces at work in the universe and expressed materially through the experiences and actions of an individual artist. The work of art is the result of a metamorphosis that begins as a creative impulse. As Archipenko describes it, the artist draws on his diverse experience in order to make that impulse a virtual image – a conception of the future work.74 Art is an organic process that is analogous to the
metabolic functions of the cell. All art and inventions share this quality and connect to the creative source, which serves as its impetus.

What separates a work of art from a masterpiece is that the masterpiece must contain the latent creative forces, which serve as its impetus. The material form of a work of art, its style, historical, and cultural conditions are only the surface qualities, but a work of art elevates and amplifies the spirit (which is its impetus) registered by the artist and expressed in concrete form. In a masterpiece, a work of art that is enduring and timeless, spirit transcends the temporal and material conditions acting as a creative force that contributes to the evolution of mankind.

If Walking is a masterpiece, then it must radiate universal creativeness in a way that is powerful enough to elevate the senses and the mind of the viewer spiritually. Here we must understand that this is not a metaphor, but that the artist, in the creative process, manipulates not only the material form, but also the spiritual, vital energy that Archipenko understands as present at the atomic level. The true work of art is a manifestation of universal abstract causes, registering through an individual, where the material conditions of the work give way to and communicate spirit. In the work of art, as in life, a metamorphosis occurs that changes inert matter and becomes filled with vital energy permanently attached to living being. The true work of art - a work of genius, for Archipenko - is a manifestation of universal abstract causes, registering through an individual, where the material conditions of the work give way to, and communicate, spirit.
Genius is the central point of Archipenko's "Creativeness." However, Archipenko is emphatic that genius is not an accidental phenomenon. Through the right educational methods, one may concentrate the mind to operate on a level that taps directly into the stream of creative forces in order to produce art and inventions that radiate universal creativeness. He teaches that, "the urge to create can be utilized on scientific principles and be directed for the better destiny of mankind towards a happy existence and progress." Creative endeavors become a path through which mankind can influence and further its own evolution. Archipenko’s treatise is the cornerstone of the artist's project intended to develop an educational system that could train people to tap into their latent creative powers and to become, not artists, but geniuses. His lectures and teaching endeavored to do just that. Further, his own sculptural work is intended to stimulate the latent creative forces in the viewer. In the presence of a work like Walking, we are meant to sense something in the work, some aspect that is not visible or part of its material qualities. Elevating spirit over matter, Archipenko formulates the primary goal of art in the following way:

In art, if spirit becomes the victor over the presence of matter during the creative conflict, the work of art will automatically become vitally attached to timelessness as the consequence of the diffusion of the concreteness of matter. The projection of atomic creative forces makes a work of art radiate hypnotic exaltation, powerful enough to elevate the mind and senses to the highest state of spiritual rising.

For Archipenko, the work of art is the result of universal creative forces registered through individual experience and expressed in material form in such a way that it radiates spiritual energy to the viewer. He conceives of this energy as an atomic force that pervades the universe, creating living organisms and driving those organisms to further
complexity through evolution. Art emerges as an extension of the creative, evolutionary process, as the conscious awareness of creativeness and dynamism as the spirit of the universe.

Archipenko’s understanding is vitalistic in the sense that the universal, creative force animates matter as living beings, which cannot be simply reduced to chemical constituents or be understood through a mechanistic model. His particular vitalistic position can be understood as biocentric because he views the animating force in terms of biological processes. For Archipenko, the creation of artworks is an organic extension of exactly the same processes by which the amoeba converts energy into movement or the cell replicates itself in mitosis. Converting energy into matter and matter back into energy is the same metamorphosis that occurs when a creative idea is made manifest as an artistic form, only on a different scale. The creative forces that result in an artistic masterpiece are identical to those that produced the first living organisms. Thus, Archipenko finds a cellular basis for creative expression and contends that this expression becomes more complex as organisms evolve toward greater complexity.

The Cellular Basis of Creativity

Like an alien heroine, a goddess from another world, or some lost branching on the evolutionary tree, the sculpture provocatively titled *Who Is She?* (1957) (Fig. 2) stands proudly. She is a distant relative of *Walking* separated by nearly half a century, two World Wars, the Great Depression, and countless other changes both cultural and personal. Formally, both figures share the vertical orientation, the Classical stance –
weight firmly planted on one leg, the head slightly turned enhancing the dynamic asymmetry of the contrapposto figure. Both also share a balanced alternation between positive and negative space, though *Who Is She?* is far less radical than *Walking*, presenting more of a rhythmic alternation between material and space, rather than a substitution of one for the other. Where the figures diverge is that *Who Is She?* appears biomorphic, not geometric. Where *Walking* uses cut out slabs joined at angles to bisected cones, *Who Is She?* appears to swell and flow in a continuous, organic manner.

Structurally, *Who Is She?* has more in common with a single-celled creature or protozoa than with the human figure. The smooth, green appendages are like pseudopods, which extend from the nucleus, transforming the shape of the organism in order to move. Along the central trunk is an area differentiated in both color and texture – a crystalline, mineral structure that supports the figure’s upright position. The bisected head, with its familiar oval void looks like a pair of mandibles. Yet the figure, in its abstraction, is strongly anthropomorphic as well. The sense that this figure is otherworldly derives from this conflict between its human character and the organic otherness.

In Archipenko’s view, the cell is the building block and the creative center of all organisms. Out of the *Ur-Schleim*, the protoplasmic mass where life found its first expression, creative forces gathered to organize primitive cells with walls separating the mass into individual organisms. These single-celled organisms exhibit all the characteristics of creative life and recapitulate cosmic dynamism at the microscopic level. They are dynamic, moving about freely, acting and reacting to their environment; they
are self-replicating, transforming matter and energy into living copies that retain all of the characteristics of the original; and they are metamorphic, adapting to environmental conditions as necessary in order to develop and progress. The living cell is spirit, the universal creative cause, acting through matter to introduce freedom in the form of indeterminacy.

This otherness is something that Archipenko explores in his later work. It derives from a deep understanding of the forms that bind us to our primordial past. For Archipenko, the cell contains all of the experiences of the past and passes them on, during mitosis, to the next generation. In the artist's words, “the greatest miracle is enclosed behind the walls of the smallest organ, the cell. In this invisible area, there are located an incredible amount of ancestorial [sic] experiences and their forces accumulated for centuries.” No information is lost and each cell passes its experience on to the next so that we carry, locked within our cells, the accumulated memories going back to the first cells. “The range of the cell’s memory is far beyond the life of one individual,” he continues, ”It extends into the infinity of previous lives,” This memory of the past remains unconscious unless it is tapped or triggered by creative causes. “Cells memorize their own reactions, which may be consciously evocated and returned to the mind in the dream or in meditation.”

Part of the development of a creative individual is the ability to reach into this vast storehouse in order to consciously draw on experiences that are universal and timeless. The varied textures and innovative polychrome patinas Archipenko carefully applies to these late bronzes, like Who is She? combines with abstracted figural forms to
produce works that feel utterly alien and yet somehow ancient as well. We are made aware of something from our evolutionary past – a connection that we have to all other living things across time. The ancient quality is tied to that sense of timelessness that he strives for in the work.

Archipenko asserts that chromosomes, in the nucleus of the cell are the source of individual creativeness.\textsuperscript{88} It is in the chromosomes that an individual’s character and form are stored as well as the code needed to produce future generations. The chromosomes hold both the characteristics and the germ of an individual. He goes further to describe chromosomes as “the threads of contacts with the rest of the universe,”\textsuperscript{89} Since the chromosomes contain ancestral experience, they tie each individual to their origins with the first cells. Through evolution, all plants and animals contain the same common origin and are entangled. This entanglement of all living beings means that individuals are not truly independent but exist as constituents of one system.\textsuperscript{90} The idea that all living beings are connected across time and space, combined with universal creative forces which flow through us, are the reason why different civilizations, separated by oceans, come up with similar cultural forms at the same time.

\textit{Who Is She?} formally combines elements of the cellular, and the protozoan with germinal, anthropoid characteristics such as the bi-lateral symmetry, central vertical torso, bi-pedal stance, and forward-facing head fusing aspects of our evolutionary origins with the recognizable traits of our species to create a new form. Archipenko connects the present with the primordial past in order to project something that speaks to the creative possibility that lies at the source of all living things. Creative forces that have
accumulated for centuries, from the very first cells, propagate through the artist combining with his individual experience to evoke a new expression that reflects the system as a whole.

Tracing the evolutionary development of cells from the primordial protoplasm to multi-cellular organisms, Archipenko draws on the work of Jules LeFevre director of the Laboratoire de Bioenergetique from 1918-1940. Based on LeFevre’s Manuel Critique De Biologie (1938), Archipenko outlines three developmental phases of cell organization: primordial, grouping (or speciation,) and individual. In the primordial phase life springs not from the cells, but from formative dynamism, natural forces acting within and through the cells. These forces he identifies as “electricity, chemical, radiation, magnetism, gravitation, etc…” The cell as an organism is a result of these forces acting through matter. In the development of the cell we can draw, “a parallel between universal and individual creativeness, [and] we find that the whole premordial [sic] flow of causes producing cells, as principle is precisely duplicated in any creative process by man and animal.” In its formative phase a work of art stands in relation to these universal origins which are its impetus, and if a work doesn’t contain “those causes which provoke mind and feeling to follow the activating forces that are supposed to be present in the world,” then the work or invention is useless.

The creation of a work like Who Is She? duplicates the same flow of causes that produces life in the cell. Each work is tied to this generative source that Archipenko calls formative dynamism. The importance isn’t simply on the formal or surface qualities of the work that mimic or reproduce the appearance of the primordial. Archipenko always
places these physical characteristics secondary to the inner forces that radiate from the work and expand out from it. Placing too much emphasis on geometric or biomorphic features misses the point of the work, which is to provoke us to follow the course of creative forces. The distinguishing feature of the cell is not that it is a mass of protoplasm individuated by a wall, but that it is the embodiment of forces that allow for progression and freedom. No matter its form, the work of art must also be the embodiment of these forces.

In the grouping phase these cells group together forming complex multi-cellular organisms. Groups of cells adapt and become specialized into organs with particular functions. Archipenko jumps from groups of cells directly to the evolutionary differentiation of distinct species. Each species is distinct but all have a common structure, development, and organization. Despite their outward appearance they are all unified by the same universal, creative forces. From this, Archipenko concludes that, “the same universal causes forming cells are to be found in all animals and human beings, plants and minerals,” and, “basically every living being is exactly the same, only [the] forms and functions are different.”96 Through our common origin we all carry the same forces and material constituents which form all other living beings, we are abstractly and materially entangled with them. Realizing this, as creative individuals we should, “attach ourselves to all universal causes and establish feeling and intellectual contact with infinity and eternity,” which all masterpieces must contain.97

The grouping, or speciation, phase of development flies in the face of materialism and a mechanistic view of the world in many ways. The taxonomy of different species
established by Carl Linnaeus stands as a system of classification that divides species based on morphology, or the differentiation of physical characteristics. Speciation, and the question of when evolutionary changes accumulate to the point of distinguishing a new species played an important role in the early debates surrounding evolution. As with the primordial stage, the stance that Archipenko takes in regards to speciation is that morphology is a secondary characteristic. The primary emphasis is on the collective organization and developmental continuity that binds us as one.\(^9\)

*Who Is She?* like all works of art, establishes and maintains contact with those universal causes which unite us. The individual morphology of the work, both the strange organic elements and the more familiar anthropoid aspects, differentiates it from other works, yet it remains connected universally to all other creative works. Like living beings, works of art are entangled across space and time. In this sense, *Who Is She?* shares in the creative spirit of both contemporary and prehistoric art.\(^9\) Archipenko stresses that the artist has to be consciously aware of his connection to these universal causes and how they are expressed in the work in order to evoke the sense of that connection in the viewer.\(^1\)

The individual phase maintains the sense of unity and collectivity, and combines it with the unique characteristics that arise from distinct genetic and environmental conditions. As Archipenko describes it, the traits that an individual has are the cells’ tendency to “bend in the area of their own disposition.”\(^1\) However, these individual traits are combinations of characteristics belonging to the species as a whole that arise from genetic expression. Individual traits are the realization of creative potential that lies
within all cells. This results in an individuality that is rooted in the universal. He writes, “the mentality and feeling of an individual, regardless of his individuality, are never independent from the center where the mentality of other creatures are formed.” The individual member of a species is different only in aspect, sharing a commonality in perception and experience that arises from evolutionary ancestry. Archipenko’s claim is that, creatively, we respond to the same causes with similar reactions because of this commonality, an effect that is often referred to as the spirit of the times. Our entanglement leads to a creative non-locality, where similar creative expressions and concepts arise at the same time in different cultures, despite having no physical contact or influence. The example Archipenko uses is prehistoric artwork produced in Denmark that shares the same traits as work produced in New Guinea at the same time. Another example would be the architectural form of the pyramid developed independently but simultaneously by the Egyptians and the Aztecs.

These three phases of development: primordial, grouping (or speciation,) and individual result in a different conception of causal relations than the physical/mechanical one, where a chain of events can be described in terms of predictable causes and their direct effects. The idea that the very creative causes which organized life from matter result in an effect that is a spontaneous, non-local manifestation due to entanglement once again touches upon theories developed by quantum physics, but are applied to biological processes and living entities. Because we maintain a common center and a genetic link with our common origin through our cellular constitution, we respond to universal creative causes with a similar, general expression, but one differentiated by personal and
cultural experience. Someone living in the twenty-first century would not respond with the same creative expression as an Egyptian living in the twenty-first century BCE.

The identification of *Who Is She?* as a figure originating from another world is thus the result of a conjunction between organic elements from the microscopic world with those visual elements, usually reserved for the human figure, which have a long history in Western Art going back, at least, to the ancient Greeks. The technology of microscopy opens our experience up to a world, which is truly alien, but is also our origin. Materially and formally, *Who Is She?* connects our evolutionary development to the first living organisms. The claim that Archipenko argues for is that spiritually, the work of art also connects us to those first creative causes that produce life and leads to our ability to consciously tap into that source as a means of progress. Unlike the mechanical cause and effect, creative causes are like an energy field surrounding all of us. We register this energy through our cells and are able to manipulate it through conscious will producing works that express both the universal and the individual.

*Instinct and Intellect*

Evoking the swirling color, movement and sheer joy of the Cirque Medrano, the affable, female juggler *Medrano I* (1912) (fig. 3) performs for the crowd, keeping her balls dancing in the air as though by magic. To create this figure Archipenko assembled diverse materials and adapted them for a new purpose. Wood, metal, wire, glass, and even one of the sculptor’s tools used for modeling clay, were brought together in a way that seems spontaneous and whimsical. Pieces of sheet metal have been bent and
folded to create the head, torso, breast, and shin. Wood pieces serve as the spine, legs and arms. A hoop of wire traces the outline of the right shoulder and the sculptor’s tool forms the right forearm. These elements are not the typical materials of sculpture. In traditional sculpture an assemblage like this might serve as an armature onto which clay would be molded like flesh, but here it is as though the internal structure of sculpture has been laid bare and made to stand revealed as the work itself.

Of course, Archipenko has not laid Medrano I bare, but has painted it in the colors that evoke the lively feeling of the circus. Like a carousel, the curve of the torso alternates between vibrant, yellow stripes and reflective metal. The smiling face with her red cap is almost clownish recalling both the entertainments of the circus and the characters that populate it. Archipenko also uses the paint to create the illusion of depth on flat surfaces – the figure’s left breast, painted on a glass sheet, is given highlights to make it appear round and the folded circle of metal that comprises the left knee is painted to create a highlight and sense of curvature. Everywhere in the work Archipenko oscillates between the thing as it is (a rectangular length of wood painted black), and the thing transformed into something else (the bent piece of metal painted as a foot complete with six toes.) Nowhere is this play made more evident than in the juggler’s balls, which serve double duty as knees and breast. Archipenko even plays with the difference between real and represented forms: alternating between real spheres - the left knee and under the right arm, and the flat, circular forms of the disc on the base, the right knee, and the breast, which are intended to represent balls.
This kind of transformation between the material as it is and what it represents is an important aspect of Archipenko’s art and it provides a clue to what he means when he says that spirit must be the victor over materiality if the work is to become truly timeless. The material quality is always evident in Archipenko’s work, but it is the feeling that the work evokes that is its spirit. *Medrano I* elicits a sense of joy and play that overwhelms the material qualities, and even when our attention is drawn to the material, those feelings remain as part of its construction. These feelings are produced through intuition by an aesthetic faculty that Bergson calls *sympathy*. For Bergson, our eyes see a work like *Medrano I* as an assemblage of parts, but our intuition puts us in touch with life, and allows us to see the figure as a juggler, a performer, and an embodiment of sprightly, female spirit.

Bergson's conception of instinct and intellect and the way that intuition evolves from both helps to us to understand the role intuition plays in Archipenko’s work. In the evolution of animals, Bergson identifies instinct and intelligence as two different tendencies, or divergent solutions to adaptation, which nature bestows in different degrees on a path to mobility and suppleness. About these two tendencies, Bergson writes, “there has never been a complete severance between them: they haunt each other continually; everywhere we find them mingled; it is the proportion that differs.” The hymenoptera, or insects, the most successful of the arthropods, rely largely on instinct though a degree of intelligence exists. Whereas in man, the most successful of the vertebrates, we find a surfeit of intelligence that all but overpowers instinct. According to Bergson, the essential difference between instinct and intelligence is that (as in the
original italics): “*instinct perfected is a faculty of using and even of constructing organized instruments; intelligence perfected is a faculty of making and using unorganized instruments.*”\(^{109}\) Organized instruments are those provided by nature, whereas unorganized instruments are invented as needed.

*Madrano I* could not be created by an animal that operates primarily on instinct. Art, in that it is inventive, relies largely on the intellect’s ability to adapt processes and materials to novel forms – making and using unorganized instruments. The ability to process symbols, to see a painted, folded piece of metal as a foot requires consciousness, in addition to intelligence. Instinctive animals operate in the present, with no hesitation between sensation and reaction, through what Bergson identifies as a sympathy with organic life. Bergson indicates that it is in the hesitation between sensation and action that consciousness arises.\(^{110}\) Instinctive knowledge is action - immediate and largely unconscious.

As Bergson makes clear: Instinct uses a specific instrument for a specific object and “*the most marvelous instincts of the insects do nothing but develop its special structure into movements.*”\(^{111}\) Nature gives the insect the tools, which it requires in order to develop. However, this creates a certain rigidity or automatism. There is a freedom of movement, to be sure, but within a certain limited range. The structure is invariable even while each particular instance is novel. Bergson uses the bee's hive to indicate how it is always structurally the same, utilizing the instruments that it is given and the instinct to work those instruments.\(^{112}\)
Instinct is rigid and restricts the freedom of organisms whereas the intellect moves freely, adapting readily to changing conditions. With the benefit of the intellect, it is possible to escape automatism and to create freely. *Medrano I* demonstrates the free associations that the intellect makes available, resulting in a spontaneous material expression. The bee constructing a hive, the decisive action of the wasp, who knows exactly where and how to sting its prey so as to immobilize and not kill it, is reflected in action. The action gets to its object immediately, through instinct. *Medrano I* requires the delay between sensation and memory that is intellectual perception. This delay opens up a conscious range of possible actions from which to choose, as the possibility of suspending action in reflection.

Instinct proceeds organically. As Bergson claims, it “carries out further the work by which life organizes matter.” Grouping to form a multi-cellular organism, cells alter their morphology specialized to perform required tasks. They adapt to work for the benefit of the whole organism, “and yet,” Bergson continues, these instincts “are the natural functions of the cell.” In a similar way, the beehive must be seen as a single organism. Each bee is adapted to a specific task that benefits the hive as a whole. For Bergson, “the instinct that animates the bee is indistinguishable, then, from the force that animates the cell, or is only a prolongation of that force.”

Archipenko also recognizes a separation between divergent evolutionary lines separating the arthropods and vertebrates along the lines of unconscious instinct and conscious intellect. He defines instinct as an organic response to the universal creative forces registered by the cells and the organism as a whole. Instinct ties into the same
universality that Archipenko classifies as part of grouping, or speciation. The instinctive action of ants, bees and other animals comes from a direct contact with the creative forces registered by the cells. He writes, “their use of technique and their social organization are borrowed from the universal stock, and do not differ from those of humans.”

Instincts have evolved along with the species and stored with the ancestral memories that Archipenko posits within the nucleus of the cell. We carry deep in the unconscious depths of our being a common instinct going back to our evolutionary origins. However, instinct alone does not lead to creative potency. The creative potency of a genius requires the ability of the intellect to penetrate instinct consciously in order to sift through and choose the appropriate reactions.

In order to see the beehive as a product of precise engineering and organization or the wasp's expertise as the presence of specific knowledge requires the analytical ability of the intellect. The intellect strives to understand the hive as a functional assemblage of hexagonal cells that make up the comb and serve as both storage for honey and as a nursery for the egg, larvae, and pupae. The intellect breaks the world into parts from which it reconstructs the whole as relations between those parts. When we see *Medrano I* as an assemblage of different materials, our intellect has already divided it and put it back together again. Intelligence wants to discover how the wasp knows precisely where to sting its prey, in the same way that it wants to know how the artist arrives at his subject. The bees and wasps, however, have no such understanding. They live in the present, acting without thinking, and use the innate tools nature has provided, which have
developed through a long evolutionary process to ensure the continued survival of the hive.

Where instinct is reflexive and automatic – using the tools provided by nature, the intellect constructs instruments that can take any form and serve any purpose. Intellect fashions artificial objects into tools to serve a particular need. Bergson writes (emphasizing his words by italicizing them), “intelligence, considered in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects... and of indefinitely varying the manufacture.” There is a flexibility and freedom to the inventiveness of the intellect. What the intellect trades with instinct is that constructed instruments are often clumsy and inferior to the satisfaction of immediate wants, they lack the swift precision and perfection of the natural instrument, but the intellect introduces a flexibility that extends the organism beyond the limits of instinct. Bergson claims that the intellect “lays open to activity an unlimited field into which it is driven further and further, and made more and more free.”

When we analyze Medrano I as an assemblage of different materials we are relying on the intellect, which sees the work as forms and relations between parts and aspects. A folded piece of metal with a painted oval and a curved line becomes a face because we match those features with those in memory. The work of art is a unique kind of tool in that it suspends action and encourages reflection. This reflection stimulates a cascade of associations in memory opening up a field of contemplation that is manifold and personal. The clownish face may evoke a sensation of joy or a childhood recollection of the circus. The recognition of a sculptor’s tool as the extension of the arm may literally
invoke the artist as creator or relate the artist’s skill to the illusion of the juggler. The work of art turns to self-reflection, contemplation, and thought rather than action.

Intelligent knowledge is thought, and it involves choices. It stops the automatic response of instinct and inserts a delay where options are considered. Thought, however, gets at no object in particular. It deals with forms, relating “an object to an object, a part to a part, and an aspect to an aspect.”123 Instinct deals with unconscious knowledge while the intellect, trying to find the most suitable solution, deals with a conscious knowledge of relations between the things into which it divides the world.

Dividing the world, understanding it in terms of parts in relation to other parts breaks matter, life, and time into pieces. According to Bergson, what the intellect gains in terms of freedom, it loses by letting an essential aspect of life escape. In addition to artificially dividing up the world into smaller and smaller parts, which it identifies as the true reality, the intellect then mechanically reconstitutes the world with what is already given in memory and lets what is new in each moment escape.124 The intellect is like a matching system, which separates present perception into familiar categories based on memory and then reconstitutes those memories in order to anticipate the future. The evolution of the intellect produces a very flexible organism, which is able to quickly adapt to, and act upon, new situations. Though, it does this by viewing the present (a totally novel moment,) in terms of the past (that which has already occurred.) What is new in every moment is discarded and what resembles the already known is retained. The new is always resolved in terms of what is already known arranged in a different order, thus the intellect innovates rather than invents.125 In order to become truly free and
creative requires the development of what Bergson calls intuition, which allows us to reconnect with the natural and immediate continuity of the instinct but in the full consciousness of the intellect.

The tendency of the intellect to fabricate, carving out forms in matter, makes us consider all forms, even the forms of natural things, as artificial. In our analysis of Medrano I, we break apart what is, in reality, a unified composition as we match individual features with corresponding memories. In order to fit these memories to the present forms they are stripped of their particularity and distilled into general forms. The folded and painted piece of metal is perceived as a human face because of its shape and the relationship of the features to the rest of the figure. Bergson describes this intellectual tendency as thought seeing the whole of matter as a fabric, which it can cut up and sew together as it pleases. Medrano I is nature that has been cut up and sewn back together in a way that is provisional. As Bergson defines it (with the emphasis of italics), "the intellect is characterized by the unlimited power of decomposing according to any law and of recomposing into any system." This tendency to fabricate, combined with the social nature of our species, develops into an ability to communicate through a language of signs, which are mobile and infinitely extensible. A curved piece of metal painted with lines that divide it into segments, affixed between the base of the sculpture and a wooden spindle symbolizes a foot. Change its relative position and it could be a hand. With very little visual cueing we can read these signs, and they are equally legible to essentially all humans. It is this mobility of signs, moving from thing to thing, that has enabled them to be extended from things to ideas, according to Bergson. Moving from
the things to ideas is the ability to reflect, and it is through reflection that the intellect detaches itself from the material world, achieving another degree of freedom. This increased freedom comes through consciousness, which pushes the intellect to another level. The ability to turn inward and to reflect, is the power of intuition. It is what allows the creation of a work of art, like Medrano I. Art, is directed not at practical action, but at the idea and feelings which it reproduces in us.

Intuition

Returning for a moment to instinct, the faculty that gets to its object immediately through direct action, and to the example of the beehive discussed above, Bergson declares that the wasp immobilizes its prey by an intuition, an instinctive knowledge of the other that directs the stinger to its target, and not through a process of knowledge involving a relation of anatomical parts. The question that science asks is, how does the wasp, develop, learn, and perfect this ability? This question views the problem in terms of the intellect, which knows the world from the outside, as a series of relationships between parts. Viewed in terms of intellect, the relationship between wasp and prey involves a complex set of mechanical interactions. The instinctive wasp does not know the relative positions of nerve centers, it does not develop practical knowledge of anatomy, rather it proceeds by a sympathy with its prey.

Sympathy implies a kind of co-evolution in the sense that the two, wasp and prey, develop together. It goes to the inner connection of life, rather than the outer effect. Bergson’s sense of sympathy is related to our common human notions of sympathy,
namely the fellow feeling in ourselves for another, but it is different. In English, sympathy is understood as a way of relating to another through knowledge and shared experience, not as an immediate, instinctive connection with the other as co-extensive with us. The common notion of sympathy has become penetrated with intellect, meaning that it is understood as external relations between us and the other. Archipenko speaks of this kind of co-extensive knowledge (Bergson’s sympathy) in terms of a sixth sense operating at the cellular level. This sixth sense links us to our universal nature and origins, going beyond the externalized materiality of sight, sound, and touch. The difficulty with both Bergson’s intuition and Archipenko’s latent sixth sense is that, as Archipenko indicates, they are intangible and “beyond any substantial analysis.” For Bergson, the minute we speak of analysis we are already in the realm of the intellect (as external relations) and not intuition (an inner connection with life.)

With the increased consciousness of the intellect toward reflection and the ability to move from external objects to ideas, instinct becomes intuition. Intuition, which in the wasp is instantaneous, lived, and focused on its object, becomes disinterested, self-conscious, and reflected in man. Humans develop an aesthetic faculty whereby we are placed “back within the object by a kind of sympathy.” The artist goes beyond external relations, seeing the object as it is for itself: whole, continuous, and organized, rather than as an object that satisfies our necessity: represented in terms of parts and relations that we can act upon. As Bergson asserts, that which the intellect fails to give us, intuition “by the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living, introduces us to life’s own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly
continued creation.” The intellect allows us to think about the material world and to anticipate events. Intuition returns us to spirit - to know the world as whole, continuous, and organized.

A sympathetic response to a work like Medrano I involves a turning inward to self-reflection and establishing a connection to the work through one’s own experience. It is an immediate response that evokes an emotion such as joy, delight, or deeper, less tangible feelings that prolong engagement with the work. Intuition bypasses, or leaps over the intellect in its immediacy and creates an open link with the object in itself. The art object accomplishes this partly because it is disinterested, that is, it does not satisfy an immediate need and thus stirs us not to action, but to reflection.

Where Bergson relies on intuition, Archipenko posits a third mental state or capacity, which he calls creative consciousness or “super-knowledge.” The concept is very much like Bergson’s intuition in that it goes in the opposite direction of the intellect, away from matter, turning inward and becoming self-conscious. Super-knowledge goes beyond ordinary knowledge in that it is also knowledge of the subconscious self. This includes the ability to tap into the ancestral knowledge of the cells as well as to receive the creative forces communicated through them. The activities and influences of the cells are registered by the intellect as affective sensations. In turn, intellectual activities and emotions agitate corresponding activities in the cells. Creative consciousness is an awareness of this interdependence between the mind and the cells and the awareness of the manifold influences, ancestral and environmental, seeking a creative outlet. Creative
consciousness is able to utilize these subconscious influences and through the intellect manifest them as works and inventions.\textsuperscript{137}

The figure of \textit{Medrano I} plays on the creative consciousness, stimulating both the intellect and intuition. In one sense, we cannot help but see the work as a marvelous and inventive combination of diverse materials brought together in novel ways. As viewers, applying our intellect in perception, we cut out from the whole cloth elements that we represent as knees, limbs, and heads and recompose them as fabricated parts. There is a complex interplay of signs, which seem to shift and change meaning the more one examines the work. This is particularly true in the way that the round molded forms take on different contexts and have multiple meanings. The small sphere serves as both a ball and the anatomical equivalent of a knee. The use of paint contributes to this effect. The spheres are painted in contrasting colors, which make them stand out from the figure to which they are attached, giving the appearance of being suspended momentarily in the air in the act of juggling. These effects are all external and material. They result from seeing \textit{Medrano I} as a coordination of parts related in terms of their functions. In this sense, the work of art presents itself as an unorganized instrument produced by the intellect.

Considered in terms of Bergson’s intellect, \textit{Medrano I} is like an instrument that has no outward function.\textsuperscript{138} It doesn’t fulfill an immediate need like an axe or a flint, and it doesn’t lead to decisive action, nor a single act or gesture of response. The work plays around the zone of possible actions; it interrupts the typical cycle of the intellect, which moves from the recognition of a need to fabricating whatever will satisfy it. For Bergson, consciousness arises in this interruption, becoming intense and creating the possibility of
reflection. Reflection moves in the direction toward memory and spirit, the direction of intuition.

Through the immediacy of intuition, we register the continuity of Medrano I—organized in itself and stimulating reflection toward spirit. The work triggers an emotional response that relates to joy, pleasure, the excitement of the circus and the magical entertainments experienced there. Medrano I is intricately connected to a diverse history of entertainment, circuses, and performers, as well as to a history of artistic subjects, methods, and modes of expression. There is a sympathetic connection to the work by which we experience ourselves, not as apart from it but as a part of it. Like the wasp who paralyzes its prey through an intuition of the other, Medrano I inserts itself directly into conscious, not as an assemblage of parts but as a whole conception connected to our entire evolution, producing an affect, an emotional response, that goes beyond the material form. Medrano I maintains the tension between the external direction of the intellect (toward materiality) and the internal reflection of intuition (toward spirit) that is dynamic and progressive.

For Archipenko, works of art like Medrano I activate both the intellect and the intuition. The viewer, engaging the intellect, sees the work as a co-ordination of parts that have symbolic equivalence with experience in memory. Through the mobility of signs and the interrelation of material forms with abstract ideas, the viewer becomes a creative and active participant in the work. This engagement completes the work making it live in experience. Like a refrain of music that remains in memory after the performance, the work of art becomes eternally tied to spirit. The work of the intellect opens up a certain
duration of time as more and more associations with memory are formed through reflection.

The viewer’s intuition, however, acts with an immediacy, leaping beyond the intellect in the direction of spirit. Where the intellect initially isolates the work from others, cutting it from the whole fabric, intuition finds sympathy with the work as part of the whole cloth. The eyes of intuition see Medrano I immediately in its fullness and continuity with everything else, which the intellect stitches together after the fact. For Bergson, the sense of the whole, which intuition provides, hovers over the intellect’s process of cutting and stitching extending across its entire duration.¹⁴² For Archipenko, much of what intuition provides remains as latent or subconscious experience, which is registered by the cells and surfaces as an emotional or autonomic response.

What makes an emphasis on intuition so difficult is that it evades analysis. When the intellect turns its attention to intuition the best it can arrive at is an analogy or approximation. As Bergson laments, “Consciousness in man, is pre-eminently intellect... In the humanity of which we are a part, intuition, it is, in fact, almost completely sacrificed to intellect.”¹⁴³ According to Bergson, in the struggle to conquer matter consciousness has adapted to the habits of matter and become even more identified with intellect. He describes intuition as “a lamp almost extinguished, which only glimmers now and then, for a few moments at most wherever a vital interest is at stake.” However, should philosophy sustain these fleeting intuitions, as Bergson encourages, it would reveal the unity of spiritual life and the relation of the life of the spirit to that of the body, rather than isolating one from the other.¹⁴⁴ This becomes the goal of Archipenko’s
sculpture – to express the unity of spirit and matter as aspects of cosmic dynamism and universal creativeness. He describes the artist as transforming his “body’s experiences into spiritual energy,” which through time and space are “transported into the body of the listener, indefinitely, immortally.” The artist’s process is identical to that of nature, which carries vital characteristics through time and space to emerge in cells.145

This chapter situates Archipenko’s metaphysics within a tradition of vitalism that finds a resurgence in the early decades of the twentieth century, by demonstrating a close parallel with arguably the most pre-eminent proponent of vitalism, Henri Bergson. Adopting the paradigm of energy-based physics Bergson was able to develop a neo-vitalism, which argued that an immaterial, life force was the animating principle dividing living from non-living matter. In addition, this élan vital was the creative force through which evolution introduced new forms of life, countering the mechanistic entropy of materialism. For both Bergson and Archipenko, spirit is the source of life energy and the creative impetus in the universe. While Bergson asserts that matter and spirit belong to two different realities that are united in being, Archipenko views matter and spirit as different aspects of the same phenomena existing in dynamic tension. Art, for Archipenko, expresses universal spirit as a latent force that is perpetually evolving through the creation of new forms.

Archipenko’s Walking serves as an example of universal creativeness expressed through artistic works. Walking is the expression of universal, abstract causes flowing through the artist who takes up the creative impetus and through a metamorphosis turns abstract and immaterial ideas into a material form that unites spirit and matter where the
material conditions of the work give way to, and communicate, spirit. Archipenko parallels this idea of a metamorphosis that produces a work of art with cellular biological functions like metabolism and mitosis, which transform energy into matter and vice versa. In the creative process, through metamorphosis, a masterpiece radiates spirit to elevate the senses and mind of the viewer. Walking accomplishes this by engaging an active viewer who completes the act of creation through their own experience. The viewer transforms the contour, voids, and contrasts of light and shadow into the figure of a walking woman through associations in memory.

The biomorphic forms of Archipenko’s later works like Who Is She? reveal a deep biocentrism in his metaphysics. Biocentrism is a particular form of vitalism that expresses the animating forces of life in terms of biological processes. In his treatise, “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” Archipenko describes the cell, the basic unit of biological function, as spirit acting through matter to introduce freedom in the form of independent, indeterminate, creative action. The cell serves as a link that connects all living beings across time and space. For Archipenko, the cell contains ancestral memory going back to the primordial origins of the original cells. He stresses the commonality that all living beings share despite the differentiation of species and individuals, which he describes as simply morphological and not structural. Who Is She? draws on ancestral memory, biological origins, and morphological variation to present sculptural organisms that both appear strangely foreign and remain tied to common origins. The claim that Archipenko argues for with works like Who Is She? is that spiritually, the work of art connects us to the first creative causes that produce life and provides us the opportunity
Bergson describes intellect and intuition as two different directions in the work of consciousness. Intuition goes in the direction of life (and spirit) and the intellect goes in the direction of matter. The intellect uses perception to divide the world into things upon which we can act. It cuts up the world into parts and cause and effect relations. Intuition presents the world as a unity that we feel part of through sympathy with it. Archipenko’s Medrano I serves as an example of how both the intellect and the intuition are engaged through the work of art. Through the intellect, we see Medrano I as an assemblage of diverse elements each of which represents some corresponding feature of the human body. The sculptural tool that makes up the forearm and the painted, folded piece of metal forms the head are symbols that we actively interpret through mnemonic associations. The intellect facilitates the substitution of a painted piece of metal for a face. These symbolic associations are an important element in art, for Archipenko, because they engage the viewer’s creative consciousness in an interpretive function that ties the work into individual experience. At the same time, Archipenko sees the intuitive aspect of art as going beyond the morphological and material elements. Intuition places us in contact with our own spirit and through sympathy, the creative spirit that Medrano I radiates forth. The sympathetic response reunites us with the latent, universal spirit and the commonality that originates from our cells. Intuition bridges the distance that intellect places between us and the art object and encompasses the duration that the intellect
breaks into discrete moments. Through intuition we are able to enter into the work as it is in itself, rather than as a network of external relations.

The following chapter explores the complex relation between instinct and intellect through an investigation of Bergson’s model of being bridges matter and spirit, as presented in *Matter and Memory*. The chapter also examines the difference between Bergson’s conception of art as a disinterested luxury and Archipenko’s belief that art is an active engagement in dialectic through a visual language of symbols, which connect us to our universal, cellular origins. Finally, it investigates Archipenko’s idea of metamorphosis as an essential function of art, whereby spirit is materialized as a form of social communication and matter is spiritualized to enlarge the viewers’ creative consciousness toward an evolutionary progression.
Chapter 3: Art, Artifice, and the Dialectics of Sculpture

In the previous chapter we investigated Alexander Archipenko’s conception of the universe as a dynamic flux of creative energy and matter. Within this universe life evolves as a progressive expression of creative forces acting through matter, driving it forward toward greater complexity. The cell, serving as the basic, independent, unit of living matter, receives and transmits these forces through metabolic processes – a metamorphosis which transforms energy into matter and vice versa. At the same time, Archipenko contends that the cells store memories, transmitting them to each subsequent generation through the process of mitosis, as he understands it.

From Archipenko’s perspective, human beings are the culmination of this evolutionary process, composed of billions of cells, organized into specialized functions, all receiving and transmitting this creative energy in a massive biological system. As a result of the evolutionary process, human beings have developed to the point where the intellect efficiently predicts future outcomes by resolving every new moment in terms of what is already known in order to guide the survival of the organism. The intellect mechanically reconstitutes the world in terms of relations – parts to parts and things to things. Through this approach, the intellect gains mastery over the material world, but it loses contact with the living spirit. It is only through intuition that we find sympathy with the world as a continuous, organized whole and regain our connection with spirit.

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There is a constant tension between the world as presented to us by the intellect and that which we feel through intuition. Archipenko stresses that the primary role of art, over all human invention, is to reveal the presence of spirit over and above its material conditions. In order to accomplish this, the artist must initially reject the intellect and the material world and turn inward to find the source of creativeness. This turning inward, to self-reflection, Archipenko calls creative consciousness, which is an awareness and registration of abstract, creative causes that are received and transmitted by the cells. This idea of creative consciousness closely parallels Bergson’s intuition, which he defines as instinct turned inward to become dis-interested, self-conscious, and reflected.¹

This chapter seeks to understand the path that the creative impetus takes in its metamorphosis from the abstract idea to material realization in Archipenko’s work. As in the first chapter, the philosophy of Henri Bergson again serves as a useful counterpart to Archipenko’s own writing. The first section of this chapter explores Bergson’s model of being in relation to the creative process Archipenko explicates in his treatise “Creativeness” (c. 1950). In Bergson’s second book, Matter and Memory (1896), the philosopher provides a clear, visual model of being that focuses on the role that memory plays in perception; the way that an intuitive leap leads to creative, indeterminate choices; and how being is a dynamic process that bridges spirit and the material world, leading ultimately to freedom from automatism. For Bergson automatism is a bodily reflex or trained response, that occurs immediately, requiring no conscious thought or alternative choices.² As we shall see, despite differences in the details of Bergson’s and Archipenko’s understanding, both believe that, for the engaged viewer, art provides a
means of escaping automatism by prolonging deliberation on the work, which forestalls a physical response and turns attention inward, toward memory and spirit.

Art plays an important role in Bergson’s philosophy precisely because, by engaging the intuitive faculty in man, it brings us closer to the full, creative potential of the universe. Intuition is the faculty that returns us to the natural world as unified, continuous, and living. Bergson describes the intellect’s engagement with the material world through perception as an artifice created to efficiently choose the best course action leading to survival. In the second section of this chapter, we will examine Bergson’s differentiation between art and artifice, the former being fully intuitional and the latter a product of the intellect. Art goes beyond representation and reproduction because the artist, like the instinctive wasp, goes to the heart of his object, and in so doing, leads the viewer to trace that same path and to see the world in a way that goes beyond the habitual way of acting in the world. Contrary to the artist, who places us directly and immediately within life, the philosopher, gets at life indirectly, through dialectic.³ For Bergson, dialectic is also an artifice, a tool of the intellect, created and expressed by language, which seeks to get back to intuition. The artist, relying on aesthetics, bypasses the artificial, conventional aspects of language, and aims directly at intuition through sympathy. Where the philosopher must pass from intuition through the intellect and the artifice of language; the artist, by contrast, presents the rarified example of truly disinterested, pure intuition.

While Archipenko would agree that art places us directly and immediately within life, he asserts that the artist is also, and at the same time, engaged in dialectic. The artist,
must materialize the abstract creative impulses from intuition; in order to do so, he must utilize a symbolic language of form. Archipenko disagrees with Bergson’s characterization of art as a disinterested luxury with no intentions to correct or instruct. He argues that the artist engages in both art and artifice in order to communicate within the social realm and to stimulate the creative evolution of mankind. Just as the philosopher must write down his thoughts, the artist must materialize his inspiration, in order to communicate to others.

This discussion of the role of art (intuition) and artifice (intellect) in the social sphere and the difference in the artist envisioned by Bergson and Archipenko leads into the third section, of this chapter, on the social aspect of language. Bergson differentiates between conventional and poetic language in order to stress the importance that attention plays in a listener’s ability to go beyond artifice to gain the truth of art, which is spirit - the unity of all living beings. For the inattentive listener language breaks down into words, syntax, and static symbols, which are the artificial conventions of language. The attentive listener, however ascends beyond artifice and convention, to intuition, allowing him to relive the spirit of the poet’s words. For Archipenko, attentiveness also plays an essential role in the engagement with a work of art. He expresses a belief in a symbolic language of form that finds its origins in the evolution of our cells. This language is latent within the cells and its understanding remains largely subconscious, revealing itself through emotional and affective responses. For Archipenko, the inattentive viewer will only see the external surface of sculpture, while the attentive viewer engages with the internal, spiritual aspect of the work through associations in memory and creative
energies registered by the cells. Through this attentive engagement and experiential association with a work of art we bring something of ourselves to it and it becomes part of us. In Bergson’s terms, we close the distance that the intellect places between us and the object and enter into its duration in sympathy with it.

The final section of this chapter examines the essential role that metamorphosis plays in Archipenko’s philosophy of art. The movement from the immaterial idea to the material work of art requires a metamorphosis – a change from a state of energy to a state of matter. If we recall from chapter one, Archipenko posits spirit as an energetic force operating at the atomic level, where matter and spirit are two facets of the same phenomena. Archipenko calls the transformation from creative sources and abstract ideas to the physical work of art a metamorphosis; in a work of art, it plays a role equivalent to the role of metabolism in the cell. A masterpiece, a work of genius, or any other creative product accomplishes two simultaneous metamorphoses. The first is recognized as the materialization of spirit; it requires a language of form capable of symbolically representing latent and abstract creative forces in concrete matter. It serves as a means of communicating what is universal to each of us. The second, the spiritualization of matter, becomes a focus of the universal, creative forces, which serve as its impetus. It elevates the spiritual in the work so that it radiates to the viewer as pure energy. The materialization of spirit functions in a similar way to Bergson's dialectic, communicating through a common language of form; the spiritualization of matter, on the other hand, aligns with Bergson’s sympathy, closing the distance between the object and the viewer, allowing us to enter into the work through an intuitive grasp.
Throughout the chapter, Bergson’s model of being, the cone model, will be used to illustrate the creative progression from the immaterial to the material in the creation of art. Selected works from Archipenko’s œuvre will be analyzed to demonstrate how the theoretical model conforms to actual practice. The model will also be applied to the viewer, who moves from the artwork to the creative source, achieving a sympathetic concordance with both the work and the artist’s originary inspiration. Of particular interest in this investigation are the points where Archipenko’s philosophy diverges from Bergson’s. Primarily, Archipenko advocates the social responsibility of art and artists as a force for elevating creative consciousness for all, which he believes leads to the next evolutionary stage of development. The work of art, by activating both the immediacy and unity of intuition, and the symbolic associations produced by the intellect, engages the whole being of the viewer. Through their engagement viewers become active participants in the creation and spiritual progression of the work. For Archipenko, the spiritual energy of a work of art is transmitted through space and time to the body of the viewer who, in their engagement with it, makes the work immortal.

*Images, Perception, and Bergson’s Model of Being*

*Woman Before the Mirror* (1916) (fig. 4) presents us with a woman, seated in an armchair, combing her hair, while she gazes at her reflected image. Like many of Archipenko’s works, each encounter with *Woman Before the Mirror* brings forth some new element, contrast, or observation that prolongs our engagement and interest in the work. The alternation between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional elements
creates a fluctuating perceptual tension that is never quite resolved. The illusion of depth, of space receding into the background to the right of the figure is countered by the actual projection of wood that makes up the arm of the chair. Every moment (when we begin to relax and see the familiar image of a woman in an armchair) is brought up short by something that forces us to see beyond it. In addition to the contrasts between the planar and the plastic, Archipenko alternates purely geometrical forms, such as the cones used to create the shape of the figure, with more organic, painted, curvilinear areas in the waist, hips, and arms. The artist maintains a delicate balance between these opposing qualities, heightening them in some areas and decreasing them in others, all the while creating complex rhythms throughout the work. Within this multiplicity of shapes and contrasts, the unity of the figure, and the composition as a whole, is never lost. _Woman Before the Mirror_ seems to call attention to both its diverse materiality and the enduring unity of its playful composition at the same time.

_Woman Before the Mirror_ breaks us out of our habits of perception. The immediate recognition of a woman seated at her vanity is the result of an intuitive response to the composition as a whole; a response that prolongs our engagement with the work. Within the duration of our engagement, our intellect decomposes the work into identifiable parts and the relations between the different parts. Two intersecting cones, with the addition of a painted area, form the torso, while another cone forms the legs. For Bergson, this recognition of cones, torso, breasts, legs is the work of the intellect, which negotiates between sense data and memory to form a perception of the work. Perception is a constant substitution between what is presented to the eyes, in this case,
and what is already known in memory. What is perceived lies somewhere between what is present to the senses and what resides in memory. *Woman Before the Mirror* breaks from habitual perception by presenting a constant challenge to this negotiation.

Archipenko’s alternations described above keep the perspective of the work constantly shifting. The artist uses illusionistic painting techniques to create a sense of depth, but it is a depth that isn’t consistent throughout the work. The illusion of three-dimensional depth, produced in paint on the planar surface, is contrasted with plastic elements that are truly dimensional. The constant shifting of perspective produces an instability in the work, which prevents it from settling into an easy perceptual image. This dynamic instability is intentional on Archipenko’s part. His goal, in the work is to prolong the process of association between the work and the viewers’ experiences in order to elevate their creative consciousness in new directions. In Bergsonian terms, *Woman Before the Mirror* doesn’t allow the intellect to simply cut the work into parts and reassemble it into a provisional whole.8 The work never settles into a single representation, rather the intellect keeps negotiating between memory and sense data in a deliberation that is never quite resolved.

The idea that perception is the result of the intellect’s negotiation between sense data and memory is a critical aspect of Bergson’s philosophy. In order to fully understand his position and how Archipenko sees art as a fruitful prolongation of this negotiation, it would be beneficial to explore Bergson’s phenomenology in depth. Bergson's *Memory and Matter* begins as an investigation into phenomenology, how we perceive and experience the world, which we are both part of and which seems somehow apart from
us. Leonard Lawlor, in his book *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, and Ethics* (2003) clarifies some of the more difficult aspects of Bergson's thought and demonstrates a consistency of method across all of Bergson's work. Lawlor claims that Bergson presents a challenge to phenomenology, because, “Bergsonism is a 'primacy of memory', and not a 'primacy of perception,'” which characterizes contemporary phenomenology, particularly that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Bergson confronts both classical and contemporary notions of phenomenology because, in his view, perception does not take place without memory. As Lawlor explains, “for Bergson, the priority of memory is so extreme that we must say that being is memory.”

In Bergson’s philosophy, the material world is conceived as the things that surround us in space and upon which we act. He contends that both instinct and intellect remain largely concerned with action and reaction in the material world. Instinct is limited to the tools that nature provides, whereas intellect opens up a certain amount of freedom to choose actions that lead to predictable outcomes. Memory plays a key role in the intellect and in the development of consciousness. It is our ability to recall experiences in a general way, so that memories fit the present perception, allowing us to apply them to entirely new events as though they were recurring. Just as a baseball, hit by a batter, never takes the same trajectory, Bergson would claim that every aspect of a given moment is completely different from any moment that has come before or will happen again. To continue with the analogy of baseball: the outfielder, in contrast to the batter, chooses from his years of experience, reacts with trained reflexes, and predicts the movement of the ball so that he can catch it in his glove. The outfielder has rehearsed this
action to the point that it has become almost an habitual reflex. About this kind of habitual action Bergson writes, “the function of the body is not to store up recollections, but simply to choose . . . the useful memory, that which may complete and illuminate the present situation with a view to ultimate action.” What is different in Bergson's phenomenology is that memory, coming to perception, allows us to eliminate what is novel in the moment in order to act as though the world is a repetitive series of causes and effects. Perception, in concert with intellect, does not give us a picture of the real world, but provides us with an abstract view that is filtered, parsed, repeating, and artificially divided by necessity.

*Woman Before the Mirror* highlights this sense of division. The composition is divided into distinct areas of color, bold lines, and generalized anatomical shapes that don’t conform to any naturalistic representation of a figure. A work like this relies heavily on the intellect’s ability to borrow from our experience of actual figures, rooms, and armchairs and to distill them into general shapes so that we might read the highly stylized forms as a left hand, a nose, or legs. We invoke memory in order to make sense of the perceptual data confronting us. In Bergson’s view the eyes, the nervous system, and even the brain cannot engender the image that we see. The sense organs register frequencies of light as energy impulses that pass from cell to cell. It is only the insistent presence of past, as memory, inserted into present perception, that allows us to compose the image of a *Woman Before the Mirror*. Without memory, we would have only an immediate, continuous, vibrating energy exciting our nerves and our reactions to those
excitations. Memory provides us with the sense of duration, of one moment flowing into another in a stream that we can see flowing behind us.

Memory, for Bergson is metaphysical. Memory isn't stored in the body, but instead belongs to spirit.\textsuperscript{12} Bergson asserts, "Memory is spirit, not a manifestation of matter," and "memory must be, in principle, a power absolutely independent of matter. If, then, spirit is a reality it is here, in the phenomenon of memory, that we may come into contact with it experimentally."\textsuperscript{13} Through memory, we come into contact with \textit{duration}, a key term for Bergson, which signals the record of the past preserved and continuous with the present. Metaphorically, Bergson describes this record saying (with the emphasis of italics), "wherever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed."\textsuperscript{14} Our conscious awareness of our own duration as a continuous whole rather than a disconnected series of unrepeated moments is what we identify as our self.\textsuperscript{15} The philosopher writes that our character, "always present in all our decisions is indeed the actual synthesis of all our past states," thus, "our previous psychical life exists for us even more than the external world . . . we use the whole of our lived experience."\textsuperscript{16}

Our lived experience is a continuous negotiation between perception, which is bodily, and memory, which is immaterial. Bergson describes this negotiation between the body (matter) and memory (spirit) saying that it is, "within matter that pure perception places us, and it is really into spirit that we penetrate by means of memory."\textsuperscript{17} Bergson describes the past, the totality of our memories, as largely unconscious, constantly pressing against us, trying to gain the present, but, except for the occasional fancy, our bodies only allow through what is useful to the present situation.\textsuperscript{18} In order to truly touch
the reality of spirit, we must place ourselves within our own duration and escape the law of necessity, which focuses only on useful action in the material world. This is a turning inward to intuition, affection, and sympathy, which the work of art affords us.

Bergson describes the work of art as a disinterested luxury. By this he means that, in an evolutionary sense, art only becomes possible when beings are not solely engaged in survival and reproduction, which are the material necessities of life. In this regard, *Woman Before the Mirror* escapes the law of necessity for it is not engaged in useful action, and it is not a tool designed to solve a particular problem. The work’s role is to engage in a kind of reflection that suspends all physical action. Intuition turns inward, prolonging an engagement between the presence of the work and memory. This contemplation stretches the present moment and enlarges perception. Thus the normal rhythm of our consciousness changes. Before the work of art, we allow what is novel in the present perception, to play freely in the association of memory before returning to the image. This movement inward, toward intuition and spirit, and the return to the material object, is the process of entering into sympathy with the work. We come to know the work in itself, from within rather than as a thing, external and apart from ourselves.

Where Bergson sees memory as belonging to the immaterial world of spirit, Archipenko envisions it at the very center of cellular development, both in terms of the individual and evolution as a whole. Memory is a biological process, though remaining below the level of consciousness and not confined to a single organ like the brain. For Archipenko, our cells contain all of the memories passed on from generation to generation, from the first cells to the present moment. Memories are somehow coded
into the chromosomes as a living history that can be consciously accessed to some degree. A single-celled paramecium does not simply react to a stimulus, but can determine whether that stimulus is a threat or potential food because memory is tied to perception at the most fundamental level. In perception, the excitation of cells to energy vibrations also stimulate the memory associations of those cells, which are transmitted and added to as they pass along the nervous system. Only certain associations may rise to the level of conscious perception while others remain unconscious. Woman Before the Mirror triggers both conscious and unconscious memory associations in order to perceive the work and its subject matter. The conscious elements of perception are the most obvious because they interpret symbolic forms that we identify as a woman’s face, hair, torso, and other elements that find parallels in the natural world. Unconscious associations are more difficult to identify because they may reveal themselves as emotional or autonomic responses to colors and forms or spiritual energies emanating from the work. Archipenko believes that this energy is registered by the cells and contributes to our response to the work, but in ways that cannot be precisely identified. Thus, the conscious and unconscious associations combine to provide an overall response and engagement with the work, whose total effects cannot always be ascertained.

Although Archipenko and Bergson describe the process of memory and perception in very different terms, in its general features Bergson’s model continues to dovetail nicely with Archipenko’s. Both set up memory as largely unconscious, internal, and divorced from the material world; memory lies on the opposite pole from perception, which is focused on action in the material world; and the whole of the past is conserved,
constituting our sense of individual character, the whole of our lived experience, and, our entire evolutionary history.25

If memory represents one aspect of being, perception represents the opposite aspect. Perception is the material body reflecting and vibrating at the presence of other bodies that surround it.26 At the opening of Matter and Memory, Bergson defines all perceptual reality with the term, image. He writes, “here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed.”27 Lawlor describes the term image as both central to, and the most difficult, in Matter and Memory.28 The whole of images, what Bergson terms an aggregate of images, is the material world and includes my body, cells, nerves and brain.29 The Bergsonian image is objective, it has an existence in itself, apart from us, and of which we are a part. Images are there even when our senses are closed to them. However, images are not things, not objects. Things, objects and relations all belong to perception and the manner in which the intellect divides up the world. Images are a continuous presence to perception. When we open our eyes, the image is there before us, a flux of color and movement that is ever changing. The image is what the material world appears to be in all of its aspects.

Because of the limits of our perceptual organs, the world as image is more than the perceived world; the material world is more than what appears to us. The importance of Bergson's use of the term image (from Lawlor’s perspective) is that it speaks to vision, it is a picture, and it is always a picture of something.30 Lawlor explains the link between images and pictures: “when I see a picture, I see a unity composed of a multiplicity of
colours all different from one another." 31 Pictures are a simple unity but composed of a complex multiplicity. That we perceive the world as a multiplicity - a consistent, unchanging composition of individual things in space, is directly related to the way we process perception, applying memory to it. We perceive the world with an interest toward acting upon it and thus it appears to us as an extended space filled with permanent, individual objects, things, surfaces, colors and textures. Perception limits the field to representations of that which interests us. It is not only that perception is limited, evolving through adaptation to better suit our needs, but that our intellect further reduces our recognition. The intellect forms representations of objects by discarding that which has no interest or necessity for it. The actual representation we create of an object is a diminution of the real. 32 The example that Bergson uses is the apple, which the observer distinguishes from the leaves and branches of the tree because it will satisfy his hunger. Seeing the apple as an object to satisfy hunger intensifies it for the viewer, but diminishes what it actually is in itself. Here again, the particular role of art is to go beyond the limitations of the intellect and return us, through intuition, to the apple in itself, as a simple unity composed of a multiplicity of colors, textures, and shapes, rather than a thing or part that satisfies one’s interest.

When we open our eyes to Woman Before the Mirror the image is before us, present to perception. 33 As memory informs neural excitations into perceptions, we see a picture, a subject that we recognize as a seated female figure. We distinguish the picture as an organized composition of forms and colors. Our tendency to break the image into parts, for example, cones that form the torso, breasts, and legs, is due to the intellect’s
focus in the material world as a place of action. The intellect plays a necessary part, without its ability to filter and select from memory we would not be able to form representations and the abstract elements that make up the face, nose, and cheek would simply be shapes and a picture would never take form. However, the work of art requires no action on the part of the viewer. Woman Before the Mirror stimulates the intellect, intensifying consciousness in the interval that opens up between perception and action. Deliberating on the work’s presence the viewer turns inward, toward reflection memory, and the reality of spirit.  

With his emphasis on biological processes and a cellular basis for creativity, Archipenko's view of perception is that all cells, not only those specialized and directed toward immediate reaction, are capable of sensation. Eyes and ears have developed specifically to provide immediate and instinctive responses to the environment. As for Bergson, these senses are directed toward action in, and reaction to, the material world. Relying only on these senses limits our field of perception, however. Archipenko cites biological studies, which demonstrate that all cells are capable of registering, responding to, and even emitting energy. Thus, all cells may act to conduct energy signals from the environment and universal creative forces. These cellular signals lie below the level of consciousness, accumulating and transmitting through the cells, registering as inspiration, emotion, or other less distinguishable, mental states. In Archipenko's view, attentive recognition to these states and their causes expands our perceptual field.

Through the process, intellect is not something to be discarded, but is essential to perception and representation. In Woman Before a Mirror, Archipenko pushes abstraction
to the point where the image just holds together as an organized unity, a representation of
a figure. Interest is stimulated by those elements that interrupt visual unity. The intellect
is constantly working to fix the image into a consistent and unchanging picture. The
tension between two-dimensional illusions of space and three-dimensional objects,
contrasts in color and shape; the difference between real shadows changing in variable
lighting and painted shadows keep perception from settling into a comfortable position.
The eye remains restless, roving over the work, trying to fix it once and for all, but the
work resists.

For Archipenko, this continued engagement of the senses activates all of the cells,
which are receiving and transmitting energy from the work. On one level, the three
dimensional elements and the varying textures trigger a tactile sense, even though we
don’t physically touch the work. On another, we may display an affective response that
derives from cellular memories that remain below the level of consciousness, but which
may produce emotions of joy, delight, or sadness. These emotional responses are
different for all depending on their particular circumstances; for Archipenko, these
responses are not purely subjective. They are triggered by qualities in the work itself that
result in a similar kind of open deliberation and reflection that Bergson describes as an
intensified, conscious awareness.\textsuperscript{36}

The role of sense perception and the intellect is to situate us within the material
world as a place of predictable action in order to ensure the satisfaction of our needs.
Through memory, we have both a sense of personal identity, which is singular and
largely unchanging, and a sense of the world as a place of identifiable causes and
predictable effects. Thus we have a model of reality that is largely mechanistic, consisting of things, composed of parts, which can be described in terms of their relations. However, we also have intuition, which takes us beyond our model of material reality, toward a unity with all beings existing in sympathy. Intuition moves away from the material world and, for Bergson, it is only through an investigation of intuition that we can understand the role that spirit plays in being.

In the third chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson illustrates a diagram of his model of perception and the way that memory exists prior to perception. In his model, perception only occurs when memory descends through the intellect and is inserted into the present image. This model, described simply as the cone image, is not only analogous to perception but, as Lawlor rightly characterizes it, “Bergson is confronting us with a *new philosophical idea of existence*, [Lawlor’s emphasis] which is represented in the cone image.”37 The cone image presents being as a continuous movement between the two different realities - matter and spirit, where spirit is inserted into the material world as indetermination, choice, and freedom.

In the cone diagram (fig. 5), the cone SAB represents the totality of recollections in one's memory. The base AB remains motionless in the past, while the summit S, which represents the present, moves forward unceasingly. S, where the image of the body is concentrated, touches plane P, which is the whole of images. The whole of images is the apparent universe as a continuity of space and time. Point S and P belong to the material world, the plane of perception. Within the body are the sensorimotor systems organized by habit. This is memory, too, but it is memory, which has become habitual and
automatic, allowing us to act and react in the present. Bergson calls this a quasi-instantaneous memory because it requires little to no reflection or duration.\textsuperscript{38} Returning to the baseball analogy above, the outfielder engages a quasi-instantaneous memory that directs his catch, but it is memory stripped of particular details, which would interfere in his directed actions.\textsuperscript{39}

The base SAB is memory, it is immaterial, yet is retained. Bergson refers to this as true, or progressive, memory and it is more like a field than a plane. Turning toward memory is like looking at the night sky. Each galaxy is a cluster of stars and each star a memory stretching back into the infinite past.\textsuperscript{40} Yet these unconscious memories have no substance, no life, until called into action by the sensorimotor systems that make up our bodies. As we drift off into sleep, releasing the demands of the body, we can get lost in the free association of memories, in dreams unanchored from the material world.

At one extreme, the summit S, we find automatism; at the base, AB, we have dreaming. One is totally in the material present and the other in the immaterial past. We spend most of our lives balanced somewhere between the two, in the back and forth between the necessity and reflection, focusing on the present task or recollecting a time gone by. As Lawlor points out, what is phenomenologically different about Bergson’s model is that memory is always prior to perception.\textsuperscript{41} Memory comes before representation. The body (and this includes the brain) reaches into memory in order to identify the present, perceptual image and form associations to our experience. Without an association in memory there would be no recognition.
According to Bergson’s model, when we encounter novel situations that require a solution, intuition institutes a leap into memory. It is not a regression through contiguous moments in time; rather we are cast all at once into the past and not into a specific time or event, but into regions of the past, as into a region of the night sky. But these memories are not images of the past, they exist only as a general idea of our individual character. Bergson describes this idea as like a cloud, made up of tiny drops of water. It is nebulous having no color, potency, or sensation. It isn’t until we focus in on it that the drops coalesce into a virtual image, or, in the case of the night sky, the individual stars come into focus. Bergson refers to these virtual images as memory-images. Memory-images are immaterial memory united with the material image of perception by the hyphen of being. The cone rotates, again like a telescope, or a camera lens and this analogy is the movement of the body, drawing memory into it, engendering memory with substance. These memory-images extend; they take shape, color, and specificity. They become singular and personal, but they remain virtual, having no material form.

The gray zone between the nebulosity of the idea and the memory-image is the zone of indetermination. Here is the interval between thought and action, between memory, the virtual image, and action. This is when there is true freedom. Intuition moves in the direction away from matter toward memory. It leaps to a place that is unconscious and above what Bergson refers to as, “the turn of experience.” As the cone rotates, memories are drawn toward the summit where they become virtual images. This turn of experience is the movement where the intellect grabs hold of the memory and unites it with sensory excitations. Intellect turns back toward matter, contracting and
distilling what is important for the present action from the memory, so that the idea matches the general outline of the present perception. Lawlor presses this movement further, indicating that the contraction must continue if it is to become action and be inserted into the present between the summit S, and the plane of images P. The general idea must become a specific, new action tailored to the particular need. Over time, if the action is effective, it may become a motor habit. Further still, the method may be put into words and become an artifice for intelligence.47

When we first encounter *Woman Before the Mirror*, a number of quasi-instantaneous memories are engaged. Seeing the orthogonal lines to the right of the armchair as an area receding into depth is something we had to learn as infants, but which is now a habit of vision that allows us to navigate our environment. The variation and distinction between different colors is also a habitual response to reflected frequencies of light. The almost immediate recognition of a human, female figure opens us up to higher degree of memory, but there are elements of recognition that are habitual. The position of the figure, arrangement and disposition of limbs, the shape and position of the face are all aspects we register without consciously thinking about them. In these quasi-instantaneous memories we have what Bergson calls the necessary outlines. We have enough information to determine what action, if any, needs to be taken. Deciding no action is required, we may move on, investigating the image no further. This level of perception is where we spend most of our lives. We are caught up in the rhythm of our own duration. Intent on some goal, we move on, giving the barest attention to the details, particularly those details, which detract from easy recognition.
The importance of a work of art is that it can take us out of our own duration and place us back within the spirit of life through intuition. *Woman Before the Mirror* breaks our habitual and automatic manner of perception by presenting the figure in a novel way. Finding something other than what is expected causes the leap of intuition seeking an equivalent experience in memory. Possibly the figure, composed of cones, recalls particular experiences of a childhood drawing or another work of art, or perhaps the associations are vague, nebulous ideas. These memories descend and are set upon by the intellect, which combines them with perception to form a virtual image. The process of leaping and returning to fill out the perception is continuous. The general outlines are filled in with details and colors from experience until we form, what Bergson calls, a memory-image. As memory and image expand and intersect, the interval between perception and recollection increases. Our sense of time seems to both expand and open until the hyphen of being is in both memory and the image, and the distance between us and the work closes. The sense of unity of the memory-image is our sympathetic connection to the work, a feeling that it is a part of us and we are a part of it.

Archipenko never directly references Bergson’s cone model, yet the model, which we can deduce from his writing, has a similar binary opposition and double movement between spirit and matter. Archipenko also introduces two types of knowledge — one, which is habitual, mechanical and bodily, and deals with established facts in order to effectively act within the material world; the other “higher” knowledge is intuitive and infinitely complex. It is “accumulated from one's own spiritual reactions, from multiple experiences and from verisimilitudes, engaged in an associative process and
experimentation.” Overlaid onto Bergson’s model, this higher knowledge would reside in the tumultuous gray zone between memory and matter, oscillating between intuition and intellect. The field of memory, which for Bergson is immaterial and belongs to the spiritual reality, lies deep within the nucleus of our cells for Archipenko. It, too, is largely unconscious and inactive, latent but with vast creative potency, until touched upon by intuition. This past stretches back into the vast infinity of our evolutionary ancestors, yet remains accessible providing that one has the will to plumb the depths for these creative sources. This force of will is the same effort that Bergson refers to as the intuitional method. It is the turning away from the material world toward the past to get beyond a habitual way of seeing things to something new, which is then inserted in the interval between us and the things in the world. We get beyond the surface appearance to the pulse inside, which we know through a sympathy with the natural world derived from our oneness with it. Thus Archipenko writes, the ideal “is the type of creativeness which uses every culminating achievement and ideal . . . as a step towards the next evolutionary attainment.” Creativeness is the same forward movement by which the cone moves against the plane and which Bergson describes as taking the whole of the past and inserting it into the present moment.

Like Bergson, Archipenko also opposes the kind of materialist domination of the intellect saying that it is impossible for an artist to produce a masterpiece or invention, “if he uses the rigid intellect based exclusively on the positiveness of visible matter.” The larger part of creative potential is played out by latent forces registering through emotions and dreams. It is those subconscious elements, interwoven with the instinct and
containing spiritual vitality that are only introduced to the intellect after the fact and which may remain largely obscure in the process of making a material work. Thus the intellect’s role is to take what emerges into consciousness and manifest it, like language, as an artifice for the intellect. As with Bergson's cone image, in Archipenko we see an intuitive leap toward the spirit for inspiration, which is countered by the return to the intellect and materiality.

Art and Artifice

Vertically extending beyond the confines of her support, Woman Standing (1920) (fig. 6) presents a forceful, confident figure in gleaming steel. Standing over six feet tall, this monumental work presents the kind of geometrical precision and streamlined panels that suggest modern, mass-manufacture. Curving forms contrast with sharp lines recalling the bodywork of automobiles or the slipstream surfaces of airplanes. The rigid verticality and strict frontal stance lends the work the poise and timelessness of Egyptian or Archaic Greek sculpture, but the material and its treatment is contemporary.

Woman Standing draws on aspects from our ancient past that exist as the syntax of a language of visual form. The rigidity of straight lines or forms that curve with an almost mathematical regularity lend an air of authority and strength to the figure that the viewer registers through quasi-instantaneous memory. For Archipenko the impact of these forms comes not only through experience gained in our present lifetime, but belongs to the ancestral memory in the cells, which goes back to the evolutionary development of vision. By consciously utilizing this language, Archipenko seeks to make
the work timeless. At the same time, *Woman Standing* engages in a technological aesthetic that is indicative of modernity and mass-manufacture. The precisely cut and bent, polished metal sheets symbolically represent the anatomical forms of a modern woman who presages an age of machine-made efficiency. Archipenko utilizes the materials and adopts particular techniques to speak to the intellect, which is engaged a process of consciously perceiving and representing material forms through associations in memory. Thus, Archipenko is engaging both intuitive and intellectual functions, linking the work to our universal origins and our particular moment in that history.

This aspect of Archipenko’s art, his awareness of a continuity with the whole history of art as well as his insight into his place in a particular moment of that history, didn’t escape the notice of his contemporaries. One of these, Marcel Duchamp, the creator of Readymade art - everyday, mass-manufactured objects that he elevated to the status of art through his interventions - was a long-time friend of Archipenko and championed his works. Duchamp advocated for Archipenko’s first solo exhibition in the United States to Katherine Dreier and the *Société Anonyme* in 1921. In February of that year, an anonymous, satirical advertisement appeared in *The Arts* ostensibly to promote the exhibition (fig. 7). Credited to Duchamp, the advertisement shows an illustration of Archipenko’s *Woman Standing* with text marketing the wonders of a new, modern, fountain pen from the Archie Pen Co. The text declares, “It thinks for you,” and, “A distinct achievement of the ARCHIE PEN is its ability to bring delicacy of line and graceful poise to a hard dry mechanical drawing.”
Duchamp’s take on Archipenko’s *Woman Standing* does more than, as the editor notes, present a “brilliant caricature of a modern magazine advertisement,” it puts an interesting twist on Archipenko’s art in relation to the Readymade. Rather than elevating the mass-manufactured object, a one of a kind work of art is envisioned as a machine designed for the betterment of modern life. Duchamp reveals something in Archipenko’s work that speaks to the role that design and manufacture plays in our culture. The work of art now aspires to express the height of scientific and technical achievement, rather than try to mimic the world of natural appearances. *Woman Standing* uses the language and inventiveness of our technology to represent us to ourselves. If our true character is the whole of our past combined with the completely new, then the technology we surround ourselves with reflects our image.

In the previous chapter we revealed the way in which Bergson identifies intelligence as a faculty of making and using unorganized instruments. The ability to fabricate and recompose elements developed into the ability to attach signs to things and to create a language that is infinitely extensible. The mobility of these signs allows us to move from things to ideas, to turn inward toward self-reflection which marks another step toward freedom. *Woman Standing* relies on this mobility of signs to communicate its image. Not only do the curves cut into the metal signify the breast, waist, and hips, but the shiny metal itself speaks to our cultural economy based on iron, steel, and industry.

Moving from things, which the intellect cuts out from the whole, to ideas marks a significant adaptation for living beings. However, as Bergson points out, the intellect always fabricates in terms of what is already known from past experience. We fabricate
tools, but these tools reproduce models, which are simply new arrangements of things already known. Bergson describes how we are all engaged in this process, “long before being artists, we are all artisans; and all fabrication, however rudimentary, lives on likeness and repetition, like the natural geometry which serves as its fulcrum.”57 This, at least, is the understanding of the world from a mechanistic viewpoint. In this view the geometry and the natural order are a priori, found in the world apart from us, not as dependent on our own evolved structure. But, for Bergson, this mechanistic view itself is an artifice, a tool created by the intellect for its utility. Mechanism mimics the natural world but in a manner that is automatic.58 Mechanism is extremely useful and it is the proper direction of science. It breaks images into discrete parts, which it then artificially isolates from the rest in order to analyze them. Science proceeds as though the natural world is a machine composed of parts that fit and function like a clockwork. Each sweep of the second hand is treated as identical to the previous one although truly nothing ever occurs the same way twice. The goal of science is to furnish to intelligence the best means of acting upon the world.59 This approach works extraordinarily well on inert matter, because “matter has a tendency to constitute isolable systems, that can be treated geometrically.”60

From a mechanistic standpoint, Woman Standing is understood as an assemblage of different parts. Each part relates to some analogous part of the human body. The looping sheet of metal is understood to stand in for the figure’s left shoulder viewed in profile. The black oval painted on the concave piece of sheet metal represents a face and the curvature of the metal speaks to the general roundness of heads. These separate
pieces, brought together in a particular way, produce the image of a standing woman. The mobility of signs and our ability to gather the general outlines from memory, allow us to perceive this assemblage as a human figure. In addition, in every viewing of the work, the intellect quickly matches the work to its generalized form in memory, eventually developing a habit memory. Each time we view the work, it appears the same, leading to the conviction that it has a continued, objective presence. We isolate the work from other conditions, such as differences in lighting or position on the wall. We don’t see these changing conditions as altering the work itself, only how it appears to us. In fact, we discount the changes over time. That is, we see the work as remaining the same despite the dulling of metal from oxidation or the dirt that accumulates in the paint over time. We think of the work as a static thing, existing apart from and subject to these changes. Often our desire is to erase that time and restore a work to its original condition. However, for Bergson that sense of permanence is an artifice of perception, which we create when we think of permanent objects existing in space. It is a necessary and useful artifice, but an artifice all the same.

Bergson argues that life proceeds along different lines than inert matter. Life is mutually organized rather than constructed. The eye, understood by science as a wondrous coordination of infinitely complex parts all assembled together is the result of an intellect, which, taking different views of the object, tries to represent it symbolically to itself in terms of a machine. Bergson counters that the object of the eye is simply vision and this simple act is accomplished with no more difficulty than I have in raising my arm. The notion of mutual organization is that the eye is not the result of accidental
variations that eventually add up to a working machine, but is instead the co-ordination of forces acting on living matter and living matter, in turn, adapting to those forces. He writes, “the more and more complex eye would be something like the deeper imprint of light on a matter, which being organized, possesses a special aptitude for receiving it.”

Over time the eye becomes better adapted to light, it enables us to see and react to objects that could be beneficial or harmful. And this progressive adaptation of our eyes is coordinated with the development of a complex nervous system and intellect that can construct instruments to extend our influence.

Mechanism and organization move in different directions. Mechanism is a view of the world in terms of isolable systems and coordinated parts. It moves from the periphery to an ideal center, which is a common action. Organization moves from the one to the many. It begins at a central point and spreads out in concentric waves, ever expanding. Where science proceeds as if organization is like a machine, in the direction of matter, art moves in the opposite direction, towards the mutually organized and unforeseeable variety of forms that emanate from the original impetus of life. Art gives us the picture, which approximates the unity and internal continuity of life free from the necessity of the intellect, which divides the world into representations. Bergson describes art as a vital process, “like the ripening of an idea.”

A work of art, like Woman Standing, provides us not primarily with an assemblage of parts, but with a unity that is organized of a variety of forms, which, like the forms of nature, are unforeseeable. Unlike the escapement of a clock where each cog and spring is determined by its precise function, the forms that make up Woman Standing
follow the changing movement of thought. The creation of the work is the result of the will, which impresses itself upon a pliable material. The process of development and the time taken up in the work’s invention is incorporated into the work. Thus the work of art endures like the eye, which is a constantly changing index of adaptation. *Woman Standing* can be perceived in isolation, as coordinated parts, but this is an artifice of the intellect that discounts the history of its making and development over time. For Bergson, the simple act of art is the picture, which is a unity that approximates the unity of life.68

Our mechanistic intellect gains us a degree of freedom, and makes us masters over the material world, but in the process of carving it up loses the unity of life. The intention of life is what the artist regains, by presenting a picture of the world that is mutually organized. In one of the most famous quotations from *Creative Evolution*, one which Archipenko himself uses, Bergson writes, “this intention [of life] is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model.”69 The intention of life is a simple movement; it is the world as mutually organized, that is, as duration – continuous and singular. The idea of space is born of the intellect and its tendency to divide the world into figures and relations, into things and parts. Space is the boundary or distance that we establish between ourselves and the things upon which we act. The effort of intuition establishes a sympathetic communication between ourselves and other living things. It expands consciousness and “introduces us to life’s own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration and endlessly continued creation.”70
The artist isn’t copying what appears to his eyes. It is not a mechanical reproduction, or the skilled coordination of hand and eye that reproduces what it sees. This is not art for Bergson, but artifice. The artist, by force of will, turns away from the material world and makes a leap of intuition. This is the same leap into the whole of memory represented by the cone image. Turning back into the grey nebulosity, which is the turn of experience, what intuition has grasped coalesces into a new virtual image or memory-image, which is then inserted into the whole of images, and impressed upon matter as something entirely new and unforeseeable. This work of art has no goal, or object – it simply is.

In *Creative Evolution*, art serves as an analogy for the human activity that most closely approximates life itself. However, it is in his 1914 essay, *Laughter* that Bergson truly addresses the role of art in society, which is to transcend the intellect and to place us directly and immediately into life through intuition. While the essay deals with the nature of the comic, Bergson contends that, in examining the comic what we are seeking is the relationship between art and life. Comedy lies midway between art and life. It negotiates between the two extremes by laughing at the rigidity of habit that the intellect introduces in an attempt to correct the course of society back towards its natural freedom. By life, in this instance, Bergson means daily life as a member of society, which is the material world where we use language to communicate with others, obey rules, and observe mores. The comic comes into being when necessity is relaxed, at the point when, “society and the individual are freed from the worry of self-preservation, outside of emotion and struggle,” and his role is, “to refine elasticity and sociability and

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rid a certain rigidity of body, mind and character.” This rigidity is the mechanical automatism that sets itself into the body through the habit of necessity. When exposed as artifice, these habits elicit spontaneous laughter, which is intended as a corrective measure. The correction is intended to return society back through intuition to a nature, which is spontaneous and free - the realm of art.

In *Laughter*, Bergson sets up a similar dichotomy to the one introduced with the cone image in *Matter and Memory*. In this case, the social life is largely the realm of matter and the intellect; it is a communal world governed by language. Art, as we have discussed, utilizes intuition, moving inward toward memory and spirit. Therefore, art in its making at the very least, is largely an individual pursuit. Whereas everyday life is social and primarily artifice, art is individual and moves in the direction of spirit. It is in this dichotomy that Bergson’s characterization of art parts company with Archipenko’s. Bergson distinguishes art from the comic as disinterested, rejecting the social impulse without any intention to correct or instruct: “Art is a breaking away from society and return to pure nature.” Breaking away from social life is also a turning away from obligation. The essential obligation being an attention to the greater needs and survival of the group. Art is a luxury, arising when the needs of the society are satisfied. Bergson also views art as a rarity, produced by and accessible to only to a few, existing outside of the social realm. Bergson characterizes artists in a similar way, as accidental souls detached from the habitual manner of seeing, hearing or thinking who are separated from the herd. Thus he categorizes art primarily as that leap of intuition, towards
disinterested self-reflection. The artist’s return to impress their unique vision onto matter is secondary and disengaged from the social impulse.

Archipenko views art as essential to the evolutionary progress of mankind because, through creative invention man develops creative consciousness to a high degree. Art is an essential tool that communicates to the creative spirit that is the source of all life. A masterpiece, or work of genius, is not a disinterested fancy or a work or imagination that we adopt because it gives us pleasure; rather it represents a truth about the world as a whole. *Woman Standing*, like all works of art, utilizes a symbolic language of form in order to communicate abstract ideas and emotions to the viewer. For Archipenko, art is an utterance that puts us back into the current of life to the universal creativeness that is spirit. Art clearly engages in the social impulse and is a necessary and indispensable tool in the progression of our creative evolution toward the betterment of mankind.

Archipenko also disagrees with Bergson’s characterization of creative genius as accidental souls, rarefied and set apart from society. Genius is a potential that all humans share and its development can be encouraged by a particular concentration of the mind in order to operate in a truly creative sphere. “A genius is formed from his own right knowledge of many causes, resulting in mental clarity towards anything he approaches.” He describes the goal of his treatise, *Creativeness*, as “an intellectually creative, practical training,” and “a cornerstone for the development of creativeness,” which he believes suffers in contemporary education and society as a whole. Archipenko seeks to open the path to a creative educational method that would put all
mankind on the path to genius, or falling short of that, to tap into the innate, creative potential we all possess as originating from the creative source.

For Bergson, philosophy, like comedy, bridges the gap between art and life. The artist is free to reject the social impulse and engage in an individual pursuit of intuition, producing fantasies and creative imaginings without any intention to correct or instruct. However, the philosopher, who utilizes the same initial leap of intuition as the artist, must break what he finds in intuition into logical concepts that can be transmitted to others via language. The necessity of dialectic means that, as Bergson describes it, “the philosopher is obliged to abandon intuition . . . to rely on himself to carry on the movement by pushing the concepts one after another,” so that the truth of intuition may be communicated to others. In short, Bergson seeks to maintain a dichotomy between art and artifice that limits the role of artists, even while claiming that they regain the intention of life, which is unity and spirit. The artistic genius has the benefit of not having to appeal to society, whereas the philosopher has the burden of the social impulse: to correct and instruct.

Bergson describes the philosopher seeking his source in intuition (which is fugitive and can only be held onto briefly) by a force of will that does violence to his nature. Intuition is seized upon by the intellect, broken into concepts, and symbolized in terms of what is known, in order that it can be made into an artifice of language to be communicated to society as an utterance of truth. If that utterance can put us back into our will, into the current of life that runs through matter, then we understand and feel reality as perpetual growth, and a creation without end. Dialectic is the obligation of the
It is a necessary artifice by which he can communicate what he finds in intuition to others via the intellect. Through the intellect and language, dialectic can elevate us beyond every day habit and put us into contact with the sense of unity and continuity that is duration.

It is precisely in this sense, the sense of dialectic, that Archipenko conceives of art. The attitude of strength exhibited by *Woman Standing* derives from its strong verticality, which we associate with uprightness. The sharp straight lines introduce a severity to the figure. These tapering lines cause our eyes to ascend, looking up to it as we would a superior presence. The frontality of the work, produces a sense respectful formality as when we meet someone for the first time. The simplicity of its curves, which sweep in gentle undulations soften the figure, giving it a sense of casual poise rather than confrontational threat. The black oval, which stands in for a face, feels like it is staring out, straight ahead, not meeting our glance. The dialectic of art, the language and logic it uses is the same as Bergson describes for philosophy. The artist must descend from intuition and employ a symbolic language in order to communicate to others.

Considered in Bergson’s terms, Archipenko’s mission of art, “matter and abstraction fused in one effect,” is akin to philosophy and artifice. Like Bergson’s cone image, Archipenko identifies two types of knowledge: lower and higher. Lower knowledge, like Bergson’s intellect, is mechanical, and deals with facts already known. Higher knowledge is creative, linked to spirit and experience, engaged in a constant process of association between memories and experiences, and like Bergson’s intuition, willed to turn away from matter and necessity, toward ideas and self-reflection. We see
these two oppositions, higher and lower knowledge, united in being as an unresolved tension between matter and spirit. Archipenko also divides creativity into two tendencies: one which is habitual, limited by doctrine, static and directed toward matter; and one which is unlimited, dynamic, and directed toward spirit.  

The process of creation involves turning away from matter toward the metaphysical. Archipenko writes, “We must avoid obstacles by liberating our minds of materialistic tendencies.” Matter is only a temporary manifestation of energy and will disintegrate in time to “become again, abstract energy.” The metaphysical realm is spirit and dynamism and it is only by abjuring the outer appearance of matter and turning inward that we can tap into the creative channels that are latent within us. It is not in the outer appearance but in other properties and characteristics radiating from the object that evoke associations and stimulate the creative process. As with Bergson, Archipenko speaks of the turn away from intellect and matter, toward spirit, where higher knowledge forms abstract ideas and new associations that are then impressed upon the material world as works of art.

In the creation of a work, the artist must return to the material world to make it manifest. Archipenko says that it is wrong to give all of the artistic control to consciousness or to the subconscious. “The sublime perfection of creativeness consists in the alliance of both and their reciprocal constructive cooperation.” This alliance is the return from the metaphysical, from the subconscious to consciousness, which makes the virtual image an actual image. In order to make actual what is immaterial requires a kind of translation or substitution of equivalents. This is the moment that the intellect seizes on
what intuition has brought forth and reconstitutes it in terms of what is already known. Archipenko writes, "In order to present the whole spiritual content of an absent object or action, the author is obliged to discover an expression which could serve as an equivalent to the known, but absent, object." These equivalent expressions are symbols that represent what cannot be expressed directly.

*Woman Standing* is the image of a modern goddess, shining bright with reflected light, which seems to almost resonate from within the figure. As Duchamp recognized, she appears to be the result of industrial manufacturing, a product of human ingenuity and efficiency produced for our ease and comfort. The achievement of Archipenko’s expression is that the figure brings a delicacy of line and graceful poise to what would otherwise be hard and mechanical. This work manages to express a faith in, and embrace of, technological progress. These characterizations of the work do not arise through intuition alone, but through a translation from abstract ideas (e.g., the image of a modern, technological goddess finds expression in the materiality of polished sheet metal) and the way that it is shaped and fashioned by the artist. The inclusion of organic, curved lines, offsetting the rigidity of steel, lends a sense of grace and poise because our eyes are attuned to such nuances. They may not rise to the level of consciousness, but they nonetheless communicate to us. For Archipenko, the visual language of form resides deep within our cells. We may never have seen an Egyptian sculpture like *Menkaure and Khamerermebty* (fig. 8) but the strict frontality, the verticality, and straight lines, which we read as a regal timelessness, are part of a visual language that is an inherent aspect of
ancient, pharaonic sculpture. It is known to us as a language of form that evolved along
with the development of our senses and our consciousness.

For Bergson, once we have symbols we have geometry and language, that is, we
have artifice and not art. For Archipenko, the artist uses equivalence, symbolism, and
relativity in order to evolve creatively and to expand into the unknown.\textsuperscript{94} Additionally,
the results of this process become attributes of the work of art, which are “useful for
stimulation of inspiration by outer force of transmission to the spectator.”\textsuperscript{95} Just as the
philosopher must write his thoughts down, putting intuition to the test and returning to
the material and social realm to transmit his ideas to others, the artist, must
“metamorphose the formless transcendental energy into clear and sensible matter,” so
that it may radiate universal creativeness forever.\textsuperscript{96} This process is akin to language in
that it takes individual creation and returns it to the social sphere where it can
communicate to others.

\textit{The Social Aspect of Language}

Standing atop pillars flanking the entrance to the University of Missouri-Kansas
City are two tall metal figures created by Archipenko in 1950 (fig. 9) Untitled and simply
referred to as ‘ornaments’ the two sculptures stand like sentinels welcoming students to
the university as a place of education, research, and service to the community. The
construction is simple. Two, flat silhouettes are placed perpendicular to each other,
meeting in the center, so that, viewed from the top they form an ‘x’. The two sculptures
are identical but have been placed on their pedestals at right angles to each other (fig. 9).
The effect is that the left and right sides present two different profiles, but as you approach and pass through the entrance they slowly morph into the opposite silhouette.97

Archipenko rarely created monumental sculpture for public commissions. His works are typically smaller, intended for private homes or galleries where interaction with the work is more individual and intimate. However, after the Second World War, he becomes more intent on expressing his ideas for the development of progressive, creative thinking through educational reform. It is during this period that he is writing his treatise, delivering lectures across the country on fostering creativeness, and teaching at institutions like the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In “Creativeness,” it is clear that developing a society that values creative potential, over dogmatism and pedantry, is a primary concern. He writes that the development of art, in concrete ways, is “useful and indispensable for cultural progress in general and especially for our confused civilization.” Archipenko adds that the urge to create “can be utilized on scientific principles and be directed for the better destiny of mankind towards a happy existence and progress instead of holding millions of innocents under constant fear of being exterminated in the destructive chaos.”98 This last statement is as political as Archipenko ever gets in his writings and it is clear that, after the impact of two world wars and the Great Depression and his own dislocation from Ukraine, his homeland, which was being trammeled by vying political forces, he believes the time is ripe to move in a different direction.99

One of the key arguments in reading Archipenko’s treatises and pairing them with Bergson’s philosophy, is that Archipenko believes in a universal language of form, a
symbolic language that functions like the syntax and grammar of language. The sense of this language communicates new expressions, often unconsciously and intuitively, which are the fusion of universal creative causes with individual experience. Increasing creative literacy is progressive and, for Archipenko, will lead to another evolutionary stage of attainment.\textsuperscript{100} This universal language finds its source in the course of evolution through the development of sense organs, which respond to stimuli from the environment. Our autonomic system, responding to colors, patterns, and sounds, increases blood pressure and releases endorphins in a way that is instinctual. Eventually these stimuli become associated with emotions and memories. Thus, for Archipenko, there is something like a deep structure for visual form, a capacity for understanding, interpreting, and using form that we all share, but requires development for creative progression.\textsuperscript{101} The aesthetic structure is innate, but the distinct style of each culture develops differently according to its particular environment and beliefs. In the modern period, individual style is not subordinated to religious or political impositions, but is allowed free expression. For Archipenko, “the origin of style is not only in the religious, epochal or other philosophies, but is also in the character of the individual, and consequently in his biological organization.”\textsuperscript{102}

In the development of style, there is a clear opposition between social influences and what Archipenko refers to as, the individual “in his biological organization.”\textsuperscript{103} This same opposition is expressed by Bergson, particularly when he speaks of the philosopher who must separate himself from society in order to go beyond common knowledge, to find life at its source, but who must then turn back toward society and dialectic in order to
communicate his ideas and put his intuition to the test. Unlike Bergson’s characterization of the artist who is completely free but apart from society, Archipenko’s artist engages with it through dialectic. In order to be progressive and timeless, the work of art must be social and yet it must go beyond social conventions. Archipenko refers to this drive as forwardness and characterizes it as dynamism, the ever-increasing expansion of nature that reveals itself, in man, as a drive toward creation and spirit. Forwardness is registered and expressed by our cells as the creative causes which arise to consciousness as works to be made manifest.

Bergson never actually articulates a philosophy of language, but as Lawlor reveals, there are clear references to language, which form a consistent view in line with his philosophy of ethics. On the basis of Bergson’s use of the concept “the whole of obligation” in *The Two Sources of Morality* (1935), Lawlor postulates that we can deduce something like “the whole of language,” which is language as a dynamic schema. “The whole of language,” as a dynamic schema, is a capacity for learning and using language that all humans share. Language is a natural development that arises out of our social organization. The “whole of language” parallels the idea of a deep structure allowing for a common understanding of visual form. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson says that man is a being who lives in a society and that it is through language that community action is possible. This is as true for ants as it is for humans. However, ant societies operate instinctively; their communication is static, fixed. In human society, “there must be a language whose signs . . . are extensible to an infinity of things.” The intelligent sign is mobile; it can be passed from one thing to another and can be extended from
things to ideas. In fact, our language can be mobilized to produce ideas for which there is no corresponding object. Taken together, these concepts, “constitute an ‘intelligible world,’” that resembles the world of solids in its essential characters, but whose elements are lighter, more diaphanous, easier for the intellect to deal with than the image of concrete things.”

Language in its particular sense, i.e., in terms of specific grammar, syntax, and words, is conventional and governed by the intellect. Conventional language is directed toward social needs and is largely habitual. The intellect views language as parts and relations – words strung together according to particular rules that are recomposed into meaning. This is language in its material form, at the point of the cone, where it is inserted into the plane, where the body acts and reacts to others. Language here is utilitarian and determinate. Its conventions keep us trapped within an artifice. Two speakers in normal conversation use conventional forms of speech, they speak in general terms, according to the static ideas of their community, and everything they say and recognize “is analyzed and synthesized, subsumed under these ideas.” These speakers never rise above the habitual or conventional use of language. This kind of inattentive recognition to language, characterized by two native speakers, distances us from the object through conventional symbols.

The effort to close the distance that habitual language puts between us and the object in itself requires an attentiveness that Bergson equates with a listener who is learning a new language. The novice listener has not acquired the habits of speaking and recognizing language that make it automatic for a native speaker. In order to reconstruct
speech intelligently the listener must start from the ideas. Bergson writes, “If I am to understand, I must place myself ‘immediately’ ‘in the midst of corresponding ideas.’”

This sense of immediacy is the intuitive leap into memory. With language, we don’t recompose the individual words to find meaning, but must make the intuitive leap above the turn of experience to memory and meaning, to the whole of language. The listener must move directly to the idea or context of the utterance. Before he can turn back to the individual words he must have the sense, or the corresponding idea, of the utterance. This sense of the whole is what Bergson refers to as a dynamic schema. The dynamic schema is not the whole of language as already constituted but remains flexible like the chess grand master who sees the whole of the board as a mutually organized set of potentialities.

When we encounter the two Archipenko sculptures at the gateway of the University of Missouri we are placed immediately within the idea of the work because we intuitively possess a dynamic schema for three-dimensional forms. The works stand out and mark the site as an important passage. Ideally, the university is where individuals broaden their knowledge and expand their creative capacity in order to contribute to the society in a meaningful way. The inattentive viewer, rushing to a class, might simply see sculptures, and may pass by without noticing that the works change in relation to his or her position. This inattention distances the viewer from the work, placing it on the margins of awareness. The work remains unthought and unseen. A similar thing happens through repetition. The student on her first day may be fascinated by the sculptures, in their novelty, the change that the passage marks in her life, the way that the sun casts

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long shadows. However, after four years, she is habituated to the works, seeing them as a conventional sign of the university; what was once a dynamic experience becomes a static symbol and a fixed idea. This static, conventional symbol is not the kind that Archipenko refers to when he speaks of the creative mind using suggestions and symbols to project the ideas and feelings of things that are materially absent. Instead, Archipenko favors symbols that are mobile and dynamic, causing the viewer to create new associations that cascade and multiply, exciting the creative consciousness of the viewer and directing her beyond what is present to perception. The sculptor uses material in the same way that the poet uses language.

The poet, like the artist, uses language in a way that is unlike the logic of conventional speech. In Laughter, Bergson says that the object of art is to “brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself.” Bergson writes, “when a poet reads me his verses, I can interest myself enough in him to enter into his thought, put myself into his feelings, live over again the simple state he has broken into phrases and words.” In sympathy with the poet’s intuition there is unity between creator and its receiver. The poet, in touch with the source of life, returns to the material of language in order to insert something of himself into it. The sympathetic listener, through effort of the will attains a level of attentiveness, that allows him to relive the thoughts and feelings, which is the poem’s creative source. Here again, the sense of sympathy is more of resonating at the right frequency, entering into the current of life, and matching the durational rhythm of the poem. The poetic sentiment is
singular. It is a dynamic schema – a free and indeterminate play of language that remains open and unresolved.

By contrast, the disinterested listener relaxes, becomes inattentive, any sense of unity breaks apart into phrases, words, and syllables, a “multiplicity of individuated elements.” Bergson describes this as moving in the direction of the dream. The materiality of the language that creates it precipitates a regression into the intelligible world. The more we move in this direction, the more we see order and complexity, how admirably each part is woven into the next. The simple organization of the poem as an indivisible whole is broken down into an infinite complexity of parts. If we put ourselves to the task of memorizing the poem, we move in the direction of the motor schema, rehearsing the words, forming the shapes and sounds until they become habitual. As an example, we may know the Gettysburg Address by heart, be able to recite it, even perform it, but we have lost the sense of it. It has become mere utility unless we again become attentive and enter into sympathy with it.

There is a clear difference between Archipenko and Bergson in terms of the symbolic. For Archipenko, the poet necessarily uses symbolic language to express his thought, and it is through that symbolic language that we return to it. He writes that, in poetry, music or art, “in order to present the whole spiritual content of an absent object or action, the author is obliged to discover an expression which could serve as an equivalent to the known but absent object.” In order to express abstract ideas such as love and beauty, the author must move from his inspiration toward a virtual image, which is equivalent to the abstract idea. This transformation from expression requires a
substitution from the immaterial to the material and the author uses symbols and associations from his experience in order to produce a new image that retains the full sense of the original idea. Like the poet who breaks the unity into words and phrases, the artist must break his inspiration into forms. The goal for each is to retain the unity through the multiplicity. When Archipenko speaks of symbols, he is not talking about the kind of fixed, mathematical symbols, or even common speech, that Bergson characterizes as conventional. Archipenko calls for a symbology that abstracts and spiritualizes the object, one that is “invented by the artist as a consequence of personal experiences and creative imaginings.” The symbols are intuitive not conventional, they derive from the gray zone, which is experience.

Returning to the gateway sculptures in Kansas City, each is composed of the same silhouettes, arranged perpendicular to each other. Each of these silhouettes carries motifs that Archipenko uses in other works. The first silhouette (fig. 10) is tall, wider at the bottom and tapering toward the top. Cutouts in the figure delineate the arms, torso and waist. A flat, metal halo tops the figure. The feeling elicited by the form is a figure of spiritual devotion, humble and self-contained. For Archipenko, the motif represents the union of matter and spirit raised up to the eternal, which is one of the pillars of Archipenko’s teaching. The aim of his art is to “grasp abstract causations of the universal creativeness and to awake consciousness of this power.” We exhibit this awakened consciousness of the unification of spirit and matter through creative activity, which is an expression of the same forces that permeate the universe and all living beings.
The second silhouette (fig. 11) contrasts with the first by swelling in and up with a deep curvature. The effect is dynamic and opens outward whereas the first is still and meditative. On top of the figure’s head is a curving form with two lobes that point upward and out from the figure. This motif can be seen in several of Archipenko’s drawings, such as the middle figure in *Three Worried Kings* (1948) (fig. 12). The motif appears again in Archipenko’s *King Solomon* (1963) (fig. 13) as a horned crown. The horns in antiquity are a symbol of wisdom, honor, divinity, and power. The king-like silhouette, with its horned crown is a figure of wisdom and honor radiating with creative consciousness.

The two silhouettes merge into one, both in their construction, and also as the viewer engages with the work, circling around it. Archipenko’s adjustment of the silhouettes makes the metamorphoses seamless. One figure transforms into the other, in an endless cycle. The spirit, self-contained in one figure, opens up, becomes dynamic and radiates forth in the other. The characteristics of the two aspects combine in single, dynamic form. Marking the entrance to the university, the two sculptures represent the highest attainment of education. Students enter, seeking knowledge and experience; they exit, filled with a creative spirit, which benefits mankind as a whole. The refined, simplicity of the work contributes to the purity of the artist’s intent, free from the complicated realities that often interfere with the spirit of universal education.

For Archipenko the more dense and layered the symbolic associations, the more the work will attract the attention of spectators because it will resonate with their personal experience as well as with the universal creative impulse. Thus, as with the poem, the
work of art is a dynamic schema through which the attentive viewer may enter into sympathy with the creative impulse, while the inattentive viewer may see it as an admirable assemblage of color and form. Both the sense of the spiritual whole (which is the source and the admirable order that we find in its parts) must harmonize in the work. Archipenko writes, “in making and in looking at the style of creative sculpture, one should see beyond the forms, as one reads poetry between words or hears music above sound.”\textsuperscript{124} The goal is to spiritually elevate the mind to the highest level,\textsuperscript{125} to the realm of universal causation where masterpieces are formed.\textsuperscript{126} In the same sense, Bergson argues that, “the same undividedness of the real whole continues to hover over the growing multiplicity of the symbolic elements into which the scattering of the attention has decomposed it.”\textsuperscript{127}

We can see that there is a kind of doubling between the whole of language and language in its utility. The intuitive sense of the whole, as a dynamic schema, encompasses what the intellect breaks into individual words and symbolic meanings. In his analogy, Bergson focuses on the listener, and not the work of the poet who recites his verses. However, the poet and the artist, who turn inward, away from the social sphere, toward self-reflection and an intuitive contact with the direct flow of their personal life cannot stay there if they wish to communicate something of that experience to others. Like the philosopher, the artist must return to the social sphere, must turn back and descend through experience where the intellect seizes upon intuition in order to materialize the creative impulse. The goal is to preserve the original sense so that the attentive listener may enter into sympathy with it. For Bergson this means moving in the
right direction from the simple and continuous to the multiple and particular. Unity cannot be gained through an assemblage of disparate parts but only through the intuitive leap into the realm where we sense our own duration.

For Archipenko this leap also means a leap into our cells where we hold ancestral memories going back to the origin of life. There, what we might call the whole of form is accessible, though unconscious. At the same time, the creative impulse includes universal forces that are registered and transmitted by the cells in addition to our experience of the current moment, which flows through life. The artist gathers these forces and must preserve them as they morph into material form if the work is to be vital. The artist incorporates some part of the immaterial spirit into the work, elevating it above the material so that it may live forever and, “radiate universal creativeness through [the] individual's creative power of reforming the material externality into spirituality and visa [sic] versa.”128 The role of art is clearly not a disinterested luxury for Archipenko, nor does it merely insert the indetermination of life, rather it inserts spirit into the material realm so that it may radiate to others, progressively enlarge creative potential, and contribute towards the creative evolution of man.

Ideally for the attentive viewer, a work like the gateway sculptures in Kansas City would produce new associations and experiences, rather than become a habitual marker of space. The works and our relationship to them change with the changing environment and with our own mood. Engaging with a work of art requires active participation. We bring something of ourselves to the work, rather than simply seeing it. If the artist produces a work that is dense with symbols and associations and the viewer is attuned to
them, then the work will come alive, stimulating his or her creative consciousness. Tuning into the work requires a willing openness to enter into the rhythm of the work. For Bergson, this is both a turning inward of intuition (to self-reflection, memory, and spirit) and a return to the work, which closes the distance and allows us to enter into its duration. We have both the dynamic schema, the sense of the whole, spreading outward and connected to everything else, and the symbols, which relate to each other and to our own individual experience. For Archipenko, the work stimulates those associations, sending us deep into our subconscious and into our cells, where we are connected to all other beings and to our living source, which is universal creativeness.

The Materialization of Spirit

The essential quality of art, for Archipenko, is the union of matter and spirit into one form. In Creativeness he writes, “the majority of people separate materialism from spiritualism. For many the unity of both seems to be impossible. In the creative realm the unity of them becomes indispensable - both must be welded into one shape.” It is not enough that a work be a product of the intellect alone, or that it emphasize only formal material elements; it must aim at elevating the mind toward universal dynamism and continuity. The creative advancement of mankind is hindered by a superficial interest in the concrete and the external appearance of matter.

Like Bergson, Archipenko places living being as an intermediary between distinct spheres of reality. He distinguishes between the constructive mind, which operates in the spiritual realm of abstract causation, and the practical mind, which is concerned with the
material world. These two minds operate much like intuition and intellect in *Matter and Memory*. In the creation of works of art Archipenko writes that it is impossible, “to produce a masterpiece or an invention requiring ingenuity” using only the “rigid intellect” or practical mind. Spirit must become “the victor over the presence of matter during the creative conflict,” in order for the work to become vital and timeless.

If we return once again to Bergson’s cone image, we recall that the base of the cone represents pure memory, which “opens us to a view of what we call spirit.” This is a realm where pure memory penetrates immaterial spirit. The summit of the cone is “the point of contact between consciousness and things, between the body and spirit.” The summit represents pure perception, which is perception with no interval, no duration. Pure perception places us within matter. The cone represents a movement, an oscillation between perception and memory and it is why Bergson speaks of intellect in terms of direction. The intellect turns toward matter and intuition toward memory. But perception and memory can only be pure in an ideal sense. In reality, we always move between the two. This is why, at the outset, the claim was made that being unites spirit and matter. Living beings are a negotiation between the two positive realities of matter and spirit.

If spirit is one reality and matter another, how is it that being integrates them? The answer to this question is where Archipenko and Bergson appear to part company. For Bergson, the presence of spirit allows man to gather up the past and insert it into the present as free will. It is the ability to make a choice; in making that choice he inserts something new and unpredictable into the universe. Spirit forcibly reverses the tide of
time in which man and all matter is caught which is why it requires an effort of will to counter habit and the relaxation of attention. This is the contribution of life and is what makes living beings more than complex machines.

Archipenko believes that spirit is immanent in all matter at the atomic level. Matter and spirit constitute a binary pair held in tension at the smallest level. The artist writes that “all high spiritual vibrations emanate from atomic forces filling the universe,” and expresses his belief that spirit is energy in the universe bound up with matter and radiating forth. “Atoms carry the energy from the universal creative stock to produce growth, expansion, and life in general.” Matter can radiate spirit as a potential energy force. In the creative process universal abstract creative causes are registered as energy by the cells of the body which accumulate and undergo a metamorphosis in becoming conscious form which is then translated into material form. In his consciousness, man can direct and amplify spirit through the willful creation of forms.

For most, metamorphosis from the immaterial to the material would appear miraculous, a manifestation out of nothing. However, this is not true, for Archipenko, who argues that an abstract idea like harmony can be materialized in art the same way that the energy of the sun, through photosynthesis, creates the growth of new cells. Archipenko asserts that metamorphosis is occurring in nature at all times, “metamorphosis is not only possible but constitutes life, art, progress and total universal unity.” Archipenko declares, that mitosis is divine metamorphoses arising from cosmic dynamism, which occurs in the smallest unit of life, the cell. All cells take in matter, convert it into energy and, reaching a certain threshold, begin the process of creating an
exact duplicate. The cells in our body are continually being replaced so that an eighty
eyear-old man has replaced every cell in his body at least ten times; similarly, our sense of
continuity is due only to the memory which is retained in the cells. Man is privileged
to be aware of and to make use of metamorphoses in art and inventions to elevate them to
new spiritual heights.

Archipenko’s primary interest in metamorphosis in the arts is the materialization
of spirit and the spiritualization of matter. The first task of the creative artist and inventor
is the materialization of spirit. Through the development and use of super-knowledge,
which is the ability to discern the subconscious creative impulses and apply intellect and
experience to provide significant, symbolic form, the artist fixes the unity of spirit with
concrete matter in the act of making. The artist or inventor must enter into the depths
of his own psychological and sensual reactions to select those elements, which will guide
him to the spiritualization of the object. These creative forces or abstractions are
inmaterial impulses registered by the cells and transmitted to the subconscious mind that
must be inserted into concrete forms to “perform the miracle of making spirit live in
matter,” in the same way that the humble cell creates a living copy of itself out of inert
matter. The example that Archipenko uses for this in art is Beethoven’s Ninth
Symphony, which he describes as identical with nature, carrying “vital latent
characteristics through matter, time, and space.” The Ninth Symphony offers concrete
evidence of the existence of spirit. The work is timeless, conveying its vitality to new
generations of listeners and resonating with something that goes to the heart of what it
means to be alive.
A natural genius, like Beethoven, Archipenko contends, blends spirit and matter, “instinctively and unconsciously into new forms with more precision and perfection than an intellectual scholar may do by using manufactured formulas.” However, one does not have to be a genius to create works that seamlessly blend spirit and matter. This task, making spirit live in matter, is not easy and it is the reason that Archipenko wrote “Creativeness.” Archipenko fervently believed that the right education could teach individuals techniques to tap into latent creative causes as well as provide them with the wide experience necessary to provide concrete form to spirit. This type of education would orient mankind in a creative direction and away from the stultifying and stagnating tendencies of the academy.

The second task in artistic metamorphosis is the spiritualization of matter. In the first, immaterial abstract forces are gathered and inserted into concrete matter to make spirit live in new forms. In the second, the material aspects of a work of art must be dematerialized to allow spirit to radiate forth. Archipenko is less clear on how one completes this task, comparing it to the sublimation of ice into vapor or wood into fire, a metamorphosis from a solid state to an immaterial one. Returning to the example of Beethoven, Archipenko writes that the composer transformed, “his body's experiences into spiritual energy and gave to it the aspect of the Ninth Symphony, which through time and space is sequently transposed [transposed in a temporal order] into the body of the listener giving it immortal, but latent, existence.” The artist’s individual bodily experiences are converted into spiritual energy, which is infused in the work. In other words, the listener receives this spiritual energy above and beyond the musical notes.
spirit of the work lives in the listener. The particular work of art elevates the individual experience of the artist as universal spirit. The example of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* demonstrates the dual metamorphoses whereby spirit, flowing through the artist is expressed in concrete form as musical notes (i.e., the materialization of spirit); at the same time the bodily experience of the artist is expressed as spiritual energy (i.e., the spiritualization of matter). Spirit exceeds the material content of the work, allowing it to transmit to the listener in a way that elevates the work to the universal.

We can see in this play of metamorphoses not only as a negotiation between matter and spirit, but also a negation between the individual and the universal. The artist receives the universal creative forces registered by his cells but filtered through his personal experience. The work of art is symbolically expressed in a way that expresses his feelings and psychology as form and color.\(^{149}\) It is an individual expression of the spirit. In the process, the artist remains connected to universal spirit as a creative source. Archipenko insists that regardless of the individual style, the work of art should “show the spiritual derivation from universal creativeness,” and make it pronounced so that it may be adequately communicated to the receptive spectator. If exposed, the spiritual content may stimulate and inspire the spectator through universal creativeness.\(^{150}\) The work of art, which successfully materializes spirit and spiritualizes matter remains vitally and timelessly an individual expression, but one that expresses universal dynamism.
Chapter 4: Metamorphosis: The Materialization of Spirit and the Spiritualization of Matter

The very nature and function of creative art is to exploit abstract exertion in order to metamorphose the formless transcendental energy into clear and seizable matter and at the same time to liberate matter from its own shape by reforming [the] static into [the] dynamic.
- Alexander Archipenko

Alexander Archipenko views matter as a manifestation of energy that will again become abstract energy through metamorphosis. The artist’s understanding of Albert Einstein’s theory, that mass and energy are transposable, feeds into his ideas about the materialization of the intangible. He writes, “all metamorphoses in nature and in art are in-and-out circulation of creative energy.” Cosmic dynamism is absolute, perpetual creation in a state of energy that pervades all matter and produces the spark of life. This cosmic energy creates atoms, and travels through the atomic nuclei making contact with all matter. Spirit, abstract and metaphysical, is the expression of this energy as it emerges through experience and wisdom. It is an awareness of creative energy as our source, which animates matter as living beings.

Archipenko claims that metamorphosis is at the heart of all works of art and invention. Formless ideas, emotions, and inspirations arise in the mind of the artist who embodies them with memory and experience. The immaterial and abstract ideas become virtual images coalescing in the zone of indetermination, where we make choices.
virtual image, which lies between memory and matter in the process of becoming, sets
the artist into action with the aim of realizing his vision. The inspiration is the product of
the artist’s creativeness, but its materialization requires the intellect, which moves
between the virtual image and the actual material, to create in the extended space where
we participate in a social organization. The result of this process is the work of art, which
engages viewers in a reverse metamorphosis, making the material form a part of their
immaterial experience and linking the work to memory and spirit.

This is the process of artistic creation and reception that Alexander Archipenko
articulates in his writing, and that we have elucidated in the first two chapters. The final
section of Chapter Three, “The Materialization of Spirit,” represents the ultimate message
of Archipenko’s philosophy that mankind is able to consciously grasp the universal
creative causes that flow through being as a latent force, manifest those causes into
material forms reflecting their individual experience, and connect those material forms to
eternal spirit. Archipenko describes this process of manifesting abstract causes as the
materialization of spirit. In order to be eternal, the work of art must go through a second
metamorphosis transcending materiality to radiate with the spirit of creation. The
spiritualization of matter makes spirit live in matter so that it may be transmitted to others
to serve for human progress.7

The present chapter analyzes the way that Archipenko puts his theory into
practice through the work of art. Archipenko asserts, “a right attitude should be
established towards many elements [in art,] which may be antipodes to each other.”8
Primary among these antipodes is matter and spirit, where the artist’s emphasis clearly
lies on spirit over and above the presence of matter. Emphasizing the dichotomy between matter and spirit, Archipenko accentuates a set of formal oppositions in sculpture. He then amplifies the subordinate term of these oppositions in order to elevate the role of absence over presence as a stimulant for creative action in the viewer.

*Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years,* the monograph Archipenko published in 1959, focuses on the artist’s personal philosophy, theoretical foundations, and a presentation of more than two hundred unique artworks. Each of Archipenko’s twenty chapters textually addresses an artistic problem and directs the reader to a section of plates intended to illustrate how the problem is resolved sculpturally. The present chapter takes up five sculptural problems introduced in *Fifty Creative Years* as exemplifying formal, compositional aspects of the work that spotlight a particular interest in transcending habitual understanding of material, sculptural relationships. The sections on Line, Space, Concave, Reflection, and Light and Transparency all present binary relationships that invert the traditional materiality of sculpture in favor of the representation of immaterial spirit.

Line presents a concern between figure and ground as a binary opposition where, traditionally, figure serves as the primary interest. Incorporating the element of ground into sculpture in-the-round, Archipenko disrupts the logic of a unified, continuous sculptural surface that directs attention to a material volume. Space inverts the concept of the contour line as a material boundary by redirecting the focus of the contour to a volume of space, which is figured as an absence, rather than a volume of matter. Concave forms configure the surface as an area that shapes the space it enfolded. Alternating
between the conventional salient convexity of sculpture and the intaglio concave
dissociates the surface from the material volume of sculpture and reconceives it as an
energetic boundary that negotiates between matter and space. Sculpture becomes
simultaneously a material figure that is also a ground for the concave imprint of an absent
object. Through reflection, Archipenko uses light to dematerialize sculpture in order to
reveal spirit as an intuitive effect that finds eternal existence in living memory. Chrome
plating, mirrors, and other highly reflective surfaces increase the effect of the surface as a
dynamic field of energy, dematerializing the sculptural object while amplifying the sense
of space, and strengthening the connection between the object and its environment. The
final category, Light and Transparency utilizes transparent Plexiglas as a material means
for immateriality. Illuminated from within, the figures glow with a spiritual radiance,
dispersing light into the surrounding space. The material figure is made immaterial and
the immaterial ground becomes the radiation of spiritual energy. The aura remains as the
presence of the immaterial energy of spirit, which is the eternal potential for creation.

Archipenko views spirit as a potential energy that awaits manifestation through
metamorphosis. This process is a mundane miracle that occurs in every living organism
at every instant. The same kind of metamorphosis occurs in chemical reactions at the
atomic level and in galaxies over billions of years. Mankind is in the privileged position
to be consciously aware of this process and to utilize the energy of creation to manifest
abstract ideas and to communicate these ideas to others in a communal process of
creative action.
Line. Bathers II, (1950)(fig. 14) presents a quality of line that we see often in the hundreds of drawings that Archipenko made over the course of his career. Long, sweeping, lyrical lines are sinuously around the two figures identified as bathers by the cloth held by the figure on the right. The line swells and thins with a particular rhythm and frequency that stimulates visual perception, and moves the eye around the figures. For Archipenko, lines carry symbolic meaning provoking an affective response in the viewer. He likens them to music evoking feelings that remain largely unconscious, reaching into the depths of cellular memory to bring to the present moment a quality that registers emotionally. Sharp, zig-zagging lines are like the intricate weavings of Jazz music, whereas long, curving lines are lyrical producing a flowing melody. Lines of differing quality harmonize with each other or emphasize dissonance amplifying the overall impact of a work.¹¹ In Bathers II the lines move around the figure creating a visual effect similar to the vibrations we hear as sound when a string is plucked, whereas the cross-hatching radiates with a pulsatile energy.

Line plays a complicated role between art and artifice, activating both intuition and the intellect in a prolonged engagement of perception that place us in sympathy with the object. Chapter Three of this dissertation introduces this dichotomy between art and artifice, where art is described as giving us a picture of the internal continuity of life in its natural articulations. Through intuition, art removes the barriers that the intellect puts up between us and the living world. These barriers constitute an artifice, a fabrication of the world that the intellect presents by carving perception up and recomposing it in terms of parts and relations. The intellect performs this act of cutting up and representing the
world because its primary focus is on satisfying needs through immediate action and predicting future outcomes. In the everyday world, we function both through intellect and intuition and, as we have shown, intuition must pass through the intellect in order to be communicated to others.\textsuperscript{12}

As artifice, lines form the basis of written language, allowing us to quantify, enumerate, and record through conventional symbols. In drawing, operating as outlines, lines artificially separate an image into parts and relations, establishing a sense of space through the division of figure and ground. Lines, carved in tablets drawn on walls or paper, form the basis of an intellectual sign system directed toward social needs and governed by rules that enforce static ideas. As art, lines move away from conventional signs to trace the spontaneous and continuous movement of an idea made manifest. On the page the line, in this artistic sense, presents a movement whereby spirit is grafted onto matter. This movement can be retraced by the viewer placing them back within the artist’s thoughts and feelings.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Bathers II} clearly sets up an artificial division between figure and ground. The line largely encloses the two distinct figures focusing concentration on the central volumes as standing in front of and apart from the featureless ground. Cross-hatching creates shaded areas producing an illusion of depth, increasing the volume of the figures, and further separating them from each other and the surrounding space. In Bergson’s terms the line serves to carve out and delimit bodies from each other and from the surrounding environment, allowing us to identify objects upon which we could act.\textsuperscript{14} There is a quasi-instantaneous recognition of separate figures that occurs automatically
because we possess a dynamic schema for visual form that allows us to see the whole. As Bergson describes it, we discover at “once the organization of the outlines of common objects.”

For Bergson, it is our attention after recognition that determines how we proceed. The inattentive viewer takes whatever useful effects they can from the object and acts or moves on. The attentive viewer prolongs perception of the object in order to, “dwell upon its outlines,” and, “mark out the more striking features,” in a continued deliberation where memory-images come regularly to bring us back to the object. Attentive recognition suspends action to appeal to deeper and deeper regions of memory, filling in the details in an operation that can continue indefinitely. According to Bergson these memory-images, “go out to meet the perception and, feeding on its substance acquire sufficient vigour and life to abide with it in space.” This process restores continuity to the image that the intellect has artificially divided.

The work of art, then, is one that stimulates and promotes the kind of prolonged and open deliberation of attentive recognition. Archipenko uses line to bind oppositions in a manner that draws attention to the structure of the work itself, resisting easy resolution. For example, while there is a clear distinction between figure and ground in *Bathers II*, Archipenko blurs the distinction between the two in a manner that keeps the eye actively moving over the surface. The same cross-hatching used to create a figural volume extends into the ground in a manner that reads, not as shading, but as a dynamic energy surrounding and extending from the figures creating an auratic effect. Archipenko also resists a clear sense of outline, creating an ambiguity of figural form and position.
through lines that do not clearly define either. Initially, it appears as though the figure on
the right has her back to us, but the head and shoulders reverse this identification. The
lines fail to clearly delimit bodies or to establish a stable figure/ground relationship.
Instead, line is elevated beyond conventional utility, in a manner similar to the poet’s
verse or the composer’s melody, allowing us to retrace the artist’s impetus. Archipenko
describes his use of line as a psychological attractor intended to draw the viewer into a
continued engagement with the work through intrigue or an “un-knowness.”20 The
irresolvable nature of the work elevates the creative consciousness of the viewer through
an intuitional process of memory association and imagination.

Archipenko explores the opposition between figure and ground in several works
that combine elements of relief and in-the-round sculpture. Relief sculpture is akin to
drawing in the sense that there is a clear opposition between figure and ground and all
attention is directed to the figures with the ground serving a secondary role. Sculpture in-
the-round eliminates the ground completely creating a free-standing figure whose contour
serves as a boundary between the figure and its environment. We can see this in a
Classical Greek sculpture like Polykleitos’ *Doryphoros.* (fig. 15) The free-standing figure
is a self-contained volume of matter with a unified surface that evidences an imagined,
internal structure.21 Archipenko elevates a tension between figure and ground by
combining elements of relief with sculpture-in-the round and calling attention to the role
that the ground plays in relief. He also disrupts the logic of the unified surface of
sculpture by treating it, as in relief, as a surface that can be cut, marked, and inscribed. By
re-conceiving the sculptural surface he emphasizes its materiality in order to transcend it.
*Kneeling Figure* (1935)(fig. 16) presents an image of a kneeling female figure in polished terracotta that, like an ancient stele, is free-standing but modeled in the manner of a relief. The figure, presented in a three-quarter view, faces to the right with her left knee raised and the right leg tucked under. The wide base establishes a solidity of mass, while the foreshortened torso elongates the figure. The surface is smooth and features are simplified to preserve a unity of line.\(^2\) As in relief, the figure is surrounded by a ground, which is colored, polished, and modeled in the same manner as the figure maintaining the unity of the composition. The ground creates a *caesura* that both limits and establishes a sense of depth. She appears to emerge from the shadowy depths of the ground and to project into our space, as though passing through a liminal zone to materialize before us.

Seeing *Kneeling* as a figure surrounded by a ground is to accept the artificial division of the composition created by a line that divides the work into parts and gives the figure priority in its relationship to a ground that serves as a structural support. *Kneeling* calls attention to the opposition between figure and ground by freeing the relief from its role as a structural support and emphasizing the compositional role that the ground plays in establishing the figure. Figure and ground are bound together as equivalent aspects of an essential unity. The free-standing and self-supporting sculpture is not a subsidiary decoration to an architectural monument. Nor is it a traditional sculpture in the round that treats the figure as an isolated volume surrounded by space. Instead the work functions somewhere between these two extremes, balancing the qualities of both, in order to create a novel composition that declares the materiality of the sculptural surface.
Archipenko disrupts the logic of the sculptural surface through deep incisions and linear protrusions that artistically trace the sculptor’s gesture, but do not artificially describe the outline of the figure. As in *Bathers II*, the lines that inscribe *Kneeling* do not clearly delimit the figure, but blur the distinction between the figure and ground by creating an ambiguity between them. The deep cut to the left of the figure echoes the contour of her back, but never contacts the figure. Instead, this line creates a deep area of shading that breaks up the unity of the surface and introduces a contrasting compositional element. Following the contour to the right of the figure, the lines create a spatial ambiguity that makes the knee appear to project further from the surface. The different layers of material to the right of the figure’s chest also form a dark contrasting shadow providing a sense of deep recession. Archipenko uses linear forms to create a rhythm and energy that echoes the use of cross-hatching in *Bathers II*, emphasizing the dynamism of the figure.

Utilizing line to go beyond the conventional relationship between figure and ground, Archipenko reveals the ground as an essential compositional element existing in opposition to the figure. Elevating the tension between the two, through an ambiguity created by line, brings the materiality of the work to the fore over and above the subject matter. The uniform texture and color of the surface of *Kneeling*, punctuated by a rhythmic play of deep incisions and protrusions that create contrasts in light and shadow, is intended to project the viewer beyond materiality toward a contemplation on the creative execution of an abstract idea. This contemplative drive intensifies the creative consciousness of the viewer, who traces again the simple movement of the artist.23
In attentive recognition we go beyond the artificial identification of figure and ground and realize the unity of the composition. Archipenko’s use of line as a psychological attractor, calling attention to the relationship between figure and ground, is intended to draw the viewer into a prolonged and active engagement with the work. By introducing visual ambiguity, the artist engages perception in a dynamic process initiating a sustained appeal to deep memory. For Archipenko, this deep memory is not only an activation of intuition bringing us into sympathy with the object, but it is also an appeal to the ancestral memory residing deep in our cells that connects us to a universal language of visual form.24 This level of reflection puts us in contact with the universal, creative energy that is the artist’s source and impetus for the work.

**Space.** In the delicate, bronze statuette entitled *Woman Combing Her Hair* (1915)(Fig. 17) the articulations and proportions of the figure remain closely connected to naturalistic features, which accentuates the abstraction of those features through the use concave and convex forms. The right arm of the figure is raised up and over the head in a combing gesture and the hair, indicated by three curving lines inscribed into the bronze surface, falls down on either side of her head. The most striking feature of this figure is that the head and neck are formed of empty space, framed by the contour of the right arm and the cascade of hair.25 *Woman Combing Her Hair* reveals space as an element of composition that actively engages the viewer in the creative process, not as an empty container surrounding the unified surface of sculpture.
Archipenko inverts the relationship between matter and space highlighting their reciprocal relationship. In *Fifty Creative Years*, he describes the way that the outline, or contour in sculpture, can concentrate psychological attraction on the material form or on the space that the form envelops. In *Woman Combing Her Hair* the contour has this dual function, directing our attention first to the material figure and then to the space forming the head and neck. The contour elevates the tension between the material presence of the arm and the absence of the head that it encircles. The artist’s inventive use of space counters the idea of space as a frame that serves only to direct our focus upon the condensation of matter that is the material volume of sculpture.

For Archipenko, space is not empty but resonates with the abstract energy of creation. He adopts the paradigm of Quantum Physics, which posits a universe of dynamic forces and energy fields colliding and interacting, which are only perceived as solid matter. In Archipenko’s view, this energy can become animated matter through metamorphosis, which is the expression of universal, creative spirit. In *Woman Combing Her Hair*, the space of the head and neck becomes an energetic potential for inventive manifestation, an immaterial presence, and a symbol of the living spirit.

Replacing the material form with a volume of space produces a doubling in perception where the empty space, as a material absence, is replaced by associations from memory. In *Woman Combing Her Hair* we substitute the empty space with a head and neck. Space becomes a symbolic form of absence that we make present through association. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson addresses the idea of the void as an obstacle between representation and the satisfaction of an action that stimulates consciousness.
towards deliberation. The void in *Woman Combing Her Hair* frustrates the ease of habitual perception by creating a distance between representation and action. This distance, for Bergson, is precisely the point where consciousness becomes, “the light that plays around the zone of potential actions or potential activity.” In instinctive activity, there is no consciousness, because there is no interval between representation and action, but “where many equally possible actions are indicated without there being any real action (as in a deliberation that has not come to an end), consciousness is intense.” *Woman Combing Her Hair* presents an energized space that the viewer responds to by both acknowledging the sense of absence and transforming it into a presence in perception. The two fuse in perception activating affection and memory to make spirit present in the mind of the viewer.

Archipenko triggers this intensity of consciousness when he substitutes space for a torso, head, or limb. He writes that modeling space, “becomes a creative process which may be compared with the psychological reconstruction of the absent object reposing in our memory.” The shape of the space is an imprint of what is absent, which is creatively reconstructed by the viewer. The attentive viewer participates in the creative process by combining positive associations from memory with the perception of space. The resulting memory-image is made whole through experience. *Woman Combing Her Hair* closes the distance that the intellect puts between the viewer and the art object by incorporating the viewer’s experience as creative action while making the work an indelible image permanently associated in memory.
Space as a sculptural material introduces a twist in the metamorphosis from spirit to matter. In the typical course, as in a work like *Kneeling*, the artist materializes creative causes and abstract ideas through a process of symbolization. Archipenko inverts this conventional creative path, choosing to make what is present in his mind a palpable absence. This twist flips the process for the viewer as well. Rather than transforming the material presence into the immaterial idea and creative source of the work, the viewer fills the imprint of space with a virtual image from memory, inserting their own experience into the work as a creative action. The viewer’s creative action becomes incorporated into the work as part of the metamorphosis toward the spiritualization of matter. The viewer becomes an actor in both the materialization and the spiritualization of the work of art.

The dynamic balance of the *Blue Dancer* (1913) (fig. 18)\(^{33}\) is a result of the activation of space and articulation of the figure. Revolving slowly on a pedestal, the sculpture conceptualizes the element of time as continuous movement in space. As the dancer moves, the rhythm of limbs and space create an affective response in the viewer.\(^{34}\) Her limbs enfold the space emphasizing a dynamic equilibrium between the figure and the surrounding environment. Archipenko shapes the energetic rhythm of the figure by adjusting the mass, angle, and articulations in relation to the encompassing space. *Blue Dancer* materializes the abstract notion of dynamism that Archipenko regards as, “the first cause and mover of all,” and which he asserts is the source of creation that links us with nature.\(^{35}\)
The movement of Blue Dancer prolongs the perception of one moment into another allowing us to enter into the flow of its duration.\textsuperscript{36} We see the figure’s movement as a continuity because the memory-images that go out to meet perception extend one into the other, blending into a whole.\textsuperscript{37} Blue Dancer, in its movement approximates what Bergson means when he describes life as a mechanism of the real whole, which is an indivisible continuity. Intuition allows us to enter into the continuous experience of the real, which involves a willingness to enter into the meaning of the whole, without analyzing it. The intuitive leap jumps over what the intellect would deduce from the object, to the idea of the object in itself, providing us with a dynamic schema of the whole.\textsuperscript{38} The intellect seizes upon this sense of the whole, materializing it through perception.\textsuperscript{39} However, the partial views that the intellect makes as it fabricates and reconstructs images in perception can only ever approximate the object itself.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, for Bergson, even the continuous movement of Blue Dancer can only ever be represented as an approximation of the whole and even this approximation requires the kind of attentive recognition that the work of art provokes.

For Archipenko, this leap of intuition that provides us a dynamic schema of the whole is the spiritualization of matter. The spiritualization of matter is the metamorphosis of a materialized form on its course to becoming immaterial spirit in experience. The Blue Dancer, present to the senses as solid matter in motion, is transformed into a virtual object, a perception that partakes of both body and mind, which is dispersed into manifold associations with memory and experience to evoke immaterial, abstract ideas and emotions.\textsuperscript{41} The work itself is the result of the artist’s personal engagement with
universal creativeness, as expressed through his personal experience, and made manifest. Through an encounter with the work, the viewer creates a new relationship to these ideas, which is also a relationship with the artist’s creative motivation and the universal creative forces, which serve as its source.

*Seated Figure* (1936)(fig. 19) effectively combines the symbolic figuration of absence that we find in *Woman Combing Her Hair* with the rhythmic activation of space created by *Blue Dancer*. The plasticity of the clay is evident in the undulating, sinuous ribbon of material that bends and folds as it encircles volumes of space. The figure strikes a balance between form and space, composed of equal parts of each. At some moments the spaces call our attention, standing out as a virtual torso, only to return to the material that shapes it. Oscillating between the two, our eye moves ceaselessly around the contour now following the form, now tracing space. The strong silhouette heightens the sense that the sculpture is about contour, not mass. Viewed along the diagonal (fig. 20) the twists and folds of the contour pierced in rhythmic intervals by space become more dynamic. The straight lines and sharp contour of the frontal view transform into a series of softer, sinuous, curving lines that alter not just the form, but the expression of the figure.

The balance between matter and space elevates the tension between presence and absence that we find in *Woman Combing Her Hair*. Archipenko reduces the figure to a minimal contour, a ribbon of matter that encompasses a volume of space. No naturalistic elements of the figure remain and yet we immediately grasp not only the form of a figure but also a posture and attitude that arise from associations that we bring to the figure from memory. Intuitively, we form an overall identification of the figure and only begin to
analyze its deviations through continued deliberation. *Seated Figure* presents a clear example of the viewer’s ability to create a psychological reconstruction of the absent object. Deliberation on the figure continues as we construct the figure, filling it out with details from memory. Following the cone model presented in Chapter Three, our perception of the figure begins with a leap of intuition that passes through the intellect, inserting memory-images into the present, which is the unification of spirit with matter.

For Archipenko this movement is a recognition that spirit is always already tied to matter. The energized space animates the material form while matter shapes the space it surrounds. Archipenko again finds an analogy in music. Space becomes the equivalent to the pause in a musical score. He describes the pause as an essential element to the formation of rhythm, “rhythm in music is possible only if the sound is significantly sequent to the silence, and silence is sequent to sound.” Rhythm is a sequential layering of sound and silence, and the pauses are not merely sound voids, “each has its own meaning, as has each word in a phrase.” The pause provides a vital role in music as it does in spoken language where the pauses between words play an equal part in the dynamic schema of meaning. The space of sculpture, like the pause in spoken language, serves an equivalent role in context and meaning of visual form.

As with line, space has a symbolic association with silence that remains largely unconscious but brings forth a quality that registers emotionally. It punctuates the rhythmic alternation of forms in a manner that can create a mood. Establishing a rhythm of the work that we deduce from our understanding of the language of forms allows us to enter into the durational rhythm of the work, closing the distance that the intellect puts up
between us and the object. We enter into sympathy with the object in the sense that we attune ourselves to its resonant frequency, entering into the life of the work.⁴⁴

Archipenko conceives of space as an element of composition, an energetic material that can be shaped to activate our engagement in the creative process. The sense of absence produced by works like Woman Combing Her Hair stimulate a psychological reconstruction in the viewer, whereby a flood of associations from memory flow toward the space, filling it with an energy of creation. Archipenko’s dual metamorphoses of materialization of spirit and spiritualization of matter are doubled by our active deliberation. The movement is not a simple transformation from the material work to the material idea, but becomes complex as our experience descends to meet the sculptural form in that gray, nebulous zone where memory and image are united as the union of spirit and matter in being.⁴⁵ These individual memory-images are inserted into the present to augment the work of art, which is always already the union of universal spirit with matter. Elevating the role of space in opposition to matter, Archipenko challenges our habitual engagement with sculptural form, going beyond its identification as a unified volume surrounded by a space that artificially distances us from both matter and spirit.

**Concave.** Tanagra Motif (1915)(fig. 21)⁴⁶ is a small, standing female figure composed with a balanced alternation of concave and convex forms. The lower half of the figure, legs and hips, consist of a large, scooped-out hollow of material. The mid-section of the torso curves outward forming the belly, ribs and breast. Convex forms give
way again to the concave depression which marks the figure’s face, surrounded by an
edge of material mimicking the line of the legs.

*Tanagra Motif* elevates the concave form beyond its traditional role as a
decorative support for a convex surface that acts as the sole carrier of meaning.
Archipenko writes about the concave in sculpture saying, “the modulation of the concave,
its outlines and whole patterns become an integral part, symbolically as important as the
pattern of the elevations.”47 In *Fifty Creative Years*, Archipenko’s diagrams of traditional
concave forms illustrate their origins in relief sculpture, where they function as a ground
to the more salient convex figure.48 The concave surface of sculpture, in Archipenko’s
work, functions in a similar manner as the contour in *Woman Combing Her Hair*. The
surface, rather than the contour, becomes a psychological attractor that directs attention to
either the material volume or to the volume of space it enfolds.

As with *Kneeling*, *Tanagra Motif* disrupts the logic of the unified surface of
sculpture by blending elements of relief sculpture with sculpture in-the-round.
Archipenko’s new conception of concave derives from intaglio relief, also called counter-
relief, where the figure is carved into the surface as an imprint such as *Ménélas relevant
Patrocle(?)* located in the Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques at the
Bibliothèque Nationale de France.(fig. 22)49 Counter-relief preserves the figure/ground
relationship of relief sculpture, except that the figure is carved in the negative rather than
as a positive. Incorporating the intaglio into sculpture in-the-round makes the material
figure the ground of a negative figure, which is an imprint in that ground. The surface no
longer clearly delineates matter from space but becomes an ambiguous element directing 142
attention toward both. For instance, in *Tanagra Motif*, the convex surface of the abdomen
draws attention toward the material form, whereas the concavity of the legs directs us to
the space the surface envelops. The surface is disassociated from its role as a material
support and becomes a boundary that is neither matter nor space but can be thought of as
a dynamic field that separates the two. In this sense the surface becomes a semi-
permeable exchange between matter and space – a force that both separates and binds the
two terms.\(^{50}\) This alternation between a surface that encloses a material volume and
inmaterial space in *Tanagra Motif* creates a similar rhythmic oscillation between
presence and absence as *Seated Woman*. The concave surface signals an absence that
calls forth a presence from the viewer’s experience.\(^{51}\)

In *Seated Black Concave* (1916)(fig. 23) Archipenko has displaced the mass at the
very center of the figure, enveloping the interior space with a thin surface. Seated on a
base of alternating concave and convex surfaces, the figure is formed of a single sheet of
clay that has been folded, twisted and shaped, producing a large concavity through the
very center. The surface of *Seated Black Torso* is like a shell that reveals both the exterior
appearance of the figure and evidence of some interior presence that has retreated leaving
only its trace. As with the head of *Woman Combing Her Hair*, we sense the space not as
an emptiness but as an absence. However in *Seated Black Torso* the concave remains an
undefined absence rather than a superimposition of presence from memory. Archipenko
describes this unresolved feeling as equivalent to an intriguing mystery that serves as a
center of psychological attraction stimulating consciousness and creative imagination.\(^{52}\)
Seated Black Torso’s shell-like form relates to Archipenko’s belief in creative forces that connect the present with the primordial past. The concave surface radiates with the energy of universal, creative causes that bind us to our cellular origins, and the absence symbolically figures the inner forces and ancestral memories that lie unconscious in the nucleus of the cell until triggered by creative causes.\textsuperscript{53} The interior of Seated Black Torso, is an activating force equivalent to that which animates cells.\textsuperscript{54} The absence itself serves as the trigger for creative action in the viewer, propelling the creation of new associations from deep regions of memory. Archipenko identifies this creative action as equivalent to the process whereby the latent, creative force induces new life in cells.\textsuperscript{55} While the concave at the center of Seated Black Torso connects us to universal, creative forces, the external surface presents an individuality of expression and form stemming from the artist’s personal experience. The individual morphology of the work, while it represents the artist’s personal expression, is always secondary to the essential, universal causes for Archipenko.\textsuperscript{56} The unification of the two through the singular, continuous surface of Seated Black Torso, connects the particularity of invention to the collective spirit in an expression that remains timeless through its connection to our universal origins and causes.

Walking (1937)(fig. 24) elevates the sense of absence connected to a universal past by invoking the trace of the fossil.\textsuperscript{57} The smooth, polished, concave shape, colored bright orange, is an impression of a walking figure surrounded by a highly textured, brown matrix. Fossil specimens found in limestone are like naturally occurring intaglio reliefs that record the permanent trace of something long absent. Organisms from our
ancient past, such as the nautilus, trilobite, or even dinosaur footprints are recorded by the stone matrix surrounding it as part of natural, geological processes. This fossil record of our past ties into Archipenko’s belief in universal creative forces at the very origins of life and the preservation of this history in cellular memory. The material reveals the living organism not in its presence but in its absence, which remains a potent symbol of the enduring past.

The concave elements in *Walking* are like the memory of something no longer present, whereas the matrix becomes the crystallization of its passing. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson treats the subject of absence, indicating that our recognition of absence results in an immediate sense of loss or desire of that which is not present. Absence is the projection of a memory of what was combined with a desire for its return. The turning toward memory, away from the present toward the past, is reflection. It is a movement away from the dynamic world of the living toward dreaming. The turn toward memory is also the turn to spirit and the immaterial. To dwell in reflection and dreaming is to turn away from the presentness of life and action into the darkness of what is remembered and the desire for what is not there. However, reflection is only one half of a double movement. Memory turns back toward life bringing mnemonic associations to the work in a fullness of being. It is in this return to the present moment where spirit is grafted onto matter. *Walking* stimulates a desire to replace the sense of absence, but in its materiality brings us back to the work onto which we graft a presence from memory.

Archipenko does not simply provide us with an evocative image of absence. He alternates between the logic of relief and sculpture, surface and volume, to amplify the
tension between presence and absence engaging both the intellect and intuition. The back view (fig. 25) further complicates spatial coherence by presenting a central area that doubles the concave of the front. The physical matrix surrounding the concave form is not a subordinate ground, but provides a unified silhouette and the articulation of a dynamic figure in motion. In Walking, Archipenko both concave forms of a figure that evoke a palpable and energetic absence and a material presence of the figure. The concave forms stimulate intuitive associations in memory virtually substituting absence with a presence. The material presence of the sculpture activates the visual language of the intellect symbolically transforming the work into abstract ideas. The viewer’s intuition descends to meet perception fusing into a complete virtual image in the gray area between memory and matter.

The viewer is not simply a passive receiver of sense data, but participates in both the materialization of spirit, making individual experience present, and the spiritualization of matter, transforming the material form into an abstract idea. This double metamorphosis connects the artist’s personal expression with the viewer’s individual experience and directs creative consciousness to the common memories that lie deep in our cells, which serve as the artist’s creative impetus deriving from universal creativeness.

Archipenko’s development of the concave as a symbolic form builds on the oppositions established with line and space. Archipenko’s recognition of ground and space as vital compositional elements that always stand in opposition to the figure allows him to amplify the dichotomy between them. With the development of the concave, the
surface of sculpture now serves as the boundary between matter and space. The concave surface inverts the convex, enclosing a volume of space rather than matter. This dematerializes the surface of sculpture, re-conceiving it as a dynamic field, which co-mingles matter and space. The surface of sculpture becomes, like Bergson’s hyphen of being, the boundary that binds the material and the immaterial – matter and spirit. For Archipenko, space is the creative energy of spirit filled with the potential of materialization, requiring only activation.60

Absence is the trigger for creative action. The surface that modulates between matter and space heightens the tension between presence and absence. By shaping the space that the surface enfolds Archipenko models an absent form, the outlines of which are immediately visible through our dynamic schema of visual form. As in the section on Space, the work triggers a complex set of metamorphoses between the viewer and the work. The material form, its contour, silhouette, volume, and mass, are transformed into the general idea of the form. This is a simple metamorphosis from matter to the immaterial idea. The sense of absence creates a more complex metamorphosis by stimulating a psychological reconstruction through a myriad of mnemonic associations. Our memory-images become part of the vital spirit of the work. The creative energy of the work combines with our creative action to find a new, latent existence encoding the work into the memory of our cells.61 For Archipenko, the creative energy that we bring to the work resonates with the spirit of the work, intensifying its impact both on us and on the work itself.
Reflection. The lithe, graceful figure embodying the *Glorification of Beauty* (1925)(fig. 26) seems to step out of the pages of a fashion magazine. The sharp silhouette, with her bobbed haircut is the picture of a modern woman, a rhythmic balance of graceful curves and hard edges that evokes the sense of streamlining as a consequence of modern life. *Glorification of Beauty* absorbs, concentrates and reflects the energy of her surroundings. Plated in chrome, the surface is a dynamic field of energetic light radiating and reflecting her environment in all directions. The figure is both one with her surroundings and at the same time a creative cause of them. *Glorification of Beauty* is an embrace of the kind of transformative effect brought about by creative forces at work in the world. Extraneous ornament is now configured in smooth surfaces with alternately concave and convex forms that swell and taper as though according to some mathematical function. The defining aesthetic is in the surface, the crisp lines, and the play of light and color as reflection. *Glorification of Beauty* speaks to a celebration of creative forces that enlarge spirit, through Archipenko’s creative idealism that embraces invention and ever-changing novelty. Streamlining, manufacturing, and design are the progressive result of creative invention.

Reflection contributes to the identification of the surface as a dynamic field dissociated from the material volume of sculpture as described for *Tanagra Motif*. In the process of reflection, the surface of *Glorification of Beauty* literally becomes a boundary of energy that absorbs and refracts light in all directions. Further, the surface is shaped both by the figure and its environment accentuating the formative power of each in perception. The reflective surface, in combination with concave and convex forms,
produces optical effects that result in a virtual doubling of form revealing the ambiguity of the surface. Under the right lighting conditions, concave forms will appear convex and vice versa. In *Glorification of Beauty*, the figure’s thighs and breasts are concave forms which concentrate light toward the center, producing an illusion of convexity. Convex forms, tend to disperse the light forming a highlight at the apex. The reflective surface causes the forms to perceptually oscillate between an illusion of concave and convex, creating a visual alternation of presence and absence.

The ambiguity between concave and convex forms, creates perceptual uncertainty and confusion that disrupt the habits of vision. This visual uncertainty becomes an impulse for creative action. Archipenko exploits the limits of perception in order to prolong our engagement with the work. Through our dynamic schema of visual form, we have an immediate sense of the figure, but in filling in the details we are faced with a paradox. The paradox evokes the sense of mystery, which serves as a psychological attractor drawing us into a prolonged engagement with the work.

Archipenko fixes immaterial spirit as dynamic energy in *Glorification of Beauty* through the materialization of spirit. Matter and spirit are welded into one shape that oscillates between a solidity of form and its dematerialization through reflection. The action of light energizes the surface creating disruptions and patterns along the surface, giving it a liquidity that amplifies or reduces the sense of materiality. Archipenko parallels this fluid mobility between energy and matter in artistic works with the general scientific principle of sublimation, the process whereby matter changes to a state of energy and vice versa. He postulates a spiritual sublimation whereby abstract ideas are
materialized into sculptural form, which then radiate spirit as the energy of creation. The reflective surface of *Glorification of Beauty* emanates creative spirit like an energized field of electrons, elevating the work to become for us, as Archipenko describes it, “eternal beauty, perfection and absolute truth.”

*Revolving Figure* (1956) (fig. 27) uses reflection to emphasize the viewer’s reactions and sensations over and above the objective, material form. The sculptural volume disappears in the continuous movement and play of reflection, amplified colors, and textural modulation. Archipenko revisits the form of the two ‘ornaments’ that flank the entrance of the University of Missouri-Kansas City discussed in Chapter Three. Altering the texture and color of each face and placing the work on a slowly turning base that multiplies and transforms the visual effects of reflection one into the other. *Revolving Figure* creates a complex spectacle of movement and form that emphasizes the doubling of reflected and real features, moving away from materiality and toward immaterial effects that change with each turn. The regulated cycle of revolutions, incorporates Archipenko’s theory of dynamism, which is a perpetual state of creation that, “mingles planetary forces with those of our cells in a continual creative evolution,” and which “constitutes the eternal life of art.”

Each silhouette of the *Revolving Figure* has a different surface treatment including mirror; glossy, black, plastic; orange paint; and mother of pearl mosaic.(fig. 28) As the figure turns, the pearlescent mosaic of nacre blends with its image reflected in the mirror, doubling the real and the reflected in a temporal repetition like an echo of the past receding from the present.(fig. 29) The mirrored surface proceeds to reflect the room and
our own image back to us, doubling everything through reflection (fig. 30) before being
replaced by a solid orange field. This continuous movement, slipping from one silhouette
to the other, shifting colors and lines, is like a process of folding and unfolding. Orange
becomes eclipsed by black before the luminous mother of pearl emerges, glowing as it
absorbs and refracts the light, and the cycle begins anew.

As with the ornaments, the aim of Revolving Figure is to awake a consciousness
of the unification of matter and spirit through universal creativeness and cosmic
dynamism. The doubling of real and reflected images is an alternation between tangible
matter and radiating energy in a constant interchange. Archipenko again uses music to
describe the way that the mirror multiplies surfaces, amplifying colors and textures like
the patterns of a kaleidoscope, “as rich as the variations in a symphony, in which one
musical phrase interfuses with another, thereby evoking multiple reactions in the
individual.” The individual’s reactions become the permanent record of ephemeral
effects. He says, “sound is impalpable: it appears and disappears, being dissolved in time
and space. Only the reaction, sensation and spirit remain after sound vanishes. In music
the creative essence is beyond sound.” In the same way, the essence of a work like
Revolving Figure is beyond matter. The effect is immaterial and immerses us in the
abstract causes that serve as the creative impetus of the work. In this sense, Revolving
Figure allows us to enter into sympathy with Archipenko’s intuition and attain a unity
with the creative forces that drive his invention. We enter into the durational rhythm of
the work, which is Bergson’s sympathy.
Beyond its aesthetic appeal, directing attention to the effects of light over the materiality of form. Through aesthetic choices the figure inserts Archipenko’s work in communion with the present. *Glorification of Beauty* addresses modernity by incorporating chrome plating, a streamlined form, and the subject of a stylish woman who both reflects and shapes the current style. *Glorification of Beauty* enables us to contact the metaphysical realm of universal creativeness and our own latent powers of creativity superseding the secondary interests of subject matter and material form.80

The reflective surface of *Glorification of Beauty* augments the identification of the surface of sculpture, now disassociated from its material support, as a boundary of energy that binds matter and space in opposition. The visual effect produced by the alternation of concave and convex forms acts as psychological attractor that prolongs deliberation through an unresolved, perceptual paradox. The presentation of a single form as both concave and convex unifies presence and absence in a perpetual interchange between matter and energy as the principle of dynamism. The sublimation of energy into matter and vice versa is the same natural process as the metamorphosis of spirit into matter, in which abstract ideas are materialized into art. For Archipenko, this metamorphosis causes the work to radiate spirit as the energy of creation in the same way that the reflective surface radiates with light from the environment.

*Revolving Figure* minimalizes the material form to magnify the effects produced by the continuous folding and unfolding of reflection, color, and texture. The immaterial effects animate the material form, exceeding its physical limits and projecting into the environment. We register these energetic effects in the same way that a melody is
registered as sound, and like a melody, the effects are ephemeral finding permanence only in the imprint on memory. The spiritual energy of creativeness mingles with associations from memory, elevating consciousness and moving us to action. The metamorphosis of spirit moves in both directions creating an indelible record in memory and resulting in creative action in the world.

*Light and Transparency.* The diamond-shaped figure of *Vertical* (1947) (fig. 31) curves and tapers to a small, triangular head, altering the perspective and making the figure appear taller, as though stretching into space. There is a quality that seems to defy gravity, as though the figure was created in a rarified atmosphere. The long, lyrical line of the lower half is countered by staccato bursts produced by voids of decreasing size. The three voids in the hips, breast, and head produce a contrapuntal rhythm balancing the contrasts between areas of light and dark. The plastic figure is surrounded by a vibrant aura that modulates in subtle gradations according to the shape and thickness of the plastic. Textural frosting of the legs produces a soft, continuity of form that accentuates the height of the figure. These variations create a luminosity that dims towards the top, both emphasizing the height and contributing to an ethereal weightlessness. The alternation of smooth and textured areas in *Vertical* are reciprocally related establishing a rhythmic balance emphasizing the dynamic equilibrium between light and dark.

*Vertical* strikes a balance between illumination and darkness that is similar to *Seated Figure* with its ribbon of material that encircles the space of the figure. The fluidity and balance that Archipenko gives to *Vertical*, as it extends into space, enhances
its rhythmic form. Created of space, the unlit areas become pauses providing structure to the melody. Archipenko punctuates the long, curving lines of light with areas of blackness creating a form that attracts the eye and stimulates attentive recognition. We arrive immediately at the feeling of serenity and spiritual elevation. The light contributes an element of dynamism and the energetic activation of space. The meditative effect of the figure suspends action in an open-ended deliberation that merges self-reflection with a luminous presence. The result is that Vertical provokes a sense of mystery, through its aesthetic, as a potency of the imagination to penetrate the metaphysical realm where spirit resides.82

In 1947, Archipenko turns to transparent Plexiglas and electric light as sculptural materials that can produce an esoteric effect evoking the idea of abstraction and immateriality.83 Light is a sensible example of the universal, abstract forces that serve as the source for creative art and invention. Archipenko describes phenomena such as light, magnetism, electricity, and gravitation as “contributing agents in the formation of feelings and psychology.” These phenomena affect our cells, and “emerge in the abstract character such as aesthetics in art,” even though they may not be registered consciously.84 Archipenko asserts that unconsciously we are open to a far wider range of reality than we sensate. All energy registers in the cells, whether we have specialized perceptual organs evolved to organize them or not.85 Further, he warns against relying solely on the five senses, which limit perception to the material world. The subtle energies received by the cells link the individual to intangible causes, which are beyond analysis but are
recognizable through association. Light is the visible manifestation of intangible force registered in ways that go beyond the purely optical.

The illuminated form of Spirit of the Century: Onward (1947)(fig. 32), stands out as a radiant figure, glowing from within and dispersing light into the surrounding darkness. The contours swell and taper in bright lines contrasting the figure from the surrounding dark space. Modulations in the surface are revealed as subtle gradations of light and dark with thinner areas appearing lighter. As though sculpted from pure light, the striding figure, carved from a thick sheet of Plexiglas and lit from beneath, registers presence as emitted radiation. Energy travels through the material suffusing it in a luminous glow. Archipenko exploits the ability of Plexiglas to act as a conduit for light allowing waves of energy radiate up through the material becoming visible where it is emitted and drawing white lines in space.

Onward symbolically presents spirit as the animating force of life immanent in matter. Archipenko’s Plexiglas works capitalize on modern materials as a means of expressing the vitalism inherent in his philosophy of art. The acrylic plastic, in its transparency, diffuses the concreteness of the figure in order to transcend it and register the spiritual aspect of art. He indicates this direction in his work when, in “Creativeness,” he writes, “the atomic creative forces makes a work of art radiate hypnotic exaltation, powerful enough to elevate the mind and senses to the highest state of spiritual rising.”

The lighting element creates an electromagnetic field that emits photons in all directions. Onward conducts energy through its interior, reflecting internally where the surface is polished and releasing it, as visible light where it refracts from the edges or
through rough textures. Light is contained as energy within the figure, emerging as matter where the surface is disrupted, and expanding outward into the surrounding environment. As in *Glorification of Beauty*, the surface of *Onward* is disassociated from matter and has become a semi-permeable field of energy from which light is emitted as the materialization of spirit.

Archipenko’s Plexiglas sculptures capture the ethereal quality of light. He characterizes the relationship between matter and energy, the metamorphosis that occurs as one becomes the other as, “the divinity of the concretion of energy in nature.” The fundamental character of the universe, and the heart of Archipenko’s metaphysics, is that there is a continuous exchange between spiritual energy and material bodies, which is the cause of all existence. Consciousness arises through the union of matter with the energy of creation progressing over time to self-awareness. For Archipenko, it is our conscious awareness of the source of creativeness that allows man to extract, “energies and ideas, inserting them into concrete forms according to his wisdom and desire.” The energy that emerges as visible light from *Onward* symbolizes our creative action in the world as a result of the latent forces at work lying deep in the unconscious. The light is spirit grafted onto matter to manifest as a free act of indetermination.

There is a component to the Plexiglas figures that relates to Archipenko’s interest in biological processes. The acrylic material is analogous to the plasma of a cell, which absorbs energy and transforms it into matter through metamorphosis. Our ability to extract creative energy and insert it into concrete forms as works of art is analogous to the most basic metabolic and reproductive functions of the cell. Like mitosis, artistic creation
is a form of self-creation whereby we extract abstract ideas that are the result of our creative consciousness and act upon them communicating our experience through their manifestation in material form.

*Seated Figure* (1947) (fig.33) presents the figure at the nucleus, surrounded by a transparent, protoplasmic mass that glows with the energy of creation. The work employs the same opposition of matter and space that we find with *Woman Combing Her Hair* except the entire figure is configured as space surrounded by an illuminated, Plexiglas ground. The utilization of Plexiglas becomes an investigation of the materialization of light from the potential energy of space. *Seated Figure* complicates the relationship between presence and absence in that the material presence of the work is produced as the effect of an ephemeral phenomenon - diffused light. The illuminated outline of the figure emphasizes the contour as an energetic boundary, an electromagnetic field, between matter and space. Archipenko carves the plastic in such a way that the contour swells, becoming brighter in some areas, and tapers to near invisibility in others. What we normally perceive as a strict delineation between matter and space, blend into each other at the margins through the use of emitted light.

The Plexiglas ground of *Seated Figure* registers as glowing aura surrounding the dark figure as though radiating from it. Subtle variations in the material create soft modulations between virtually transparent areas and brightly lit accents. The dark void of the figure asserts a presence that is in equal proportion to the glowing ground that surrounds it. The empty space of the figure contrasts with the energy that exceeds it. The aura remains as a presence just as the immaterial energy of spirit, which Bergson
identifies as memory and duration, persists beyond the material presence of the body, and our sense of self remains in the face of an ever changing present. Archipenko asserts that art as a creative process begins from the same forces, which “may come from the moon, the sea, or from anywhere.” For him, mind, ideas, and feelings are the result of nuclear forces, “moving eternally through the universe.” Creativeness is one of these nuclear forces that accumulates within us until we materialize it in significant forms as art and inventions. Through spiritual sublimation these artistic forms radiate forth with the same creative energies that produce life, animate cells, and form galaxies.

The use of Plexiglas enables Archipenko to achieve an aesthetic effect that goes beyond the materiality of sculpture to register the energetic presence of spirit. The light that flows up through the transparent plastic is like our creative consciousness lighting up matter and animating it into life. The energy of creativeness flows through matter exceeding its boundaries and dispersing through free action into our environment. The light that escapes from *Vertical* in white lines is the materialization of electric energy into photons dispersed in all directions. Archipenko asserts that artworks, in the same way, disperse creative energy, which is then fused into other forms in a constant exchange.

Creative potential moves through all things until it emerges in art and invention.

The metamorphosis of matter into energy and energy into matter, made literal through electricity and light, enables Archipenko to emphasize the spiritualization of matter as an organic process of creation. *Seated Figure* presents the figure as an immaterial absence, the ephemeral trace of the body, whose presence is registered by a glowing aura, radiating energy as the spirit of creation. The presence of the spirit exceeds
material form, and is what remains as a latent force in memory, passed from cell to cell. Like a fossil, the ground is the essential compositional element. Through the ground, the space that surrounds the figure, we become aware of the contour that delineates the figure. The ground is spirit, it is pure dynamism, which animates the figure and disperses creative energy to emerge again through art and invention.100

The Plexiglas works align Archipenko’s metaphysical belief in spirit as a universal, creative force and the production of art as a privileged domain capable of elevating creative consciousness for the progression of mankind. They reveal being as a conduit for dynamic, current of spiritual energy coursing through it. The spirit emerges, at the boundary where being engages in the social environment, materialized into actions and encountering other beings. Others take up these actions absorbing, transforming, and combining them with their own current, where they emerge again through creative action. “The divinity of the concretion of energy in nature,” Archipenko finds in the metamorphoses of the smallest organisms and in the largest galaxies.101 Artistic works and inventions result from the same divine metamorphosis combined with the privilege of conscious awareness. In his art, Archipenko strives to express the idea of creativeness as a motivating force for the progression of mankind. The work is the material result his personal engagement with the latent energy of universal creativeness that flows through us all.

This chapter draws out a progression of formal oppositions that are all symbolically equivalent to the binary relationship between matter and spirit. Archipenko uses line to blur the distinction between figure and ground, presenting the ground, not as
subordinate, but as an essential, compositional postulate. Elevating the ground breaks the habitual tendency to focus on the figure as a self-sufficient, independent entity. This way of thinking positions line between figure and ground as a boundary that both separates and binds the two terms in a reciprocal relationship. Archipenko conceives of the contour in precisely this way in *Woman Combing Her Hair* where the head and neck are formed from the space created by the arm and hair. The contour negotiates between matter and space, where space is the primary factor. Absence holds equal place with presence, and space becomes an energized potential for creative action, rather than an empty frame for material volume. The sculptural surface, like the contour, becomes a boundary that encompasses both matter and space equally through the elevation of the concave in relation to the convex form. The presence of the figure is held in check by the absence created through concavity. The sculptural object becomes both figure and ground, presence and absence. With the addition of reflection as an aesthetic element, light becomes the dominant factor in the activation of the surface further dematerializing the work in favor of energetic effects. Archipenko inverts the relationship between matter and energy, making energy dominant to matter. This inversion points to spirit as the universal and eternal presence animating matter into life.

Archipenko’s Plexiglas sculptures can be viewed as the fusion of all of the other categories to which he adds light as the materialization of energy, transformed as it passes from one medium to another. Spirit remains an absence in the presence of matter, but it is a palpable absence. That is, spirit remains as a latent force within us, a potential for creative activity and metamorphosis into material form. Archipenko, being a sculptor
of absence, seeks to make spirit present both as the eternal past residing as latent memory in our cells and as the potential energy of creation. In the process of metamorphosis, the spiritualization of matter is this energetic presence that we sense in the work and to which we respond through the activation of our own creative consciousness. As active viewers we not only make the work an eternal presence in our own memories, but we contribute something of ourselves to the creation of the work making it live in the present.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The knowledge of creativeness is within the individual’s power and is a sublime achievement of intellect. On this knowledge religion can be founded and its ritual may become a work of art as material expression of the contact with [the] universe. In striving for the truth, while grasping the divinity of the concretion of energy in nature itself, man may elevate his own creativeness to a superlative degree, where spirit and matter are united to serve for human progress.
- Alexander Archipenko

Alexander Archipenko paints a picture of a modern religion founded on the intellectual knowledge of creativeness as the unification of matter and spirit. Divinity resides not in gods, but in concretion of creative energy into matter and the metamorphosis of one into the other as the natural progression of the universe. Artistic creation is the ritual that enacts a metamorphosis uniting universal and individual spirit as material form. The work of art is the result of our conscious awareness and utilization of this process for our advancement carrying us, “beyond a seemingly culminating point in its [our] evolution.” Science plays a pivotal role in this religion, as it is through science that the creativeness of the universe is revealed. Biology and physics are the pillars of Archipenko’s thesis and he asserts, “there will be no science without creativeness, just as there will be no knowledge of creativeness without scientific discoveries from nature itself.”
This dissertation is the first to examine Archipenko’s unpublished treatises to reveal not just the artist-inventor, responsible for so many innovative advances in sculpture, but also the artist-philosopher deeply invested in the natural sciences and advancing a biocentric philosophy based on his study of evolution and modern biology. The primary goal of Archipenko’s treatise, “Creativeness,” is to encourage a, “comprehensive creative science,” which can be developed, “for instruction in educational institutions.” His hope was to engage a group of authorities from a variety of fields who could contribute an expertise to what he described as only an abbreviated hypothesis. For our purposes, this hypothesis, combined with the published monograph, Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years provides a new interpretive framework that investigates Archipenko’s work as the unification of matter and spirit through the artist’s contact with universal, creative causes.

The complexities of Henri Bergson’s intuitional method, as it applies to art and artists, have focused largely on superficial correspondences or secondary interpretations of the philosopher. The close reading of Archipenko’s theoretical writings provides an opportunity to delve deeply into the philosophy of Henri Bergson as it applies to the practice of the visual arts. Methodologically, Bergson’s writings form a structural foundation that situates Archipenko within a wider, counter-history of philosophical thought. The confluence with Bergson reveals Archipenko as an advocate for a modern art that has both a dialectical function directed toward social communication, and an intuitive function guiding the viewer toward direct contact with spirit. Importantly, Archipenko’s departures from Bergson’s thought reveal how practice can inform theory
as they largely result from the artist’s deep engagement with the practical, material

demands of sculpture. Archipenko’s philosophy also brings to light his emphasis on an
active viewer who contributes in the creative realization of the work. Archipenko

considers the viewer’s knowledge and experience to be essential aspects in the reception
of the work. His advocacy of a higher knowledge that encompasses the widest possible
experience and a refined attention to one’s own psychological and physiological reactions
supports the development of a creative consciousness that furthers evolution.⁶ Art plays
an essential role in this process as a nexus for shared individual experiences that elevate
the viewer toward universal spirit moving forward from primordial origins into the
future. This counters the prevalent idea that an artwork contains everything necessary for
comprehension and that the viewer need not seek outside the work for meaning. For
Archipenko, the meaning of art derives from a complex interaction that draws on
experience at all levels.

Previous studies of Archipenko struggle to make the artist comport with an art
historical discourse that favors a formalist engagement largely devoted to material
considerations and the concept of the self-sufficient work of art. The argument in this
dissertation is that Archipenko is aligned with a counter history of modern art that
disputes the valorization of the mechanism over its creative impulse. While Archipenko
clearly belongs to the field of influential modern artists it is important to stress that, to
some degree, he was always an outsider driven by an absolute idealism to champion
eternal and timeless expressions of spirit.⁷ This is not to suggest that Archipenko
removed himself from the art world, rather he was engaged in a critical effort to elevate
the quality of work being produced and redirect the discourse around that work. The emphasis Archipenko places on creative education is intended to counter an educational system grounded in the outdated demands of the industrial age. Such an educational system focuses on habit and repetition rather than the expansive knowledge directed toward invention. An approach to art that places the viewer as an active participant in the creation of the work is intended to expand creative consciousness and to place evolution under conscious control. For Archipenko, what is at stake in the work of art is far greater than material forms or empty abstraction, because the state of art not only speaks to our present, but shapes our future. To this end Archipenko drove relentlessly forward taking neglected paths, exploring unexpected windings, and incorporating the past into the present to find new, vital expressions.

Archipenko’s continued urge to dematerialize sculpture, the most insistently material of the arts, with the goal of elevating spirit over material form is revealed through an analysis of the work. In achieving this goal of elevating the spirit the artist doesn’t wish to negate the object, but rather to reveal spirit as immanent in matter. The sculptural object remains as the material constituent of a binary relationship with spirit, which exceeds it as an immaterial force. Indeed, the emphasis on metamorphosis, the materialization of spirit and the spiritualization of matter, discloses spirit as immanence, present within the material world. Archipenko considered as a sculptor of immanence, not only aligns his work more closely with Bergson, but also opens up new avenues of consideration in terms of alternate perspectives on modern art and an unrecognized continuity with contemporary theory that are beyond the scope of the current thesis.
The methodological approach of this dissertation is to examine Archipenko’s unpublished treatises in relation to the philosophy of Henri Bergson in order to situate them within a popular but controversial current of modern philosophy prevalent in the first half of the twentieth-century. The link between Bergson and Archipenko has long been recognized, particularly the emphasis each places on a creative spirit, or *élan vital*, that animates matter into life; a method that elevates the role of intuition over the intellect; and the importance of art as a counter-balance to science. Both recognize art as registering a direct contact with the continuity of nature as opposed to material science, which artificially divides the world into parts. The goal here is to present Archipenko as part of an alternate or counter history of art concerned with revealing spirit as immanent in a modern world dominated by science technology. For Archipenko, science, technology, and invention are all guided by the same creative spirit that formerly found service in religion. In many cases the guiding role of spirit has been eclipsed by increasingly formal and materialist critical approaches that find predominance after World War II. Archipenko views the denial of spirit in a world dominated by strict experimental empiricism as a threat to human evolutionary advancement.

The primary correspondence between Archipenko and Bergson is an assertion that spirit is immanent in matter and available to a properly attuned intuition. Archipenko asserts that art serves as a kind of dialectic in Bergson’s sense that art finds its source in intuition but necessarily passes through the intellect, which clothes it in a symbolic language of experience in order to materialize it in a form that communicates to the viewer. Through a process of deliberation the attentive viewer both intellectually grasps
the symbolic content and intuits a spiritual unity with the work, which Bergson calls sympathy. The viewer becomes actively and creatively engaged in the work through a process of association, which makes it live in experience. For Archipenko, metamorphosis, the transformation of spirit into matter and matter into spirit, plays an essential role both in the making and the reception of a work of art. Metamorphosis discloses dynamism as the essential nature of the universe and reveals the immanence of creative spirit.

An examination of select works from Archipenko’s *oeuvre* demonstrate how Archipenko puts theory into practice in his sculpture in relation to a series of binary relationships that he introduces in *Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years*. Key to Archipenko’s process is the inversion of relationships that elevates the normally subordinate term. For example, space becomes the dominant term over matter stressing a palpable sense of absence over physical presence. For the viewer, absence is intended to trigger both an affective and mnemonic response that engages both intuition and the intellect as a recognition of the immanence of spirit in matter. As a sculptor of absence, Archipenko actively engages the viewer in the creative process through metamorphosis. The viewer fills the absence with a presence from memory, enacting a materialization that descends from the abstract realm of memory to the object. At the same time, presence becomes a virtual object in the viewer’s experience, doubling the process of metamorphosis. This complex conception of metamorphosis moving in two directions reaches a crescendo in the illuminated Plexiglas sculptures. These works of transparent acrylic, a modern material that is itself a result of creative spirit expressed through man,
presents an almost immaterial conduit for light, which materializes and disperses at the boundary between the object and the environment that surrounds it. Light, emitted from the work, symbolizes creative potential radiating forth and materializing in the space that separates and unites us. The illuminated sculptures reveal matter to be only a temporary manifestation of spiritual energy, which is immanent as the eternal, dynamic current of creativity.

Throughout this dissertation, the stress that Archipenko places on the role of symbolism and symbolic form in the viewer’s reception of a work of art has become visible. We have examined the way that symbolism engages the intellect through a dialectical process, and how that process requires a language of form for which we have a dynamic schema as a result of our sensory evolution. Archipenko speaks of his indebtedness to the symbolist movement in literature and art that was prevalent in both Russia and France at the turn of the century. In an article titled *Conversation Avec Archipenko* from 1963, a year before Archipenko’s death, the artist credits symbolism in the formation of his art. That Archipenko would reference symbolism as foundational at this late period in his career, justifies a closer examination of the symbolist movement and works in relation to his own. This opens an interesting avenue of research that has not explored in any detail. Of particular interest is the concept of *ostrananie* (estrangement) introduced by the Russian literary theorist Viktor Schklovsky (1893-1984,) in his essay “Art as Technique,” (1925.) The goal of estrangement is to present the familiar in a way that is unfamiliar in order to go beyond a habitual way of seeing and to prolong engagement with a work. An effective way of accomplishing this is to make
perception as difficult as possible. Whether Archipenko was aware of the *ostranenie* technique is unknown, but the way he employs color, form, and reflection in his sculpture deliberately breaks from the conventional. Further, Archipenko often presents forms that shift perspective when viewed at different angles, or that initially appear familiar but then abruptly introduce an unexpected obstacle to perception. These deliberate moves on the artist’s part force us to reconsider the work, increasing deliberation, and to form new associations, expanding our active engagement.

The malleability that Archipenko demonstrates in his artistic practice is similar to the kind that Rosalind Krauss describes in “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” (1979) as a condition of the vanguard aesthetics of postmodernism. Certainly the manner in which Archipenko operates at the intersection between media - sculpture and relief, relief and painting -, his heterogeneous engagement with every possible material, and the adoption of diverse styles can be viewed as a rejection medium specificity in favor of a creative practice that sees no boundaries or divisions and finds any and all sources appropriate for artistic expression. The examination of Archipenko as part of an alternative modernism, an artist on the outside whose work is presented as a critique of the discipline and of a society that has become increasingly materialistic, places him at an interesting intersection in the twentieth-century. The question is whether this alternative modernism could be regarded as continuous with the concerns of contemporary art? The hypothesis of such a study would be whether Archipenko’s innovative approach to his artistic practice, his recognition and inversion of binary relationships inherent in sculptural form, and his consideration of the viewer as an active participant in the constitution of a work
of art, constitute preconditions for the kind of artistic engagement that, in the second half of the twentieth-century, comes to be described as postmodern. Krauss in the final section of *Art Since 1900*, entitled “The predicament of contemporary art,” suggests that what may be important in contemporary art is the consideration of medium as a support, “a source of rules that prompts production, but also limits it, and returns a work to a consideration of the rules itself.”\(^{12}\) The present study discloses Archipenko’s medium as immanent spirit, which is the creative source of all art and invention. Perhaps it is the loss of spirit that constitutes the crisis, if indeed there is one, in contemporary art?

This dissertation marks an initial study into previously unexamined theoretical writings on Archipenko and argues that he represents an alternative history of modern art that accentuates a creative spirit grounded in modern science. Further consideration of this topic will focus on other artists who advocate a similar interest in a dematerialization of art that favors some form of immanent, immaterial spirit. The assertion is that, given the importance of Bergson’s philosophy, to various artistic movements such as symbolism, cubism, and futurism, it stands to reason that other “outsider” artists, while holding views different in the specific details, might share a set of themes that all center around the common quest for an intuition of spirit over intellectual materialism. It is entirely possible that research in these areas has been done, but due to the isolated nature of such research, have yet to be brought under a single umbrella. In other cases, it may be that the artist’s expressed spiritualism has been discarded in favor of materialist interpretations. The prevalence of Theosophical thought in Europe in the first half of the century influenced the work of artists such as Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky who
have largely been considered in purely formal, abstract terms. That these artists were seeking universal truth or a spiritual expression is often discounted. Other artists of consideration include Kazimir Malevich who through Suprematism sought pure artistic feeling and László Moholy-Nagy whose New Vision investigated forms of expression that went beyond the limited range of the senses. The idea of spirit in the service of technology finds correspondence with many artists and as a theme for many early movements of the twentieth-century including Herwath Walden’s journal Der Sturm, the Hungarian Journal Ma edited by Lajos Kassák, the association of Czech artists headed by Karel Teige’s called Devětsil, and every manifestation of the Bauhaus school. Bringing Archipenko into correspondence with these alternative discourses that share a common core would expose the field of modern art as a rich diversity of thought and interests unified in the drive to express something essential about the human spirit of inventiveness.

Alexander Archipenko most assuredly has his rightful place in the vanguard of a sculptural revolution that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century. His audacious sculptural innovations during the first two decades in Paris and Germany alone are enough to secure his rightful place in history. However, the majority of his artistic output was produced after his emigration to the United States. For forty years, the artist labored ceaselessly creating artworks that he exhibited in parts of the country that rarely had any exposure to modern art. Most of these works are unknown and have received no critical attention. This dissertation seeks to reverse that trend by adopting a new criteria that investigates Archipenko’s work in relation to his own, unpublished writing on the
subject. Archipenko is presented as part of a counter-history of art that advocates spirit as an atomic force immanent in matter. In the modern world, spirit is not necessarily tied to religion, but reveals itself through innovations in science and technology. For Archipenko, all human advances are evidence of a dynamic, creative force that permeates the entire universe, producing living microorganisms, planets, and galaxies. An art focused on matter and divorced from spirit risks creative deterioration becoming inconsequential and meaningless. Only an art that is the manifestation of the artist’s contact with creative spirit can contribute to human progress. As Archipenko declares, “The urge to create can be utilized on scientific principles and be directed for the better destiny of mankind towards a happy existence and progress.”14 Thus, art in its highest aspirations seeks the eternal timelessness of spirit and not in the temporary externality of matter.15
Notes: Chapter 1

1 “Alexandre Archipenko est peut-être le plus oublié et assurément l'un des plus méconnus parmi les novateurs du début du XXe siècle, Pourtant, créateur de formes et de techniques résolument nouvelles, il était à juste titre considéré durant les années qui précédèrent la première guerre mondiale comme le principal chef de file de la sculpture d'avant-garde et ses envois aux Salons déchaînaient bien plus de passions que ceux de Brancusi ou de Duchamp-Villon, Car, plus qu'aucun autre, il personnifiait alors l'audace révolutionnaire et la rupture avec les valeurs traditionnelles.” [Author’s translation] Guy Habasque, "Alexander Archipenko," L'Oeil (Lausanne, Switzerland), no. 78 (1961), p. 38.


5 There are several issues of *Der Sturm* between the years 1921-1923 that mention Archipenko exhibitions, publish illustrations, or occasionally present articles. For example, see Roland Schacht, "Archipenko, Belling Und Westheim," *Der Sturm* 14, no. 5 (1923).


11 Alexandra Keiser, "Alexander Archipenko and Cultural Exchange between the Wars: From European Avant-Gardes to Avant-Gardism in the USA" (Ph.D. Diss., Courtauld Institute, 2012).

Michaelsen writes, “In 1923 Archipenko left Europe for the United States and his career suffered an eclipse. He continued to make sculpture, had numerous exhibition, and taught and lectured all over the country, but when he died in 1964 his fame still rested largely on the brief, intensely creative interlude fifty years earlier.” Ibid., p. 17.

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As a single example, there’s the fiasco between Archipenko and Alfred J. Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936 that Archipenko and Barr get into a heated debate about the dating of Archipenko’s works, which offends Archipenko who writes letters to everyone and makes a public announcement in the newspapers saying that he is publishing a book called, “Why I request to remove my work from the museum of modern art.” The book was never published but the scandal essentially ends any opportunity for Archipenko to have a retrospective exhibition at the museum. Ibid., pp. 76-79.

Many of Archipenko’s exhibitions, even during his lifetime, were presented as retrospectives that not only showed all of the works, but included photographs of other works from the earlier part of his career. Additionally, there was no set arrangement for the placement of works. Archipenko wanted the viewer to have the opportunity to the entire oeuvre and be able to create relations between the works. As Robert Coates wrote in the *New Yorker* about Archipenko’s exhibition at the Associated American Artist’s Galleries in 1954, “no attempt has been made to sort out its hundred and sixty items, including photographs, either chronologically or according to phases of interests or development.” The result of which is “at first (and even second) glance chaos.” He warns the viewer that “you will have to do most of the hunting down and sorting out of periods and sequences yourself. In this instance, it is worth the trouble.” Robert Coates, “The Art Galleries: Archipenko and Tibet,” *The New Yorker* (1954), p. 111.

Carl Einstein’s characterization of Archipenko was not favorable, but even he recognized virtuosity and allure in his art. “He [Archipenko] is always on hand to every innovation, arriving without noticeable delay; no matter whether it is archaism or discovery, he shows up precisely second. Even in novelty a charming virtuosity remains. He breaks up form but maintains the alluring outlines of academic salon art; he surrounds a bold venture with a sweet silhouette.” Carl Einstein, *Die Kunst Des Xx Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1926), pp. 170-174.


Large portions of the Archipenko Papers at the Archives of American Art in the Smithsonian Institute have been microfilmed. The manuscripts “Creativeness,” and “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” are located on reel 5833. The microfilmed material contains no frame references. Alexander Archipenko, *Alexander Archipenko Papers, 1904-1986 (Bulk 1930-1964)* (Washington, DC: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution).

In 2011, the Alexander Archipenko Foundation in Bearsville, NY, had all of the microfilmed material digitized in Portable Document Format, which is the source of the material used for this dissertation. “Creativeness” is file: Archipenko-Papers_S04-Writings_Item00028.pdf. “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon” is file: Archipenko-Papers_S04-Writings_Item00030.pdf. The manuscripts are unpaginated, so page numbers refer to the page number in the electronic document. Within the dissertation the source material is credited to the Archives of American Art, who owns and maintains the archival material.

The original manuscripts are typewritten entirely in English. Some of the material has apparently been edited by an unknown editor, while other portions contain Archipenko’s hand-written notes, malapropisms, and the grammatical errors that evidence English as his fourth or fifth language.

Archipenko stresses the idea that genius is not an accidental phenomenon but one that can be taught. He asserts that the knowledge and understanding of the practical application of creativeness can be,
“fundamental for our own re-creation, from what we are now, into a genius operating in the realm of the universal creative causes thru the cells. This can be achieved thru adequate education, fate, and special psycho-physiological training, fixed concretely and practiced.” ”Creativeness,” in Alexander Archipenko papers 1904-1986 (bulk 1930-1964), ed. Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC: Archives of American Art), p. 88.

22 “The mission of the creative artist and inventor is to operate just in such region where he must use his super-knowledge in order to see and fix the unity of the immaterial spirit with the matter in its concrete form.” Ibid., p. 233.

23 “This is certainly a privilege; to be a subject of such benevolent distribution of the creative ability operating with the metamorphosis such as materialization of the spirit or spiritualization of the matter. However, it remains possible through the acquired right concepts of creativeness to establish belief that these metamorphoses are not only possible but they actually constitute life, art, progress, and total universal unity.” Ibid., pp. 389-390.

24 “The urge to create can be utilized on scientific principles and be directed for the better destiny of mankind towards a happy existence and progress.” Ibid., p. 152.

25 R.C Grogin in The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914, claims that Bergson, “became the most controversial philosopher in the world and the first in the twentieth century to become an international celebrity.” Further on the page he continues, “Henri Bergson was the most admired and most hated when he was most original and productive.” R. C. Grogin, The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914 (Calgary, Alberta: The University of Calgary Press, 1988), p. ix.

26 Antliff, Inventing Bergson, pp. 4-15.


29 Not only do Mark Antliff and R.C. Grogan speak about how Bergson was used and interpreted to suit particular causes, but Deleuze was able to create what her referred to as his “monster” precisely because Bergson’s escape from history provide an opportunity to transform, as his translator Hugh Tomlinson describes it, “Bergsonian notions in his own errant campaigns for constructive pluralism.” Deleuze, Bergsonism, p. 8. In an attempt to escape these transformations, I have tried to go directly back to Bergson wherever possible, or at least the Bergson that I imagine would have been available to Archipenko. Also see, Antliff, Inventing Bergson and Grogin, The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914.

30 Within the texts, Archipenko makes clear and repeated exhortations against materialist dogmatism, for example, “in order to come closer towards the infinite depths of creativeness . . . we must avoid obstacles by liberating our minds from materialistic tendencies. Such an operation is necessary for our unobstructed contact with the metaphysical realm, and for direct observation and understanding of our own dependence on the omnipotent cosmic creative power.” Archipenko, “Creativeness,” p. 32.

31 The inventory of Archipenko’s library maintained by the Alexander Archipenko Foundation, includes English language editions of Bergson’s Creative Evolution and An Introduction to Metaphysics: The Creative Mind. No other editions of Bergson’s work exist in the libraries. I suspect that Archipenko was referring to the English translation of Bergson while writing his treatises and so have only referred to the English language translations in this dissertation. Bergson was a native English speaker, his mother was from Yorkshire, and Bergson lived in London as a child. As Arthur Mitchell notes in the translator’s note at the beginning of Creative Evolution, “Professor Bergson has himself carefully revised the whole work.” Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Modern library, 1944), p. v. Bergson reviewed and approved all of the English translations of his works and while some of the original French terms may find imprecise definition in English, on the whole these translations are sufficient and proper for the present study.

32 I do not know for certain that Archipenko read Matter and Memory, but the philosophical structure Bergson lays out parallels Archipenko’s so closely that it is an essential text for this dissertation. Matter and Memory, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919; repr., 3rd)
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33 In several instances Archipenko notes that the subject matter of a work of art is not intended to be taken literally. Instead, the subject serves as a necessary form produced by a mind that obeys abstract, creative impulses. He writes, “the ancients created not because of worshipping heroes and gods, but because their minds obeyed the creative impulses of the cells. The subject was, as usual, only a pretext.” Archipenko, “Creativeness,” p. 75.

34 The idea that the subject is secondary to the artist’s expression has been noted by several other authors. Gene Lux, in a 1932 article titled simply “Archipenko,” writes, “Archipenko has not only given expression to the intuitive feeling that the substance of humanity is most beautifully expressed in the female figure but, as an artist, he has realized the monumentality of line and form which is inherent in the womanly body.” Gene Lux, “Archipenko,” Creative Art (1932), p. 200. Katherine Michaelsen also points toward the importance of abstraction, despite the consistent presence of the figure, “The subject of all of the works in the collection is the human form, particularly the female figure. Despite the extreme abstraction toward which Archipenko gradually moved, he consistently preserve the characteristic features of the human image, albeit in the most symbolic manner.” Michael and Nehama, Alexander Archipenko: A Centennial Tribute, p. 113.

35 Archipenko writes, “from the creative standpoint, our center of interest cannot be in the temporary outer appearance of matter, regardless how inspiring it may be, but only in the permanency of the universal dynamism producing metamorphosis and animating our minds creatively.” Archipenko, “Creativeness,” p. 32. Further he stresses that a focus on matter and mechanism leads to a loss, “mechanized man risks becoming an atrophied organ of the universal body, and of being abandoned, due to his creative deterioration, in favor of technique. This may also concern the whole of society and all of the races.” Ibid., p. 22.

Notes: Chapter 2

1 ibid., p.6.
4 Michaelsen, Archipenko: A Study of the Early Works, 1908-1920, p. 4. Since the time Michaelsen wrote her book very little new information on the artist’s intellectual or artistic life prior to arriving in Paris has been discovered. While several previously unknown works have surfaced, no writings or additional archival information has been found.
5 Donald Karshan lists Archipenko’s father, Pofiry Antonovich Archipenko, as a professor of Engineering at University of Kiev, now the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. See, Archipenko, Karshan, and National Collection of Fine, Archipenko: International Visionary, p. 110.
6 Archipenko attended the Kyiv Art School (Kyivskie khudozhnie uchylyshche) from 1902-1905. The Kyiv Art School was a secondary art school that operated from 1900-1920. In a note, Katherine Michaelsen writes, “recent correspondence (November 1973) with Mr. L. E. Parnis of Kiev, confirmed Archipenko's attendance at the Kyiv Art Institute (administered by the Imperial Academy of Arts at the Ministry of the Imperial Court.)” See Michaelsen, Archipenko: A Study of the Early Works, 1908-1920, p. 4, n2. Regarding Archipenko’s anti-academicism, see Archipenko and Hildebrandt, Alexander Archipenko p. 6. Also see Edward Seredynsky, "Alexander Archipenko," Trident, The, January - February 1941, p. 7. The story that Archipenko was expelled for opposing academicism and being revolutionary is so often repeated that it becomes more of an anecdote than history.
8 Marevna Vorobëv, Life with the Painters of La Ruche, trans. Natalia Heseltine (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), p. 17. Marevna arrived in Paris, from Kharkiv, in 1912, three years after Archipenko and at a time when an influx of new artists were arriving in Montparnasse. One important
element of this memoir is that she records the activities of many Russian and Eastern European émigrés living at La Ruche and in Montparnasse.  


10 The Archipenko Foundation maintains an extensive research database of the artist’s work including information on lost, unidentified (in exhibition photos,) and unauthorized works as part of their forthcoming online *catalog raisonné*. This database serves as the most authoritative survey of the artist’s *œuvre*.  

11 “Проходя десятки зал с приянными картинками, попадаешь в центр выставки, где сосредоточены новейшия произведения модернистов, и это единственное, что является интересным в этом салоне.” Alexander Archipenko, “Салонь О-Ва Независимыхъ (Salon of the Society of Independent Artists),” *Parizskij Vestnik*, June 17 1911, p. 3 (translation mine.) Bruce Altshuler recounts how the Cubists put forth their own candidates for the hanging committee, stuffed the ballot boxes, and proceeded to concentrate their radical works in two rooms, numbers 41 and 43, which were separated by a retrospective of Henry Rousseau, who had died the previous fall. Archipenko writes about the work in both of these rooms in his review. See Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (New York: Abrams, 1994), p. 27.  


15 Opponents of vitalism often cast the term in its most naive form as a substance that animates matter differentiating the living from the non-living. Any idea of a soul or spirit could be considered as such a substance. The main argument is that vitalism is empirically unjustifiable. Bergson’s neo-vitalism counters that the *élan vital*, the life force, belongs to a different, immaterial reality, which puts it beyond the realm of any materialist proof. Further, and what makes Bergson so dangerous to his opponents, is that he logically casts Cartesian rationalism, materialism, and mechanism as constructs of the intellect and not as an *a priori* knowledge independent of experience. Thus, Bergson twists free of a traditional dualism by subsuming rationalism as an artifice produced by consciousness, which is itself a product of the vital process of evolution.  

16 Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*, p. 11.  

17 Ibid., pp. 10, 19.  

18 Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, p. 3.  

19 Ibid., p. 75.  

20 Grogin notes that Bergson attempted to synthesize science and mysticism in order to construct, “a holistic view of the universe which was more perfectly integrated with man.” Bergson was trying to validate esoteric, even occult, ideas through rational means. Ibid., p. 43. This attempt by Bergson comes at the same time as a paradigm shift is occurring in the physical sciences and mathematics. Max Plank's studies of electro-magnetism led to the field of Quantum Physics, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity which developed a reciprocal relationship between matter and energy. Wilhelm Röntgen discovered that elements at certain energy states emit x-rays and Marie Curie discovered atomic elements that emit similar radiation. These scientific discoveries of previously unexplained energy phenomena opened up the possibility that other phenomena, such as consciousness, may also be a kind of energy state.  

21 Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) was an early proponent of evolution and argued against the fixity of the species. He is most well known for the theory of acquired characteristics which postulates that offspring inherit the characteristics of their parents including traits developed over the parents' lifetime as the mechanism for adaptation. Lamarck also introduced the idea that organisms evolve from simple to more
complex forms in a progressive adaptation to environmental conditions. In contradistinction to this, natural selection assumes that variations are the product of chance variation with no design or plan. Ibid., p. 70, n. 3.


23 Ibid., p. 135, n. 38.

24 Ibid., p. 135, n. 39.

25 In a section of “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” Archipenko lays out the parts and functions of the cell. His definition of the chromosome is as a magic center that, “conserves what the individual has been before his birth as character and form, what he is now, and what he will be in future generations. Chromosomes are also the threads of contact with the rest of the universe.” Later, in the same treatise, he describes how the mind can alter the cell, improving it, through education and other means. See, Alexander Archipenko, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," in Alexander Archipenko Papers, 1904-1986 (bulk 1930-1964), ed. Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institute (Washington, DC: Archives of American Art), p. 47 and pp. 60-62.

26 From research conducted by the Archipenko Foundation it appears that the majority of early works by Archipenko were sent from the Devětsil exhibition in Prague to the Alexander Archipenko exhibition at the Kingore Gallery in New York between May 1923 and January 1924. Another group of works was owned by Katherine Dreier and exhibited by the Société Anonyme. A group of early plasters was discovered in the estate of Carlo Pott, in Germany, by Eric Weise in 1953. It appears that Carlo Pott was employed by Archipenko to carve marble editions and had retained several plaster models. Another group of works was held in safe keeping by Jean Verdier in Paris until 1960 when Archipenko was able to retrieve them.

27 Letter dated September 17, 1948 to Kathryn B. Geywaes at the State Museum of New Jersey Trenton. Correspondence 1948, Item 26, p. 77. Several articles announcing the 1935 lecture at the University of California Los Angeles are included in Archipenko's scrapbook. See Archipenko, Alexander Archipenko Papers, 1904-1986 (Bulk 1930-1964) (File: Archipenko-Papers_S07-Scrapbooks_Item00007.pdf, p. 230)

28 In an interview for Pace magazine in 1955, the author Nestor Rzepecki notes that Archipenko has been working on a book on creativeness for the last twelve years, which would also correspond to a date circa 1942. See Nestor Rzepecki, "Archipenko Interview," Pace Magazine, June 1955, p. 16. The article is copied in whole in Archipenko, Alexander Archipenko Papers, 1904-1986 (Bulk 1930-1964)

29 Archipenko taught, as a guest instructor, at the University of Missouri at Kansas City during the 1949-1950 school year. It seems that, during this time, he focused on editing and finishing these manuscripts. This dating fits in with other events and projects undertaken by Archipenko during this period.


31 The copies of Bergson's Introduction to Metaphysics and Creative Evolution in Archipenko's personal library at the Archipenko Foundation are both English language versions. Archipenko did not speak or read English when he arrived in the United States and press clippings of his arrival noted that his wife Angelica spoke for him. These versions of Bergson’s works were likely purchased later than the 1930’s.

32 In an interview with Yvonne Taillandier Archipenko notes that the Symbolist poets were an early influence on his work: “Pendant cette période, si mon style s'apparente au modern style, mon inspiration est symboliste. Je lis Mallarmé qu'on vient de traduire en notre langue et j'aime beaucoup Andreieu, un poète russe, symboliste lui aussi.” Yvon Taillandier, "Conversation Avec Archipenko," XXe Siecle 25(1963), (unpaginated.)

33 Antliff writes, “between 1910 and 1914 the Bergsonian Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger published in Symbolist-oriented journals such as Vers et Prose, Les Bandeaux d'or, and Pan; additionally their literary supporters Roger Allard, André Salmon, and Guillaume Apollinaire were all major figures in the neo-Symbolist milieu.” Antliff, Inventing Bergson, p. 18.

34 In my translation of Tancrède de Visan, he calls on the symbolists to put into practice the philosophy of Bergson, which I am arguing, is what Archipenko does to some degree. Visan writes, “It has been given to
those that we call of a very general term though obscure, the Symbolists, to put into practice to the letter the
educations of Bergson, by internalizing in the Real, no more solidifying unstable reality, but trying hard to
express it in functions of its movement which is the rhythm of soul.” (Il était donné à ceux que nous
appelons d’un terme très général quoique obscur, les symbolistes, de mettre en pratique avant la lettre les
enseignements de Bergson, en s'intériorisant dans le Réel, en ne solidifiant plus la réalité mouvante, mais
en s'efforçant de l'exprimer en fonctions de son mouvement qui est le rythme même de l'âme.) And,
“Without realizing it too much, the Symbolists are in compliance of view not only with the philosophy of
Bergson, which alone contains the potency of all contemporary aesthetics, but with the most recent
doctrines of the foreign aestheticians.” (Sans trop s'en rendre compte, les symbolistes se trouvent en
conformité de vue non seulement avec la philosophie d'un Bergson, qui pourtant à elle seule contient en
puissance toute l'esthétique contemporaine, mais avec les doctrines les plus récentes des esthéticiens
étrangers.) Tancrède de Visan, "La Philosophie De M. Bergson Et Le Lyrisme Contemporain," Vers et
Prose 21, no. 16 (1910), pp. 133, 140.

In Visan, we can hear the echo of Archipenko’s own writing. In my translation of Visan, “It is
therefore by means of perpetual suggestions, by evocations, of transpositions, by varying continuously his
palette and tonalities; and thanks to successive harmony, a scholarly approach to the work that the
contemporary poet manages to express her emotion and to make it communicable.” (C'est donc au moyen
de suggestions perpétuelles, d'évocations, de transpositions, en variant sans cesse sa palette et ses tonalités ;
et grâce à des harmonies successives, à de savants travaux d'approche que le poète contemporain parvient à
extérioriser son émotion et à la rendre communicable). Ibid., p. 137. Despite Archipenko’s frequent
references to symbolism and his professed early attempts at Symbolist sculpture, no study to date has
investigated a continued relationship between Symbolist poetics and his sculpture. This could prove to be a
fruitful avenue of further research.

If the 1912 date is correct, it would be a very early date for a work with such strong cubist
elements and advanced use of the void for both the head and the torso. In her book Archipenko, A Study of
the Early Works: 1908-1920, Katherine Michaelsen notes that Walking is, “a disturbing anomaly.” An
unidentified work called Bewegung (Movement) was exhibited in Hagen, 1912-1913 but the first
identifiable exhibition of a work titled Gehende Frau (Walking Woman) was in 1921 in Berlin. This is also
the likely date for first publication of the Wasmuth image (fig. 1) in Theodor Däubler and Iwan Goll,
Archipenko Album (Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1921)plate 14. Michaelsen writes that,
stylistically, a 1912 date would be highly unlikely as it, “displays extensive use of ‘negative’ space: the
entire mass of the torso is represented by a void,” something which Archipenko doesn’t appear to
experiment with until after 1914. For the purposes of my discussion, the precise dating is not at issue,
however the earlier work does display a freer, looser style and more intuitive sense of proportion which is

For the Archipenko Foundation, I created an extensive photography database, scanning and examining
photographs in order to catalog them. Many of the earlier photographs are embossed, “Ernst Wasmuth,
Verlag.” These photographs were used widely in German exhibition catalogs and publications from 1914-
1924. This photograph has been cropped and the embossing no longer exists, but the style of photo, the
studio setup, and the burlap covered pedestal are all indicative of the work from this publisher. Early in his
career Archipenko recognized the importance of photography and its relation to modern sculpture.
Throughout his career he sought out photographers like Ernst Wasmuth and Floyd Faxon to show his work
in a particular light. He also personally retouched many of his photographs to enhance contrasts that tended to wash out in black and white photography. Archipenko’s relation to photography will be the subject of a future study on the artist.

40Potentiality as opposed to actuality. The term arises out of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as *udunamis* or the power of a thing to change. Aristotle relates potential to form. For instance, a piece of wood can be actualized as a chair or a bowl, thus it has potentiality – the power to change into some as yet undefined actuality. In the metaphysics of Archipenko and Bergson, pure potentiality is an undefined condition, neither a substance nor a state, but simply an unrealized potential that resolves into states or matter when perceived. Further, potentiality can be virtualized in consciousness when thought and actualized through action in material. For more on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* see, S. Marc Cohen, “Aristotle's Metaphysics,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2014) (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/).


42 Bergson describes universe as a kind of consciousness in dynamic balance, “no doubt also the material universe itself, defined as a totality of images, is a kind of consciousness, a consciousness in which everything compensates and neutralizes everything else.” He continues, “in order to touch the reality of spirit, we must place ourselves at the point where an individual consciousness, continuing and retaining the past in a present enriched by it.” This is where we pass from pure perception to memory and abandon matter for spirit. It is a complicated movement that requires a force of will and can only be maintained for short periods, which elsewhere he describes as concentrating the whole of the past and bringing it into the present moment. This moment is closely linked to inspiration and a kind of rapture. Ibid., p. 313.

43 Consciousness arises where creation is possible, that is only in situations where choice is possible. As long as life remains trapped in automatism, consciousness will remain dormant. It is emergent. See *Creative Evolution*, p. 285.


45 Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

46 Ibid., p. 7.

47 Botar quotes the *Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought* writing, “‘Vitalism’ has been defined in opposition to ‘Mechanism’ as ‘a miscellany of beliefs united by the contention that living processes are not to be explained in terms of the material composition and physico-chemical performances of living bodies.’” See Botar and Wünsche, *Biocentrism and Modernism*. 17 and Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, *Harper Dictionary of Modern Thought, The* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1988) p. 898.

48 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 139.


50 Early forms of vitalism, including Aristotle's proposed some substance – entelechy, archaeus, aether – that permeated the universe and from which life was spontaneously generated. In the English translation of *Creative Evolution*, the term élan vital is translated as vital impulsion. He writes, “our philosophy represents the organized world as a harmonious whole. But this harmony is far from being as perfect as it has been claimed to be. It admits of much discord, because each species, each individual even, retains only a certain impetus from the universal vital impulsion and tends to use this energy in its own interest.” Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 57-58.

51 Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, p. 75.


53 About *Time and Free Will*, Grogin writes, “What Bergson did in *Time and Free Will* was to analyze time in a unique way. He contrasted time as we think about it, the spatialized conception of linear time that science employs, with time as we really experience it, the time of psychic states, the so-called ‘stream of consciousness.’” Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, p. 29.

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For Bergson, perception is the synthesis of mind and matter, which is the union of the soul and body. He writes, “If we take perception in its concrete form, as a synthesis of pure memory and pure perception, that is of mind and matter, we compress within its narrowest limits the problem of the union of soul and body.” See, Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 325.


Grogin writes about *Creative Evolution* saying, “With Bergson, organic evolution came to resemble the evolution of a consciousness, one of the leit-motifs of Bergsonian philosophy. Each and every species has this history of development, he said, a record of unbroken continuity and perpetual change between the evolution of the embryo and the complete organism.” Grogin, *The Bergsonian Controversy in France 1900-1914*, p. 77.

In *Biocentrism and Modernism*, Olivar Botar uses the term biocentrism as a kind of historical construct that embraces the many different strains of vitalist thought into a single category that, as he describes it is, “category coherent enough to have use-value, permeable enough to allow for multiple views.” In Botar’s use the term makes up for the lack of a coherent neo-vitalist ontology and casts a wide enough net to encompass the many different strains of vitalism, including monists, neo-Lamarckians, holists, and organicists. However, the sense that I intend in calling Archipenko a Biocentrist is that his metaphysics privileges biology, organicism, and the unity of life over physical-chemical processes. See, Botar and Wünsche, *Biocentrism and Modernism*, pp. 16, 31.

“Life as a whole, from initial impulsion that thrust it into the world, will appear as a wave which rises, and which is opposed by the descending movement of matter,” and “on flows the current, running through human generations.” See, Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 293, 294.

Archipenko reveals the close connection between atoms and creative energy in “Creativeness.” In his frequent usage it is clear that he envisions the creative vital force as an energy that suffuses matter. “Certain inquiries into the behavior and control of the atoms reveals their movement from one matter into another in a state of energy from the past, present, and future. Now we also realize that they are in our cells, and become one of the fundamental causes of our psycho-physiological functioning from which evolve different mental currents, including the creative, eventually becoming solidified in the ideas, feelings, or in a work of art, or in inventions.” And “atomic activity is responsible also for the existence of metaphysical concepts, and should be recognized as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the latent region of our whole spiritual life.” See, Archipenko, "Creativeness," pp. 48, 49.

“Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” p. 14 In “Creativeness,” Archipenko writes, “the majority of people separate materialism from spiritualism. For many the unity of both seems to be impossible. In the creative realm the unity of them becomes indispensable - both must be welded into one shape.”

“Creativeness,” p. 56.

“Creativeness,” p. 236.

Bergson writes, “On flows the current, running through human generations, subdividing itself into individuals...Thus souls are continually being created, which, nevertheless, in a certain sense pre-existed.” See, Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 294.

Ibid., p. 274.

Ibid., p. 288.

“A being which evolves more or less freely creates something new every moment.” *Matter and Memory*, p. 297.

“...The Forwardness of nature formulated in the scientific laboratory proves how life and activity of cells depend entirely on the cosmical creativeness, and how cells become creative agents of all organisms.” Archipenko refers to the work of Dr. Beatrice Hinkel, *The Recreation of the Individual*, where cells respond to injury with a greater force than necessary. See, Archipenko, "Creativeness," p.38.

Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 111.

*Matter and Memory*, p. 332.

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson defines consciousness as “the light that plays around the zone of possible actions or potential activity which surrounds the action really performed by the living being. It signifies hesitation or choice.” Bergson goes on to describe degrees of consciousness, “Where many equally possible actions are indicated without there being any real action (as in a deliberation that has not come to an end),
consciousness is intense. Where the action performed is the only action possible.... consciousness is reduced to nothing.” Works of art are like nodes of deliberation in which consciousness becomes an intense act of self-reflection. Creative Evolution, p. 159.


71 Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 260.

72 Bergson describes the brain as a “central telephonic exchange: its office is to allow communication or deny it. It add nothing to what it receives.” The brain receives signals from perception, analyzes them, and determines whether there should be a reaction or hesitation, and then directs those signals along the correct pathways. As organisms become more complex, there is a greater lag between reception and reaction, and it is in this interval that a virtual image, or representation, is created. This greater complexity also increases the range of motion and choice – indetermination. Indetermination, or freedom, results from the insertion of memory–images into the interval which allows us to move beyond reflex on the one hand and habitual instinct on the other. He writes, “the more complex organization of the nervous system, which seems to assure the greater independence of the living being in regard to mater, is only the material symbol of that independence itself, that is to say of the inner energy which allow the being to free itself from the rhythm of the flow of things, and to retain in an ever higher degree the past in order to influence ever more deeply the future.” Matter and Memory, pp. 19-23, 296.

73 The famous example of recapitulation is “Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny.” This is the concept that, in the process of growth the human embryo passes through all of the stages of evolution until it reaches its final form. Recapitulation is an important formulation in any organicist or holist theory because it is a way of showing that the processes at the micro level mirror those at the macro level. Both Archipenko and Bergson rely on this idea. For more historical information on recapitulation see, Karl J. Fink, "Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny: A Classic Formula of Organicism," in Approaches to Organic Form, ed. Frederick Burwick, Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 87-112. The idea that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny truly encapsulates the entire structure of Creative Evolution which begins with the evolution of life in general to the specific evolution of instinct, intellect, and intuition in individual human beings in order to demonstrate how the development of the individual mirrors the development of all organic life. See Bergson, Creative Evolution.

74 Archipenko speaks about the right state of mind as a necessary element for creative genius, which is a mind attuned to nature, creative causes, the emotions, and manifold experiences in every area of life. Of the progressive, creative individual he writes, “such a creative type, besides finality, will select also causation and potentiality for his own progression using different creative experiences including equivalence, symbolism and relativity. Such a type, by its own nature, has all chances to evolve creatively and develop the right state of mind as the consequence of his personality tending toward expansion and exploration of the unknown.” In terms of a virtual image, Archipenko uses the term “absent object” which refers to the abstract idea represented symbolically in the work of art. He writes, “in order to present the whole spiritual content of an absent object or action, the author is obliged to discover an expression which could serve as an equivalent to the known but absent object. For this purpose, symbolism, association and relativity become an unavoidable media presenting formless abstractions.” Thus, a wide experience is necessary to adequately symbolize the abstract idea in such a way that the whole spiritual content is expressed. See, Archipenko, "Creativeness," pp. 137, 209.

75 Archipenko writes, “In our theory the essential part is our preoccupation with latent creative forces producing entirely new realities and actual facts. Events beyond visible reality in our case, become new function and new matter serving for the production of the new spiritual values managed by a genius in producing masterpieces and inventions.” Ibid., p. 117.

76 “From the creative standpoint our center of interest cannot be in the temporary outer appearance of matter, regardless how inspiring it may be, but only in the permanency of the universal dynamism.” Ibid., p. 32.

77 We can see that Archipenko makes a strong connection between matter and spirit at the atomic level and also that matter has the ability to radiate with creative, spiritual force. He writes, “the projection of atomic creative forces makes a work of art radiate hypnotic exaltation, powerful enough to elevate the mind and senses to the highest state of spiritual rising.” and, “only those conceptions in art and philosophy may live
forever which radiate universal creativeness through individual's creative power of reforming the material externality into spirituality and vice versa.” Ibid., pp. 50, 398.
78 Ibid., p. 152.
79 Ibid., p. 50.
80 My identification of Who Is She? as alien or otherworldly derives from the sense of otherness of many of the works from the 1950’s and 1960’s. These works have the character of archaeological artifacts from a sentient culture on another world. Archipenko seems to have intentionally pushed abstraction of anthropomorphic forms in a particular direction that imagines the organic in terms of the microscopic world. This is the subject of a future study.
81 When thinking about biomorphic sculpture, we typically think of Jean Arp's Concrete Art, which are meant to echo the organic forms of nature. In using it to describe Archipenko's art, I am using the term biomorphic in a more general sense. In Olivar Botar's terms Biomorphic Modernism is a style characterized by "it's evocative swells, curves and arabesques. Echoing the forms of cells, organelles, and fetuses, it was in some sense seen by artists to figure the conceptions of 'life,' 'origins,' and 'nature.'" See, Botar and Wünsche, Biocentrism and Modernism, p. 3.
82 In his research for "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," Archipenko studied different cells, protozoa, hydrozoa, and social amoebae called Dictyostellia. The Archipenko Papers at the Archives of American Art has dozens of photographs of these microscopic creatures that Archipenko obtained from the Museum of Natural History in New York. In his research, Archipenko was retracing many of the same materials and phenomena of early biologists like Ernst Haeckel. At the turn of the century, these microscopic creatures became the battleground for vitalist debates about the nature of life. Bergson writes about these same organisms in Creative Evolution. That Archipenko would find this research a creative source for sculpture squares perfectly with his philosophical position. See the sections on "Metamorphosis," "The metamorphosis of dictyostellium," and "The metamorphosis of an Hydra" in ibid., pp. 127-133. Also see, Bergson, Creative Evolution, pp. 282-285.
83 Archipenko writes, “Each cell became a sort of universe encircled by a protective wall, but maintaining contact with the rest of the universe. Each cell is not only a small fragment of life, but it is life in itself.” See "Cells are From the See" in Archipenko, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," pp. 59-60.
84 The works from Archipenko’s last decade and a half, roughly between 1947 and 1964, largely share this stylistic trend toward organicism, which coincides with the period where he was working on his two treatises, presenting his lectures on creativenss, and the publication of his book, Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years. This period also marks a reunification with many of his old contacts in Europe and a renewed European interest in Archipenko’s sculpture. (In 1955, Archipenko had a large touring exhibition that traveled to six German cities. In 1960, another touring exhibition travelled to several other German cities, and in 1962 a major retrospective travelled throughout Europe.) The works of this later period have yet to be studied in any detail — formally, culturally, or in their relation to evolution, organicism, and the cellular basis of creativity.
85 Archipenko, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," p. 50
86 Ibid., p. 128.
88 It must be made clear that Archipenko’s knowledge of chromosomes comes prior to the publication of James D. Watson’s and Francis Crick’s landmark work on genes and the double helix, "Molecular Structure of Nucleic Acids: A Structure for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid" (1953.) However, his investigations into both biology and evolution are based on pertinent research of the time which he occasionally cites throughout his treatise. For instance he references the research of Wilhelm Hofmeister who first discovered chromosomes and Gregor Mendel whose pioneering work on genetics led to the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick. It is also interesting to note how Archipenko’s conception of chromosomes and genetics incorporate a neo-Lamarckian component which allows for the inheritance of acquired characteristics and not determinants, or germinal traits, alone. In his understanding of Darwinian evolution he cites T.H. Morgan’s, Evolution and Genetics writing, "Darwin made quite clear what he meant by chance. By chance he did not mean that the variations were not causal." For Archipenko those causes are clearly the universal

89 Archipenko, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," p. 47.

90 Archipenko uses the term "entanglement" to indicate the interconnectedness of all living organisms. He does not provide a source for this term or the concept in terms of living things, but there is a parallel concept in physics called Quantum Entanglement. The basic idea is that the physical properties of two entangled particles remains the same independent of separation in space. Entangled particles appear to remain connected somehow, either violating the laws of causality or "communicating" at speeds faster than light. When the state of one particle is measured (in terms of spin, for instance) the other particle will have the exact same measurement. If the state of the measured particle is changed, the other particle in the entangled pair will instantaneously change to match states despite no apparent local cause. This theory of Quantum Entanglement was confirmed in a 1935 paper by Albert Einstein, Boris Podolsky, and Nathan Rosen (called the EPR paradox.) For more on Archipenko's use of the term see, ibid. pp. 25, 36, and 71. For more on Quantum Entanglement see, Alexandra Witze, "75 Years of Entanglement," *Science News* 178, no. 11 (2010), and Nick Herbert, *Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1985) pp. 199-210.

91 Jules LeFevre (1863-1940) was the director of the *Laboratoire de Bioenergetique* from 1918-1940 and conducted research on cell metabolism. Archipenko cites his work in "Creativeness," and though he does not provide the source, it is likely the *Manuel Critique De Biologie*, published in 1938. See, Archipenko, "Creativeness," pp. 62-69. Also see Jules LeFevre, *Manuel Critique De Biologie* (Paris: Masson, 1938).

92 "It was found that the particularity of a creature does not spring from the cell, but from universal forces. They may be electricity, chemicals, radiation, magnetism, gravitation, etc... condensed in a particular order by favorable coincidences." Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 63.

93 This echoes Bergson’s claim that the body is matter through which the current of life flows: “We are not the vital current itself; we are this vital current already loaded with matter, that is, with concealed parts of its own substance which it carries along its course.” Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 261.


95 Archipenko writes, “An artist inventor should admit that one work more is useless unless he knows how creatively his work stands in relation to its universal origin.” Ibid., p. 64.

96 Ibid., p. 65.

97 Ibid., p. 65.

98 In his discussion of mechanism versus organization, Bergson follows a similar argument, although he does speak in terms of the differentiation of species. For Bergson, classifying different species according to morphology and then positing that classification as *a priori*, is an error of classic empiricism which sees the world as fragmented and discontinuous. See Bergson’s discussion of the eye in Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, pp. 99-108. Also see Leonard Lawlor’s discussion of classical vs. true empiricism in, Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics* (London: Continuum, 2003) pp. 66-67.

99 Archipenko expresses this idea of entanglement in a number of different ways. In this section she writes, “this is confirmed by the identicity [sic] of ideas and reactions of men and animals also expressed in prehistoric works of art produced for instance in Denmark and another in the other part of the World, in New Guinea or Egypt. Several individuals, separated by time and distance, expressed exactly identical psychophysiological theme, making their individualities look alike.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 66.

100 About our connection to universal causes Archipenko writes, “In recognizing the fact of such creative organization, we attach ourselves to all universal causes and establish feeling and intellectual contact with infinity and eternity that [a] masterpiece must contain,” in order that the work evoke those feelings which makes the work useful. Ibid., p. 64.

101 Ibid., p. 65.

102 Ibid., p. 65.

103 The Cirque Medrano, originally called Cirque Fernando, is a French circus located on the edge of Montmarte in Paris. The circus served as an important place of entertainment and source of inspiration for modern artists. Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, Henri Toulouse-Latrec, and Jacques Villon all produced
artworks based on the circus. The entry for Pablo Picasso in the Grove Encyclopedia of Art suggests that, “a fascination with images of saltimbanques, harlequins and clowns may be linked both to frequent visits to the Cirque Médrano and to an identification with such characters as alter-egos.” See, Melissa McQuillan, "Picasso, Pablo," Grove Art Online

Unfortunately Médrano I was destroyed, but another work, Carousel Pierrot, (fig. 4) from 1913 provides an excellent example of Archipenko’s color palette.

Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 50.

Bergson, Creative Evolution, pp. 194-196.

Speaking in terms of evolution, Bergson writes, “Mobility and suppleness were sought for, and also... variety of movements.” Ibid., p. 146, and also “Instinct and intelligence therefore represent two divergent solutions, equally fitting, of one and the same problem.” The problem being true independence of organisms. Ibid., p. 158.

In the original italics as a definition, Bergson writes, “the consciousness of a living being may be defined as an arithmetical difference between potential and real activity. It measures the interval between representation and action.” He continues, “It may be inferred from this that intelligence is likely to point toward consciousness, and instinct toward unconsciousness.” Bergson, Creative Evolution, p.160.

Bergson speaks about instinct finding the appropriate instrument at hand. This instrument “makes and repairs itself,” demonstrates a “marvelous simplicity of function,” and does “what it is called on to do, without difficulty and with a perfection that is often wonderful. In return, it retains an almost invariable structure.” Ibid., p. 154.

Bergson goes into great detail concerning the instinctive behavior of insects using implicit knowledge that, from a position of the intellect appear to require an explicit knowledge. See ibid., pp. 161-163, 189.

Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 73.

Describing the evolutionary development of species, Archipenko writes, “Their minds do not exist creatively in the beginning, and only after bodily experiences do their minds start to plunge into instinct, which is formed from ancestral [sic] experiences, and transferred into their cells eventually to evolve into the ability of learning.” Thus, as with Bergson, the earlier species rely primarily on instinct, the intellect and capacity for learning is a later development. "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," p. 32.

About instinct Archipenko writes, “to rely only on instinct, in spite of its importance, means to experience only a fraction of the relationship between the subconscious and matter,” and, “only through adequate experiences may one sense the peculiar double functioning of the body, when the instinct seems to be independent of reason, and yet eventually tends to be memorized and used again at the request of the mind. The ability of using both at will becomes a psychological center of the creative potency that can be developed to the point of making a genius.” He describes a reciprocity between instinct and intellect that must be harmonized to produce a masterpiece: “The successful arising toward the absolute can be achieved only through the perfect matching and reciprocal interdependence of instinctual and intellectual resources.” Ibid., pp. 5, 6.

About the intellect Bergson writes, “the instrument constructed intelligently... can take any form whatsoever, serve any purpose,” and “free the living being from every difficulty that arises.” Bergson, Creative Evolution. p. 155.
Again, in speaking of the difference between instinct and intelligence, Bergson makes the point that instinct “gets at its definite objects immediately, in their materiality itself.” Whereas intelligence is “a natural power of relating an object to an object, or a part to a part... of drawing conclusions,” and proceeding from what has been learnt to what is still unknown.” Ibid., pp. 164-165.

The intellect only relates presence to what has come before in memory. Bergson writes, “precisely because it is always trying to reconstitute, and to reconstitute with what is given, the intellect lets what is new in each moment of a history escape.” Ibid., P. 180.

Bergson writes about invention, saying that the intellect does not grasp it in its indivisibility, fervor, or its creativeness. “Explaining it [invention] always consists in resolving it, the unforeseeable and new, into elements old or known, arranged in a different order.” Ibid., p. 181.

Bergson writes, “a language is required which makes it possible to be always passing from what is know to what is yet to be known. there must be a language whose signs – which cannot be infinite in number – are extensible to an infinity of things.” He goes on to say, “This tendency of the sign to transfer itself from one object to another is characteristic of human language. It is observable in the little child as soon as he begins to speak.” Bergson then defines the following terms, “The instinctive sign is adherent, the intelligent sign is mobile.” Ibid., pp. 174-175.

“The Ammophila, no doubt, discerns but a very little of that force [the force that is the genesis of the caterpillar's nervous system] just what concerns itself; but at least it discerns it from within, quite otherwise than a process of knowledge – by an intuition (lived rather than represented), which is probably like what we call divining sympathy.” Ibid., p. 193.

In writing about the predator prey relationship between the wasp and the caterpillar, Bergson writes, “but there is no need for such a view [the entomologist's] if we suppose a sympathy (in the etymological sense of the word) between the Ammophila and its victim, which teaches it from within, so to say, concerning the vulnerability of the caterpillar.” Ibid., p. 191.

“In the phenomena of feeling, in unreflecting sympathy and antipathy, we experience ourselves – though under a much vaguer form, and one too much penetrated with intelligence – something of what must happen in the consciousness of an insect acting by instinct.” Ibid., p. 192.

In Fifty Creative Years Archipenko writes about a perception beyond the five senses that, when developed, can utilize the maximum of universal creativeness. He also includes a plate found on the beach that is directed “To the Sixth Sense.” Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years pp. 27-28.

Archipenko, speaking of cells, writes that their function goes “far beyond mechanical production of tissue.” The cells “pave the way and conduct all beings towards [the] superlative abstract realm.” It is through the cells, in contact with universal creativeness that, “we should consider human instinct, wisdom, psychology and spirit as also deriving from universal creativeness.” Thus, our response arising through the cells remains “intangible and beyond analysis.” “Creativeness,” p. 122. Archipenko also indicates that this intuitive sense does not emerge consciously: Creativeness “because its genesis is in natural universal dynamic organization which in its foundation can not be obstructed by any intellectual filtration or doctrines. It is experienced by each living creature, not through his consciousness but mostly through his natural direct intuitive alliance with cosmical creativeness often not emerging to be mentally registered.” Ibid., p. 220.

In writing about the effort required for disinterested reflection of intuition Bergson writes, “that an effort of this kind is not impossible, is proved by the existence in man of an aesthetic faculty along with normal perception.” This aesthetic faculty allows man to place himself, “back within the object by a kind of sympathy,” which escapes the perception of the eye. Bergson, Creative Evolution, p., p. 194.

Archipenko devotes a section to “The Third Mental Capacity” which he defines as a knowledge of the subconscious self and the ability to integrate that knowledge with conscious in order to come into contact with universal creativeness and develop individual creative potential. He later refers to this third mental capacity as super-knowledge. See Archipenko, “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,” pp. 7-9.
This process of turning inward and delving into the unconscious, receiving the creative impulse and turning back through the conscious intellect in order to transform reality with the invention of something entirely novel is analogous to the model of being that Bergson presents in the third chapter of *Matter and Memory*. What is important for both in this analogy is that it unites matter and spirit through the activity of living beings. See, Chapter 2, “Images, Perception and Bergson’s model of being,” for more information about the process of creative invention.

This sense of disinterest and detachment goes against our nature as intellectual beings living in a world transposed through mobile symbols (p. 154) According to Bergson, artists approach a kind of detachment that perceives things in their purity and not as tools to be applied to some goal that meets our needs. In this sense art and art objects are a disinterested luxury. However, what the artist does is give us the individuality of things in themselves and not as an interest for us. (p. 152) Thus what the artist does little by little is insinuate the inner life of things into our own perception, “for a few moments at least he [the artist] diverts us from the prejudices of form and colour that come between ourselves and reality. And thus he realises the loftiest ambition of art, which here consists in revealing to us nature.” Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Bereton and Fred Rothwell (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914) pp. 152, 154, 155.

Bergson defines consciousness as, “the light that plays around the zone of possible actions or potential activity which surrounds the action really performed by the living being.” He casts consciousness as arising in the hesitation or delay between representation and action in the same way that constructing instruments introduces a delay between the recognition and satisfaction of needs. This hesitation and recognition of other possibilities does not always result in action, which is directed outward, but also results in reflection, which turns inward. See, *Creative Evolution*, p. 159.

Bergson writes, “In the phenomena of feeling, in unreflecting sympathy and antipathy, we experience ourselves something of what must happen in the consciousness of an insect acting by instinct.” He also asserts that the artist tries to regain the intention of life – mutually organized being, writing, “This intention is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back in the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model.” Ibid., pp. 192, 194.

In “Creativeness,” Archipenko writes about this effect of music saying, “Music is the echo of cosmical creativeness... music itself becomes dynamism and projects it in its full evidence, and by this factor expresses the very essence of universal life.” Following on this he says that, “in visual art, changes are achieved by symbolical and illusionary arrangements, evocating and producing different associations, and agitate the mind to pass through various stages of creative character.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 404. Elsewhere, in the same treatise, Archipenko writes about Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* writing that its spiritual energy is “transported into the body of the listener, indefinitely, immortally,” making it identical to universal creativeness, “carrying vital characteristics through matter, time, and space,” to emerge as material form. Ibid., p. 424.

In his excellent secondary text on Bergson, *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (which will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 2,) Leonard Lawlor discusses this aspect of the intuition as a view of the whole that encompasses the intellect’s reconstruction. The example that Lawlor recounts is from Bergson’s essay titled “Intellectual Effort.” In it, Bergson describes an expert chess player who has an intuition of the game as a representation of the whole, all the while the different actions that make up the individual moves of the game play out over time. See, Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, pp. 75-77.

*Creative Evolution* Bergsen, p. 291.

Ibid., p. 292.


In *Creative Evolution* Bergson writes, “Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness: intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect goes in the inverse direction, and thus finds itself naturally in accordance with the movement of matter.” Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 291.
Notes: Chapter 3

1 In “Creativeness,” (undated) Archipenko writes about the fusion between our physiological functions and nature’s creative forces, which are absorbed by the cells and transposed into the body to become a creative consciousness. “In other words, our consciousness is built with different chemicals and different energies absorbed by the cells from the universe and influenced by life experiences.” Later, in the same text he writes that creative consciousness is necessary for the right state of mind in order, “To think in a big way,” to build a supersonic jet, an artistic masterpiece, or, “to make big discoveries is a creative privilege of the right state of mind.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," pp. 83, 140.

2 Bergson defines automatism as a, “motor memory [that] can be automatically repeated.” He indicates that these automatic or reflexive behaviors can exhibit themselves even in complex mechanisms, such as in the use of language, which successfully imitates intelligence. For example, many people can repeat prayers or poems by heart, through an automatic, trained reflex that demonstrates no attention to what is actually recited. This automatic memory is opposed, in Bergson, to spontaneous memory, which is a kind of reverie or “all-embracing complex idea in which the parts have an indefinitely felt unity.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, pp. 99-100.

3 About art and artists, Bergson writes, “What is the object of art? Could reality come into direct contact with sense and consciousness, could we enter into immediate communion with things and with ourselves, probably art would be useless, or rather we should all be artists, for then our soul would continually vibrate in perfect accord with nature.” Laughter, p. 150.

4 “In order to present the whole spiritual content of an absent object or action, the author is obliged to discover an expression which could serve as an equivalent to the known but absent object. For this purpose, symbolism, association and relativity become an unavoidable media presenting formless abstractions.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 209.


6 “All cosmical creative processes are in endless metamorphosis. We exist only in our permanent metamorphic state in which we bodily disappear from the earth each ten years, nothing left of us as matter, but only the memory in our cells which never dies.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 124.

7 Ibid., p. 424.

8 See Chapter 1, “Instinct and Intellect,” p. 34. Bergson speaks of the intellect’s tendency to fabricate and recompose the world any way that it pleases. See Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 172.

9 Leonard Lawlor is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy at Pennsylvania State University. His book, The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics, draws together material from Bergson's corpus and presents it as a unified and significant challenge to three disciplines of classical philosophy, phenomenology, ontology, and ethics. Lawlor refocuses Bergson's work in a way that remains true to the original, but serves as an excellent secondary source. See, Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, pp. ix-xiii.

10 Lawlor claims that, in the Phenomenology of Perception, Maurice Merleau-Ponty prioritizes perception over memory. Lawlor writes, “for him [Merleau-Ponty] there is no call from the present to memory without the ‘immanent sense’ that perception makes available.” Ibid., p. ix. Also see, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception (London: Routledge, 1962).

11 Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 233. The acquisition of habits occurs through repetition. Bergson writes that repetition’s office is, “to utilize more and more the movements by which the first instance was continued, in order to organize them together and, by setting up a mechanism, to create a bodily habit.” Ibid., p. 95.

12 This doesn’t mean that no memory is stored in the body. Bergson distinguishes between two types of memory, habit memory and progressive memory. Habit memory is automatic, a bodily reflex, or a trained response, like the outfielder who catches fly balls with ease or the precise movements of a sculptor working in clay. Progressive memory on the other hand involves recollection of a particular event or time extracted and condensed from duration and brought into the present. Ibid., pp. 87-105.

13 Ibid., pp. 313, 81.
14 *Creative Evolution*, p. 20.

15 The evolution of the living being, like that of the embryo, implies a continual recording of duration, a persistence of the past in the present, and so an appearance, at least, of organic memory.” Ibid., p. 23.

16 *Matter and Memory*, p. 188.

17 Ibid., p. 233.

18 About fancy Bergson writes, “A certain margin is, therefore, necessarily left in this case to fancy; and though animals scarcely profit by it, bound as they are to material needs, it would seem that the human mind ceaselessly presses with the totality of its memory against the door which the body may half open to it: hence the play of fancy and the work of imagination – so many liberties which the mind takes with nature.” Ibid., p. 234.

19 “To touch the reality of spirit we must place ourselves at the point where an individual consciousness, continuing and retaining the past in a present enriched by it, thus escapes the law of necessity, the law which ordains that the past shall ever follow itself in a present which merely repeats it in another form, and that all things shall ever be flowing away. When we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit.” Ibid., p. 313.

20 Obviously, the argument can be made that the image of a woman engaged in applying makeup or combing her hair depicts a cultural convention of beauty that plays a role in reproduction. Thus the work is still connected to necessity and serves as a social depiction of norms in a way that makes it a kind of political tool. This, I believe, is precisely the kind of argument Archipenko would make in claiming the dialectical and not purely disinterested role of art in society.

21 In Chapter 1, Bergson’s use of the term *sympathy* is discussed in relation to instinct and intuition. It remains a very difficult concept. Bergson introduces the term in *Creative Evolution* in reference to the instinctive activity of a wasp that stings its prey with a precise motion that paralyses, but does not kill its prey. The wasp is capable of this action, not because it has a knowledge of anatomy and the workings of the nervous system, or even because it learned a particular method, but because it proceeds by a sympathy with its prey. This idea of sympathy, for Bergson, goes to the deep, evolutionary connectedness of all beings. The wasp and its prey are an organized part the continuity of life. Bergson’s use of the term, sympathy, is perhaps best understood in terms of harmonic phenomena, where the vibration of a string creates a sympathetic resonance in a sounding board because it matches the frequency of vibration. In human beings, the intellect has become dominant, dividing us from our natural connection to the world, thus sympathy has come to mean having a fellow feeling for someone because we can relate to their experience. Bergson means to distance us from this identification. He states that a philosophy of intuition can place us into a sympathetic communication with the rest the living world from which the intellect has distanced us. (p. 195) Intuition, which is instinct that has become disinterested and reflexively turned inward toward memory and spirit, reestablishes a kind of harmonic resonance with the natural world, restoring our connection to it. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 195.

Another way to think of this is that the intellect divides duration (which is time as a continuity) into distinct moments, which it then puts together in a sequence that gives the appearance of movement. Intuition connects us to undivided duration. A sympathetic communication is something like entering into the rhythm of that duration. Thus, when Bergson writes that the artist, places “himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy,” and breaks down, “by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model,” he seems to be suggesting that the artist matches the harmonic resonance or durational rhythm of his object in a kind of coordination with it. Ibid., p. 194.

Archipenko does not use the term *sympathy* at all and is not engaged in the same struggle to differentiate intellect from intuition as Bergson. Archipenko envisions the turning inward toward intuition as reaching into the latent creative sources and subconscious ancestral memories residing in the nuclei of the cells. This intuitive turn also reconnects us the continuity of all living beings present and past.

22 Archipenko writes, “The greatest miracle is enclosed behind the walls of the smallest organ, the cell. In this invisible area, there are located an incredible amount of ancestorial [sic] experiences and their forces accumulated for centuries. In this area lie all the potentialities with which to form a genius, if the mind will be adjusted to bring out the right elements and combine them in a precise order.” Archipenko, “Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon,”, p. 50. Also, Archipenko describes how a man of 80 years has
exchanged every cell in his body 10 times and thus can remember events from when he was 10. The cells inherit the memory of past cells. He says, “This is the inheritance of the cells’ memory. The range of this memory is far beyond the life of one individual. It extends into the infinity of previous lives.” Ibid., p. 128.

23 See Chapter 1, “The Cellular Basis of Creativity” for more on cells and ancestral memories. In a chapter of his treatise “Creativeness” titled “Reciprocity Between Mind and Cell,” Archipenko indicates that we can contact the universal forces that pass through meditation, dreams, hypnotism, and religious exaltation. Our mind, he writes, “should be able to contact these universal causes and multiple creative currents of nature which flow through our system to form our minds, our instincts, wisdom and all that of which creativeness consists.” "Creativeness,”, pp. 72, 398.

24 In relation to associations deriving from spirit, Archipenko writes, “thought in general is only a small part in comparison with the part played by the complex latent natural forces producing feelings and containing creative potentiality, infinitely greater than those evolving from intellect alone.” These latent natural feelings do not rise to the level of consciousness. See ibid., p. 205.

25 Bergson, in his consideration of memory, does not explicitly state that our entire evolutionary history is preserved, however, he speaks about the field of memory stretching back infinitely, like the stars in the night sky. He also states that wherever there are living being the register of the past is being inscribed. Since this register is absolute duration, part of the immanent reality of Spirit, (and living beings represent an evolutionary continuity,) it is possible to deduce that the whole of the past remains open and available, if not consciously accessible. to the individual. See Bergson, Creative Evolution, pp. 5, 17.

26 Investigating the nature of perception, Bergson writes, “I see that my perception appears to follow all the vibratory detail of the so-called sensitive nerves; and on the other hand I know that the role of their vibrations is solely to prepare the reaction of my body on neighboring bodies, to sketch out my virtual actions.” Matter and Memory, p. 304.

27 Ibid., p. 1.

28 “Undoubtedly, the concept of the image is the central concept of Matter and Memory.” Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 4.

29 “There is, first of all, the aggregate of images; and then, in this aggregate, there are 'centres of action,' from which the interesting images appear to be reflected.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 44.


32 The representation we make of objects in the world is cut out from the whole and reduced in detail to suit what interests, thus in perception we see less than what is before us, not more. Bergson writes, “our representation of matter is the measure of our possible action upon bodies: it results from the discarding of what has no interest for our needs,” and “to obtain this conversion from the virtual to the actual it would necessary, not to throw more light on the object, but on the contrary to obscure some of its aspects to diminish it by the greater part of itself.” Bergson, Matter and Memory pp. 30, 28.

33 Note that Woman Before the Mirror is framed, therefore a limited picture, not the whole of images. The work of art, for Bergson, is analogous to the natural world, and the human creative process is analogous to the creative power of the natural world.

34 Bergson describes consciousness as arising in the interval between perception and action. Deliberation increases this interval and intensifies consciousness producing a range of possible actions. Choosing from a range of actions is freedom and introduces indeterminacy into the world, because the choice is not predictable at the outset. See Bergson, Creative Evolution, pp. 160, 197.

35 In Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon, Archipenko devotes a section to the work of Dr. George W Crile (1864-1943) who was director of the Cleveland Clinic and conducted experiments in cell biology. Dr. Crile's work focused on "dynamo" cells that generate and distribute electricity in the body. Archipenko writes, "Further investigation shows that from the cells emanate short wave, infra-red radiation which eject electrons from the protoplasm of the brain." He also speaks of cells that receive these radiations "recording though and emotions." See Archipenko, "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," pp. 91-97.
Archipenko writes, “We inevitably should recognize the fact that cells carry also elements of art together with other cooperating activities such as wisdom. The latter is formed not only from intellect, but from emotion, instinct, ancestral experiences and other latent factors as well.” "Creativeness," p. 128.

Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 44.

“The bodily memory, made up of the sum of the sensori-motor systems organized by habit, is then a quasi-instantaneous memory to which the true memory of the past serves as a base.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 197.

Quasi-instantaneous memory is the kind of memory that the outfielder has developed over many years of playing baseball. It isn’t completely reflexive but it also doesn’t require every particular detail from memory. In completing the action of catching a ball, the outfielder doesn’t register the differences in each moment, only the similarities of the action. In order to register similarities, the ball and its trajectory, the outfielder must reach into memory to guide his actions, but it is a memory that has been contracted as it passes through the intellect, stripped of particularity, providing the necessary outlines of movement and not the fullness of true memory. True memory is particular and would be like the outfielder remembering his first game including the smell of the Spring air, the feel of the grass under his feet, and all of the other aspects associated with that memory.

In speaking about recollection Bergson speaks about placing ourselves into the past in general and then to a specific region of this past. He describes this adjustment as like a condensing cloud coming into view. Later, he speaks again of this cloud as a nebulous mass that “seen through more and more powerful telescopes resolves itself into and even greater number of stars.” Bergson maintains this analogy between memory in the past and the night sky precisely because the examining the universe with a telescope not only brings the object into focus but looks back in time. Bergson, Matter and Memory, pp. 171, 216.

Lawlor writes, “For Bergson, we must always say that the past is the origin. No matter what present we have, there is always a past that is prior to it, affecting it, just as my character affects every present decision I make.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 55.

Bergson writes, “Whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act sui generis by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in general, then in a certain region of the past.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 171.

Lawlor extends Bergson’s analogy of the past as the night sky writing “My character is like a galaxy, white against the black of the night sky, a multiplicity with all the singular memory-images clustered together. Thanks to the rotation of the ‘lens-holders’, the stars and planets start to appear.” Adjusting from memory in general to specific memories is a kind of focusing that enlarges and sharpens particularities. See, Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 51.

Bergson describes the hyphen as a section of the universal becoming. He writes, “It then the place of passage of the moments received and thrown back, a hyphen, a connecting link between things which act upon me and the the things upon which I act.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 196. Lawlor describes the hyphen as a thickness – prolongation of perception, mingling with memory, to form an image. The hyphen is the connection between memory and perception. Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 47.

Lawlor writes that there is a ‘grey zone of experience’ “like the grey light between night and day - between colors and forms, between matter and spirit, and also between life and death and between the natural and the unnatural.” This is the zone of indetermination because it is the point at which the past is inserted into the present as a free choice. The Challenge of Bergsonism, pp. 10, 69, note 14.

Using the method of intuition, once we give up certain habits of thinking we place ourselves at the “turn of experience, when we have profited by the faint light which, illuminating the passage from the immediate to the useful, marks the dawn of out human experience.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 241.

But the contraction can go still further: over time, through repetition, the method can become a motor habit if the effects of the action are favourable. And it can still go further: over time, the method can be put in words and become and artifice for intelligence.” See Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, pp. 52.

Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 28.

Ibid., p. 34.
Bergson describes seeking the depths of experience, where we are intimately within our own life. At this point we plunge into a duration of the past, but it strains our will to its limit. He writes, “We must, by a strong recoil of our personality on itself, gather up our past which is slipping away, in order to thrust it, compact and undivided, into a present which it will create by entering.” This is when our actions are truly free. Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 219.

Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 129.

Thought in general is only a small part in comparison with the part played by the complex latent natural forces producing feelings and contacting creative potentiality, infinitely greater than those evolving from intellect alone. As we know, the existing subconscious life is very much interwoven with the instinctual activities and often becomes introduced into the intellect post factum to become an idea, and many such instinctual activities remain obscure forever to the intellect, like those dreams which escape our memory. Those ideas, evolving from instinctual attachments towards universal creativeness fundamentally contain spiritual vitality.” Ibid., p. 129.

In Fifty Creative Years, Archipenko indicates that the work of art should be a combination of spontaneous, intuitive reaction that are “evoked from the memory of the cells of the entire organism,” and which result as an “association of the senses [and] also a selection of preferred emotions and memories.” These reactions combined with selective wisdom will cause the work to “become expressive, compelling, and beyond time.” Fifty Creative Years, p. 28. In “Creativeness,” Archipenko also advocates for the spiritual over material in art in order that the work express the essence of things and be attached to timelessness. See "Creativeness," p. 50.

Marcel Duchamp, "Archie Pen Co," The Arts 1, no. 3 (1921). At the bottom of the page the editor comments, “[This brilliant caricature of a modern magazine advertisement is the work of an artist well-known in many fields who, unfortunately, objects to having is identity revealed. – Editor]” See The Societé Anonyme, Modernism for America, p. 36.

Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 158.

See Chapter 1, the section titled “Instinct and Intellect,” pp. 32-35.

Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 52.

In Laughter, Bergson describes the comic as “the side of a person which reveals his likeness to a thing, that aspect of human events which, through its peculiar inelasticity, conveys the impression of pure mechanism, of automatism, of movement without life.” It is the living being revealed as an automaton. See Laughter, p. 46.

I recognize that positive science can and should proceed as if organization was like making a machine. Only so will it have any hold on organized bodies. Its object is not to show the essence of things, but to furnish us with the best means of acting on them.” Creative Évolution, p. 104.

Ibid., p. 13.

In a long discussion Bergson describes the difference between a manufactured machine and the organization of living organs. Rather than being constructed of parts in successive steps, the development of a function like vision is thought of as a continuous “indivisible event.” As vision progresses in an animal, the organ of the eye is mutually coordinated to that progress. “Vision will be found, therefore, in different degrees in the most diverse animals and it will appear in the same complexity of structure wherever it has reached the same degree of intensity.” Ibid., pp. 104-108.

Nature has had no more trouble in making an eye than I have in lifting my hand.” Ibid., p. 102.

Ibid., p. 78.

Our eye makes use of light in that it enables that we see to be advantageous, and to avoid those which we see to be injurious.” Ibid., p. 80.

“Organization, on the contrary, works from the center to the periphery. It begins in a point that is almost a mathematical point, and spreads around this point by concentric waves which go on enlarging.” Ibid., p. 103.

“The direction of this action [life acting on inert matter] is not predetermined; hence the unforeseeable variety of forms which life, in evolving, sows along its path. But this action always presents, to some extent, the character on contingency; it implies at least a rudiment of choice.” Ibid., p. 107.
Bergson speaks of the artist who creates a picture by drawing it from the depths of his soul. “The duration of his work is part and parcel of his work . . . The time taken up by the invention is one with the invention itself. It is the progress of a thought which is changing in the degree and measure that it is taking form. It is a vital process, something like the ripening of an idea.” Ibid., p. 370.

Antliff begins Chapter Two of *Inventing Bergson,* with a reminiscence from the painter Jacques Emile Blanche. Antliff writes, “for Blanche, Cubism’s fourth-dimensional underpinnings could not be reconciled with an intuitionist aesthetic that Bergson himself linked to images such as Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa.*” Antliff also notes that Bergson’s opinion of Cubism was that it proceeded from theory and analysis, and it is impossible to move from analysis to intuition. In a work like Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* the unity of the picture overwhelms any identification of the “parts” from which it is constructed. Bergson did not see the application of his own philosophy in modern art. Archipenko however, wants to have both the intellect in parallel with intuition, which is why I argue that Archipenko believes that art is not pure, disinterested luxury, but is also dialectic. See Antliff, *Inventing Bergson,* pp. 39, 3.

Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* p. 194.

Ibid., p. 195.

“If we now move from the past to the present, we can see that memory is constantly and spontaneously rotating and contracting past memories in order to insert them into the present, into the hesitation, in other words, between the future and the past. The past is adding memory-images to the perceptual image, like an artist painting a portrait.” Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism,* p. 81.


Ibid., pp. 150, 170-171.

Ibid., p. 17.

As geometricians, we reject the unforeseeable. “We might accept it, assuredly, in so far as we are artists, for art lives on creation and implies a latent belief in the spontaneity of nature. But disinterested art is a luxury, like pure speculation.” *Creative Evolution,* p. 52.

“From time to time, however, in a fit of absentmindedness, nature raises up souls that are more detached from life. Not with that intentional, logical, systematical detachment – the result of reflection and philosophy – but rather with natural detachment, one innate in the structure of sense or consciousness, which at once reveals itself by a virginal manner, so to speak, of seeing, hearing or thinking. Were this detachment complete, did the soul no longer cleave to action by any of its perceptions, it would be the soul of an artist such as the world has never yet seen.” *Laughter,* p. 74.

Again, speaking of artists, Bergson describes, “This one applies himself to colours and forms, and since he loves colour for colour and form for form, since he perceives them for their sake and not for his own, it is the inner life of things that he sees appearing through their forms and colours.” Ibid., p. 75.

Archipenko’s language is often convoluted, but for example he writes, “If we enter into the labyrinth of our psychological reactions we may select from the needed factors stimulating and guiding our mental and sensual creative orientation toward the spiritualization of the object, by producing aspects equal to the latent characteristics of that which does not exist materially.” In this way, we use our psychological reactions to find a symbolic equivalent that can express the immaterial and elevate the work spiritually. Archipenko, "Creativeness,” p. 135.

Ibid., p 152.

“Perhaps some of the teachers adhere to an existing opinion that genius is an accidental phenomenon. There is no unexpected burst of creativeness that drives man to the high level where ready solutions of all problems seem to have been waiting for him . . . One should acquire a particular knowledge of methodic concentration of the mind in order to operate with the adequate elements constituting creativeness, which is not an easier task for a genius than for any mortal to accomplish.” Ibid., p. 16.

Ibid., p. 70.

ibid., pp. 19, 20.


Describing self-reflection, Bergson writes, “In order that consciousness shall coincide with something of its principle, it must detach itself from the already-made and attach itself to the being-made. It needs that, turning back on itself and twisting on itself, the faculty of seeing should be made to be one with the act of
willing – a painful effort which we can make suddenly, doing violence to our nature, but cannot sustain for more than a few moments.” Ibid., p. 259.

85 Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 42.

86 “Rare are those individuals who are capable of harmoniously uniting both knowledges, so imperceptible are their relationships. One knowledge is derived from mechanical learning of the established facts, leaving the unknown unchallenged . . . Another, higher knowledge is creative and infinitely complex, being accumulated from one's own spiritual reactions, from multiples experiences and from verisimilitudes, engaged in an associative process and experimentation.” Ibid., p. 28.

87 “We should not neglect to distinguish two types of creativity: first, limited by doctrines, stabilized, finally inert then obliterated. Second, unlimited, attached to never interrupted functionalism of nature and Spirit, eternal.” Ibid., p. 34.

88 Ibid., p. 32.

89 “From the creative standpoint, our center of interest cannot be in the temporary outer appearance of matter, regardless of how inspiring it may be, but only in the permanency of universal dynamism producing metamorphoses and animating our minds creatively. Such forwarding animation of mind makes it possible for us not only to unveil but also to apprehend inner latent functionality of dynamism in matter and in ourselves." ibid. p. 32.

90 The creative "mind exploits those – radiating from the object – properties and characteristics which also may be found in entirely different objects and on account of such parallels existence may evoke many associations, which are also essential for creation.” Ibid., p. 39.

91 Ibid. p. 40.

92 Ibid. p. 134.


94 “There is an entirely different type, progressively minded, one, who possesses agglomerative tendencies, selecting not only authentic [sic] elements but essentially those which contain indirect relative and comparative characteristics. Such a creative type, besides finality, will select also causation as potentiality for his own progression using different experiences including equivalence, symbolism and relativity.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 137.

95 Ibid., p. 275.

96 Ibid., p. 275.

97 These sculptures utilize nearly identical silhouettes as Revolving Figure (1956). See Chapter 4.


99 Archipenko always stressed the universality of his art and of his creative sources. In the Introduction to the 1927 catalog for Tour of the Exhibition of the Works of Alexander Archipenko he is quoted as saying he likes, "...all that is of genius in every country and of all times, and my real tradition is found everywhere – in the genius of human creation. There is no nationality in my creations. In that respect, I am no more Ukrainian than I am Chinese. I am no one person.” Despite his sense of universality, Archipenko remained affiliated with the Ukrainian Diaspora in the United States throughout his life. In 1933, his work was exhibited in the Ukrainian Pavilion at the Chicago's World Fair, in 1936 he completed a number of portraits including Taras Shevchenko and St. Vladimir for the Ukrainian Cultural Garden in Cleveland, Ohio, and in 1958, he created the memorial for Dr. Luke Myshuha, Editor of Svoboda Ukrainian Daily [СВОБОДА Український Щоденник.] which is published by The Ukrainian National Society. The Ukrainian National Association and the estate of Dr. Myshuha were instrumental in the initial phases of the publication of Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years. This initial agreement was dissolved before the publication of the book, however its publication in 1959 was underwritten by a private group of investors who were all influential members of the Ukrainian community in New York, and additional support was provided by Dr. Wolodymyr Wozniak, whose contribution is acknowledged in the book. Archipenko's connections with and support from the Ukrainian Diaspora were instrumental to his continued success in the United States. C. J. Bulliet, Western U.S. Cities Tour of the Exhibition of the Works of Alexander Archipenko (New York: Graphic Press, Inc., 1927)(unpaginated). Also See Archipenko, Alexander Archipenko Papers, 1904-1986 (Bulik 1930-1964) and Fifty Creative Years.
Archipenko believes that man’s ability to be consciously creative puts us in control of our own evolutionary progress. Using creativity to overcome obstacles is the forwardness of nature expressed as evolution. Forwardness “uses every culminant achievement and ideal . . . as a step towards the next evolutionary attainment.” "Creativeness," p. 188.


Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, p. 40.

Ancient Egyptian art and architecture would be an example of socially determined styles. The canon that governed artistic production, at least that art which remains to this day, was established by religious and imperial orders rather than by individual artists. In the modern period, we recognize the stylistic variations of particular artists. In chapter one, in the section titled "The Cellular Basis of Creativity," I discuss Archipenko’s use of LeFevre’s three developmental phases of cell organization. When Archipenko refers to the individual in his "biological organization" he is speaking about the influences that come from a commonality that comes from having the same biological origins. See Chapter 1, pp. 23-27 and see "Creativeness," pp. 63-66.

"Gravitation towards a higher sphere of activity of wisdom and knowledge is a result of automatic forwardness which is not an achievement of the intellect and will, but an automatic expansion of nature about which the individual becomes aware through his awakening desire to create." The forwardness of nature, which is the result of "an abundance of the vital supply delivered by nature." Ibid., p. 192.

Referencing The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, which Bergson wrote in 1935, Lawlor states: "In regard to language, we can say that Bergson is making a distinction between linguistic conventions such as the particular codes or rules of syntax . . . and what we can call, following the terminology of The Two Sources, ‘the whole of language.’” Further he writes: “The whole of language would then be at the source of the particular languages we speak; it would be the absolute of language.” Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 71. Cf. Henri Bergson, The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Bereton (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1935).

It is important to remember that when Bergson uses the terms natural and organization that his is speaking in terms of the simple, singular, and unified in the same way that when he speaks of memory (positioned at the base of the cone) it is as a singular, unified field; it is not about particular memories.

“In reality, man is a being who lives in society. If it be true that the human intellect aims at fabrication, we must add that, for that as well as for other purposes, it is associated with other intellects.” Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 173.

Ibid., p. 174.

Bergson identifies two types of recognition, “The first is recognition by inattention; the second, as we shall well see, is attentive recognition.” He goes on to call inattentive recognition, automatic recognition.

“In automatic recognition, our movements prolong our perception in order to draw from it useful effects and thus take us away from the object perceived.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 118.

Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 75. Also see Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 145.

“In the infinite amount of psychological refined variations the creative mind uses suggestions and symbols, and through them it finds and projects the ideas and feelings related to the original things which are materially absent.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 51.

Bergson, Laughter, p. 75.

Creative Evolution, p. 228.

Bergson contends that individuation is, in part, the work of matter. “A poetic sentiment, which bursts into distinct verses, lines and words, may be said to have already contained this multiplicity of individuated elements, and yet, in fact, it is the materiality of language that creates it.” Ibid., p. 282.

“Let me go farther still in the direction of the dream: the letters themselves will become loose and will be seen to dance along, hand in hand, on some fantastic sheet of paper. I shall then admire the precision of
the interweavings, the marvelous order of the procession, and the exact insertion of the letters into the
syllables, of the syllables into the words and of the words into the sentences.” Ibid., p. 229.
119 “Outmoded, literary, mythological symbolism is no longer usable, but a new symbology which abstracts
and spiritualizes the object must take its place, so that color-form will become synonymous with the
object.” Fifty Creative Years, p. 45.
119 Ibid., p. 46.
120 "Creativeness," p. 392.
121 Archipenko’s inclusion of horns on King Solomon relates to Solomon’s gift of divine wisdom, given by
God. This motif was frequently used in medieval art for the representation of Moses, who, according to the
Vulgate Bible, had horns (or rays of light) emanating from his head as a sign of wisdom conferred by God.
Whether Archipenko was aware of this is unclear. For a discussion on representations of Moses with horns
see, Ruth Mellinkoff, The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought (Berkeley: University of California
122 “Through experience we know that equivalence and indirectness are are similar to secrecy which always
possess and produce intriguing mystery, and become a psychological attraction stimulating our curiosity
and creative action. In such a case, the creative impulse tends to amplify the equivalence, inevitably
attracting the mind of the spectator and making it also function creatively.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p.
209.
123 Fifty Creative Years, p. 43.
124 In art, if spirit becomes the victor over the presence of matter during the creative conflict, the work of art
will automatically become vitally attached to timelessness as the consequence of the diffusion of the
concreteness of matter. The projection of atomic creative forces makes a work of art radiate hypnotic
exaltation, powerful enough to elevate the mind and senses to the highest state of spiritual rising.
"Creativeness," p. 50. Also see Chapter one, p. 19.
125 Similarly to religions, we know other causes such as inspirations, self-infusion of emotional reactions
through imagination, psycho-therapy, psychoanalysis, self-suggestion, which is definitely a tremendous
power organizing cells for action useable in a creative direction, in art and inventions, when exalted mind
reaches through the cells to the realm of universal causation from which masterpieces are formed.” Ibid.,
pp. 78-79.
126 Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 229.
128 Ibid., p. 56.
129 Archipenko contends that, “intellect alone is always lost in the dubiousness of formalism, lacking
freedom.” Further, he rejects materiality as a source for spirit saying, “our center of interest cannot be in
the temporary externality of matter regardless how inspirational it may be, but only in the permanency of
the universal dynamism.” Ibid., p. 144.
130 Ibid., p. 129.
131 Ibid., p. 50.
132 Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 78.
133 "It is in very truth within matter that pure perception places us, and it is really into spirit that we
penetrate by means of memory." Ibid., p. 235.
134 Ibid., p. 70.
135 “It is in very truth within matter that pure perception places us, and it is really into spirit that we
penetrate by means of memory.” In talking about pure perception, Bergson writes that "between pure
perception and matter itself this is but a difference of degree." The difference is that "perception does not
compass the whole of matter, since it consists, in as far as it is conscious, in the separation... of that which,
in matter, interests our various needs." Thus pure perception only gains us a part of the whole of matter, but
it is wholly matter. Ibid., pp. 235, 78.
137 Ibid., p. 201.
138 Ibid., p. 267.
Archipenko believes that the impetus, that begins cell division and self-replication derives from creativeness and not from some mechanism within the cell itself. Thus, he contends that, “mitosis seems to be divine metamorphosis and every challenge to disclose its secrets will undoubtedly never be crowned with success.” "Creativeness as a Cosmical Phenomenon," p. 55.

The argument Archipenko puts forth is: “We exist only in our permanent metamorphic state in which we bodily disappear from the earth each ten years, nothing left of us as matter, but only the memory in our cells which never dies. So, a man of eighty years of age has disappeared ten times during his supposed stay on earth, but he may still remember what happened to him when he was a ten year old boy.” Ibid., p. 127.

Archipenko stresses that: “The mission of the creative artist and inventor is to operate just in such [a] region where he must use his super-knowledge in order to see and fix the unity of the immaterial spirit within the matter in its concrete form.” "Creativeness," p. 233.

“If we enter into the labyrinth of our psychological reactions we may select from the needed factors stimulating and guiding our mental and sensual creative orientation toward the spiritualization of the object, by producing aspects equal to the latent characteristics of that which does not exist materially.” Ibid., p. 135.

“The artist and inventor must use super-knowledge in order to find the immaterial causes and manipulate them “to perfection, performing the miracle of making spirit live in matter.” Ibid., p. 357.

Archipenko writes that Beethoven transformed his body’s experience in to spiritual energy, so that the Ninth Symphony is transported to the body of the listener for all time. The Ninth Symphony “is creative identicity [sic] of nature, carrying vital, but latent, characteristics through matter, time, and space to emerge periodically as concrete evidence of the permanent existence of the spirit.” Ibid., p. 167.

Ibid., p. 357.

According to Archipenko, the first task of the artist is to fix spirit in material form, the second is: “the dematerialization of matter in favor of spirit, as cosmical creativeness does in transforming a block of ice into vapor, or wood into flame. To be creative means to know and to do as nature knows and does in its course of changes, like the transformation of energy into matter and visa [sic] versa.” Ibid., p. 233.

Ibid., p. 424.

In “Creativeness,” Archipenko indicates that, “Indifferently of the style used by artists, he should show the spiritual derivation from the universal creativeness, this of course must be amplified to become evident in order to be transmissible to [an] adequately receptive spectator.” Ibid., p. 397. He echoes this sentiment in Fifty Creative Years, “The work of art should demonstrate the evidence of the spiritual causes which produce it. The spectator should see the cause beneath the surface of the work, and thus create in him elf a spirituality parallel to that of the work which he observes.” Fifty Creative Years

Notes: Chapter 4

1 ibid. p. 398.
2 “Matter is not the beginning of energy; it is only a temporary of some part of multiple energy, like any corporal existence disintegrating in a proper time to become again abstract energy.” Ibid., p. 32.
3 Fifty Creative Years p. 39. Also see the section on “Archipenktura: Real Motion in Painting,” which is dedicated to Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein. Ibid., pp. 65-67.
4 Fifty Creative Years begins, “In the infinity of time and space between planets, there was brought into being by cosmic dynamism a specific order of suitable elements to constitute creation. This perpetual creation in a state of energy which has been embodied deep in all cells from primordiality, constitutes the eternal life of art. Besides mankind, the animals, plants and minerals, also ruled by this divine order, possess their share of creative characteristics which elevate them to the realm of spirit, and we find in them eternal beauty, perfection and absolute truth.” Ibid., p. 15.
5 In Fifty Creative Years, “All forms are temporary aspects of the permanent cosmic energy which creates atoms, remains in them, and makes them travel from one material into another, transforming their shapes.”
Ibid., p. 37. This same idea is found in the sections The Traveling of Nuclei and Atoms in Art in "Creativeness," pp. 46-52.


8 Ibid., p. 56.

9 For example in the opposition between matter and spirit, Archipenko states that our interest, “cannot be in the temporary exteriority of matter,” but, “in the permanency of universal dynamism,” which, “opens infinite horizons for the extension of spiritual activity.” Ibid., p. 186. Also he admonishes, “In art, if spirit becomes the victor over the presence of matter during the creative conflict, the work of art will automatically become vitally attached to timelessness.” Ibid., p. 50.

10 The monograph, Alexander Archipenko: Fifty Creative Years, is an illustrated text divided into three sections: theoretical text, 292 photographic plates of artwork, and an Appendix of quotations from various critics intended to show, “the diversity of character and quality of several criticisms in relation to a particular problem in some particular work.” See, Fifty Creative Years

11 Archipenko compares the stylistic quality of his line to a Japanese instrument called the Sumako do or Ichigenkin. This single-stringed instrument is plucked with a plectrum and the individual tones are produced by moving a ceramic tube, like a guitar slide, along the length of the string. The sharp attack of the plucked string is accompanied by a long sustain and slow release. Ibid., pp. 61-62.


14 In Matter and Memory, Henri Bergson uses the terms of drawing – line, outline, and sketch – to distinguish between pure perception on the one hand and distinct ideas, memory-images, which are more akin to paintings – unified, colored, and complete – on the other. Leonard Lawlor, in The Challenge of Bergsonism, brings Bergson’s use of these terms together to clarify the analogy between drawing and perception. The movement from presence, which is the unified image before us, to perception involves making representations. We delineate and separate objects from that unity, which is like making an outline, or a sketch. A sketch is indistinct, until furnished with details. Bergson writes, “A sketch is thereby furnished [in perception] to which we put the right details and the right coloring by projecting into it memories.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 130. The sketch or drawing is an artifice of the intellect because it divides the world up according to necessity and represents it as a line, which are symbolic, geometric, and static. Archipenko’s drawings are not copies of a presence to perception. Rather, he is drawing from memory, which is the movement of intuition. Also it is important to remember that Archipenko does not enforce a difference between art and artifice. The mark on the page, like an utterance, is a symbolic representation of the artist’s creative consciousness. See Chapter 1, Instinct and Intellect, Intuition, and Chapter 2, Artifice. Also see Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, pp. 22-25.

15 Bergson, Matter and Memory, p., 118.

16 Ibid., p. 118.

17 Ibid., p. 123.

18 Ibid., p. 125.

19 I’m thinking here of the Vinculum in mathematics, which is used to bind two propositions together, as in the numerator and denominator of a fraction. Archipenko writes that, In sculpture line creates a “psychological and aesthetic attraction,” that can direct attention to “where the shape of space begins” or “the volume of the material surrounded by the outline.” Thus line both ties and separates figure and ground in a way that can emphasize one or the other element. See, Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, p. 62.

20 “In sculpture very often the psychological and esthetic attraction arise from the outline where the shape of the space begins and matter is disregarded. In some cases, the opposite happens: psychological attraction concentrated on the volume of the material surrounded by the outline and space is disregarded.” Ibid., p. 62

21 “In the creative case, in the work of art, the metaphysical significance remains in the un-knownness, which is preferable, because it appears as one of the powerful impulses for future creative self-discovery and progression.” "Creativeness," p. 179.

22 In Ancient Assyrian, Egyptian and Greek sculpture the figure, the condensation of mass at the center of the composition is the important subject. The idea of space as the ground against which matter stands as
figure remains unchallenged from Michelangelo through Bernini to Rodin up until the early twentieth century. It is simply understood that this is how we see objects – in space. If we look at a work like the *Laocoön and his Sons* from the Hellenistic period of Greece, the dramatic figures struggling with the serpent are like stone made flesh. All evidence of the stone block that contained them has been chipped away to reveal the figures in their struggle. Material is removed to reveal the spaces between the figures creating a psychological sense of separation between them as Laocoön fights to free his sons from their fate. Yet the essence of the work remains in matter. The spaces are accidental, meaning that they are produced by the contours of the figures. Space is simply where figures are not, it serves to outline them. Archipenko writes, “In the Greek marble statue of Laocoön with his two sons being attacked by serpents, there are many shapes of the spaces between the volumes of the material. But the form of this space is accidental and has no meaning of its own, because it is an unavoidable consequence of a certain position of the significant volume of the carved material according to the subject. In this case the form of the space does not contain its own spiritual significance or symbol. The points of attraction and of significance remain only in the forms of the matter.” *Fifty Creative Years* p. 57.

22 Archipenko writes about how he eliminates naturalistic details is they contradict the expression of the esthetic, “If muscles or bones interfere with the line, I eliminate them in order to obtain simplicity, purity and the expression of stylistic line and form.” Ibid., p. 48.


24 Archipenko writes of intuition, “this faculty is germinated way back in the genetic origin through instinct in cooperation with ancestral [sic] experiences and directly linked to the universal creativeness itself.” Archipenko, *Creativeness,* p. 213.

25 The contour of the void has a shape that is similar to Duccio’s *Madonna and Child.* This pose, with a slightly elongated neck and head tilted to one side becomes a common motif in art from at least the medieval period.

26 “In sculpture very often the psychological and esthetic attraction arises from the outline where the shape of the space begins and matter is disregarded. In some cases, the opposite happens: psychological attraction is concentrated on the volume of the material surround by the outline and space is disregarded.” Archipenko, *Fifty Creative Years*, p. 61.

27 Ibid., p. 56.

28 In the twentieth century, the model of the world and our conceptions of matter and space changed radically. With the discovery of x-rays by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895, and electrons by J. J. Thomson in 1897, it became clear that empty space was no longer empty. Albert Einstein’s theoretical model of Brownian motion published in 1905 proved, mathematically, that the air we breathe consisted of atoms and molecules constantly moving and colliding. Even objects that appeared to be solid turn out to be invisible particles jostling against each other in constant motion, held together in an electromagnetic field, as theorized by James Clerk Maxwell in 1895. This same theory revealed that we never actually touch the surface of an object. Instead our sense of solidity represents the degree that our flesh yields to an object’s electromagnetic force. Despite the evidence of our senses, the boundary between matter and space was no longer sharply delineated. To make things more complicated, Einstein’s theory of special relativity, published in 1905, demonstrated that mass could be transmuted into energy and vice versa. Einstein also theorized that space could not be conceived apart from time, and that the universe was a continuum where events might be perceived differently by two observers based on their relative velocities in space.

29 Bergson, speaking of conscious arising when there is a lag between perception and action, writes, “if the accomplishment of the act is arrested or thwarted by an obstacle, consciousness may reappear... The obstacle creates nothing positive; it simply makes a void, removes a stopper. This inadequacy of act to representation is precisely what we here call consciousness.” Bergson, *Creative Evolution* p. 159.

30 Ibid., p. 159. Also see Chapter One, “Intellect and Intuition,” p. 38.

31 Bergson writes (in the original italics,) “There is more, and not less, in the idea of an object conceived as ‘not existing’ than in the idea of the same object conceived as ‘existing.’” This is because the idea of a non-existent object is the idea of that object plus negation, whereas the existing object simply exists.
Archipenko twists this around by providing us an absence, a negation of form, to which we add a presence from memory plus the sense of the object’s absence. Ibid., pp. 308-311.

32 Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years p. 57. Bergson also stresses that to think of something is absent is to think of that thing. To speak of an absent head is to think of head and then to negate it. He writes, “Thinking the absence of one thing is only possible by the more or less explicit representation of the presence of some other thing.” Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 308.

33 The actual date of Blue Dancer is in question and it is likely that this version was actually created in the late 1950’s. There is no early exhibition evidence of a work called Blue Dancer. The first recorded exhibition of Blue Dancer is in the Alexander Archipenko: Bronzes exhibition at Perls Galleries, NY in January, 1960. There are records of a lost work called Red Dance, dating from 1913, which is only known through early photographs, but this work does not appear to be free-standing, nor did it rotate on a base. It’s possible that Blue Dancer is a later re-working of the Red Dance (a common practice for Archipenko,) which would account for the early date. In 1968, Archipenko donated his plasters to the Saarlandmuseum in Saarbrücken. Among several broken works was the red figure of a dancer, which was restored in 1986. See Brigitte Schröder, “Der Rote Blaue Tanz - Zur Restaurierung Eines Gipses Von 1913,” in Alexander Archipenko, ed. Ralph Melcher (Saarbrücken, Gemany: Saarlandmuseum, 2009)

34 Blue Dancer is one of the few instances where Archipenko creates a figure with fully articulated limbs precisely because the limbs are essential to the expression of the figural lines, and the manner in which they enclose space as a volume.

35 “Dynamism inevitably must be considered as first cause and mover of all, also it should become the source of creative philosophy, linking the individual with Nature.” Archipenko, “Creativeness,” p. 153.

36 See Chapter 2, “Images, Perception, and Bergson’s model of Being,” p. 9

37 Bergson characterizes pure duration as a flow which is, “continuous and in which we pass insensibly from one state to another: a continuity which is really lived, but artificially decomposed for the greater convenience of customary knowledge.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 243. Blue Dance is in continuous movement, which we decompose into moments. To regain an approximation of that continuity the intellect recomposes duration through, “an effort of memory which prolongs one [perception] into another,” creating, “a plurality of moments,” and contracting them into a single internal moment. Ibid., p. 25. Memory-images occupy a certain duration and in attentive recognition they flow into each other reconstituting duration. To be in pure duration would be to be wholly in the present without thought or action.

38 Intuition seizes, all at once, the simple truth, which is the whole. He writes, “Human reasonings are drawn out into an endless chain but are at once swallowed up in the truth seized by intuition, for their extension in space and time is only the distance, so to speak, between thought and truth.” Creative Evolution, 346-347. Leonard Lawlor, drawing from Bergson’s 1902 essay, “Intellectual Effort,” uses the example of a dynamic schema as the sense that a chess player has a “representation of the whole that enables him at any moment to visualize the elements.” Lawlor draws this concept out writing, “what the example implies is that the chess player has something like what Bergson would call an intuition; he or she has an intuition of the whole and the difference that can be developed from it... The chess player has the whole as a schema, in which there are unforeseeable developments.” Lawlor, The Challenge of Bergsonism, p. 76. Also see, Henri Bergson, "Intellectual Effort," in Mind-Energy (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 162.

39 Bergson argues that we will only recognize the unity of spiritual life when we, “place ourselves in intuition in order to go from intuition to the intellect, for from the intellect we shall never pass to intuition.” Creative Evolution, p. 292.

40 “The real whole might well be, we conceive, an indivisible continuity. The systems we cut out within it would, properly speaking, not then be parts at all; they would be partial views of the whole. And, with these partial views put end to end, you will not make even a beginning of reconstruction of the whole, any more than, by multiplying photographs of an object in a thousand different aspects, you will reproduce the object itself.” Ibid., p. 36.

41 Archipenko describes artistry as a generator of spiritual content, “linking the spectator to universal creativeness.” He differentiates the art object and its subject matter, from its spiritual content, which he also
describes as a “metaphysical order.” This spiritual content is available, above and over the material form, and is transmitted to “the adequately receptive spectator.” He categorizes ideas such as harmony as metaphysical experiences that can only be expressed through symbolism. He writes, “considering the fact that art is only media using interpretative methods artists inevitably will find their guidance in such spiritual characters as symbolism, relativity, aesthetics, harmony, rhythm, transformation, suggestions, expressions, hypnotism, meditation, exaltation, and a number of other psychological states dealing with the abstract spiritual elements. All these elements are inevitable attributes of a work of art and are useful for stimulation and inspiration by author for the transmission to the spectator.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 397. Archipenko echoes this in *50 Creative Years*, indicating that space, balance, harmony, and spirit are abstract categories of the formative laws of nature. See, *Fifty Creative Years*, p. 34.

In language, words have conventional symbolic meanings, but not so with pauses and silences. When a speaker pauses or leaves a phrase unspoken, we complete the sentence because we have the schema of the language. If we understand the context, then we can complete the phrase. We fill in what is missing from the virtual image created by perception and memory. As Archipenko writes, “silence thus speaks.” Ibid., p. 58. Also see Chapter 2, “The Social Aspect of Language.”

Archipenko’s emphasis on the pauses in musical sound and language recall the works of Harold Pinter, the Twentieth Century playwright known for placing more import and drama into long silences than into dialog. It also recalls the works of John Cage from the 1950’s, particularly his 4’ 33”, a three-movement musical composition consisting of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence.

For more on the idea of a visual language of forms see, Chapter Two, “The Social Aspect of Language,” p. 39.

The title of Archipenko’s *Tanagra Motif* is curious as the work shares very little stylistically with ancient Tanagra figurines, based on the Praxitelian ideal of proportion and naturalism. The relationship between Archipenko’s sculptures and Tanagra figurines, which he would have encountered in the Louvre between 1908-1920, has yet to be developed to any degree. Besides his interest in Classical antiquity and the fact that several pieces are titled *Tanagra Motif*, many of his sculptures share the scale, subject matter, reproducibility and decorative quality of Tanagra figurines. In addition, Archipenko created a school, Arko, that was dedicated to making modern, decorative, ceramic figurines in the 1920’s and he participated in a program called Sculpture in Replica that produced artificial stone sculptures for middle class households and budgets in the 1940’s. *Tanagra Motif* may reflect a continuing interest in the statuette as a more intimate, private form of sculpture.

Archipenko, *Fifty Creative Years*, p. 52.

In the section entitled, “Concave,” Archipenko depicts four diagrams of different types of relief sculpture and how they conceive of the concave. The first three diagrams show how concavities are either accidental or decorative. The fourth diagram shows Archipenko’s conception of the concave as a symbolic contrast with the convex. Ibid., pp. 51-52, diagrams III-VI.

An intaglio carving, like a photographic negative, is the polar opposite of bas-relief. The concave impressions form the image whereas the convex elements are decorative. Traditionally, intaglio is the process used for making stamps and dies. It is a negative that is used to impress a relief on some other material, such as wax or clay, to leave a positive impression. .

This idea of a surface as a dynamic field relates to the electromagnetic forces theorized by James Clerk Maxwell in 1895. Despite the evidence of our senses, the boundary between matter and space is not sharply delineated, but each is composed, to some degree, of the other. (See note 28 above.) Archipenko never directly addresses the work of Maxwell, but in “Creativeness,” there is a section titled, “Atoms in Art” where Archipenko addresses the role of atomic science in art. He writes, “atomic activity is responsible for the existence of metaphysical concepts,” as well as, “the physical reality of matter, endorsed by modern science,” and, “should be recognized as a phenomenon deeply rooted in the latent region of our whole spiritual life.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 201.
In the creative process, as in life itself, the reality of the negative is a conceptual imprint of the absent positive. This is a polarity a sort of equivalence of opposites, similar to the photographic negative on which light becomes shadow and shadow becomes light.” Fifty Creative Years, p. 53.

Archipenko writes about the role of symbolism and abstraction in creative associations, “symbolism, association and relativity become an unavoidable media presenting formless abstractions. Through experiences we know that the equivalence and indirectness are similar to secrecy which always possess and produce intriguing mystery and become a psychological attraction stimulating our curiosity and creative imagination. In such a case, the creative impulse tends to amplify the equivalence, inevitably attracting the mind of the spectator and making it also function creatively.” “Creativeness,” p. 375. Further, Archipenko categorizes mystery as, “one of the magnetic centers of creativeness, from which great researches in science begin and masterpieces are composed.” Mystery serves as, “a never exhausted impulse for imagination.”

In Fifty Creative Years Archipenko uses images of fossils to demonstrate how the creativeness of man in art and architecture is a reflection and awareness of universal, creative forces universal propagating as a dynamic force through all matter. Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, pp. 32-33.

Bergson refers to memory as the plane of dream writing, “A human being who should dream his life instead of living it would no doubt thus keep before his eyes... the infinite multitude of the details of his past history.” Bergson writes that “pure recollection is, by hypothesis, the representation of an absent object.” Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 84. Memory makes the object present through recollection. Returning to this idea of absence in Creative Evolution, Bergson speaks about the idea of absence in terms of negation. He writes, “only, if the present reality is not the one we are seeking, we speak of the absence of this sought-for reality wherever we find the presence of another.” Further, “the idea of disorder corresponds to the disappointment of a certain expectation... the presence of that order which does not offer us actual interest.” Creative Evolution, p. 289. This leads Bergson to the formulation, “the representation of the void is always a representation which is full and which resolves itself on analysis into two positive elements: the idea, distinct or confused of a substitution, and the feeling, experienced or imagined of a desire or regret.” Ibid., p. 308 Archipenko uses this quotation to support his use of the void as a substitution for matter. See Chapter2, “Images, Perception and Bergson’s Model of Being.”

“it is not exactly the presence of a thing but rather the absence of it that becomes the cause and impulse for creative motivation. This process exists in nature as latent force and is the fundamental creative inducer of new organic life. Nature creates that which is not yet there. The apprehension and use of this principle by an individual may guide him to the understanding of many transcendental values of art and life.”

Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, p. 54.

See Chapter 2, “Images, Perception and Bergson’s Model of Being.”

Archipenko notes that inventions are the result of an attentiveness to creative forces at work in the universe. He writes, “Edison did not make electricity, but through different associations he met existing combinations forming ideas and fact – electricity. Marconi did not make sonic waves, he as Edison through associations made radio waves that become ideas and fact – radio. Any invention and masterpiece in the
arts are nothing but psychophysiological reactions, a parallel set to already existing things we call ideas.” Archipenko, "Creativeness,”, pp. 278-279.


66 Archipenko’s essay for The Machine-Age Exposition catalog, “Machine and Art,” emphasizes the point that the basis of art remains the same and it is only the exterior form that change to reflect the spirit of the epoch. The exterior form of art is its style, and each age has its style. Archipenko imagines that, given enough distance, we would see that the predominant style of the present would be viewed as a time of machine and action. However, he warns against putting mechanism in front of creation. The machine is a symbol of universal creativeness and dynamism because it emerges as the metamorphoses of an abstract idea into a material form. If art uses the machine as its model, or glorifies the mechanism, then it does not reflect the creative source, of which the machine is a result. Invention is the manifestation of pure creativeness not the machine. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

67 Archipenko relates this story of a museum director viewing one of his exhibitions as an example of this effect, the Director “pointed to my statue which was concave and said: ‘I prefer this statue with normal form, no concave riddles!’ Mr. Ronebek replied: ‘But this statue is concave!’ The optical illusion is a consequence of the frontal light under which the concave and convex will have similar effects. The deepest and highest forms will have similar highlights in the center. Both forms will produce similar effects, especially on shiny surfaces.” Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, p. 53.

68 "There is a similarity in the effect of semicircular concave and convex bending of metals. Both reflect the environment they face, the concave in a concentrating manner, the convex in a distributing manner. What is reflected by the concave on the right side will be reflected by the convex on the left.” Ibid., p. 60. “The optical illusion is a consequence of the frontal light under which the concave and convex will have similar effects. The deepest and highest forms will have similar highlights in the center. Both forms will produce similar effects, especially on shiny surfaces.” Ibid., p. 53.

69 Once perception has grasped the ambivalent nature of reflective concave and convex forms, we are able to alternate between them at will. We can choose how to perceive the work, which is our ability to insert some form of indetermination into the world that Bergson characterizes as the primary role of life. For Archipenko, this insertion is a creative act that parallels the creation of the smallest organism and the entire universe. See Chapter 1, “The Creative Universe and Cosmic Dynamism,” p 12.

70 Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years, p. 59.

71 The transition of a substance directly from the gas phase to a solid phase is called sublimation. It reflects a change in energy state that either gives off in energy or requires energy, usually in the form of heat. In Fifty Creative Years Archipenko describes sublimation in the following way, “A low temperature as energy plus humidity will become solidified into ice and, contrariwise, wood as matter may become an immaterial phenomenon such as gas or temperature while burning.” He then parallels this with his own concept of spiritual sublimation, “In art [creative] forces are condensed into the forms of matter, and then radiate as abstract spirit.” Ibid., p. 37.

72 “Mankind, animals, plants and also minerals being ruled by this order exhibit their creative characteristics elevating them into the realm of our spiritual sublimation to become for us eternal beauty, perfection and absolute truth. This reveals to us the omnipotence of the universal mind that we express through the arts and inventions.” "Creativeness,”, p. 6.


74 Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years p. 17.


76 Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years p. 45.

77 Ibid. p. 35.


204 Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 32.
81 The rhythm produced by the triangular voids has a similar balancing effect as the triangular spaces in The Blue Dancer. See pp. 25-26 above.
83 In 1946 Archipenko is appointed as the sculpture instructor for the Chicago Bauhaus by his friend and colleague Lazlo Moholy-Nagy. Moholy-Nagy’s work utilized light as a medium, particularly his “Light Space Modulator.” This moving work created a constantly changing display through the chance interactions between colored lights and moving materials. In 1946, Moholy-Nagy was experimenting with Plexiglas forms and the effects of light on the transparent material. There are no recorded interactions between the two artists, but it is likely that Archipenko was aware of Moholy-Nagy’s work. In Fifty Creative Years, Archipenko writes about his process of sculpting in Plexiglas writing, “I use a thick sheet of plexiglas and carved forms on both sides and adjust their interdependencies in order to obtain unity of form from both views. The three-dimensional character of the flat material I obtain either by actually twisting the planes of material or by designing and carving the figure in foreshortening or perspective.” Fifty Creative Years p. 60.
84 Archipenko writes, “the facility of plexiglas to conduct electric light through an entire block is similar to a pipe conducting water.” Fifty Creative Years p. 60.
85 In the same way that plant cells respond to light without “seeing,” our skin cells, though not specialized to the task, may register light in ways that remain below the threshold of consciousness.
86 It will be very poor judgment of creativeness, if one will rely only on the primitive 5 senses and on the modest psychology without linking the Individual to the Intangible causes which are beyond any substantial analysis, but are recognizable by indirect characteristics through association and relativity. Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 122.
87 Archipenko writes, “in the same way that plant cells respond to light without “seeing,” our skin cells, though not specialized to the task, may register light in ways that remain below the threshold of consciousness.
88 Archipenko, "Creativeness," p. 50. Also see Chapter 1, “The Creative Universe and Cosmic Dynamism,” p. 10. There is a complex metamorphosis in the phenomenon of electric light. The electricity is converted from material sources, like coal, into a physical action – the spinning of a dynamo, that generates a state of energy - the electromagnetic field, conducted through copper wires as an electron field, into the filament of the bulb where the electrons emit photons. Also, like an individual’s spirit, the light bulb is one of many, connected to a larger source that provides energy to power them all.
89 “Light from within the material is stopped only on the frosted part and produces the effect of a luminous design. The luminosity is amplified by contrasting lightless, unfrosted transparent patterns.” Archipenko, Fifty Creative Years p. 60.
90 “Plastic illuminated from within also produces an ethereal quality strongly felt in semi-darkness.” Ibid., p.61.
91 In striving for the truth, while grasping the divinity of the concretion of energy in nature itself, man may elevate his own creativeness to a superlative degree.” “Creativeness,” p. 7.
92 “Man, similarly to animals, also is guided the universal mind. However, he is privileged to be conscious of many sources of his creativeness. He can apprehend very profound causes of cosmic creativeness, from which he extracts energies and ideas, inserting them into concrete forms according to his wisdom and desire.” Ibid., pp. 6-7.
93 Archipenko writes, “metamorphosis also continues after death,” and is, “the eternal emanations of forms and motions from energy, and of energy from forms.” Archipenko, "Creativeness," pp. 124-125. On the same pages Archipenko talks about our bodily disappearance and renewal every 10 years where nothing of ourselves is left materially, only the memory in our cells. See Chapter 2, “The Materialization of Spirit.”
94 Ibid., pp. 47-48.
95 Mankind, animals, plants, and also minerals being ruled by this order exhibit their creative characteristics elevating them into the realm of our spiritual sublimation to become for us eternal beauty, perfection and absolute truth.” Ibid., p. 6.
96 Ibid., p. 156.
97 Ibid., p. 198.
Notes: Chapter 5

1 ibid. p. 7.
2 Ibid., p. 6.
3 Ibid., p. 20.
4 Ibid., p. 12.
5 Ibid., p. 13.
6 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
7 In the exhibition catalog Archipenko: The Parisian Years, Katharine Kuh notes, “Though Archipenko was widely acclaimed in Europe, he was never fully appreciated in America where he lived for thirty-four years. Coming here at the age of thirty-six and at the height of his European fame, he remained something of a displaced loner, a man who always seemed to be looking in from the outside.” Alexander Archipenko, William S. Liebeman, and Katherine Kuh, "Archipenko: The Parisian Years," ed. Museum of Modern Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), unpaginated.
9 “Symbolism, you see, here is another thing of capital importance. It is so frequent that we do not notice it any more . . . During this period, if my style appears modern, my inspiration is symbolist. I read Mallarmé, which had just been translated into our language and I also liked a Russian, symbolist poet Andreyev [Leonid] very much.” Taillandier, "Conversation Avec Archipenko,", unpaginated.
11 “Categories like sculpture and painting have been kneaded and stretched and twisted in an extraordinary demonstration of elasticity, a display of the way a cultural term can be extended to include just about anything. And though this pulling and stretching of a term such as sculpture is overtly performed in the name of vanguard aesthetics-the ideology of the new-its covert message is that of historicism. The new is made comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from the forms of the past.” Rosalind E Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," October 8(1979), p. 30. Though I would argue that the elasticity of Archipenko’s oeuvre is aimed at a kind of defamiliarization that displaces static conventions, rather than making the new comfortable through familiarity as Krauss argues for the expanded field of sculpture.
12 Hal Foster et al., Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 2004), p. 674. It should be noted that in Art Since 1900 Archipenko is mentioned twice, both times parenthetically in relation to other artists, though no portion of the book actually considers his work. In some ways, this confirms the idea that Archipenko, like Bergson, escapes from history but marks his place in that absence.
13 Herwath Walden was Archipenko’s dealer in Germany and the artist contributed to both Der Sturm and Ma. In 1923, he held an exhibition in Prague under the auspices of Devétsil, and he twice taught for the American Bauhaus school in 1938 and 1946 under the direction of László Moholy-Nagy, so his connections with these groups and artists is certain, but no study has really looked at how his art and thinking corresponded to the larger ideals expressed by them. For more information see Michaelsen and Nehama, Alexander Archipenko: A Centennial Tribute.
14 Archipenko, "Creativeness;", p. 152.
15 Ibid., p. 186.
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Appendix A: Figures

Fig. 1 – Walking

Fig. 2 – Who is She?
Fig. 7 – Archie Pen Co

Fig. 8 – Menkaure and Khamerernebty

Fig. 9 –Untitled “Ornaments”

Fig. 10 – untitled, left profile
Fig. 11 – *untitled*, right profile

Fig. 12 – *Three Worried Kings*

Fig. 13 – *King Solomon*

Fig. 14 – *Bathers II*
Fig. 15 – Doryphoros

Fig. 16 – Kneeling Figure

Fig. 17 – Woman Combing Her Hair

Fig. 18 – Blue Dancer
Fig. 19 – *Seated Figure*

Fig. 20 – *Seated Figure, 3/4 view*

Fig. 21 – *Tanagra Motif*

Fig. 22 – *Ménélas relevant Patrocle (?)*
Fig. 23 – Seated Black Concave

Fig. 24 – Walking

Fig. 25 – Walking, back view

Fig. 26 – Glorification of Beauty
Fig. 31 – *Vertical*

Fig. 32 – *Spirit of the Century: Onward*

Fig. 33 – *Seated Figure*