

**THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND ARTFUL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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**August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

## **DEDICATION**

To Annie and Isaac

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## ABSTRACT

As Maurice Merleau-Ponty pointed out, a work of art allows us to explore our sense for meaning in the world. It not only allows us to translate our perceptions, but it allows our perceptions to speak to us through what he called a “respiration in being” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In this process of respiration, artists and artful public administrators alike are *inspired* by what they see, and *expire* that which is seen (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). This research suggests that what Merleau-Ponty described is an element of the aesthetic experience that enables a person to explore the world and what it means to be in it. After Dwight Waldo argued that all ways of knowing are value laden in the field of public administration, he left the field without a prescribed way to know, and this is a problem, given that public administrators are often required to act while in a crisis. If public administrators lack a form of inquiry to understand the world, then how are they to act? This dissertation asks whether administrators, in fact, base their administrative discretion on aesthetic judgment and what they find pleasing or displeasing, their taste (Kant, 2001), to discern what to do and which type of understanding to employ (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2006; Stivers, 2011). Through a set of phenomenological interviews the dissertation attempts to access, or pull on the understanding(s) of artists, artful administrators, and hybrids, to better understand administrative discretion by examining the aesthetic experience more deeply and hopefully contribute to how we think about the role of the expert in public administration.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

*“Hurray for positive science! Long live exact demonstration!...Gentleman, to you first honors always! Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling, I but enter them to an area of my dwelling” (Whitman, 1881).*

*“I would be hard pressed to say where the painting is I am looking at. For I do not look at it as one looks at a thing, fixing it in its place. My gaze wanders within it as in the halos of Being. Rather than seeing it, I see according to, or with it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).*

Ever since Carl Friedrich and Herman Finer engaged in a debate as to how to best maintain a sense of administrative responsibility in the 1940's, the field of public administration has been struggling to determine the role or rightful place of the public administrator. While Friedrich believed the administrator was in a unique place to interpret and act on the best interests of the public, Finer, much like the founders of the U.S. constitution and their belief in the separation of powers, believed public administrators would pursue their own interests at the expense of the peoples' interests, if they are left un-checked (Friedrich, 1940; Finer, 1941). Essentially, Finer believed that public administrators must be held accountable to the law. Since their debate, our scientific understanding can be considered to have evolved. Perhaps, if for no other reason than our desire for objectivity (Follett, 1926), science and measurement, i.e. “yardsticks” (Arendt, 1992), have gradually sought to fill in these conceptual gaps in our understanding concerning whether administrators should be able to exercise their discretion, whether ethics, Gaus' “inner check,” legislation, or the public might serve to keep administrators acting in the interest of the public, rather than what many fear—acting in line with their own financial gain and material pursuits, or other aspirations like

prestige, or even power. Science has taken over, for example, in the form of radar detectors, automated traffic light and speed limit enforcement, license plate scanners, all in an effort to insulate public administrators from politics. In contrast, we are reminded of a police officer in the mid 1970's who pulled over a vehicle on the basis of only his split second judgment (Rosenbloom & O'Leary, 1997, p.154). While on the stand the questioning of the officer sounded like this:

*Question from Lawyer- "Okay, what do dope haulers look like?"*

*Answer from Policeman- "Just like that" (STATE V. BLOOM, 1976-NMCA-035).*

The police officer above could not defend himself because, in part, his understanding of why he pulled over the "dope hauler" had not been translated into scientific terms (Hummel, 2006), but also because the officer did not attempt to translate his understanding beyond recognizing that it was a capacity or sense he gained through experience. In other words he had not yet articulated his aesthetic understanding.

Given the world in which public administrators operate is always changing, through technological advance, climate change, even our capacity to understand the world itself, it seems that administrators rarely, if ever, face an old problem to which they already know the scientific solution. Similarly, research in social science does not occur in a vacuum, because the conditions are always changing. In light of these assertions, technology cannot solve all of our problems, in part because technology and our scientific understanding are interwoven and inescapably linked. Perhaps more importantly, our scientific understanding will always be incomplete, which is to suggest that there are other ways to understand in the world in addition to those found through scientific inquiry (Kant, 2001). In the spirit of this idea, or perhaps fueled by it, Ralph Hummel

explored how stories can help to inform the field of public administration (Hummel, 1991). He expanded on stories as a way to understand the world and took something that all public administrators perhaps unconsciously employ while on the job and made it more explicit. Hummel and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, were not only both phenomenologists, but both were also very concerned with the tendency to think according to, what might be considered, only scientific or empirical terms (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 1968; Hummel, 1991, 2004, 2006). Both stayed true to phenomenology, which, as a type of inquiry looks to integrate our experiences in the world as knowledge (Johnson, 2010, p.16). Like the good phenomenologist that he was, Merleau-Ponty cautioned that “science [strips the living material out of things and therefore] must return to the ‘there is’ which precedes it; to the site, the soil of the sensible” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 1968). Hummel’s concern was similar in that he knew science did not offer us a way to understand the world in its entirety, therefore we must expand how we conceive of inquiry—we might call this a healthy sense of skepticism (Hummel, 1991).

Merleau-Ponty sought to expand inquiry beyond science through looking at the issue of philosophy of vision and ontology, or more plainly, by looking at the work of artists and how they make sense of the world. He drew on both the work and thoughts of artists, notably Paul Cezanne, Matisse, and Paul Klee to argue there is more to the artists’ exploration than their search for beauty (perhaps if only for the sake of beauty) (1964; 1968). Merleau-Ponty argued that the artistic process is not only alive, but the artist’s interaction with the world might even create something “carnal” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). As he phrased it,

*“The painter recaptures and converts into visible objects what would, without*

*him, remain walled up in the separate life of each consciousness: the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things. Only one emotion is possible for this painter—the feeling of strangeness—and only one lyricism—that of the continual rebirth of existence” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.305).*

His quote suggests that the very act of painting allows the painter the possibility of capturing more than what they can see through the use of their five senses—the aesthetic experience allows for what they sense between the eye and mind to become, and then be captured, and even translated. More simply put, the aesthetic experience might allow as the foundation from which we might be able to better understand the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

Like Merleau-Ponty, Hummel drew our attention to “the recalled experience,” which he believed could serve as the basis of a story, and contribute to our understanding (Hummel, 1991, p.36). Hummel also recently asserted that there is something non-subjective about a seemingly subjective thing such as aesthetic taste, and that the resulting feelings that arise when judging beauty could be utilized in politics (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1998; Hummel, 2006). Taste relates to what we find pleasing or displeasing, therefore the faculty of aesthetic judgment that is directed by taste is quite different than the faculties of reason or intellect (Kant, 2001). As Camilla Stivers argued, our aesthetic judgment allows us the capacity to discern what to do when “yardsticks” or “bannisters” (i.e. science and moral principles, respectively) (Arendt, 1992) fall short (Hummel, 2004, 2006; Stivers, 2011, 2013). In other words, aesthetic judgment is the use of our taste to help and determine how to act when scientific understandings do not fit (Hummel, 2004, 2006; Stivers, 2011, 2013). These works have helped to focus and perhaps even shift our

attention toward aesthetic judgment, but there has been very little research related to the relationship between administrative discretion and aesthetic judgment, as well as the nature of aesthetic judgment itself.

The assertion that aesthetics offers the field of public administration a means to improve judgment is not necessarily standard practice. In fact, many argue that the inherent subjectivity of aesthetics make it less valuable than other aspects of our thought. In his dissertation, Anthony Molina argued Aristotle's concept of phronesis, or practical judgment, "is the type of knowledge which is most useful to public administrators" (Molina, 2004). This dissertation offers a different take on judgment. It suggests that which arises from the aesthetic experience, admittedly a less palpable aspect of our thought, offers a great deal of insight to the field of public administration. Moreover, it argues that which arises from the aesthetic experience helps to refine our aesthetic judgment (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2006). Although phronesis may provide a means to deliberation in human affairs such as ethics (Molina, 2004), aesthetic judgment might be viewed as even more crucial given its potential to help us understand how public administrators know how to act.

Today, the field of public administration has still not been able to agree on the role of the expert, and in fact the debate related to administrative discretion has become more loaded and remains, perhaps, further from understanding how the administrator should act. In the state of Ohio, for example, even though science is employed to enforce traffic through automated means of measurement, police officers can also pull drivers over according to their judgment, because they were speeding. In addition to this, Dwight Waldo suggested that all forms of inquiry were value laden, and in a way left

administrators without a prescribed epistemological method, and therefore without a way to know (Waldo, 1984). Further, O.C. McSwite made a convincing argument that pointed out a certain logic of the “Man of Reason” suggests that the basic Friedrich-Finer debate surrounding the issue of administrative responsibility makes a series of assumptions that are unanswerable that is, because the “Men of Reason” exclude most people from governance (McSwite, 1997; Catlaw, 2006). So, given that we not only expect public administrators to be able to act with expediency in a time of crisis, but even further we expect them to be able to defend their use of discretion, then we ought to look more deeply at what serves as the basis for their administrative discretion. In other words by better understanding the use of discretion itself we might be more capable of shedding some light on this debate, or rather approach the debate from a new perspective and help to determine what the use of discretion means for the people governed.

It is with these basic issues in mind that this dissertation has used a series of phenomenological interviews with artists to better understand aesthetics, what we might assume is the foundation for aesthetic judgment. It then proceeds to interview administrators to understand how discretion is employed, and what type of judgment serves as the basis to act, and finally hybrids to understand a little of both, and find out how those with artistic abilities engage in administration. This dissertation begins with a brief statement of the research question, attempts to outline the literature related to aesthetics and administrative discretion, explains the phenomenological method employed, performs an analysis of three distinct groups of people, summarizes the findings, and finally discusses what they could mean for the field of public administration.



## **Statement of Research Question**

After Dwight Waldo pointed out that all forms of inquiry were value laden (Waldo, 1984), the field of public administration is considered to be lacking agreement over how those in it might understand the world. However, despite the corresponding epistemological paralysis that might ensue, during a time of crisis, administrators must still be able to discern what to do, which is to suggest that they need to be able to apply their understanding(s), even though this understanding may have not yet been translated into scientific terms (Hummel, 2004; 2006). With this in mind, this dissertation attempts to better understand the role of the aesthetic experience in helping public administrators to form the judgment necessary to discern what to do. More specifically, this dissertation asks: Does it make sense to consider administrative discretion to be an example of aesthetic judgment, and if so, what does the use of this aesthetic judgment mean for the role of the expert in public administration?

## **Chapter II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review of this project begins with a discussion of artfulness, or the relationship of art and aesthetics with the practice of public administration. Note that although this “artfulness” has been theorized on, and to some degree even articulated, this project aims to dig further into the nature of artfulness and what it means for how we know in the world. The second section provides a general overview of some of the fundamental literature in public administration, noting several specific questions that it hopes to contribute to. It then proceeds to discuss the different interpretations of aesthetic judgment as presented by Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, Ralph Hummel, and Camilla Stivers, and how this type of judgment relates to administrative discretion, as employed in the field of public administration. The literature review then proceeds to discuss Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of vision and ontology in an effort to summarize several key ideas within his philosophy and how these ideas relate to the public administration, not only as a way to better understand aesthetic judgment, but possibly as a mode to “bring-forth” *being* (Heidegger, 1977). Finally, the literature review ends by discussing how the work of Mary Parker Follett might serve to shape our notion of expertise in public administration. This section discusses her proposed blurred lines between the expert and the leader, and more integrated understanding as an alternative to compromise or domination (Follett, 2013).

#### **Art of Administration**

Many scholars within the field of public administration have written on the value

of art—its potential to expand how we think about or understand problems, including how we address them—as well as fill in some of the gaps left by science; one even suggested it might be able to serve as an ethical system of sorts to be used to guide administrators (Goodsell, 1992).

### **Chester Barnard the Aesthetician**

There is some indication that this interest in the relationship between art and public administration might have begun with Chester Barnard. Barnard was perhaps one of the first thinkers in the field to speak of the art of organization, and he also directed our attention toward aesthetics and its value in terms of how we understand the world. His writings suggest that he maintained an overall frustration related to what he believed was his inability to accurately illustrate the “sense” or “aesthetic feeling” of organization. In this respect, his frustration likely serves to peak our interest in aesthetics and what might lie outside of the more typically recognized five senses, upon which empiricism is based. As he phrased it,

*“Still more do I regret the failure to convey the sense of organization, the dramatic aesthetic feeling that surpasses the possibilities of exposition, which derives chiefly from the intimate habitual interested experience. It is evident that many lack an interest in the science of organization because they are oblivious to the arts of organizing, not perceiving the significant elements. They miss the structure of the symphony, the art of its composition, and the skill of its execution, because they cannot hear the tones” (Barnard, 1939, p.xxxiv).*

In Barnard’s view, the ability to discern what might be an appropriate executive decision, or more broadly, how to act within an organization does not consist of a set of rules that

tell us how to act. Instead, how to act might be more of an overall “sense” of the organization, more specifically, a sense for individual problems and how they might relate to one’s sense of the whole organization (Barnard, 1939). Barnard argued that an executive’s knowledge of coordination resides as an “aesthetic feeling...which derives chiefly from the intimate habitual interested experience,” suggesting that there is value in any research that attempts to better understand the root of this aesthetic understanding, where it comes from, what it means, and perhaps what it becomes (Barnard, 1939). Moreover, it was by digging into the experience itself that the aesthetic understanding might be revealed.

Barnard argued that the executive must be able to not only gain a sense for the organization, but also the situation at hand. As he phrased it,

*“Sensing of the organization as a whole and the total situation relevant to it. It transcends the capacity of merely intellectual methods, and the techniques of discriminating the factors of the situation. The terms pertinent to it are “feeling,” “judgment,” “sense,” “proportion,” “balance,” “appropriateness.” It is a matter of art rather than science, and is aesthetic rather than logical. For this reason it is recognized rather than described and is known by its effects rather than by analysis. All that I can hope to do is to state why this is so rather than to specify of what the executive process consists” (Barnard, 1939, Ch. XVI, p.235).*

Barnard believed the executive process is more aesthetic than logical, consisting of a sense rather than a more formally recognized scientific knowledge. As I will illustrate shortly, Barnard’s process of “discriminating the factors of the situation” seems very similar to the concept of taste, which is discriminatory by nature (Arendt, 1992; Kant,

2001; Hummel, 2006). A sense, say that of smell for example, can discern and discriminate a fresh egg from a rotten one, which is to say that it can recognize the good and edible egg over the bad and inedible egg, while empiricism might leave a person without guidance beyond that food smelling like an egg or turkey. Although the sense of smell is one of the five senses, in terms of what goes into the judgment of taste, it goes beyond the standard sense for smell and actually enables an overall sense—what Barnard might consider a “sense of things as a whole” (Barnard, 1939, Ch. XVI, p.256). It seems that Barnard believed the executive could develop a sense for a situation, which would help them discern how to act. His sense of the organization also bears resemblance to some of the ideas found in phenomenology. Barnard argued that there is a creative element involved when managing, which is to say that public administration can be artful. More specifically, he said, “the creative side of organization is the coordination...[which requires a] sense of things as a whole” (Barnard, 1939, Ch. XVI, p.256). Given the degree to which Barnard’s writings stressed the importance of the human experience we are led to believe that he might have been referring to our sense being developed through experiencing this interaction between particulars and the whole.

If examined from afar, Barnard’s writings indicate that there is both great value in the experience itself—in terms of the understanding it provides to a manager, or individual, for that matter—and also great difficulty that arises when attempting to translate this experience to oneself or others. He argued that his own experiences in organizations have an aesthetic feel to them, one that he feared he could not adequately convey (Barnard, 1939, p.xxxiv). Moreover, in his effort to draw our attention to this experience and articulate it he suggested that is not the “science of organization” that we

should divert our attention to, but instead the “arts of organizing” (Barnard, 1939, p.xxxiv). From Barnard’s often under-appreciated book we might gather that he was in fact a fellow aesthetician who, by experiencing the organization in its entirety, believed there was more than a scientific understanding of the world. In light of all of this, Barnard would have likely believed that we could also understand this aesthetic sense of the organization, and use it to better make sense of public administration, a field that he believed at the core was about people organizing (Barnard, 1939, author’s preface).

### **Charles Goodsell and the Need for a “Value System” in Public Administration**

Other scholars in public administrators have helped to draw our attention toward art and artful administration, not only as an extra sense, but also as a way to explain some of the judgments administrators make, and even in an effort to supplement a scientific understanding. Charles Goodsell wrote on aesthetics and artful administration in an effort to provide public administrators “with a satisfactory and supportive value system” (Goodsell, 1992). He argued that while much attention has been paid to “sciences and processes,” very little attention has been given to the art of public administration (Goodsell, 1992). This “value system” was perhaps intended to fill in many of the gaps left by sciences of administration, suggesting as many like Carl Friedrich for example, have that even legislation is rarely fully formed or articulated, and therefore the split between science and administration frequently leaves administrators with not only the space, but the need to act according to their own discretion. Goodsell believed that administrators had the opportunity to use their discretion to act, and perhaps if nothing else but to adhere to Friedrich’s concern for administrative responsibility, this discretion should be checked by a “value system” (Goodsell, 1992). Goodsell does not go as far to

propose what this “value system” should look like, only that it should be based on an aesthetic understanding. From this we might gather that an aesthetic understanding might allow us to better understand some of the more unique situations encountered by public administrators, moreover, further research into the concept of an aesthetic understanding would have value.

### **Geoffrey Vickers and “Appreciative Judgments”**

In his work on the art of judgment, Geoffrey Vickers argued that “appreciative systems” are a crucial component of relating to others (Vickers, 1995). He suggested that we use “appreciative systems” to “find pattern in complexity and to shift our choice of pattern according to varying criteria and interests” (Vickers via Adams et al, 1995, p.xxi). In other words, the individual plays a role in determining which patterns they recognize or see, and likely also incorporates their own preferences or values into which pattern they ultimately choose. Since he believes this process involves adaptation to values and concerns, perhaps those recognized by a community, it is a process of “artful selectivity” that is part of judgment (Vickers, via Adams et al., p.xxi). Further, he believed appreciative judgments, unlike scientific ones require a certain bond, which is why they are marked by an “Investment of the self into a situation at hand” (Vickers via Adams et al, 1995, p.xxii). What is interesting here is that Paul Cezanne’s interactions with the landscape of Mont Sainte-Victoire certainly involved self-investment, which leads one to ask whether a person can make an aesthetic choice that does not require self-investment, and is not thereby meaningful (Merleau-Ponty, 1964)? Much like Barnard, a characteristic of Vickers’ “appreciative system” also includes “the ability to ‘read a situation’” which he related to management (Vickers via Adams et al., p.xxi). It follows

that if an individual can see different patterns depending on the “sense” they draw on, that some people might be more skilled at reading particular situations precisely because of their “sense.” Perhaps their experiences have allowed them to refine their overall sense and this is precisely what is employed when seeing patterns? The job of a professor leading a student through the development of a research project comes to mind. If the professor is good at what they do then they should be able to not only have a feel for the literature the student is working with, but they will combine this sense with their overall sense of the student and what it is they believe the student is most interested in. Their “sense” likely would be refined and made possible through self-investment on the part of the professor, therefore the professor would find it difficult or impossible to offer an un-biased reading of the situation. The task becomes about using several different *reads of a situation* that are based on one’s own interpretation or read of a situation and working to refine and align this with respect to new situations—this seems to be what Vickers speaks of with regard to appreciative judgments.

### **Camilla Stivers and the Explorers of the American West**

More recently, Camilla Stivers argued public administration involves a great deal of art, not just science, and further that perhaps art can be considered a means to understanding (Stivers, 2010). As she phrased it with the help of Hannah Arendt,

*“Today’s administrators rely heavily on texts: on laws, regulations, agency protocols, reports, and analyses. Yet when they have to figure out the right thing to do, the capacity they draw upon is an aesthetic capacity, which has no firm ‘yardsticks or banisters’ as guides” (Stivers, 2011).*

Essentially, she suggested that a public administrator is often required or called upon to



figure out what the best course of action might be without the use of a report or rule, i.e. on the basis of one's own experiences. In other words, she accepted Immanuel Kant's theorem that there is no rule to follow when following a rule (Stivers, 2011), which is to suggest that administrators, work in an environment where employing discretion is a necessary condition for doing their jobs. In light of this opening for administrative discretion she argued that aesthetics can and do play a role in helping the administrator discern the right course of action, particularly when administrators encounter a unique situation where the tools of science (i.e. Arendt's "yardsticks") would not only be less applicable, but one where administrators might lack firmly defined moral principles or values to govern their actions (i.e. they lack Arendt's "bannisters"). Specifically, she suggested that when administrators encounter something new they bring an aesthetic judgment just like the artist-explorers brought (Stivers, 2011). With the help of Kant, Arendt, and Hummel, Stivers took the conversation on art and public administration further, by not only helping to provide an example for us to understand artful administration, i.e. the explorers of the American West, but she also helped refine how we conceive of the link between aesthetics and politics. As she phrased it, "science is fundamentally anti-political when it insists on right answers, while its quieter partner, aesthetic judgment, whispers 'Isn't that beautiful!'" (Stivers, 2011). Her work serves to peak our interest in the relationship between aesthetics and public administration, and perhaps gives us further reasons to examine the aesthetic experience more in depth— so that we might understand this "aesthetic capacity" further—and work in an effort to refine our understanding of how science and politics interact with each other when making decisions.

## **Administrative discretion: Paving the Road with Science and Discerning the Role of the Expert**

Woodrow Wilson proposed the development of a science of administration, one insulated from “the hurry and strife of politics” focused on managing government efficiently (Wilson, 1887, in Shafritz and Hyde, 2007). In addition to helping to found the field of public administration, his essay infused the field with a value of efficiency that would clash with the democratic notion that public administrators should listen to the people. Wilson helped to introduce the politics-administration dichotomy, which paved at least two different paths of intellectual discourse in public administration. First, by establishing the doctrine of efficiency Wilson pushed the field to examine how it goes about inquiry. He argued that the efficiency to be found in the tasks of administration was separate and distinct from the area of politics and by doing so he encouraged the field of public administration to search for the foundation necessary to be efficient. In this sense Wilson paved a path for inquiry itself and epistemological questions concerned with how knowledge is acquired. As for the second path, the politics-administration dichotomy prompted an intellectual schism between the privately held thoughts of administrators or what they believe to be an appropriate course of action, and the expectations of the legislature and citizenry or how administrators are expected to act publicly. Herbert Simon believed that while administrators should focus on facts, not values, politics came down to values. Simon not only allowed, but expected each administrator to have their own political views, for each administrator had to be predictable (Fry, 1998, p.187). Without this predictability administrators could not be expected to maintain the level of efficiency needed in government. The notion of

efficiency and a “business-like” profession created a group of administrators who engage in scientific inquiry, narrowly or broadly conceived of, and also political discourse, and still somehow remain mindful to both practices despite their tendency to conflict with one another (Wilson, 1887).

### **Friedrich and Finer and the Role of the Expert**

The notion of efficiency led to further debate on the role of the expert public administrator and how administrators ought to be held accountable. In the early 1940’s this debate began with a definition of responsibility, which said “a responsible person is one who is answerable for his acts to some other person or body, who has to give account of his doings” (Oxford dictionary, as cited in Friedrich, 1940, p.316). This focus on administrative responsibility served to shape the conversation with regard to epistemological questions related to knowing. Their approach was pragmatic in nature for by examining the issue of responsibility first, the findings would serve to inform the epistemological questions from the bottom up, a process that is quite different from beginning with philosophic inquiry into how one knows, which would shape *a priori* how we think of responsibility. This distinction is important given that both Carl Friedrich and Herman Finer believed in the importance of administrative responsibility, but differed in their views on the limits of knowing and thus the necessary controls for administrators to be held accountable for their actions. Essentially, the root of their disagreement lay in their understandings of how administrators know, and what this knowledge means when put into a public context.

Friedrich highlighted some of the weaknesses of representative government to

argue that the public administrator is both capable of knowing and acting on the interests of the public while Finer used the need for control and the limits of human knowledge to argue that political responsibility should always trump moral responsibility (Friedrich, 1940; Finer, 1941). Finer believed we should not make assumptions that we cannot prove, basically suggesting that if we lack the means to know something then we cannot allow administrators to act on this knowledge, which is imperfect. Like Rousseau, Finer believed the public may be unwise but not altogether wrong, thereby suggesting administrators must always defer to the will of the public as expressed in only the legislation (Rousseau; Finer, 1941, p.339). Alternatively, Friedrich argued the shortcomings of the representative form of government, notably that confusing and conflicting policies call for the administrator to act on the basis of their “technical knowledge and [interpretation of] popular sentiment” (Friedrich, 1940, p.320). Thus, Friedrich suggested that administrators remain accountable to John Gaus’ concept of an “inner check” or a set of professional standards (Friedrich, 1940). There is some indication to believe that Finer interpreted this “inner check” as subjective, not objective. Finer argued that because each administrator has a different interpretation of what wants and needs might be, that we should teach the public the difference instead of imposing our views on them (Finer, 1941, p.338). Thereby he asserted a sense of skepticism with respect to the pursuit of knowledge, suggesting that administrators need an external check due to these epistemological limitations (Finer, 1941). In light of this it seems the debate surrounding the issue of administrative discretion is intimately connected with how administrators know in the world. Friedrich and Finer’s disagreement over the rightful place or role of the expert may have likely served to influence Herbert Simon and Dwight

Waldo to more closely examine the epistemological underpinnings of the field of public administration. On the other hand, McSwite critiqued both Friedrich and Finer, suggesting they were rationalists (Ward & Wamsley, 2009), given both attempted to deal with this problem of discretion by beginning with the notion of responsibility, which in its nature is applied. If Friedrich and Finer are truly rationalists, then they cannot be sided with Simon or Waldo, as rationalists believe they can discern much more than Simon would ever espouse to. Moreover, Friedrich and Finer's interest in running a government would likely prevent them from focusing on some of the political theory that Waldo would suggest they ought to study.

### **The Waldo-Simon Debate**

The debate between Dwight Waldo and Herbert Simon not only helped to further our view of both public administration theory and practice, but it also exposed the issue related to the type of thinking needed for public administrators to do their jobs well. Simon had a strong belief in the value of science when practiced as value neutral inquiry (Simon, 1957). And although his value-neutral science was, as Waldo pointed out, imbued with the value of efficiency, it also provided administrators with the means to assert and defend their expertise (Waldo, 2007). It was this idea of neutral expertise that provided administrators with the justification needed to make an argument for the use of discretion, and served to strengthen the view that humans are capable of rationally discerning what is in the best interest of the public, but only with respect to empirical matters. In this sense Herbert Simon's work helped to advance a science of administration and allow stronger examples of administrative discretion to appear in the

administrative sub-fields of policy science or policy analysis and budgeting. In an effort to discern the facts that might allow for better decision-making Herbert Simon advocated a positivist scientific inquiry (Simon, 1957). He distinguished between facts, things that humans could discern from empirical observation, and value concepts, which could never be known by humans or administrators alike (Simon, 1957). In this light of this epistemological distinction Simon was a skeptic, but Dwight Waldo was far more skeptical of Simon's separation of fact and values than he was of philosophical inquiry in general. Waldo believed everything to be value laden, or as Hugh Miller put it, he believed "there is no fact, as such" (Waldo, 2007; Miller, 2007). In particular, Waldo took issue with Simon's call for empiricism suggesting that even Simon's positivist science brought the value of efficiency right along with it (Waldo, 2007). If as Simon suggested we were to restrict what could be studied to facts, in our very effort to choose to study one thing and not another we would employ or incorporate our values. In this sense Waldo was correct that values could not be removed from any inquiry. As a result, the Waldo-Simon debate left administrators in a particularly difficult place in which there are multiple ways of knowing, each as Waldo points out being full of values, leaving no prescribed set of methods to discern what is, let alone what should be "made so."

As Dwight Waldo pointed out, when referring to positivism and utilitarianism, both "are protests against intangible criteria, both propose to substitute measurement for metaphysics. Both claim the sanction of Science—and both seek to "engineer' for Heaven an earthly locus" (Waldo, 2007, p.80). In this view, the danger of science does not lie in its practice, but instead in the over-practicing of it to the point when one begins to think according to science itself and therefore implicitly accept the limitations of

science (what might be considered scientism). By asserting that any form of inquiry is equally value laden, Waldo (2007) put each form of inquiry on the same plane, thereby leaving administrators in a potential state of paralysis when it comes to knowing what is. In contrast Simon's positivist science of administration prescribed means to know, thereby he provided administrators with a method, whereas to Waldo all methods were limited in their pursuits and in this sense his ideas leaned toward the post-modern. Although Waldo may not have claimed to have answers from metaphysical inquiry, it seems he believed metaphysical inquiry to still be of value, perhaps because it had the potential to open up inquiry (Waldo, 2007). Waldo may have also served to muddy the intellectual water to some degree from the standpoint of administrative epistemological pursuits. By opening up inquiry beyond one form or "logic" he prompted administrators to begin to practice several forms despite the fact that these forms of inquiry often conflict with one another, i.e. he proliferated intellectual schizophrenia. In other words, administrators may subscribe to a coherent understanding of the world, but their pursuit of answers while on the job entails practicing several different and likely conflicting forms of inquiry, and yet their findings from these multiple forms of inquiry must still find their way into their understanding of the world. So after the Waldo-Simon debate an administrator may have certain views or beliefs that do not necessarily align in a coherent fashion with each other, and further these beliefs may not necessarily align with how they are expected to act while on the job. By researching into the nature of administrative discretion, which this dissertation postulates is largely based on aesthetic judgment, further research could allow for public administrators to improve the extent to which they have epistemological integrity or soundness.

## **Preserving Individual Ethics in Public Administration**

*“More than two years before the first guillotine was built, two engravings, almost mirror images of one another, envision an execution scene. One shows the face of a delicate executioner turning his head away in sadness or pain as he cuts a rope to drop the blade. In the other, we see the back of a dramatically posed and shaded executioner, head turned away from both us and the victim, one hand raised to cover his mouth or face as the other cuts the rope. This same averted gaze is reproduced, fancifully, in a German engraving of the guillotining of Louis XVI...” (Applbaum, 1999, p.25).*

The engravings mentioned in the passage above were intended to capture the anguish of the public administrator; in this case it can be found in the image of the executioner taking action. Isak Applbaum used the corresponding images as an avenue to discuss the concept of “role morality” (Applbaum, 1999). With this ethical construct Applbaum discusses a notion from Monsieur Sanson, the executioner of Paris, who suggested his job required upholding a distinct split between privately held views and the professional views (and action) required while on the job (Applbaum, 1999). As Sanson phrased it “[when] acting in my personal judgments, I step out of my professional role” (Applbaum, 1999, p.46). As he illustrated, the public executioner’s anguish may be indicative of a disconnect between the privately held views of the public administrator, and what is expected of them in their craft. In this case Sanson’s personal experiences conflicted with his public duty as executioner, to uphold the law and a sense of order (Applbaum, 1999, p.25). In light of this personal and public split, Applbaum believes it is quite natural to feel anguish as a public administrator, perhaps even a good or human



emotion to have (Appelbaum, 1999).

Earlier writings like, Machiavelli's *Prince* or something as recent as Michael Walzer's "dirty hands," suggest this split between private and public views to be a necessary part (or evil) of public administration. Many theorists believed it was necessary for the leader to lie and deceive others in an effort to preserve the state as a whole, so they instilled this idea that it is natural, perhaps even normal that a leader's public actions must conflict with the leader's individual sense of ethics. It seems this conflict, between public and private views may be quite natural, given that the discourse on the role of the expert has not necessarily carved out how an administrator ought to know and act, at least if the administrator does not accept scientific based neutrality as the answer.

The field of public administration has not made sense of the privately held views of administrators and what these understandings mean. And yet, one would think that a thoughtful public administrator, one who may often act contrary to their own views, would wonder whether their own privately held views actually corresponded to reality? Does the administrator act on their personal views, despite their anguish, because they recognize their knowledge is imperfect? If so, this would suggest that they acknowledge that they cannot discern the best course of action. But considering the images captured in the engravings it seems the executioner still felt anguish when taking action. It also seems that as long as the field is not in agreement over what humans can know, they will debate over the role of the expert, moreover whether there can be an expert. As this dissertation suggests, given that administrators must take action to remedy social problems, some of which require immediate action, the field needs to think about how to

address these epistemological questions, which is to say that the field needs to find a foundation or understanding from which it might be able to act.

Phenomenology as a general mode of inquiry seeks to align the personal experiences that likely account for these feelings with knowledge more generally, or in the case of Sanson, perhaps align his understanding of justice and order with that of the community. This is to say that by further phenomenological inquiry, like that of Merleau-Ponty and his study of the aesthetic experience, we might be able integrate the experiences of an individual with what they feel, and perhaps even know. It is perhaps no coincidence that the anguish, which presents itself in each of the engravings, is translated with the help of, or rather through, aesthetics, for in Merleau-Ponty's view the artist explores their relationship with nature (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). This is to suggest that aesthetics allows us to translate and understand something, in this case, the feeling of anguish that we might not have otherwise known. By seeking a type of knowledge with integrity (Curry, 2014) public administrators might be better equipped to perform their duties, otherwise in the presence of the anguish, how is an administrator to defend their actions to elected officials and the citizenry, let alone look in a mirror?

With the help of Hannah Arendt, Camilla Stivers likely helped us re-conceive of the Waldo-Simon debate and perhaps shed some light on the concept of role morality presented by Applbaum. By arguing that our epistemological choices have ethical implications, her work provides the public administrator who might find his or herself in a state of paralysis with a way to navigate through their day-to-day responsibilities in the face of multiple ways of knowing (Stivers, 2000). In a way, she uses politics to essentially root the issue that arises from the need for epistemological and

methodological correspondence. Politics becomes a philosophy in itself.

Stivers suggested that your ethics, how you conduct yourself as a public administrator (or person for that matter) could be informed by how you balance the use of empiricism and science of administration (Stivers, 2000). She applied three different archetypes from Arendt to enable us to deal more explicitly with Wilson's science of administration (Stivers, 2000).

Her first archetype is perhaps the most common, the *Parvenu*, or the person who seeks assimilation in their job (and the world) (Stivers, 2000). In this view, the *Parvenu* would actively look to learn and acquire know-how as an empiricist (and instruction in the science of administration), so that they can solve problems with the use of science—essentially Arendt's *Parvenu* is focused on finding Simon's "facts" (Stivers, 2000). The next archetype, Arendt's *Pariah* is an escapist, who likely feels homeless in the field of public administration, at least one that is dominated by the use of empiricism (Stivers, 2000). This person is certainly not at home with the use of empiricism, but also not readily understood by others (Stivers, 2000). In light of this disagreement and perhaps disconnect we might expect this *Pariah* to have a difficult time finding gainful employment in the field, in part, because their methods might not be perceived as methods that will lead toward objectivity, or "facts" for that matter. This would suggest that the voice of the *Pariah* might very well not be heard.

Arendt's last archetype is the *Conscious Pariah* (Stivers, 2000). This person can be considered to immerse his or herself into the field of public administration that is dominated by science of administration (and empiricism), but uses their position to further question the use of empiricism, presumably in a constructive yet assertive way

(Stivers, 2000). In this view, the *Conscious Pariah* could be considered a member of both Dwight Waldo and Hebert Simon's school of thought simultaneously (Stivers, 2000). In other words they believe in the usefulness of both science and politics, given that each has the potential to allow us to examine problems in a different way. In much of the same way, the concept of validity, which is typically conceived of as only applicable to quantitative analyses, validity might be considered a way to help us build stronger, more rigorous qualitative analyses. Much like Merleau-Ponty's concern with scientism, and his corresponding fascination with philosophy of vision, she suggested that the mark of Arendt's *Conscious Pariah* is not foreclosing on alternative ways of viewing the world, but instead entails embracing several ways of knowing (Stivers, 2000). If we take her ideas and apply them to the idea of role morality we might gather that the conscious public administrator (even the public executioner) can know through several different modes, and the choice of how to know has ethical implications. But, do her ideas suggest the public administrator who knows through several different modes is actually participating in several ethical dimensions? Moreover, is it possible to operate in several ethical dimensions? Does a belief in the value of politics act as a philosophy in itself suggest that politics provides a way to know?

Ralph Hummel (1991) pointed out that an individual [manager] might have difficulty using scientifically obtained data analyses and applying a "scientific rule" to a particular event (p.33. 34). As he pointed out, a problem is a problem by virtue of the fact that it "does not fit into existing routines." a pattern of existing routines that likely have been established using what we typically conceive of as science (Hummel, 1991, p.34). If we put his ideas in the context of ethics in public administration we might

gather several things. First, if using “scientific rules” alone, public administrators will find themselves in situations where a rule does not fit. This is to suggest that many of the particular events encountered by public administrators are unique in nature, and further that their uniqueness might exclude them from having the conditions or criteria present so as to apply a “scientific rule” appropriately. So when it comes to addressing problems in the field, one size does not fit all. Hummel also reminds us of the context in which findings in the social sciences have been discovered. In a scientific experiment the physical scientist works to isolate all variables and to establish causation, essentially the physical scientist works to create a vacuum where no outside variables might serve to explain causation. The Latin term *ceteris paribus*, meaning all things being equal, is used quite frequently in economics to remind us that we have taken an idea from the physical sciences and applied it, rightly or not, to isolate problems in the social sciences.

Hummel’s work reminds us that conditions in the social sciences are always changing, and also perhaps that terms like *ceteris paribus* are not only borrowed from the physical sciences, but even to the physical scientist they are contrived, i.e. the physical scientist does their best to imagine this vacuum, but this ideas of a vacuum is still theoretical in nature. The use of quasi-experimental designs in social science, if anything, illustrates that social scientists recognize the difficulty of establishing a vacuum in a world of changing conditions, as well as the limitations of the findings that result. In other words, the presence, and frequency of quasi-experimental designs reminds us that the conditions are different, the problems are unique, and therefore findings in social science are less likely to be applied in a routine fashion.

Lastly, Hummel provides public administrators with a solution to the limitations

of science—stories are and can be used as a means to understand the world, translate, and finally communicate this knowledge (Hummel, 1991). Stories serve as a means to communicate experiences to others and they do so in what seems like a particular open way. Although stories likely always fail to capture the richness or entirety of an experience, they still communicate it in a way that can be consistently re-evaluated or re-imagined, which is to say that our understanding of the story might evolve over time. In this sense, the story might offer administrators with means to better understand how the world, and further how to act in a contextually rich environment. Given Hummel’s later writings on aesthetic judgment we are led to believe that the story could be considered an aesthetic representation of an experience, one that might only be understood through membership and participation in a community.

### **Literature on Aesthetic Judgment**

Immanuel Kant argued that the concept of beauty plays a key role in our faculty of judging, or what pleases or displeases us (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992). Much of his inquiry into the faculty of judgment likely resulted from Kant’s idea that there is no rule for following a rule (Stivers, 2011). Assuming, we as public administrators seldom encounter a situation, which is precisely the same as another, or as Arendt phrased it, a situation that permits the use of “bannisters or yardsticks” (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2004, 2006; Stivers, 2011, 2013) we employ something that is altogether different than a scientifically derived way of knowing. That is, we use our judgment to tell us when a particular “bannister” (i.e. principle derived from reason), or “yardstick” (i.e. scientific knowledge from intellect and thinking) might be appropriate, in other words, we employ

judgment to help us discern when, how, and which type of science or understanding fits (Hummel, 2004; Stivers, 2011), and as Arendt suggested help and check our principles from reason “in those rare moments, when the chips are down” (Arendt, 1971). Perhaps for these reasons, Kant’s arguments suggest that we ought to be concerned with not only beauty, but the process of judging—for these concepts likely impact how administrative discretion is not only conceived of, but also how administrative discretion is put into action, or rather, how administrative discretion is employed.

### **Immanuel Kant: “Taste” and the “Supersensible”**

In an effort to better grasp the faculty of judgment and its role in our understanding, we should address each of the faculties laid out by Immanuel Kant. Kant argued that there are three cognitive faculties of the soul—these are intellect, judgment, and reason (Kant, 2001, p.289-91). His faculty of the intellect is associated with our thinking faculties and allows for our theoretical knowledge of nature. Our understanding of nature is made possible by conforming to law, and is therefore determined *a priori* (Kant, 2001, p.291). Nature allows for theoretical knowledge, but it can only be grasped or understood through phenomena that is, empirical (because according to Kant the noumenal cannot be known by people). That said, because Kant believes that nature goes deeper than empirical observations, one might suggest that he believes this theoretical understanding draws on “supersensible substratum” (Kant, 2001, p.291). In other words, the faculty of intellect and theoretical knowledge draw heavily on phenomena and empirical observations, suggesting the thinking faculties operate entirely within this tangible world, however, according to Kant our theoretical knowledge of nature is still

shaped by the “supersensible” (Kant, 2001, p.289-91).

Unlike his faculty of intellect, which utilizes thinking, Kant’s faculty of reason utilizes the faculty of desire. Reason allows for us to access what he calls the “pure practical,” as determined with respect, or rather, reference to a final end, *a priori* (Kant, 2001, p.291). Kant argues that “reason as a higher faculty determines for the faculty of desire the final end accompanied by pure intellectual delight in the object” (Kant, 2001, p.290-1). Although he acknowledges the role of desire and the pursuit of delight in the pursuit of theoretical knowledge (i.e. the faculty of the intellect), he maintained that these are separate and distinct mental faculties (Kant, 2001, p.289). That said, his faculty of reason, although it operates, or deals primarily with phenomena (hence the use of the term practical, to indicate sensible), like the faculty of intellect, reason is also influenced by the “supersensible.” As Kant pointed out, “reason prescribes laws a priori for freedom and its peculiar causality as the supersensible in the subject, so that we may have a purely practical knowledge” (Kant, 2001, p.289). If you consider reason as that which helps to allow us to align our desires with our final ends, and finally rectify these with our capacity for freedom, then reason as a faculty might provide us, at least in part, with moral guidance or moral principles.

Kant’s faculty of judgment is associated with “feelings of pleasure and displeasure” (Kant, 2001, p. 291). Judgment, and these “feelings of pleasure and displeasure” present themselves when determining the “appropriateness [to an end]” (Kant, 2001, p.291). In this sense an artist or spectator might employ his or her judgment when either creating a work of art, or interpreting it. In other words, he or she determines whether a piece of art is pleasing or displeasing to them, in this sense “art” is applied to



judgment. Kant also suggested that judgment “provides us with the mediating concept between concepts of nature and the concept of freedom—a concept that makes possible the transition from the...theoretical (laws of the intellect) to the pure practical (laws of reason)...” (Kant, 2001, p.289). In other words, the feelings of pleasure and displeasure (those associated with the faculty of judgment) help to guide and mediate the faculties of intellect and reason.

It seems natural to mix the faculties of judging and thinking, given that each contribute to our understanding, but as Kant pointed out, judging is quite different from thinking. He argued, “To apprehend a regular and appropriate building with one’s thinking faculties, whether the manner of imaginings is clear or confused, is quite different from being conscious of the image with an accompanying sensation of delight” (Kant, 2001, p.293). Thinking also must conform “to a law” and is relative to nature, whereas judgment deals with “appropriateness [to an end]” and is applied to art (Kant, 2001). This distinction helps us to recognize the difference between an intellectual judgment and an aesthetic judgment. As Kant pointed out,

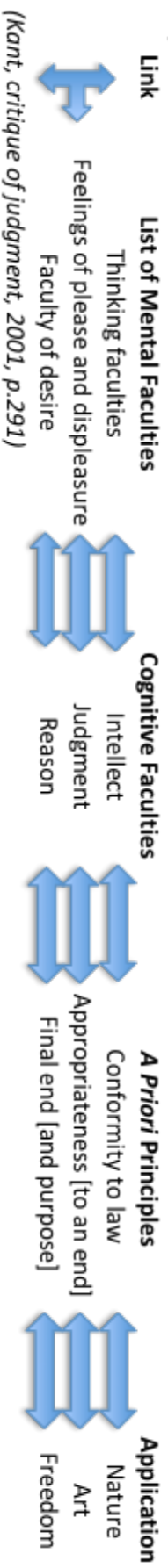
*“Given images in a judgment may be empirical, and so aesthetic; but the judgment which is pronounced by their means is logical, provided it refers them to the object. Conversely, even if the given images are rational, but referred in a judgment solely to the subject (to its feeling), they are always aesthetic to that extent”* (Kant, 2001, p.293).

In other words, aesthetic judgment draws on both feelings that refer to a subject, and rational thoughts that refer to empirical observations (i.e. the sensible or those dealing with phenomena). In this respect, judgments can be intellectual or aesthetic depending

upon their unit of reference. An intellectual judgment is logical and refers to the object, whereas an aesthetic judgment can be rational (in the sense that it draws on the empirical), but deals with feeling and therefore refers to the subject.

A summary graphic of Kant's faculties, including, an interpretation of how each interact with one another can be found on the following page.

Figure I: Three Faculties From Immanuel Kant



(Kant, *critique of judgment*, 2001, p.291)

Although all of the faculties deal primary with phenomena and the sensible, intellect and reason draw our attention to a large gap between the sensible (that which deals with phenomena) and the *supersensible* (that which deals with the *noumena*—the unknowable) (Kant, 2001, p.289). Since judgment operates both, separately, as well as within each of the other faculties (please see prior graphic), then we might consider the faculty of judgment to be closer, or rather closest to the *supersensible*. That said, “for Kant, the senses and the intellect can never have any direct sensation or knowledge of and extra-mental sensible object or intelligible objects” (Curry, 2014). In other words, because the *noumena* do not belong to the realm of phenomena (i.e. that which we can discern empirically), and because *noumena* are not accessible by people, a priori, Kant’s three faculties largely interact with each other and not the noumena. And although the *supersensible* helps to guide people in their use of the three faculties, at the same time Kant considers the *supersensible* (and *noumena*) out of human reach. In this sense, Kant considers judgment no different from the other faculties in terms of its capacity to access the noumena, an issue which Hannah Arendt sought to remedy by extending his concept of aesthetic judgment and *taste* perhaps a little further.

In contrast with what Kant believed we could know through the empirical sciences, his notion of taste was rooted in what he called the “supersensible,” something he considered “within us” (Kant, 2001, p.313). Because his *supersensible* does not draw on that which we might discern empirically, i.e. through the use of the five senses, the “supersensible” is considered to reside outside of what we can objectively claim to understand, only offering us “a unique key” to access his *transcendent* (Kant, 2001). As he explained,

*“To supply determinate objective principles of taste in accordance with which its judgments might be derived, tested, and proved, is an absolute impossibility, for then it would not be a judgment of taste. The subjective principle—that is to say, the indeterminate idea of the supersensible within us—can only be indicated as the unique key to the riddle of this faculty, itself concealed from us in its sources; and there is no means of making it any more intelligible” (Kant, 2001, p.313).*

In other words, taste cannot become objective by virtue of what it is, and how it was arrived at (subjectively)—taste is and will always be a judgment. Moreover, Kant believes the “supersensible” to be quite removed from what we can objectively know. At the same time, Kant speaks of taste as a “sensus communis,” or a sense known by the community, and thereby allows taste to become something universal, something more, perhaps closer to his *transcendent* or “supersensible” (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992, p.70).

In his “Critique of Judgment,” Kant discussed how we decide whether a work of art is beautiful (Kant, 2001). He argued, “For judging beautiful objects *taste* is required...for their production *genius* is required” (Kant, as cited in Arendt, 1992, p.62). Here, genius might be considered an artistic capacity or talent that allows the artist to take an idea and translate it into something that others see—i.e. genius allows them to produce a work of art technically speaking. Taste, however, is required to make judgments about what is beautiful. In Kant’s view, both artists, the creators of art, and spectators, people who view and judge artwork, possess and have the capacity to taste. Both the spectator and artist might draw on taste when attempting to discern which art is beautiful, but the artist might also draw on taste when making particular choices in a work of art. In this sense the spectator might have the distance that the artist lacks, which could explain

Kant's decision to place taste above genius (Kant, 2001).

As Kant phrased it with the help of Arendt,

*“Taste, like the judgment in general, is the discipline (or training) of genius; it clips its wings...gives guidance...brings clearness and order [into the thoughts of genius]; it makes the ideas susceptible of being permanently and generally assented to, and capable of being followed by others...If then...something must be sacrificed, it should rather be on the side of genius” (Kant, as cited in Arendt, 1992, p.62).*

From this we might gather that Kant believed taste to be more important, and perhaps even more central to, the creation of something beautiful. While he confirms that the *genius* of the artist is necessary to create beauty he also places the act of judging beauty first and foremost (Kant, 2001). This primacy of taste over genius might be explained on the basis of his reference to the importance of community. Because *taste* relates to the capacity to judge, taste allows for beauty to be translated and communicated to others, and in this sense would allow for beauty to be “followed by others” in the community, and even shared (Kant, as cited in Arendt, 1992, p.62). To Kant, taste resides with, or rather is, this “community sense,” and sense is “the effect of a reflection upon the mind” (Kant, as cited in Arendt, 1992, p.71).

For Kant, beauty provides us the opportunity to enjoy the presence of the “supersensible.” In other words, although beauty in its *transcendent* form cannot be known (because beauty and all *transcendent* things are *noumenal* or unknowable), judgment (and the other faculties for that matter) can be understood and have a foundation in the “supersensible.” The question that remains is if taste and aesthetic

judgment can only provide us with a glimpse of the *supersensible* (his *transcendent*), then why did Kant study aesthetic judgment and taste at all? In other words, if taste consists of a bunch of jumbled feelings, and nothing more—nothing that might access the “supersensible”—then why study it, or for that matter why dive deeper into the nature of taste, aesthetic judgment, and what makes things beautiful (Kant, 2001)?

As Martin Jay pointed out, Kant believed that beauty

*“Provided a link with the noumenal origins of practical reason, because it gets us in touch with the supersensible realities that could not be grasped by synthetic a priori judgments...Kant, in short, was never really satisfied with the radical disentanglement of aesthetic experience from its cognitive and moral counterparts”* (Jay, 2005).

At least according to this author, Kant seems to have sought greater things for aesthetic judgment in terms of helping us to better understand the world, and perhaps had higher hopes for beauty and what we deem to be beautiful. Beauty, for Kant, allowed us access to the *supersensible* (his *transcendent*), which by definition was unknowable (and *noumenal*)—in this sense beauty was the carrot that dangled in front of him, offering him the potential to understand the *noumenal*. It also seems that by further exploring these cognitive faculties of the soul, Kant must have believed that the faculties could improve our understanding, and further that if the only purpose of studying taste and aesthetic judgment was to avoid being insane, then Kant probably would have stopped here for most philosophers would be content being called insane, and in fact frequently are. But, he did not stop here, thereby he hinted to others that aesthetic judgment and taste might allow us access into something more. Kant was looking for a way to use judgment to

pick up where the faculty of reason, (and perhaps intellect as well) might fall short.

Hannah Arendt latched onto his ideas in an effort to make *taste* and aesthetic judgment further “intelligible,” (Kant, 2001) and to put it plainly, to understand how aesthetic judgment can help us when our principles fail us (Arendt, 1971).

### **Hannah Arendt: Using Aesthetic judgment to “woo” or “court” others**

As Hannah Arendt pointed out, “Kant was very early aware that there was something nonsubjective in what seems to be the most private and subjective sense” (Arendt, 1992, p.67). Building on Kant’s work, Arendt also distinguished between thinking, which “deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent; [and] judging [which] always concerns particulars and things close at hand” (Arendt, 1992, p.110). In this way, she accepted Kant’s divisions of the faculties, and believed that while thinking relates to how we understand nature, judgment “arises from ‘a merely contemplative or inactive delight’” (Kant, as cited in Arendt, 1992). In this respect judgments are quite different from thoughts according to both Kant and Arendt. Moreover, Arendt argued, “only taste and smell are discriminatory by their very nature and because only these senses relate to the particular qua particular,” taste is perhaps best suited to the act of judging, for the sense of taste can be used to examine the minute details of a particular situation (Arendt, 1992, p.66). Alternatively put, its discriminatory tendencies allow taste to differentiate where other senses (aside from smell) might lack the ability to discern any recognizable difference.

Although she applied Kant’s ideas, at some point Arendt departed from Kant and his notion of the *noumenal* (i.e. the unknowable). According to Arendt our sense of right



and wrong (i.e. our ability to judge) is actually derived from our sense of taste (Arendt, 1992; 1971). In this respect, Arendt seems to have departed from Kant in terms of his inability or incapacity to know the “supersensible.” When asked about the need for Kant’s “concept of the good” and more broadly, metaphysical inquiry (Jonas, 1972, as cited in Beiner, 1992), Arendt pointed out that thinking “does not create values; it will not find out, once and for all, what ‘the good’ is; it does not confirm but, rather, dissolves accepted rules of conduct” (Arendt, 1972, as cited in Beiner, 1992, p.116). In other words, while Arendt accepts Kant’s division of the faculties, she also fears what has and could happen because of the limited nature of what we can discern from phenomena, as well as the lack of access to Kant’s *noumenal* realm. Kant believed that without access to the *noumenal* that thinking could serve to undermine moral reason. Beiner suggests that Arendt’s answers in their conference make Arendt’s skepticism quite apparent, as well as her limitations related to thinking (Beiner, 1992; Arendt, 1971). Essentially thinking cannot discern Kant’s “supersensible,” but at the same time thinking requires the “supersensible,” these invisibles or universals, to guide it—a situation, by many accounts that Arendt found disturbing (Arendt, 1971).

Arendt was particularly concerned with the need to “prevent catastrophes...in those rare moments when the chips are down” (Arendt, 1971). Her writings suggest one of the crises of modern philosophy is the lack of metaphysical study as well as the limitations associated with metaphysical inquiry, things that she, for the most part, seemed to have agreed with (Arendt, 1971). If scholars like Dwight Waldo, for example, left us in a place where we lack the capacity to know what reality is, then how are we to establish a set of principles or morals (i.e. her bannisters) that to help us “when the chips

are down” (Arendt, 1971). This concern, perhaps served as motivation to elevate the value of judging beyond what Kant might have intended. When referring to judgment, Arendt argued, “the manifestation of the wind of thought is no knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly” (Arendt, 1971). For Arendt, judgment offers us the potential to help and differentiate or distinguish more than the “beautiful from ugly,” but “right from wrong”—suggesting that judgment not only offers us a tool to use when principles fall short, but if “right and wrong” cannot be known according to Kant (because they are *noumenal*) then for Arendt, Kant’s very conception of aesthetic judgment offers us insight to the “supersensible,” or Kant’s *transcendent* (Arendt, 1971). In other words, aesthetic judgment is for those moments when “bannisters” (those principles gained from Kant’s faculty of reason), and “yardsticks” (the empirical understanding gained from Kant’s faculty of intellect) fall short of explaining a situation and helping us to discern what to do.

Arendt further described taste as “an extra sense—like an extra mental capability (German: *Menschenverstand*)—that fits us into the community” (Arendt, p.70). This “extra sense” was not only meant to be something different from the five senses (upon which we base empiricism), but it was also meant to complement and to some degree even enable these five senses, suggesting that it was literally a capability that is necessary for humankind (Arendt, p.70). Arendt suggested, “the reflection affects me as though it were a sensation, and precisely one of taste, the discriminatory, choosing sense,” suggesting that *sensus communis* or taste might be perceived as though it were a judgment rooted in the community communicated through, or felt as, a sensation (Arendt, p.72). Or rather, as Kant eloquently phrased it, “Taste is then the faculty of judging a

priori of the communicability of feelings that are bound up with a given representation” (Kant, as cited in Arendt, p.72). The representation would be the idea of what good taste is within the community, one derived from an experience and bound up as a feeling that is constantly being refined through interaction with others.

As Arendt pointed out, we can only really enjoy a meal while in the presence of others (Arendt, 1992). And yet while a meal can only be enjoyed socially, a person can still have an aesthetic experience that we might base our notion of taste on, suggesting there is a hermeneutic loop between the aesthetic experience and communal interaction. In Arendt’s view we must work to transform our *taste* through the process of reflection, then we might be able to communicate it (Arendt, 1992, p.72). Kant believed that without this “*sensus communis*” a person would literally be insane, for without this “*sensus communis*” they would necessarily replace its absence with their “*sensus privatus*,” or their own private sense (Arendt, p.70). In other words, it is this extra sense (*sensus communis*) that ties us to the community and enables our ability to taste, to discern whether something pleases or displeases us. A worthwhile thing to consider here is that according to Kant, without a tie to the community a person not only loses their ability to use their other senses, they are literally rendered inept, or as Kant suggested, without this common sense they become mentally incapacitated—since our notions of what pleases or displeases us (i.e. our ability to taste) are formed through the community, without a tie to the community our ability to taste is lost. As Arendt explained,

*“This sensus communis is what judgment appeals to in everyone, and it is this possible appeal that gives judgments their special validity. The it-pleases-or-displeases-me, which as a feeling seems so utterly private and noncommunicative,*

*is actually rooted in this community sense and is therefore open to communication once it has been transformed by reflection, which takes all others and their feelings into account” (Arendt, p.72).*

So in Kant and Arendt’s view, in order to accurately judge, we must be able to utilize our tie with the community to compare our own personal judgments with the judgments of others, and further attempt to ““woo” or “court” the agreement of everyone else” in an effort to find agreement (Arendt, p.72). This is to suggest that in the effort to learn and refine our taste, i.e. our ability to judge, we must actively attempt to find inter-subjective agreement. Based on the work of Arendt, we are left to believe that Kant seems to have suggested that each of us has a duty to translate our tastes and attempt to persuade others, so as to contribute to the community sense as a whole (Arendt, p.72). This idea aligns with that of Mary Parker Follett’s notions of active citizenship and democracy, suggesting the citizen has a responsibility to do certain things so as to refine our version of democracy as a whole (Mary Parker Follett, 1912).

As Arendt pointed out, judging allows for a unique access to the particulars, but it also allows for interplay with the generalities, a dynamic, which is similar to the method employed by phenomenology (Arendt, 2003). As she phrased it more precisely, “To think means to generalize, hence it [judgment] is a faculty of mysteriously combining the particular and the general” (Arendt, 1992, p.76). Kant’s notion of a *transcendent* place is an example of the general and a place where universal concepts exist, but cannot be logically discerned. So although aesthetic judgment may call for a person to focus on the particulars, as Beiner noted, these particulars are only possible in the presence of universals (Beiner, 1992; Arendt, 1992). Moreover, we must be free in our observance of

these particulars else we risk foreclosing on what is there (Beiner, 1992; Arendt, 1992).

As Beiner summarized Arendt's idea,

*“Naturally, we can apprehend particulars only to the extent that we class them under some universal. A bare (un-classed) particular is not a possible object of judgment. But when the universals under which we subsume those judged particulars turn into fixed habits of thought, ossified rules and standards...the danger is that we will not open ourselves fully to the phenomenal richness of the appearances that make themselves available for our judgment” (Beiner, (on Arendt), 1992, p.111).*

Beiner goes on to suggest that Arendt's thinking is intimately connected to the faculty of judgment. As he argued,

*“According to Arendt, thought—the critical movement of thinking—loosens the hold of universals and thus frees judgment to operate in an open space of moral and aesthetic discrimination and discernment. Judgment functions best when this space has been cleared for it by critical thinking” (Beiner, 1992, p.112).*

This suggests judgment also requires thinking, for without this interplay judgment would lack the flexibility to change as needed.

### **Ralph Hummel and What Cannot be put into Scientific Terms**

Arendt's concept of “wooing” or “courting” not only fits with Kant's notion of the global citizen, but also with Ralph Hummel's view of Heidegger's politics and Parmenides (Arendt, 2003; Hummel, 2004). To each, our understanding of the aesthetics was less about rationally *discerning what something beautiful is*, and more about finding

agreement with others by asking *what is beautiful?* This search for inter-subjectivity might explain Heidegger's fairly demanding notion of politics, one, which Hummel described as, "the concept of politics as search for the truth about ourselves provides the openness, the clearing, the light, the shining that reveal the possibilities of our being here" (Hummel, 2004, p. 298).

Hummel argued that aesthetic understandings are particularly useful when approaching new situations or problems, something administrators frequently find themselves doing (Hummel, 2004). To Hummel, Kant and Arendt's concept of aesthetic judgment was not only separate from thinking or what we desire (the faculties of intellect and reason respectively), but that judgment is particularly useful when attempting to discern how to act. As he eloquently phrased it,

*"Science can tell us true from false. Ethics, right from wrong...but judgment discriminates and distinguishes between states of mind when we must act (or distinguish between actions) under circumstances when there is no concept or principle to guide us. Judgment calls are made precisely when a new experience affects us in the absence of a map to guide us. Judgments are made in the absence of a concept, when there is a lack of standards or regularities or yardsticks to refer to" (Hummel, 2004).*

In this view, because judgment does not require "bannister" (i.e. principles from which we discern how to act like a moral principle), or a "yardstick," (i.e. scientific understanding from our theoretical knowledge of the world), judgment is particularly useful when encountering a new situation or circumstance. Specifically judgment might allow us to discern similarities and differences between one situation and the next, and in

this respect helps us to discern which types of scientific understanding might apply because it helps to discriminate based on how well these understandings apply.

In a way, the idea of judgment relates to Hummel's piece *Stories Managers Tell* where he argued that someone could read his or herself into another person's story (Serle, 1965; Hummel, 1991). Further, after reading oneself into a story, a person then begins to determine the ways in which their own experiences are both similar or different from the story (Gendlin, 1976; Hummel, 1991). In a sense, the process of distinguishing between, one person's life and the next—or in this case the similarities and differences within particular story—is enabled by the faculty of judgment. Given its discriminatory nature, aesthetic judgment in particular is able to discern how different situations might be approached through using the particulars within each to differentiate and compare the characteristics therein. In other words, Hummel suggests that aesthetic judgment is not only suited to addressing this issue of when science falls short, but he also asserts that aesthetic judgment is already employed by public administrators. In this way, it becomes our task to first, be open to politics, and second, to study how administrators know.

### **Camilla Stivers: *Unknown Bureaucrat***

Camilla Stivers' piece on the "Unknown Bureaucrat" suggested something interesting with regard to aesthetic judgment and remembering (Stivers, 2013). She suggested that remembering allows an experience to mean different things at different points in our life (Stivers, 2013). If the aesthetic judgment can be based on an experience, and "remembering" allows us to understand an experience in different ways, then it follows that the experience and the understanding, aesthetic judgment, that might

result is adaptive while a scientific understanding is more fixed. If the public administrator works in an environment without rules to follow rules (Kant, as cited by Stivers, 2013), a place where scientific rules often do not apply (Hummel, 1991; Stivers, 2011), then a type of knowledge that is inherently more adaptive is of great value to the public administrator. In this view, aesthetic judgment can help us to better understand when to apply our knowledge (Stivers, 2013). Like the others, her work makes us wonder what is at the heart of this aesthetic capacity to judge? How is a sense for what might be the right situation to apply a specific type of knowledge gained?

### **Literature Related to Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Vision and Ontology**

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of vision and ontology used artists to examine the aesthetic experience more deeply. Like Kant, Merleau-Ponty not only recognized the limitations of empiricism, or rather science, and the importance of the non-rational, but it seems he studied vision in an effort to better understand vision through aesthetics, suggesting the arts are a means to "bringing-forth," and *aletheia*, the act of revealing things to us (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Heidegger, 1977). In Merleau-Ponty's view, science's "fundamental bias is to treat everything as though it were an object-in-general" and in this process of reduction i.e. the use of a model, the living is stripped out of things themselves (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.159). Hence his study of painting and vision was an effort to understand the world in a way that makes sense out of life, i.e. this living material. As he argued, it was the combination of scientific reduction and a Cartesian legacy that was rooted in the philosophy of Descartes that may have served to prompt science to essentially bracket out metaphysical study entirely



(Merleau-Ponty, 1964). As he pointed out,

*“Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the “there is” which precedes it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and humanly modified world such as it is in our lives and for our bodies—not that possible body which we may legitimately think of as an information machine but this actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and acts” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.160-1).*

He believed art held and still holds the key to this disconnect between the researcher and their world, for “art, especially painting, draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which operationalism would prefer to ignore” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.161). In other words art provides us with a lens through which we might be able to examine this relationship between oneself and the world, a lens full of living material.

Art, as a mode of inquiry, involves the artist “lending his body to the world,” the interaction between the artist and the environment provides us with a richer way to study the world, one lacking the theoretical constructs, reduction, or perhaps even manipulation needed to force what a researcher sees into a model (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.162).

Cezanne painted Mont Sainte-Victoire in an effort to present nature with the use of art (Merleau-Ponty, as cited in Johnson, 1993, p.63). This presentation was perhaps enabled through his interactions with the mountain, and by extension his environment. In other words, Cezanne allowed the distinction between the mountain and himself as a person to blend—by lending himself, he enabled the mountain to lend itself to him—a situation that Merleau-Ponty called reversibility (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Toward the end of Cezanne’s life he was so deep into the aesthetic experience, so focused on lending, and blurring, this

distinction between himself and the mountain that he was believed to be caught in a large storm as a result of his focus, and this storm led to his illness (Johnson, 1993). This aesthetic experience was perhaps captured, at least as much as it could be through the use of words, by Paul Cezanne when he said “the landscape thinks itself in me, and I am its consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Cezanne’s painting required him to lend himself to the environment so as to allow the landscape to be lent to, sensed, and perhaps even doubled by him, an interaction, which might have allowed the painter to sense the “invisible” that he believed to reside within nature (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the “invisible” is not as he would suggest “pregnant with texture” as are things that are considered visible or empirically observable, but instead the invisible is made up of “musical or sensible ideas” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 287). He believes our body, the “sensible sentient,” is a body that can, not only sense, but also simultaneously be sensed itself: therefore the body helps to expose or reveal the “invisible” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Unlike the visible, the invisible, and its “musical or sensible ideas” within cannot be possessed by us, but rather these ideas “possess us,” suggesting they require bodily interaction in order to be revealed to us (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In this respect his “invisible” differs from Kant’s “supersensible,” specifically, because to Merleau-Ponty we can sense the “invisible” through aesthetic experience.

Merleau-Ponty’s research on aesthetics and the ontology thereof was an effort to allow science to better “understand itself” and become a type of thought rooted in philosophy (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.159; p.161). His writings provide us with several ideas that are crucial to the study of aesthetic judgment in public administration. He argues the relationship between the artist, and artful administrator, and their environment

is far more complicated than Cartesians would suggest. Merleau-Ponty captured “the undividedness of the sensing and the sensed,” or to put it differently he believed that the mind could not merely be separated from the body, which for our purposes is the eye; instead he stated the two are very much connected so as to allow for communication back and forth between them (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In other words, things are not simply seen by the eyes, but rather the eyes and the mind interact, suggesting Descartes’ theory of vision has a blind spot (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

In this respect, Merleau-Ponty provides us two key ideas for this research as it relates to the aesthetic of aesthetic judgment. First, Merleau-Ponty suggests that nature is not necessarily always visible, and yet it is always there for us to find. As he argued, the painter “interrogates” a mountain with their “gaze” and asks it “to unveil the means, visible and not otherwise, by which it makes itself a mountain before our eyes” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.166). This is to say that the invisible not only becomes sensible through this process of “respiration,” but in the process the invisible also *becomes*. In this respect, Merleau-Ponty draws our attention to the process of respiration and leads us to wonder whether all aesthetic experiences include some level of respiration.

Which brings us to his second key contribution to this research: he suggests there is a certain depth to be discovered in the artists’ environment (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). As he pointed out, “It is too little to say that it is there as an image or essence; it is there as itself, as that which was always most alive about it, even now as I look at the painting” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.169). The depth and flesh Merleau-Ponty speaks of are both the objects and subjects of his ontological inquiry—they are elements of what it means to be in the world that can be found through a closer look at vision and the aesthetic experience

itself. If Merleau-Ponty's concepts of depth and flesh have merit then they might be helpful when discerning the role of the expert, and in light of their ontological implications, they would also be helpful when asserting how the expert knows. Moreover, he also provides with a set of concepts to look for when attempting to examine the aesthetic experience, so that we might be more able to recognize it if this experience plays a role in shaping administrative judgment, specifically that which is related to aesthetics.

### **Mary Parker Follett on Expertise and Integration**

There are some high-level, as well as some more particular similarities between the work of Merleau-Ponty and what is proposed here, and the work of Mary Parker Follett. Follett's *The New State* argues that creative citizenship allows us the means to make the state and democracy more visible (Follett, 1918, ch. xxxiv). This is to suggest that she viewed citizenship much like Merleau-Ponty viewed the aesthetic experience, and what might be revealed through it. As she wrote, "As God appears through us, so is the state made visible through the political man" (Follett, 1918, ch. xxxiv). Like Merleau-Ponty's view of the aesthetic experience as a process or activity to be engaged in by the artist, Follett's citizenship is "an activity to be exercised every moment of the time," and therefore a "responsible citizen [is] always in control creating its own life" (Follett, 1918, ch. xxxiv). Follett believed that citizenship was not only a process that was alive and becoming, but further that citizenship creates the state, much like Merleau-Ponty who believed the aesthetic experience created something in the process itself. In this work, Follett also noted that a good citizen "has an active sense of being an integral part of the

state” suggesting that the citizen must do more than merely reside in a state and maintain a level of indifference toward state policies (Follett, 1918, ch. xxxiv). Instead the “good citizen” must continuously and consciously work to accept the ideas of the state. This could suggest that Follett not only believes in a purposive state, but that she believes citizens can have a shared understanding of not only their role in the state, but even mutually agree on the nature of the state and its role in securing the opportunity for the common good.

There are some other, perhaps even more substantial similarities between the work of Mary Parker Follett and the research carried out here. In particular, Follett’s idea of “integration” or “integrative behavior” has the potential to offer one way to address some of the issues in public administration related to the role or place of the expert, as well as how to resolve some of the conflicts to be found politically (Follett, 1924, 1925). In her book, *Creative Experience*, Mary Parker Follett called our attention to the potential of the human experience. She argued that through our observation of, and even “interplay” with the human experience, we might be able to better understand how our different human desires interweave with one another, rather than settling for compromise or resorting to a state of domination (Follett, 1924, p.xi, xiii). As Follett phrased it, “we seek a way by which desires may interweave, that we seek a method by which the full integrity of the individual shall be one with social progress, that we try to make our daily experience yield for us larger and ever larger spiritual values” (Follett, 1924, p.xiv). In her view, as we discover how our desires might conflict, we are made more aware of the values that are behind these desires, and through this process we might improve our understanding of both what our ends are, and be able to broaden these ends with this

newfound understanding (Follett, 1924, p.xii, xiv).

In addition to highlighting the importance of the experience itself, Follett used this idea of “interplay” to refine or perhaps reorient how we think about conflict. As she phrased it, “when two desires are integrated, that means that a solution has been found in which both desires have found a place, that neither side has had to sacrifice anything” (Follett, 1925). She believed this “integration” had distinct advantages over compromise, because compromise calls for us to “give up part of our desire, and because we shall not be content to rest there, sometime we shall try to get the whole of our desire” (Follett, 1925). This suggests that while compromise is only temporary, integration can be considered closer to a resolution of conflict. When we confine ourselves to “an either-or situation,” meaning we either give the other part what they would like, i.e. “domination,” or we find a compromise that allows each party to get some of what they would like, Follett believes this serves to narrow our thinking (Follett, 1925). So Follett’s concept of integration can be considered a means to not only settle conflict, but also a means to have better conflict that occurs at a higher level (Follett, 1925). This is to suggest that through integration we might find something better than the possibilities that an “either-or” mentality offers us. Merleau-Ponty’s study of the aesthetic experience could have been fueled by similar desires when compared to Follett’s work, given that her integration is to be found through “interactive behavior between the situation and ourselves” (Follett, 1925). The integration and “interactive behavior” shares the interplay evident in Merleau-Ponty’s notion of respiration, between the artist and the landscape, and both involve or perhaps rather result in the creation of a sense. But, Follett’s work is also helpful to us in terms of how she understood the role of the expert in society.

Follett reminds us that the relationship between the expert and politics, or the role of the people is a delicate one. As she argued,

*“Our job is to apportion, not usurp, function (the “people” have a place, what is it?); and we also must warn ourselves that a little of the ready reliance on the expert comes from the desire to waive responsibility, comes from the endless evasion of life instead of an honest facing of it. The expert is to many what the priest is, someone who knows absolutely and can tell us what to do. The king, the priest, the expert, have one after the other had our allegiance, but so far as we put any of them in the place of ourselves, we have not a sound society and neither individual nor general progress” (Follett, 1925, p. 4).*

Follett asserts that the expert is considered to know “the facts” because of society’s tendency toward objectivity, but, in fact, she believes that the facts are not necessarily known, nor held by the expert for that matter. Hence the role of the expert relative to the people that she proposes is more indeterminate than one of domination (Follett, 1925, p. 3). Follett also believes that people have a tendency to give power to others, perhaps because they would prefer to live passively as Erich Fromm suggested (1976), or because giving up their right to choice reduces anxiety or brings them a sense of peace. With this quote, Follett again implies that there is great value in citizenship as a means to bring individuals into a state of harmony with the social values held by their sovereign. In this view, citizenship and integration (of desires) might be considered the method or means to a “sound society” and “progress” (Follett, 1925). So, she implies that people not only have the potential to integrate their desires, i.e. know or understand better, but that the byproduct of this process of integration is that of progress. While it seems that she

acknowledges that individual progress and societal progress do not necessarily always occur together, she also seems to imply that individual progress and societal progress can occur together through the creative experience and citizenship that she proposes.

Follett's notion of integration has major implications for experts in public administration, specifically the extent to which experts can know. Follett was concerned with the tendency of the expert to silence our appreciation of politics, and even the voice of the people (Follett, 1925). As she indicated in the early 1900's, there seemed to be a "trend [or tendency] toward objectivity" that exists today, which, although it serves to equip the expert it also provides them with a certain appeal (Follett, 1925). The expert offers the people rationality and the "facts" that arise from the application of this rationality, and this sense they offer people a way out of citizenship. So in many ways, Follett's concern, to borrow an expression from Herman Finer that the expert was on top of the people, likely motivated her to write, but it seems that she simultaneously believed in the value of what the expert had to contribute. This is to say, that while she was concerned the expert should not displace politics, she also believed the expert could serve a valuable role, but only after we reshape the expert's pursuits and methods. In other words, the expert can be thought to pursue an understanding, but perhaps it is done differently, or in a different way through a unique set of individual experiences.

Follett's notion of "interplay" with the human experience can be thought of as a method that a person might use to find a shared understanding. In other words, a person can understand their desires, and those of another person, and use interplay as a means to arrive at a shared understanding. Given that Follett suggests a person can use this interplay to arrive at a better or higher level of understanding it seems she believe that a



certain rationality is possible. Thus it seems Follett believed that a public administrator can begin know something better, and therefore might become an expert. The question that is particularly relevant for the purposes of this project then becomes, what did Follett mean when she suggested that we might find integration through our interplay with the human experience (Follett, 1925)? Further, can this interplay be found between the artist and his or her environment, in the aesthetic experience? If so, it seems the field of public administration might benefit from a closer look at the human experience, so that we might discern whether the expert can really find the means to assert their expertise and what its rightful place is in democracy relative to the people.

Follett believed that we as a society must work fully incorporate the ideas of the expert in their entirety (p.256), and further that the relationship between the expert and leader is becoming something different (Follett, 2013). She argued, at least with respect to business organizations, that people no longer look to leaders to make a decision, but instead view decisions as shared or integrated (Follett, 2013). As she observed, “in most recent business organizations...fewer officials...are ’tasting power,’” and this could mean something for how we govern in a democracy (Follett, 2013, p.248). As she phrased it, perhaps even more clearly, “to-day, however, it seems to me that the tendency is not to check leadership, but to encourage multiple leadership” (Follett, 2013, p.251). In other words, to some degree, at least in a democracy, leadership can and should be shared. She further explained that in business management a relationship is based on functional utility, and suggested that this might serve as a model in public organizations (Follett, 2013). Perhaps this sharing of utility, or need, is what called for people to share power in business? Indeed, this would align with the view that every person knows

something, as well as her respect for politics. She further expanded on her view and what it might have meant for democracy by saying,

*“We have all to learn to take our share of responsibility or get out of the game. The leader should make us feel our responsibility, not take it from us. Thus he gets men whom it is worth while to lead” (Follett, 2013, p.249).*

This quote likely indicates several things. First, there is reason to suggest that Follett believed that individuals have certain responsibilities as citizens (and great responsibilities at that), and if they cannot fulfill these responsibilities then it is probably better to “get out of the way” and perhaps even move to a country with a non-democratic form of government. Second, her quote puts the leader forth as more of a motivator of the people, rather than a decision-maker, who serves the function of recruiting and retaining citizens in a democracy. Again, this view is in direct contrast with the notion that the expert should be on top. Follett believed the expert and leader knew something, but so do others in society. This can be gathered from her acknowledgement that there can be different types of knowledge that result from different experiences (Follett, 2013, p.256).

Perhaps, as Follett suggested with a quote from Mr. Dennison, if an organization is run correctly, say that related to the tasks of public administration, then it would reduce the degree to which administrators are called upon to act quickly? In other words, by working to integrate our understanding in a democracy public administrators might find themselves addressing problems with more foresight, thereby requiring less last minute decision-making.

If the aesthetic experience can be considered as one form of understanding, one

that helps administrators when discerning when to apply different understandings (Stivers, 2013), then we need to dig deeper into these aesthetic experiences in an effort to provide administrators with insight into the foundation of administrative discretion. Along these lines, this project aims to refine our understanding of the role of the expert by examining whether administrative discretion is an example of aesthetic judgment being employed. Further, through a more detailed look at the aesthetic experience in particular the project hopes to better understand the foundation of an aesthetic judgment- what it is, how it is formed, and what it means when placed into the context of governance.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

*“Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, ‘What is this or that kind of experience like?’ ...It offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world” (Van Manen, 1990, p.9).*

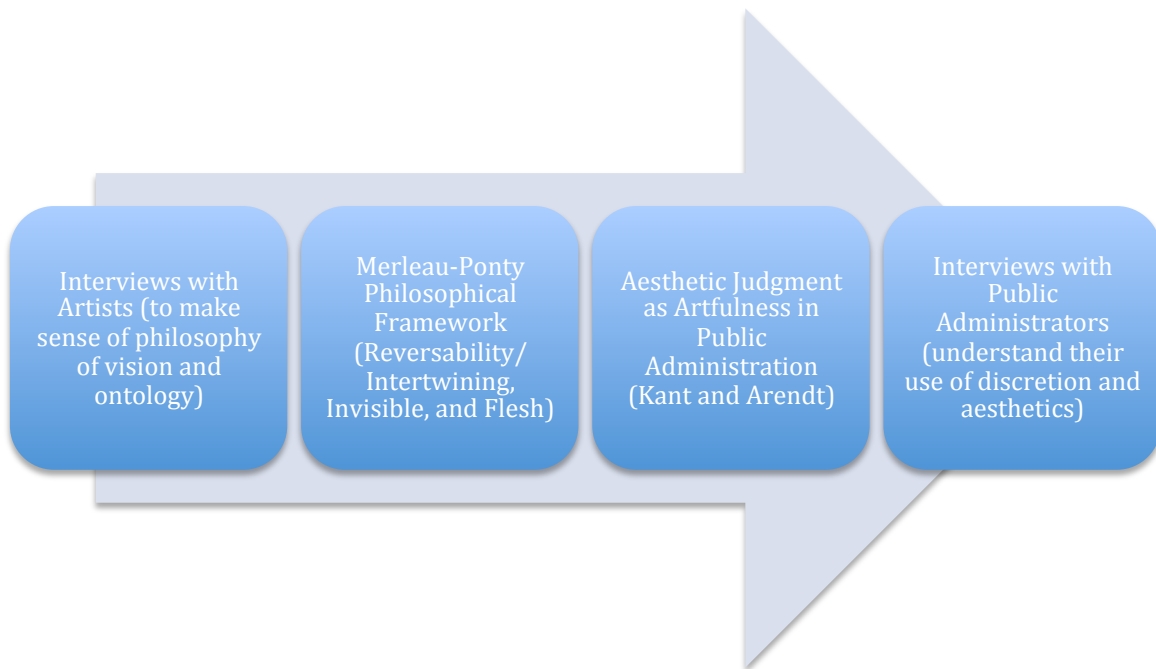
A total of nine phenomenological interviews were conducted with artists, public administrators, and a third group of people called hybrids (public administrators and artists). Instead of asking, “what happened?” as a quantitative method would, phenomenology is useful when attempting to understand how research subjects “make meaning,” and in this way it attempts to make sense of sense-making (Smith et al., 2009). Several pilot interviews were used to make sense of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy from the lens of an artist and art teacher, as well as to learn more about the nature of the interaction between an artist and his/her environment. This initial data also helped to identify and establish the basis for linking the aesthetic experience, as an artist understands it, with the use of judgment in public administration, as formulated by Kant (2001), Arendt (1992), Hummel (2006), and Stivers (2011).

When administrators say things like “I just knew,” it seems likely that their experiences must have served as the impetus for the formation of aesthetic judgment, which is then employed as administrative discretion (Rosenbloom & O’Leary, 1998; State v. Bloom, 1976). Essentially their judgment serves as an example of their

artfulness, and tells them how to act in a situation, which lacks rules (Kant, 2001; Stivers, 2011). To explore the likelihood of this link, between the aesthetic experience and judgment in public administration, a second set of interviews was performed with public administrators in and around Cleveland, Ohio. This second set of interviews helped to gain a deeper understanding of specific instances of administrative discretion, specifically how administrators’ aesthetic judgment might have been formed and employed, so as to “un-conceal” their exercise of aesthetic sense or “taste” (Heidegger, 1977; Merleau-Ponty, 1964, Kant, 2001). Finally, a third set of interviews was conducted with hybrids, a group of administrators who practiced art that were serendipitously discovered while performing the other interviews. This third group of administrators actually practiced art and therefore could not be accurately categorized as either an artist or an administrator.

The diagram below outlines these fundamental theoretical links that served to shape the structure of the basic research design.

**Figure II: Theoretical Links Behind Research Design**



Van den Burg, with the help of Max Van Manen, suggested that poets and painters are natural phenomenologists (Groenewald, 2004). Phenomenology is not only uniquely suited to the study of aesthetics, but as Van den Burg suggested, phenomenologists and artists share in the effort to translate their lived experiences, so that their work can be understood by other people. This could explain the kinship I felt with each artist that I interviewed. I realized that we were, in fact, interested in the pursuit of the same tall task. Michelangelo, the artist, sought for his sculpture to come alive much like a phenomenologist looks to capture lived experience, and translate this experience into words. Neither, the artist, or phenomenologist attempts to establish an objective truth, but they would, however, both like to convey their in such a way that it becomes objective, or at a minimum more real or tangible to others. My sense of kinship with the artists might be explained by their effort to communicate in an effort to transcend boundaries between lived experience and a reflection on that experience (Zingale & Piccorelli, 2013), even though communication is, ultimately elusive (to both the artist and phenomenologist). The effort itself, however, not only creates a similar attitude in the interlocutor, but perhaps also allows for a deeper understanding with one another. This means the interviewees felt the link, which helped them to speak freely and share more personal thoughts and feelings. After the end of one interview that entailed an artist doing what he called “pouring his guts out” he kindly remarked, “now don’t go making me look crazy,” to which I responded, “you won’t look any crazier than I.”

Just as Thomas Groenewald worked to explain his epistemological assumptions in an effort to justify his phenomenological study, I should state the basic epistemological assumptions of this study, as they help to explain why this particular methodology was

employed, as well as its advantages and limitations. Given this dissertation has utilized phenomenology as a mode of inquiry, it accepts a great deal of its epistemological framework. Phenomenology does not separate the mind from the body the way other types of research do (Husserl, 1999). In fact, a large part of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of vision and ontology was based on a critique of Rene Descartes' idea of dualism, or his sharp distinction between the mind and body (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 1968). As Merleau-Ponty pointed out, Descartes modeled his theory of vision on our sense of touch, by suggesting, "the blind see with their hands" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Descartes, as cited in Merleau-Ponty, 1968). In effect Descartes' dualism overlooks, or actually negates any communication that occurs between the eyes and mind, while Merleau-Ponty and this dissertation not only assume there is a "blind-spot" between the eyes and mind where interaction occurs, but even further, they assume that to see a person must immerse his or herself into the environment (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). In other words, a person needs to get in touch with the environment and the essence of being in order to see.

In some ways, part of the challenge associated with this dissertation was mediating the differences or rather disagreements between Immanuel Kant and Merleau-Ponty who, together, served as the epistemological foundation for this research. Although Kant made a distinction between phenomena (things we can know through empiricism), and noumena (things that are unknowable) that aligns at least in part with Merleau-Ponty's distinction of the visible and invisible, both thinkers indicated at least on some level that aesthetics might allow us to catch a glimpse of the noumenal (or "supersensible") and "invisible" (Kant, 2001; Merleau-Ponty, 1968). When referring specifically to aesthetic judgment Kant said suggested it "compel[s] us...to look beyond

the horizon of the sensible, and to seek in the supersensible the point of union of all our faculties a priori: for we are left with no other expedient to bring reason into harmony with itself” (Kant, 2001, p.313). In this respect, although Kant believed that the notion of taste, what a person finds to be pleasing or displeasing, is actually subjective, at the same time he believed inter-subjective agreement would lead to taste as a universal concept (Kant, 2001). In other words, there was more to the seemingly subjective notion of taste and aesthetic judgment, and what we believe to be beautiful has “supersensible substratum” (Kant, 2001). In spite of his separation between phenomena and noumena, Kant allowed for aesthetic judgments to navigate between the two (to some degree)—although they are based on subjective feelings, when these feelings are refined in the community and gain universal recognition, this universality might provide a glimpse into the supersensible (Kant, 2001). While Arendt picked up on the significance of Kant’s aesthetic judgment, Kant walked a tight rope between phenomena and noumena. For the sake of full disclosure, this dissertation aligns more closely with Hannah Arendt’s read of Kant’s aesthetic judgment than it does with Kant himself.

These somewhat more basic theoretical assumptions of this dissertation are as follows;

- (1) The artists possess knowledge concerning the experience of creation. They also understand the effort to translate something lived into a more public display.
- (2) The public administrators chosen to interview possess an aesthetic understanding, which presents itself as a type of judgment. Further they use this judgment as the basis to discern exactly which scientific rule to employ, but also what to do when a situation might not fit any of their rules (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2004; Stivers, 2011).



(3) The aesthetic understanding serves as the basis of judgment, and whether it presents itself in the process of creation, i.e. choosing how to translate and create beauty, or as an aesthetic judgment in the form of an administrative decision, the two aesthetic experiences and perhaps even understandings share themes which might be identified through research (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2004; Stivers, 2011).

(4) At the core of aesthetics and Immanuel Kant's notion of taste is the assumption that issues related to beauty, or more generally, things that relate to what pleases us, then aesthetic judgment bears meaning, which is to say that aesthetics are meaningful to individuals and the faculty of judgment (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992).

(4) Each of these understandings are formed through the experience itself and deal with questions related to meaning, therefore phenomenology is uniquely suited to study and interpret them through the eyes of those interviewed (Van Manen, 1990).

Assuming there is merit to the epistemological assumptions above, then it follows that by interviewing both artists and public administrators that this research might access some of the meaning within aesthetics and the understanding that results. It follows that a rigorous set of phenomenological interviews might improve our understanding of aesthetic judgment.

As Van Manen illustrated, employing phenomenological research not only has great potential, but it also carries with it certain limitations. As he phrased it, "Phenomenological questions are meaning questions...[and] cannot be "solved" and thus done away with (Marcel, 1949). Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on the basis of this understanding I may be able to act more thoughtfully and more tactfully in certain situations" (Van Manen, p.23). From this we

might gather that phenomenology offers us a method to evoke meaning-making or meaningfulness of aesthetic judgment, but in doing so we can only hope to uncover some of this meaning-making in order to try to make sense of it. In other words, we hope that this research might allow us to better understand the conditions under which administrators form and transmit their aesthetic judgment, and provide us with a better idea of what aesthetic judgment means in the field of public administration, i.e. an environment where science and empiricism are considered much more widely accepted.

Research into the nature of aesthetics, which is considered a “meaning-making activity” by some art textbooks, could understandably kindle critique if the intent of this research was to come up with meaning that could be used as a value-based tool for administrators. Instead, this research attempts to study art and public administration through the eyes of artists, public administrators, and hybrids so that we might better understand their experiences. It does not attempt to suggest that the individual meaning(s) firmly held by each should be left unchecked by others, whether through argument or through the application of scientific findings. Further, given my own background as an artist or administrator, both limited at best, it should be stated that this research does not attempt to judge the aesthetic choices of artists, or the decisions of the public administrator, instead it seeks to identify and analyze common themes within, so that we might better understand these decisions as they relate to aesthetics.

Van Manen likely captured both the intent of phenomenology as well as its honest limitations. He said, “Phenomenology aims at making explicit and seeking universal meaning where poetry and literature remain implicit and particular...the difference is partly that phenomenology operates with a different sense of directness” (Van Manen,

1990, p.19). In this sense phenomenology might serve as a method to begin the conversation, not end it. Having not physically or mentally been present during the moments in which artists and administrators made certain choices (because we only have access to these experiences by way of these individuals) it is quite difficult to make explicit the implicit, and also difficult to allow the particular to have universal implications. This conflict might serve to illustrate the challenge associated with phenomenological research given that it utilizes the particulars of a situation to move toward universals, but it is not at home in either place. Phrased more succinctly, “Phenomenology is neither mere particularity, nor sheer universality,” therefore we might think of it as almost a dancing between the two states (Van Manen, 1990, p.23). In other words, by working with the particulars a phenomenologist might uncover a theme, which has meaningful implications for the universal, but this also prompts the re-interrogation of the particulars, and therefore phenomenology as a method calls for us to constantly navigate a hermeneutic circle of meaning.

The process of identifying themes in this research was challenging in the sense that the several potential frameworks were discussed before actually conducting the interviews. Which is to suggest that I imposed my idea of what is meaningful on the interviews, and therefore helped to set the context in which we might consider some of the particulars meaningful. At the same time I also sought to be open enough to allow the participants to disclose what is meaningful to them. In other words, the research involved allowing the subject’s to come out of the interviews before working to summarize the themes within. This is not to suggest that interviews were approached without several important questions, but that the interviews and analysis were conducted with an attitude

that is hopefully consistent with phenomenology, one that is curious and focused on a specific question related to the nature of aesthetic judgment in public administration, and simultaneously open to what the research might reveal. In light of the fact that we as phenomenological researchers are attempting to access and understand meaning by way of research subjects, as these research subjects are also attempting to understand meaning (or make sense of things in the world), the researcher cannot escape the filtration that occurs. In other words the phenomenologist by virtue of their position must attempt to wrestle with a double hermeneutic circle.

The participants in the study were initially thought to represent two groups—artists and public administrators. Both groups were strategically chosen so as to include a wide range or spectrum of people in terms of the art practiced, and the nature of their role or job description as a public administrator. As the interviews progressed it became clear that there was a third group of hybrids, or administrators who practiced art. In light of this discovery, the number of interviews was expanded from three to six interviews, to a total of nine. As participants were added, their knowledge, experiences, roles, and how they fit into the study became a consideration that was increasingly important.

### **Pilot Interviews**

The three pilot interviews conducted with one artist explored how artists make sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009, p.45). The purpose of these pilot interviews was twofold; first they allowed the opportunity to test and refine some of the questions before being used in future interest, and second, they helped to explore the overall merit of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of vision and ontology, i.e. whether there is

something more to the aesthetic experience. It seems that if there was no merit to the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, and more to the aesthetic experience then there would be little reason to proceed with the research.

The research was able to proceed because these pilot interviews were particularly helpful to me as a researcher in the field of public administration. No matter how much research was performed it seemed that as a researcher, I was unprepared to understand and analyze it given the breadth of this subject's knowledge of art. However, by splitting up interviews over the course of several months I was able to read enough of Merleau-Ponty and material related to the philosophy of aesthetics to grasp most of the artists he spoke of between interviews, and he was also able to think on the questions he was asked. By the third and final meeting the artist came to the interview excited about what we had spoken about during the prior interview, full of insight and related stories to tell. In this way, the pilot interview allowed the flexibility for a lay researcher to get up to speed on art, and admittedly allowed an artist and art teacher to shape some of what was studied.

### **Interviews with Artists, Administrators and Hybrids**

The interviews consisted of a set of open-ended questions designed to allow the participants the opportunity to describe their aesthetic sense or feel for the situation and how it is employed in either: their process of creation, their administrative work, or both. In other words, the research assumes that their aesthetic experience serves as the basis for their aesthetic judgment and how they make sense of the world. In the case of artists, if what Kant hinted at is true then the aesthetic experiences of the arts and administrators might provide us with a glimpse of what he called the supersensible, or transcendent. In

the tradition of phenomenology, as a method of inquiry, the questions did not act as a script that one might follow, but instead acted as a questioning guide to keep the subject matter focused on accessing the meaning related to each of the research questions. Other small follow-up questions we asked in an effort to reveal meaning-making, for example, “Would you tell me a little more about that?” That said, several of the interviews only required one or two pointed questions in a two-hour interview. The questions below represent the initial research plan, which believed there to be only two groups (artists and administrators), but in most cases the conversation gradually became more focused on the questions for artists, or perhaps their responses allowed for the questions to blend.

The first phase of interviews was with artists and sought to “make sense” (Smith, et al., 2009, p.45) of their aesthetic experiences, but also to better understand Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of vision and ontology. A sample of the questions that were asked appears below.

### **Questions for Artists**

*Would you tell me a story about a particularly meaningful piece of art that you created?*

*How did you know to do that?*

*What does this mode of creation feel like?*

*When you create a piece of art what are you hoping to present? What does it mean to you?*

The public administrators chosen can all be considered either experts at what they do (or did) or very experienced. This experience requirement was to allow sufficient time for their (1) aesthetic judgment to have been developed and honed, (2) allowed the

opportunity for their discretion to have been employed while on the job, and (3) perhaps allow the reflection necessary to translate their aesthetic judgment into words. A series of questions were designed to probe into the root of some of their aesthetic judgments. The questions were designed in a way that might encourage participants to tell stories about times when they lacked sufficient guidance to make a decision, and are carefully worded to avoid expressing judgment, or any discomfort surrounding their use of judgment. Given administrators are ultimately accountable for acting on something as seemingly subjective as an aesthetic sense of taste (a reality they were not be reminded of), it is understandable that many might be less willing to admit this. For this reason no audio recording devices were used for any of the interviews. The questions used for public administrators and hybrids can be found below.

### **Questions for Public Administrators**

*I'm interested in a time when you felt as though you had little guidance to make a decision. Would you tell me how you went about figuring out how to proceed?*

*Follow-up: Did any of your past experiences help to make the decision?*

*Follow-up: Did you feel strongly about your action? Where do you think this feeling came from?*

*Follow-up: Have you ever not acted on this feeling, and if so why?*

Given the discovery of a hybrid group occurred during the research process several administrators were sought out in an effort to balance the perspective more evenly. Alternatively, administrators who practiced less art were necessary to as to ensure the connection between aesthetic judgment and administration was not artificially

contrived. A summary of the basic research design appears below, including a brief (and likely incomplete) categorization of each interview participant.

### **Illustration and Explanation of Research Design**

#### **Figure III: Illustration of Research Design**

<u>Artist</u>	<u>Hybrid</u>	<u>Administrator</u>
Sketch Artist/Art Teacher		
Painter/Musician/Writer		
Musician/Lyricist		
	Director of Development Entity/Cartoonist	
	Director of Various Public Agencies/Painter	
	Director of Local Library/Poet	
		Child Support Case Worker
		Director of Finance for Local Government
		Grade School Teacher

A grade school teacher and some of the more front-line administrators are of particular interest in this study by virtue of their position relative to the public, as well as the unique level of discretion exercised. According to Maynard-Moody and Musheno, cops, teachers and counselors are citizen-agents who work in environments that are “ironically, rule saturated but not rule bound” (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003, p.10). Rather than “delineating street-level workers’ subservient role” they focused their book on the citizen agent, whom they believe accounts for as much as 75% of the contact



between members of the public and their government (2003, p.9-10). In this sense their work, and by extension mine, believes there is value in looking at “what government actually does as opposed to what it says it does” (2003, p.11).

It should be noted that to some degree inclusion in the project required interest on their part, so the participants chosen would be considered already “biased” according to positivist standards, but phenomenological interviews are focused more on the degree of breadth and quality than representativeness. In other words, because phenomenology attempts to access meaning, bias is not a concern. Overall, participants were more experienced. Many were directors of organizations, worked the front-lines and many of the interview participants are now retired.

### **Artists**

Although most, if not all the artists interviewed could be considered generalists, i.e. they used their creativity through several mediums, and a few specialized in their efforts. Bear in mind that while the overall purpose of speaking to the artists was not different than the study’s research question, which was to discover how administrators make sense of situations and judge what to do, but instead the question has more depth. The artists’ creative experience was examined to help and illuminate the aesthetics of aesthetic judgment. This reflects an underlying belief that aesthetic judgment incorporates the interaction the artist has with their environment much like that of the artful public administrator. In other words, interviews with artists were meant to dive into the creative experience in an effort to help and reveal the nature of aesthetic judgment.

Alternatively put, the interviews with artists were helpful to know what to look for with administrators. Given I engaged in the study of aesthetic judgment as a public administrator I lacked the background in aesthetics. As a phenomenologist I went to artists in an effort to access their understanding of aesthetics, and what occurs in the aesthetic experience. Once I better understood the aesthetic experience I felt more capable of recognizing and examining it when used by public administrators. The interviews with artists taught me when I might call certain activities or interactions aesthetic experiences, and when these experiences might not classify. In short, the interviews with the artists improved my own notion of an aesthetic sense or feel, i.e. the artists helped to improve my own aesthetic judgment.

One artist was a retired art teacher who had worked as an artist for most of his career. After seeing several examples of his work it seemed as though he preferred sketching to other forms. This might very well be a generalization, but when asked about his most meaningful pieces he showed me three sketches that were part of a series. He had also done several other non-sketch pieces of art including a guitar for the city of Cleveland. This artist was not only helpful from the standpoint of talking about his experiences creating, and the meaning behind the work itself, but he also helped me understand the ideas of Merleau-Ponty better, and even provided a short lesson in art history. Without speculating too much, this artist was likely in his late 50's to early 60's and had spent some serious time reflecting on the nature of art, perhaps in part due to his time teaching, but this reflection was also a result of his own interests. A total of about three interviews were conducted with this artist. The first consisted of him providing something of a general overview on art and art history, designed in part to better acquaint

me as a researcher with artistic subject matter, and the third interview followed a structure similar to the others, where I asked him a series of questions about his most meaningful pieces of art.

Another artist was focused primarily on music, more specifically playing guitar, and lyricism. Based on its tone, his music might be described as folk. He was probably in his 50's. Based on conversations with him it was clear that he spent a good portion of his career and life focused strictly on making music. He had grown up around a group of "beatnik" types and learned how to be a musician with their help. It was clear that he had spent a good amount of time not just writing about music, but also analyzing his own life experiences. In other words he took art quite seriously and had thought about the nature of art. There were a total about two interviews with this artist. The first interview consisted of more unstructured talking about the nature of art, specifically music, and the second was focused entirely on his personal experiences and the meaningful pieces that he created.

The creative efforts of the third artist spanned from painting to music. He was likely in his mid to late 20's in age. We spoke on several occasions leading up to his interview on the nature of art. Perhaps, given the nature of what artists do, one would expect their words to flow—this was certainly the case with this artist. As somewhat of an outsider to the creative arts I probably could not adequately phrase my questions, but that did not stop him from filling in the blanks and really diving into the meaning to be found within the aesthetic experience. His answers suggested that he had also spent some time reflecting not only on the aesthetic experience, but he also had experienced it, and even acted as a spectator while seeing his work on display. Although I initially sought to

watch this artist create a piece, his recent move made a visit to his studio more difficult.

## **Hybrids**

As previously mentioned the study planned to interview artists and administrators—at least three in each category. However, as interviews with public administrators unfolded it became clear that several administrators were in fact either closet artists or hybrids who performed both administrative roles and had experience creating art. Although this was unplanned it was also a pleasant surprise that added depth and perhaps also another dimension to the research. The interviews with these hybrid types helped to thicken the connection between artists and administrators, but it also helped to make sense of some of what has been discussed in the literature in public administration in terms of skillfulness. Many of these hybrids were not only very familiar with the notion of an aesthetic experience, but because of their practice of art, I also could be certain that they had employed their experiences as judgments while working with administrators, which is to say that they were artful public administrators. Based on the interviews it would seem that they not only utilized art as a skill while working as administrators, but that they also conceptualized different aspects of their job as opportunities to practice art. Perhaps, most notably, they drew on their skills and lessons from the arts when navigating a highly political environment. So what began as an honest effort to interview public administrators led to the addition of a group of three hybrids to the interviews, which ultimately led to the study being expanded to a total of nine interview participants.

The first of these three hybrids was a director of a local development entity, now

retired, as well as a cartoonist. He seemed to be in his late 50's or early 60's. I spoke with him once in depth leading up to the later interview, which lasted several hours. To some degree the interview moved back and forth in an effort to make sense of both his administrative experience and his art. He presented me with several pieces of art that he had created and as one might expect the interview focused on the meaning behind the meaning behind these pieces of art. What was unique about this administrator and cartoonist is that he had actually melded the two, i.e. he utilized cartoons in presentations to make his argument and in some cases to change the tone or mood of a room.

The second of the three hybrids was more of a surprise than the first. He has been a director of various government agencies in the state of Ohio. We met several times and discussed the questions at length. Toward the end of our first meeting he said the equivalent of "I am interested in your project and how you are using art, because I am a painter. Let me show you some of my paintings up in my office." This prompted some interesting discussions on the meaning that was quite literally behind (or underneath) his paintings. He is around his late 60's in age and from what I could gather had been painting a long time during the time of his work as a well respected administrator.

The third hybrid was a director of a local library, now retired. He is also a published poet as well as an analyst of poetry. I was struck by one particular comment of his and its applicability to this research. He said that for most of his life he felt as though he was leading two separate lives, one as a successful administrator involved with the public, and another, more private life, as a poet (Interview, 2013). At the time I wondered why these two lives could not be more integrated, but after reflecting on the interview it seems that to some degree the two lives had, in fact, been integrated quite

well.

### **Administrators**

In terms of being able to connect administration to art, the interviews with administrators seemed to be a much more daunting task, but this was not the case. As it turned out several administrators ended up telling rich stories that served to explain not only their aesthetic experiences, but they also began to draw some of the lines between these experiences and why they believed and acted as they did. This leads one to wonder, even if an administrator does not consider oneself an artist, perhaps their “gaze” functions much like that of the artist- allowing them to “wander” within a particular situation so as to experience it on a deeper level (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

The first was a front-line worker for a local agency tasked with child-support related enforcement. Although he is in his mid-thirties, he seemed to have enough stories from the job that he could have been retired. This was probably a reflection of the nature of his job, which called for him to help roughly 60-80 members of the public each day. From what I could gather, a line of clients frequently extended beyond the very useful metal detector and doorway leading outside of the building.

The second participant serves as the director of finance for a local government. He is around 60 years and worked as an accountant for the government in the early days of technological advance. Given the technical nature of his work and the central questions of my research related to judgment he was a little surprised that I expressed interest in interviewing him. This likely reflects the popular view that many technical jobs lack the opportunity for judgment, because the approach used is quite technical, and

therefore, governed by many rules. As we got deeper into the interview, referring to the annual local budget document on the table, he said, “that whole thing is judgment” (Interview, 2013).

The third interview was with a grade school teacher, who is now retired. She managed and educated classes with roughly 30 young children for at least 30 years. This experience almost seemed to require her to develop a strong aesthetic sense of not only the students themselves, but an aesthetic sense for some common, but not yet measurably evident, mental health conditions. As we talked it became clear that this teacher really communicated with her students on a deeper level than what any school board might have imagined.

### **Description of Analysis**

In terms of the analysis, each of the interviews interview findings were interrogated and examined separately in an effort to identify meaningful themes. Admittedly, this process of interrogation is shaped by my identity and research interests from the standpoint of the research, given that upon hearing and reading the stories as a researcher I looked for similarities or differences from my own experiences (Hummel, 1991; Gendlin, 1973). This idea is captured in the following statement: “a good phenomenological description is an adequate elucidation of some aspect of the lifeworld—it resonates with our sense of lived life...Buytendijk once referred to the “phenomenological nod” [suggesting a good phenomenological description] is something that we can nod to, recognizing it as an experience that we have had or could have had” (Van Manen, p.27). In this sense, if we did not bring our own experiences in as

researchers, we would probably lack interest in attempting to answer a specific question, or further in performing any type of research altogether.

After escaping from the paralysis likely caused by the hermeneutic circle above, we can recognize that there are several different approaches in phenomenology that might be used to uncover meaning. The approach employed in this project can be considered in line with “the selective or highlighting approach” as described by Max Van Manen. As he explained, “in the selective reading approach we listen to or read a text several times and ask, What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described? These statements we then circle, underline, or highlight” (Van Manen, 1990, p.92-3). While reading the interview notes certain quotes seemed to really speak to the research questions asked, and therefore “almost literally” smacked me in the face. You might call it an aesthetic sense or feeling, but some of the things interview participants said, stories they told, or even mannerisms used really served to shed light on the research questions. And so, this process of identifying things that smacked me in the face, or to use the technical term, the process of “isolating thematic statements” consisted of pulling in these meaning units into the analysis (Van Manen, 1990, p.92-3).

After identifying the meaning units within each of the interviews, and being forced in the interest of time and clarity to reduce these interviews down into a limited number of observations, these meaning units were then grouped into several themes that seemed to resonate within each interview. Toward the end of each analysis and corresponding interview these themes were summarized in a table, perhaps in an effort to, if nothing else, clearly identify the meanings found. These themes were related back to



the research questions throughout the analysis, specifically, how each meaning unit might have served to help us answer how administrators know. Surprisingly, or perhaps not so surprisingly given the time my dissertation committee spent helping to identify a conceptual framework after the prospectus defense, the themes seemed to track, at least in part those identified in the initial conceptual framework. A sample of this three-part framework developed by the committee can be found below.

**Table I: Framework of Analysis**

“Bringing forth” / Aesthetic reflection
Judging / Taking a stance toward the situation / Deciding / Acting
Justification of the stance / Persuading / Wooing / Accountability

*Heidegger, Kant, Arendt, Hummel, Merleau-Ponty; as presented by Stivers, Zingale, and Zinke, 2013*

It was thought that the public administrator operates within each of these three levels, and further, by categorizing the particulars in this way we might be able to understand administrative judgment (and discretion) more deeply.

After making sense of the interview findings the project used the specific quotes or observations, i.e. the particulars, and the themes that they allowed when reduced to help us understand more deeply the aesthetic experience of the artist, how this aesthetic judgment is used in public administration, and lastly, how public administrators know. In part, the project looks to find out whether there is, indeed, more substance of being, (i.e. Merleau-Ponty’s flesh) to be found in the aesthetic experience of the artist. In other words, in their interaction with the environment, is any being-related material actually created? As Van Manen argued, “A genuine artistic expression is not just representational or imitational of some event in the world. Rather, it transcends the

experiential world in an act of reflective existence...the artist recreates experiences by transcending them” (Van Manen, 1990, p.97). If Van Manen is right then there is justification for digging into the experiences of the artist so that we might better understand whether this “act of reflective existence” speaks to what administrators actually do as they make sense of situations. Moreover, if the aesthetic experience can be understood as a way of characterizing administrative sense-making, then that understanding may in turn help administrators themselves become more conscious of how they go about exercising. The case, *New Mexico vs. Bloom*, and the administrator who said, “I just knew,” suggests that both Kant’s ideas of aesthetic judgment and taste are in fact used by public administrators, and illustrates the difficulty of trying to breakdown and/or translate the basis of an aesthetic judgment (Kant, 2001; Arendt 1992, Hummel, 2006). Hummel’s work argues that there is more to the aesthetic sense and even taste of the administrator, that it in fact helps them when judging, suggesting there is a deeper relationship or connection between an aesthetic sense or taste and how decisions are actually made (Arendt, 1992; Kant, 2001; Hummel, 2006; Stivers, 2011).

## **Chapter IV**

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Part One: Artists**

##### **Sketch Artist/Art Teacher**

Since a key aspect of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is his idea of reversibility and intertwining, between the artist and their environment, several questions were designed to see if artists indeed experience this type of sensation. Questions were also directed toward uncovering the meaning to be found within the process of creation. Admittedly, some of the artists began to literally show me all of their work: although it was nothing less than profound, in the interest of time, but also depth, on one or more occasions I asked a more pointed question in an effort to clarify. This question was, "Is there a piece that you feel particularly strongly about? A really meaningful piece?" While this indicates the presence of judgments made by the artist, and therefore a place for bias to enter in, I also believe that their judgments are what is of particular interest to this project. This conflict might be grounds for dismissal in an empirical piece, but here it merely illustrates one of the main challenges associated with performing interpretive research. As Hans-Georg Gadamer phrased it, "when we interpret the meaning of something we actually interpret an interpretation" (Gadamer, as cited in Van Manen, p.26). This project assumes that it is the artists with whom the meaning lies, and therefore as researchers we must access this meaning through them. In other words, unless we hone our own artistic ability so that we might actually create as the artists do, then as researchers we must work to interpret the interpretations of artists.

(Piece 1- Upstairs Bathroom)

*“I wanted to do more meaningful art. As I got established I wanted to do things for arts’ sake. She didn’t have clothes (he added those later). I tried to make a dreamy image. Sort of airy. I like the dream like sequence that was happening. This idea of the dream sequence was starting to gel. There was something about her being a natural, real, sort of person” (Interview, 2013).*

A few things jump out in the words of this artist. First, his desire to not only do more meaningful art, or alternatively put, to use art to express what was presumably meaningful to him, relates back to one of the underlying questions of this paper, which is “What does this aesthetic experience feel like?” In this view, the aesthetic experience might be a meaningful one to the artist. Perhaps it was the “meaning” behind his art that allowed it to become something more than a drawing to him? As Merleau-Ponty suggested, art is “a process of expressing...[an effort] to grasp the nature of what appears to us in a confused way and to place it before us as a recognizable object” (Merleau-Ponty, p.304). From this we might gather that the artist was less interested in producing or making for financial gain, and more interested in producing art “for arts sake.” This leads one to ask whether art produced for “arts sake” can be considered akin to communicating meaning? In other words, meaning might lie at the heart of art, suggesting art might play a role in creating meaning, or meaningfulness to an individual. This view of art aligns with one particular textbook that argues art, and the process of creating art, is a “meaning-making” endeavor. Also of interest in the quote above is the use of descriptors like “airy,” “dreamy,” “natural,” and “real,” in an effort to describe or capture the essence of the image, albeit one that is incomplete when compared to the

sensory data belonging to the artist. To some degree his use of the phrase “starting to gel” implies that many of his partial views are being “welded together” (Gasquet, as cited in Merleau-Ponty, p.304). Perhaps it is these feelings of dreaminess and airiness expressed by the sketch that were coming together to be “a natural, real, sort of person?”

In many ways this process of coming together, or alive, might be considered possible by several technical aspects of the sketch. The artist explained his approach even further,

*“Maybe I’d do another one with her looking away. I started to like these lines, kind of fading out. I want this (woman) to be the focus [which was the goal of the lines]. Everything got drawn here. This was a natural movement, and I like that. Every time I put down a line it has got to mean something. It started to mean something to me” (Interview, 2013).*

The quote above helps to suggest that meaning is interpreted by the artist, given that he directs the viewer of the piece toward what he believes to be meaningful. In this sense it also helps us to clarify the importance of the role of the artist given that their judgment is utilized to determine and act on what meaning is. Here we are reminded that both Immanuel Kant and Hannah Arendt placed the ability to judge as first and foremost to the ability to create beauty (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992). The creation of beauty, in their view, is enabled by the judgment and tastes of the community, featuring the spectators as a central group within, one who has the distance needed to judge accurately (Kant, 2001: Arendt, 1992). These thinkers distinguish this ability to judge from the ability to create, the latter comes from what they called “genius” (Kant, 2001: Arendt, 1992). The quote also draws our attention to the more technical elements of the sketch, in particular, the

use of the lines as well as their level of fading. What is it in particular about the lines that he liked? It could be their role or helpfulness in allowing the reader to home in on the woman, who was meaningful to him. Indeed, he likely confirmed this presence of meaning by suggesting,

*“Our [art] professors were trying to tell us to find more reasons for why you do what you do. It has to have meaning” (Interview, 2013).*

It seems that at the heart of each piece needed to be this sense of meaning, otherwise a person does not have the rationale to create, let alone create something.

In a follow-up interview this artist indicated the importance in directing the viewer when looking at art, at something or feeling in particular, thereby suggesting the artist not only uses their judgment when creating the piece, but also when directing the spectator toward particular elements of the piece (Interview, 2013). The artist used these lines to capture a “natural movement,” and given that he liked this, he made a judgment on what the piece needed, presumably to illustrate the meaning he had in mind. Since every line this artist puts down must “mean something” we might gather that each line demonstrates intention, ironically intentionality is a phenomenological term that one could write books on and still not do justice to. Intentionality, as understood by myself and a co-author, might be adapted to art and be considered the ability to move freely between two states of mind, “knowing how,” what Kant and Arendt would label the genius of the artist, and “knowing that,” or the conceptual understanding of what it is that the artist would like to translate into art (Zingale & Piccorelli, 2013). In this respect, Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s view of intentionality is very similar to the back and forth motion studied through the aesthetic experience in this project that is one occurring

between the artist and their environment. From the quote we might gather that the lines assisted the artist in directing the viewer toward the woman, the place where he believes the meaning lies. And from this, we might ask, what exactly does the woman mean to the artist? Some of this should be uncovered through the rest of the interpretation given that each piece in the series has allowed the artist to get closer to what it is that he is attempting to communicate (Husserl, 1999).

(Piece 2 – Upstairs Hallway)

*“There are some things in that dreamy piece [piece 1] that I enjoy. I really wanted to do another one. [In this piece] I capitalized on her dreamy clothing. I saw a mattress ad and I said that’s what I liked. I liked a limited pleasure”*  
*(Interview, 2013).*

The mattress advertisement likely helped to refine or give shape to the artist’s aesthetic sense for what he wanted to express. Therefore, we might gather that judgment, in this case the artist’s *like* for the mattress advertisement, played a role in directing the artist toward “a limited pleasure.” If the mattress ad helped to refine his idea, something else allowed for his idea to come to fruition, perhaps a combination of what Kant and Arendt would label genius along with some motivator. “Limited pleasure” in the mattress ad likely referred to the state of sleep, suggesting the woman pictured suffered from a lack of sleep, or at least the artist sought to portray this. Perhaps the meaning behind the piece can be found in the events leading up to sleeplessness? What did the artist mean when he said, “I capitalized on her dreamy clothing?” Perhaps he made this dream-like feeling more evident, he brought it forth in the drawing so as to become more real to us? One might guess that the clothing in the sketch served the purpose of helping

to express a least part of the aesthetic sense or feeling he sought to convey. Dreaminess, and the dream-like state certainly seems to be a desirable state in this piece. So why is this dreamlike state preferred over a more awake state? The answer is at least partially revealed in his second piece.

*“I call it ‘He who hesitates is lost forever. Here’s a woman who feels agony and can’t decide, or make that decision. She’s being blown off this page. There’s a time I had where I thought, ‘Should I take this next job, should I take this next risk?’ You find people that don’t want to grow anymore. You have other people that don’t want to experience in life, playing the guitar, or whatever it might be. With the piece I was trying to confirm that I was doing the right thing for [myself]” (Interview, 2013).*

From this quote we might gather that the desire to be in a dream-like state is more of a symptom of sleeplessness and not necessarily the true goal. It could be a symptom of the *hesitation* and *agony*, which are a result of what is, to some degree, the paralysis that comes with having choices in life. Based on the language used, and even the way in which he spoke about this piece, it is certainly meaningful to the artist. The woman’s agony not only seems particularly real to the artist, but even the title suggests the agony felt by the woman is, in fact, his agony being presented through the woman. This would suggest that the drawing was almost used as a conduit to allow the artist’s own agony to become more real. In other words, art allows him to find his way in the sense that it gets him in touch with the “supersensible” (Kant, 2001).

What did he mean when he suggested that he was trying to confirm his life aligned with his work? Moreover, how do we know when this alignment is present? The



agony could cease to exist, or the sketch could confirm or deny the decisions in some way. What must be there in his art in order for it to provide this confirmation? This might be the wrong way to think about this. Instead, perhaps we should be looking to the artistic process and aesthetic experience itself for some confirmation of this alignment? In other words, the agony or hesitation will always be present, and indeed they are likely motivators for the artistic process, but here it seems that the aesthetic experience can be considered some way to gain a sense of understanding in the world. In this view the understanding that could arise out of art (from experiencing the process of creation itself) can be used as means to confirm or deny how the artist is living their life. Further, the alignment between his life and the sketch might be found in the aesthetic experience, more accurately it might be found in the process of moving between two spaces—one where the creative vision of the artist (the idea) resides and the other consisting of the environment (the canvas and real world as experienced in the moment). The piece's title leads the viewer toward what the artist deems meaningful.

There are reasons to suggest that this second piece began to take on additional meaning. As the artist explained,

*“There’s something in this tense movement. You can see how it fades off the page again [like the other piece]. Some of these shapes were taken from that. I really like the intensity of that” (Interview, 2013).*

His use of language, in particular, seems to indicate there are some metaphysical implications to his piece. By saying “there’s something in this tense movement” that he likes, perhaps for the “intensity” it brings, he suggests that this piece has taken on additional meaning. Essentially he seems to be suggesting that there is something there,

something that not only creates this intensity, but something that also resides in the piece itself. If we assume that intensity can be a direct reflection of an emotion, we can also assume that the presence of intensity indicates meaningfulness, which could have originated from the aesthetic experience. As he further explains,

*“You start to get a little euphoria. Like a ... in the moment. You get away from...in an enlightened moment...you start getting away from reality a little. Some people might think, ‘what the hell is he thinking?’ A title gets a viewer in a direction [these are important]” (Interview, 2013).*

This quote seems not only profound, but also quite revealing in that it aligns with some of the ideas presented by Merleau-Ponty as well as Cezanne. The use of the term “euphoria” speaks to several different aspects of the artistic process. First, euphoria perhaps refers to a feeling of happiness as experienced by the artist. This would imply, at least, the sensation of a separation from reality while practicing art, but it could also suggest that reality might offer us some things, which are less desirable. In this sense, we might consider euphoria as a different or separate space from the world, perhaps akin to a liminal space (Turner, 1969; Foucault, 1967). As Turner explained, “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner, 1969, p.95). The euphoric space described by the artist could serve as a place of transition between the artist’s thoughts and the paper. In other words, this possibility of euphoria, in a different space, might imply an interaction similar to Cezanne’s respiration, a back and forth, almost dialectic movement between two spaces and therefore an effort to mediate the resulting feelings into a piece of art. In this sense the sketch could serve as a representation of what the

artist was feeling and therefore an effort to express what he believed to be there in himself. This feeling in the artist, admittedly, could be considered subjective by many, but given the degree to which this aesthetic feeling or sense seems to be shaped by the environment around the artist it seems to be something more than mere subjectivity. This is to suggest that the experience of Cezanne's respiration, this dialectic, given the degree to which it draws on the elements of a landscape and the creative thoughts of the artist might very well be considered something real to others. Perhaps this is why artists look to others who view their work so as to verify what they believe to be there? If these viewers of art, Kant's spectators, can use their judgment to discern the feelings that the artist sought to translate, then it seems these feelings must align with some of what these viewers believe to be there. A beautiful piece of art might only resonate with a spectator who can identify aspects of the work that align with their own view of what beauty is, suggesting that what is real to both the artist and spectator is far from subjective, and now perhaps more verifiable.

[Piece 3 – Upstairs studio]

The third sketch in the artist's series gets even closer to expressing the feelings the artist believes to be there. This piece pictures a woman turning on bed with what look like shards of glass coming toward her. There were horizontal shadows that look like they were the result of light being filtered through a set of blinds. The artist explained these shadows and suggested, "*I had different blinds here (horizontal). When I couldn't sleep I'd see all these lines on the ceiling [in his bedroom]. When something was on my mind [I'd lose sleep]*" (Interview, 2013). Again, there is reason to suggest that in some ways this woman pictured in the piece is meant to represent the artist himself, or at the

very least express the feelings that he felt. There is also reason to suggest that in this piece he was able to bring this meaning to life. The sketch evolved from the others and in many ways helped the artist get one step closer to translating certain feelings, a process that he began with the first piece. In fact, there was a great deal of emotion and meaning tied to this piece. As the artist explained, *“So I [borrowed these lines and] ended up with this one [the artist let out a deep sigh]” (Interview, 2013)*. After hearing the sigh I asked, “What is that sigh all about?” He responded,

*“Because it becomes a nightmare. There are thoughts that enter your mind in the middle of the night. I’ve got all these shards coming at this person. It became a dark nightmare. Thoughts that you hope won’t be. [there’s] “Hell to pay.” Maybe this is happening because you did something. I suppose I was thinking of a stupid thing I did and it was bothering me. [I was] trying to deal with it. I suppose we’ve all been there. Maybe this is a way to keep me on track? Art did that for me (Interview, 2013)”*

The artist used the term “nightmare” to describe the feelings that result from his piece. In other words, the drawing expressed a nightmare, but what do we think of when we hear the term nightmare? Perhaps we think of a nightmare as a dream that entailed visiting another place, with its own storyline, and probably even a corresponding experience to take part in? The artist pointed out that these “shards” in the sketch represented individual thoughts coming at the woman [and him] in the middle of the night whilst sleeping (Interview, 2013). These “thoughts that you hope won’t be” likely became reified in the sketch, each one represented by a shard of glass pointed at the woman (Interview, 2013).

Several other things are apparent from the sketch and the artist's words. Here we might gather that a disturbance, bother, or agitation helped to motivate the artistic process. In other words, certain thoughts quite literally served to motivate the sketch and eventually found their way into it. If other interviews are any indication, a disturbance seems to play a motivated role in the artistic experience, and could even serve as the focal point from which the artist begins to reflect on, and experience this nightmare. In other words, a disturbance or botheration might act as a focal point for the dialectic similar to Cezanne's respiration (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Also apparent are several lines that circle around the woman in the sketch. As the artist explained, "*[The] lines signify movement, duress, tossing and turning, uneasiness*" (Interview, 2013). This woman was clearly disturbed by the shards (thoughts) coming toward her, and likely felt paralyzed until each one is addressed. Perhaps this resolution is what the artist was referring to when he suggested art, and this series in particular was a way to keep him on track? Was paying for it in the middle of the night necessary to drive or fuel the artistic process? In this respect, we might benefit from looking at the shards not so much as a symptom of sleeplessness, but instead as the reason for deeper inquiry or exploration into the feelings that result from experiences. Perhaps art, in this view, might be considered a place to help and translate and refine these feelings so that he might grow as an individual?

[Generally speaking on art and his sketch of a local home]

*"I like black and white. To go and make surroundings ... and light, that's... I took the wood house and made it stone. See these lines? You don't get lines like that with a mechanical. I like that variance in the lines. I started doing it and didn't like the way it was coming out. You see what I'm doing [in this piece]?"*

*[You] Gotta have a plan of attack. I started the 3 part series [with a plan]. You have to have a sound idea during. Accidents are going to happen. But you gotta have a plan” (Interview, 2013).*

The artist said it better than I could. His statement, “you gotta have a plan of attack,” captures the idea that the creative process needs to begin with a plan or idea instead of relying on divine inspiration. Further, the statement that you need to have a “sound idea during” implies this artist’s mind is literally combining two different types of meditation, from eastern and western philosophy. The western influence would suggest we could discern the work of art by applying our mind, and perhaps focusing on one concept, an idea that is contrary to Kant’s noumena. The eastern influence is present in several of his statements that suggest there is value in allowing freedom, for “accidents” to happen. This idea bears some resemblance to what one author points out, “*the insights of insight meditation are intuitive, not conceptual. Intuitive in this sense does not mean some kind of vague feeling about something; rather, it means clearly, directly seeing and experiencing how things really are*” (Goldstein, 1993). In other words, the artist draws on both the rational, his plan for his art, and the intuitive, which is an experiential mode that allows for freedom.

This balance between, the need for a plan laden with meaning, and the need for freedom, to allow the body to respond to the environment seems to be a crucial part of the creative process. The artist further explained,

*“Once you have a sound idea of where you’re going you can be free to have these moments of inspiration. For me, that’s what makes art work. I’ve always needed a reason why. I’ve watched them [other artists] work, they can watch their hands*

*work. Be definitive with those strokes. [Have] freedom so there's no hesitation. If you hesitate it's going to stifle your creative life" (Interview, 2013).*

This quote confirms what was suggested earlier, regarding the need for meaning in the creative process, and a piece of art. He again suggests that while a plan is necessary for art, freedom is also important. Perhaps having an idea of where you are headed, a particular direction or plan, provides a role in allowing the conditions for freedom, and “inspiration.” In this view, the plan might be conceived of as something that enables freedom. As the artist explained, without freedom there is hesitation, and this hesitation “stifle[s] your creative life.” What is particularly interesting is the artist’s reference to having watched other artists work, and how they use their hands. When Merleau-Ponty spoke of the body as “an intertwining of vision and movement” (1968), this is precisely the phenomena that I believe he was thinking of. If an artist watches his/her hands work it could imply that there is some degree of separation between the mind (plan) and body (creative process), but perhaps more realistically it suggests a change in perspective. An artist (the subject), might step outside of his/her piece of art (the object), and examine his/herself (the subject)—allowing the hands to become the object. If the hands are now objects, it could allow the piece of art to become the subject, but unfortunately we cannot expect a response from the piece of art if we asked it to confirm. Or, if there is this exchange between the subject and object, what Merleau-Ponty called lending, perhaps we could expect the piece of art to speak to us in a non-verbal way?

Most, if not all of the artists brought up the relationship between art, or their work, and how others perceive it. This suggests that they not only create in what is to some degree a public environment, but that their judgment is influenced by the public’s

perception of beauty. In this way, their concern for how their art is perceived and their choices defended aligns with Immanuel Kant's primacy of the spectator in our understanding of what is beautiful. As this artist readily volunteered,

*"You have to be ready to defend your art—Give reasons or account of things.*

*The red in that one [piece 3]. That was a heated moment man" (Interview, 2013).*

Here the artist began to address the political dimension of art, and the fact that artwork is often viewed by others. It is for this reason that he suggested a person must "be ready to defend" their art. Notice that he did not go as far to suggest that others have to necessarily agree with your art, but rather that you have to be prepared to "give reasons or account of things." This was likely deliberate, because he recognized that an artist can rarely get others to understand their piece in its entirety, but that artists might be able to provide the other people with reasons for their artistic choices. In other words, an artist might lack the words to describe the feelings placed into a piece, but they could describe some of the experiences that motivated their piece in the form of a story. As Hummel and others have suggested, the story might be a way to communicate not only feelings, but also ideas and even knowledge (Hummel, 1991). The artist goes further to explain that the red in his third piece helped to represent a particularly heated moment. Perhaps "giving reasons or account of things" in this case consists of explaining the heated experience to others, not so they necessarily begin to feel what he did, but so they can at least relate to it on the basis of their own experiences? Hummel suggested a "recalled experience" —serves the function of making a new situation part of the listener's previously experienced world," so similarly, perhaps the artist might give reasons by *recalling their experience* and giving an account of it, so as to make this experience part



of the viewer's world (Hummel, 1991, p.36). Moreover, as others would suggest perhaps the artist has a responsibility to engage the viewer in this inter-subjective process (Hummel, 1991, 2006; Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992).

What is particularly interesting about this artist's interpretation of his three part series is that he placed himself in it. In the third piece, in particular, the shards of glass were considered thoughts that were coming at him in the middle of the night. This fits with a notion from Searle and Hummel. They suggested that we must read ourselves into a story in order for it to take on meaning for us (Searle, 1969; Hummel, 1991). If we consider art to be much like a story, then perhaps this is what the spectator of art does. They place her/himself in the piece of art, and engage with it so as to allow the piece to become meaningful. Hummel also suggests that there is interplay in how we interpret stories (between subject and object), much like Merleau-Ponty would suggest occurs in the aesthetic experience of the artist (Hummel, 1991, p.39). In this sense, when a person immerses her/himself into a piece of art these lines between subject and object become more blurred, and this might create an interaction, which is particularly ripe with potential for the development of meaning. This interplay, although likely a nightmare for a Cartesian, because there is not a well defined subject or object, let alone body and mind, seems to allow for the conditions of interest to Merleau-Ponty. In other words, this interplay between the subject and object allows for meaning, what Merleau-Ponty called depth or flesh, and allowed for others to call this interplay "an ontological hinge" (Johnson, Inside and Outside). Although we cannot be sure of where he was during the aesthetic experience, this artist certainly confirmed his meaning behind the third piece, not only by the sigh he released when showing me the piece, but also by describing it as

“a heated moment.”

Toward the end of the interview the artist said something particularly rich. He said,

*“I used to go to the track and draw cars at lunch...it wasn't about capturing the image perfectly, but...it was about capturing that moment in time...you get into it and let your mind wander” (Interview, 2013).*

Here the sensation of a wandering mind could imply that much like Cezanne, he allowed the landscape to think itself in him (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Certainly a mind that is not allowed to wander would be less likely to allow for the reversibility and intertwining that Merleau-Ponty spoke of, one which involves a fluid exchange between the artist and the landscape (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Moreover, given the artist sought to capture a moment in time it seems he may have felt that moment with the landscape; in this case the cars may have touched him in return.

**Table II: Summary of Interview with Sketch Artist/Art Teacher**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Lending Freedom to move between	"Get into it and let your mind wander", "sort of airy" "They can watch their hands work" "If you hesitate it's going to stifle your creative life"
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent Focal Point	"It becomes a nightmare" "I was thinking of a stupid thing I did and it was bothering me" "I've always needed a reason why" "Gotta have a plan", "Be definitive with those strokes" "I've got all these shards coming at this person"
Translation of feelings Self-Development and Growth	"Maybe this is a way to keep me on track?"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"That was a heated moment man" "Give reasons or account of things"

(Interview, 2013)

### **Musician/Lyricist**

When asked about a particularly meaningful piece of art that he created, the artist responded,

“[There was a] *real working piece I wrote, never made it past the working title, “Words.” It was just me pouring my guts out. [It was a] victim of over-working”*  
(Interview, 2013).

Certainly “pouring his guts out” suggests that the song was intended to represent something meaning to him, i.e. the substance of his guts. Moreover, pouring implies continued effort at expressing this meaning, likely without ever doing it fully. One of his most meaningful pieces could not be developed beyond his working title, perhaps

because it was so difficult to find the “words” to accurately convey the substance of his guts in a short title. Based on his description of the song it certainly was meaningful to him, but perhaps the difficulty lay in the effort to translate this meaning into “words?” Another thing that he said jumps out, and that is, what did he mean when he said it was a “victim of over-working?” Perhaps he attempted to control or “work” the piece too much and in doing so suppressed some of the beautiful from revealing itself. From this we might gather that the artistic process requires a certain degree of freedom, so as to allow the “words” to come forth. This also could suggest that the “supersensible” is really quite distant from our reach (Kant, 2001).

In an effort to answer my question about a piece he found meaningful, the artist described some of what motivated him to create. As he explained,

*“Jethro Tull was my reason for creating. 1963 Country music. The piece put me back in the studio. I was living with a model for 10 years. I had a personal tragedy. She’d finally broken into a national advertising campaign with “because I’m worth it.” My lyrics reflected what I was trying to say to her [we split up]. I wanted to communicate to her that I understood what happened and why we couldn’t be together. We worked together professionally. I wanted to get away from everything. My first house was in Nova (Ashland). 11 acres of woods, [they] don’t plow the roads down there. I liked the solitude. I had a deck out in the back. I used to sit out there staring into the sky. That inspired it [the song]” (Interview, 2013).*

This quote is particularly telling in the sense that it illustrates the deep meaning and emotion within his song. When asked about his motivation to create he provided two

examples (1) Jethro Tull and their music, and (2) his “personal tragedy.” Since Jethro Tull helped to get him writing again, then we might gather that he found their music beautiful in some way. Perhaps their music communicated things he agreed with—feelings he sought to communicate. The second, his “personal tragedy,” suggests that his reasons for creating were particularly strong and meaningful. What could be more meaningful than a personal tragedy? Certainly if part of his reason for creating was to communicate during this difficult time why a relationship did not work after 10 years it would imply the piece was meaningful to him. Moreover, we can assume that this meaning resided in his work because of the feelings and emotions within.

What is also telling is how he used his music to convey and communicate this meaning. We can assume the surrounding environment, and his interaction with it, likely played a large role in helping the artist to communicate his feelings. The artist was probably inspired by his location and his connection and interaction with nature, in his large 11-acre backyard that was removed from an urban area. Even further, he “liked the solitude” that the property provided him, which could indicate that he enjoyed interacting with nature. The feeling of isolation he felt in his backyard likely provided him with the impetus to not only write the song, but the feeling of isolation might have also served as a model to work from, and also express in his music. In other words, his feelings might have become more real by his interaction with nature in an isolated place, and this allowed for a more accurate expression. That said I believe he experienced what all artists do in the sense that he could not accomplish precisely what he intended to. As he phrased it, his “lyrics reflected what he was *trying* to say to her,” suggesting that even with his music he could not quite communicate the meaning he sensed, and feelings he

felt. This corresponds to Immanuel Kant’s notion of the beautiful, something removed from the world or phenomena—instead, the beautiful is something *noumenal*.

This was not the only piece that was spurred by his interaction with the environment. Another song seemed to appear rather miraculously after being hired to write a song and recalling an experience. The artist explained,

*“There was a recording engineer in Nashville. To pay for the song he asked me to write a song for his daughter. The song was one of fear that I put the same emotion into. We used to joke around a lot. ‘I know I drive myself to...(some silly country lyric that I remembered).’ At that point I felt her come around the corner laughing. My favorite line was ‘I’ve got to stop for a while, I just saw your face... When she opened the door it was like looking at a stranger. To find a night so long it terrifies the stars and the sky: (title) Bottom Feeder.’ You push your emotions to clarify what you’re trying to say. Another song – ‘Just pushing the envelope, don’t worry about me’” (Interview, 2013).*

This artist suggested that creating music entailed “pushing [his] emotions” or “pushing the envelope.” Music, or more generally art, was about using or “pushing” these emotions in an effort to “clarify what you’re trying to say.” But, what was he trying to say? From this quote we might gather that he was attempting to communicate the feeling of his former girlfriend coming around the corner—the feeling that results when looking into someone’s eyes that you know quite well and feeling are now looking at a stranger. Given this was his “favorite line,” we might be able to safely assume that his like for the line corresponding to his feeling or meaning therein.

To borrow the words from another interview, perhaps he was attempting to

“capture a moment in time?” The way he described the feeling in the interview (several times, with emotion I cannot put into words) as one where he “felt her come around the corner” seemed quite real and resonated with him as an experience. What is interesting here is the moment he was attempting to express was an aesthetic experience that he was recalling, and yet it was also one that he seemed to have experienced without the other person. In other words, he found himself attempting to express a moment in time that consisted of an imagined experience. Even in this imagined experience, the feeling that she was literally coming around the corner was strong enough that he could operate from it, so as to translate it into music. Certainly this artist interacted with his surroundings like Cezanne claimed to, as a process of respiration, which is to say that he interacted with his environment on a deeper level (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). But, what did the artist mean when he said, you “push your emotions to clarify what you’re trying to say?” Perhaps there is something about emotions if pushed far enough that can reveal something more. Immanuel Kant might have suggested that the artist’s music provided him with the opportunity to experience beauty and therefore interact with the “supersensible.” In this sense, the artist’s emotions might provide a closer peak or connection with the “supersensible.”

I was particularly interested in the meaning and feeling that prompted his creative process, so I said, “I’m curious about the thing/feeling you create your song from.” To which he replied,

*“Let me think about that and how to put it into words. Some things I agonize over for years. I did 95 recording sessions where I was doing a lot of introspective stuff. Everyone was asking for a ‘rocker’ (something everybody would pay*

*attention to). I was listening to Led Zeppelin. I was feeling pretty down. The winter fireman siren went off. (Fires, storms, but [I] twisted the siren into a nuclear attack). I called it 'The day they decided' – title about a nuclear strike, the end of the world. She (girlfriend) was about a half a mile down the road [which was too far to see her before the end]. Line was 'I can't believe you're over here and I'm over there.' Everything I was coming up with was too mambi pambi. [I thought to myself] What if the siren means that this is our last night? [This heightened the intensity for him] My mind goes into a place where it's 100%. I did nothing but music. My mind is in this place that's hard to describe. Creating something, not nothing. For the beginning you're probably drifting all over the place. But then you're more focused. If you try too hard then it [the creation] doesn't happen" (Interview, 2013).*

This quote helps to confirm or clarify several prior assertions that were made. It suggests that this artist needed to be 100% focused on music, what Heidegger would call “immersed,” in order to create (Heidegger, 1977). Instead of forcing the creative process, he needed to allow it to happen. As he phrased it, “if you try too hard then it doesn't happen.” And yet, at the same time, the artist's mind went to “a place where it's 100%, suggesting that not only is he completely immersed or invested, but that creation requires the use of his mind. In this view, it seems he needed both the mind and body, but even further, he needed to allow the two to seamlessly interact and communicate with one another. Although he did not necessarily refer to his body as being needed in the creative process, given that his body must have been present to hear the sirens and to play the song (with his fingers on the strings), to some degree, both the body and mind were



required. But, this seamless communication that needed to occur between them seems rather difficult and almost makes the mind and body seem less distinct, or more blended. This brings us to the ideas of Merleau-Ponty, who departed from Descartes' mind-body dualism when he suggested there is a blind spot where the mind and body communicate in a way, which we do not entirely understand (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). If we take his anti-Cartesian notion and apply it, then we might gather that the artist's mind and body might have a blind spot that allows for this "drifting all over the place." In other words, drifting seems quite difficult if we adhere to Descartes' mind-body dualism, but more possible if we maintain the possibility of Merleau-Ponty's blind spot (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

Even more intrigued with this creative process, I asked, "How does this process of creation begin?" The artist replied, "*When someone says I want something in this genre. [It possibly calls for more thought] When I was working you become a character. It's like acting in a movie. You become a personification*" (Interview, 2013).

During the creative process the artist suggested that he worked to "become a character." Given he feels as though he is a "personification" this would suggest that there is a sense of distance from the self. If you consider the character an object by virtue of its position relative to the artistic piece, then this effort to "become a character" involves moving away from the self and toward the object. This idea aligns with Merleau-Ponty's idea of respiration, which suggests the artist lends his/herself to the environment and the environment in exchange lends itself to the artist (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Becoming a personification can create meaning and have ontological implications, as the artists explained,

*“I broke my back in ‘76. I was laid up. In that time I wrote a graphic novel, ‘The last pharaoh.’ I started getting so deep into cultures [and] beliefs of the characters that it started something like a religion. I started getting so deep into the subject” (Interview, 2013).*

A religion seems to suggest the book shaped his thoughts to some degree, but a religion might also be considered a representation of a way of thinking, in this case beliefs and characters. Did the book create what Merleau-Ponty called flesh? Alternatively put, perhaps his interaction for the characters in the book become real to him in a way that it could have become something more (i.e. substance of being). When the artist suggests that he got “deep into cultures, [and] beliefs of the characters” he leads us to believe that in the depth he not only invests himself in the story, but that this depth leads to meaning, and this meaning is certainly real to him. This leads us to wonder, what does it take to be, or alternatively, what does it take to become real? Merleau-Ponty argues in this creative experience this depth becomes fleshy, because it becomes meaningful to us, and therefore our experiences can take on an ontological role (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

The artist was then asked about a piece that he had previously spoken about, one that was particularly meaningful to him. He replied,

*“‘Nobody home’ – This song started in ‘93. Inspiration was Brother code. Trying to write like Cyndi Lauper (upbeat rock). I had the basic rhythm and lyrics. I was meeting with someone at the disability office (because of my back) and I said I’m bummed, I’ll admit I’m depressed. I’m going to have a cigarette. This is what’s keeping me going (my art) right now. She was concerned for my mental health that I’d try and hurt myself. So I argued with her for a while and*

*left my keys (while I went for a cigarette). Then I came back and she said we were going to the Nord Center (a psych institute). I said I'm depressed, but I have no intention of hurting myself. A song I had been working on for 3 years I wrote it that night."*

[He then proceeded with the lyrics to his song, "Nobody home."]

*"My woman now left me, now it seems I lost my job. Seems the mortgage man just kicked down my door. Feeling kind of low. Got to feel the street. Hoping I'll run into a bud or two. The last thing I expected is what happened next after I stopped in just to chat with you. Now there's nobody home. You keep a knocking but there's nobody home. Never nobody home. Why you keep knocking if there's nobody home. Used to feel quite normal. Woke up everyday. Good woman lying next to me lying by my side. How I'm in this place that I don't want to be cause I was down. Hell I might even have cried. (Nobody home chorus with minor changes) ...John Giles – rage in the cage. I stole a little... 'Just sit down it won't be that long. They took away my keys next thing I knew I couldn't find you. What's happening tell me please, please, please. I get to listen to you battle now throughout the day. Why you'd just get this though your thick head, Now you're pumping – through my veins. Now it just happened. I wish I were dead"*

*(Interview, 2013)*

Apart from my feeling an inclination to give up research and pursue something more artistic, if only to be half as *revealing* as this artist, these lyrics suggest several things. First, the artist's creativity was catalyzed by an experience in his life, i.e. the tension from being unemployed and perhaps by the conflict and emotion that resulted from his

interaction with the social worker. Merleau-Ponty and others like Ralph Hummel warned us of the limitations of empirical measures, as they often fail to grasp the full situation. Because the social worker was trained to use what were most likely, a set of specific verbal cues or words to assess the risk of a patient harming his/herself, she operated strictly according to these empirical cues. In doing so she failed to see the whole person, a person who when interviewed provided a perfectly reasonable explanation for his frank and honest choice of words. After these empirical cues were applied, he now sat there without his keys when he had to be somewhere, like his studio—this created the conflict. He had bills to pay and financial problems that made his time more precious, and he was coming to a head with the fact that his relationship with his girlfriend was worsening. It could have been her, or a friend knocking on his door, but he was basically held hostage given who held his keys. He was presumably held hostage to a more comprehensive set of empirical questions designed to rate his mental health. But, as he asked me, “what’s wrong with being depressed once and a while?” The artist’s aesthetic experience really seemed to stimulate his writing, but his lyrics also suggested that the feelings he was trying to express were much more profound than this one encounter. In this sense, perhaps the experience just allowed his feelings, and the meaning within to surface. As he indicated, the song has been in the works for three years. During this three-year period did he reflect on, or attempt to better understand his own feelings, or did he lack the words to translate these feelings into a song? It could have been a little of both, but the experience with the social worker, and his aesthetic sense for it, seemed to have created feelings within him that reminded him of what he felt, and what he intended to express in the song.

I probed further, asking, “So it was the experience that really prompted the creation?” in an effort to uncover the role of this experience with the social worker, and its relationship to his artistic work. He replied,

*“[Yes] It pissed me off to the point...you like Pink Floyd? They had a song about where expressing emotion was not acceptable in society anymore. [This was the basis for the song]” (Interview, 2013).*

Here the artist suggests that this conflict with the social worker might have served to open a creative window in the sense that it pointed to other societal norms that angered the artist.

The artist closes by explaining what drew him to music,

*“It was such a cool atmosphere. There’d be beatniks over there. Their names were the Logans. I’d offer them a lot of credit for getting me started” (Interview, 2013).*

Something jumps out in this brief quote. To my knowledge, a “cool atmosphere” cannot be measured in terms of its coolness, and yet this cool atmosphere was particularly meaningful to him. The atmosphere was powerful enough to get him started making music, which, from what we can only assume on the basis of this interview was life changing, and yet “yardsticks” could not capture it (Arendt, 1992). Instead, the artist used a term that one can only gain a sense of and for. In this way, “coolness” will probably always elude the scientist who is not open to what can be learned from aesthetics.

**Table III. Summary of Interview with Musician/Lyricist**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Sensation Freedom	"I used to sit out there staring into the sky" "At that point I felt her come around the corner laughing" "[The song became a] Victim of over-working"
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning	"I had a personal tragedy," "They took away my keys" "You push your emotions to clarify what you're trying to say" "I started getting so deep into cultures, [and] beliefs of the characters that it started something like a religion"
Translation of feelings Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical)	"My lyrics reflected what I was trying to say to her"
Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"[The novel] started something like a religion" "Pink Floyd...had a song about where expressing emotion isn't acceptable in society anymore"

(Interview, 2013)

**Painter/Musician/Writer**

The artist was asked, “Would you mind telling me about a particularly meaningful piece of art you’ve created?” He replied, “*One that represents that moment really well. I looked to find some way to express it better*” (Interview, 2014).

This artist, like the other, sought to capture a moment in time. Given the question asked, we can assume that this moment he intended to represent was one that was meaningful to him. In other words, something happened during that moment that spoke to him on some level.

I followed with a probing question, and asked, “What is ‘it?’” He replied, “*Whatever I’m trying to get across. Get something out that’s in your mind, or an effort to kind of counter something. When it’s satisfied. I’m never felt completely satisfied with art...never had that moment of clarity. The more you focus on that*

*moment of clarity the less likely you are to reach it. When other people connect to it, that's the most satisfying. That weird connection that's created. A moment of clarity comes about when a complete stranger connects to it. It doesn't need to be for the same reasons. It could be something like the paint you choose, or shared something intimate" (Interview 2014).*

What did the artist mean when he said, “a moment of clarity comes about when a complete stranger connects to it?” First, we might gather that through his art, the artist understands “it” better, but given a stranger connects to it, then it seems that he has also effectively translated an idea that was in his mind. Moreover, the stranger’s connection to his art suggests that the artist succeeded in communicating what is in his mind. In this way it seems that the capacity of art to connect with people is not only desired, but if what this artist suggests is true, then to some degree this connection with others might serve to shape the artistic process. This need for a connection with the greater public, or community, aligns with Kant’s notion of judgment, which suggests aesthetic judgment is communally shaped—a “sensus communis.” Like Kant, the artist’s desire for a stranger to connect could indicate the primacy of the spectator (Kant, 2001). In other words, the spectator is crucial to the development of “taste” and “aesthetic judgment” even more so than the artist’s “genius,” and the artist seems to recognize this quite well (Kant, 2001). That said, he noted that this connection “doesn’t need to be for the same reasons,” which could imply that he does not expect the spectator to completely understand his work given that they have had a different set of experiences per se. The spectator could use his or her experiences to find things that are similar and different in an effort to relate to art (Hummel, 1991; Gendlin, 1973). The spectator’s experiences are perhaps ones rooted or

based in aesthetics, and therefore give them the capacity to relate to one or more ideas in the piece of art. If this explains the connection, then maybe the artist's attempt to get something across, or "effort to counter something" was communicated and/or successfully countered? In this sense, perhaps the moment of "clarity" is a result of alignment—in terms of how each party sees meaning within the art, and how each party understands beauty. Kant would call this inter-subjective agreement, but Mary Parker Follett would go further to call this alignment integration (Kant, 2001; Follett, 1926).

Even though the artist finds value in strangers connecting to his art, he also believes his art is somewhat private in nature. He explained this unique position or role of art by suggesting,

*There's a lot of stuff that I leave out of conversation that I put into my art. Sometimes it's easier to put in a song, or on paper because it's so abstract. I got into writing short stories these are the most satisfying. They're extremely honest self-admissions that I wouldn't say in conversation. Everything has a tiny bit of investment...every piece of art I can say what I was going through and what spurred me to make it. Making art is intimate, revealing. I've never created around people I haven't been involved (intimately) with" (Interview 2014).*

Why is it that the artist would not say these "honest self admissions" in regular conversation? Is it because these ideas cannot be accurately translated into conversational words and therefore not adequately conveyed? This is odd given that he seemed to have the right words to at least describe this conundrum to me, but perhaps what is difficult is explaining ideas that are based on an aesthetic understanding without the use of art. He pointed out that with each piece of art he knows what he was going



through at the time and exactly which feelings or experiences prompted him to create. By suggesting, “Everything has a tiny bit of investment,” the artist also seems to indicate that he invests himself into the art. From this we are lead to believe that “what the artist is trying to get across” is certainly meaningful to him, and further that on some level his aesthetic understanding of the world he on one hand he would like to keep private, but on the other hand he would like to make it public in an effort to find some validation. In this sense, the artist can be considered to reside in a continual feedback loop, between his own experiences in the world and his aesthetic understanding thereof, and the judgment of other persons, who look to critique his work on the basis of their aesthetic understanding (Kant, 2001). He goes on to explain this feedback loop,

*“I was put in a weird position where my work was hung where I worked. I got to see people’s reaction. At art openings they [the artists] are halfway between viewing people and selling their art. [This] criticism or feedback helps refine mainly what you create” (Interview, 2014).*

This criticism and feedback loop, is very similar to what Merleau-Ponty and Cezanne believe occurred between the artist and their environment. If we consider the people to be a part of the artist’s environment, then we could even consider people viewing the art as allowing for a process of respiration (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). The artists speak to people through their art and the people speak to the artist(s) much like the environment or canvas might speak to them. His quote also reinforces Kant’s belief that in terms of beauty, judgment (that allows the spectator to determine what is pleasing and displeasing) is superior to the genius (that allows the artist to create) (Kant, 2001). As Kant suggested judgment trains genius, and allows for beauty (Kant, 2001).

In an effort to find out what the process of respiration between the artist and environment entails, I asked the artist, “What does the experience of creating feel like?”

He replied,

*“What drives me is anxiety or negative feelings. I create art out of those negative feelings and releasing them. I feel anxious or like I need to do something to release the tension. 90% of my work comes from that. Being an artist is a little self-destructive. It’s about countering something. Rolling with what I put down on paper, and growing from there. It’s a build and release sort of thing. The release is while you’re creating. But then you look back and critique parts (from afar). You let the piece sit and look back at something. That’s the most satisfying, is when it’s validated after the immediate fact. You have an idea of what’s going on, but emotions control a lot more than we realize. You won’t be able to grasp the completeness until you step back and look at it. And [if] you [can] still say I’m completely happy with that. Usually I’m totally immersed, then step back...those ah-hah moments are so rare” (Interview, 2014).*

This quote provides some insight into what motivates this artist to create, as well as the some of the meaning behind his art. The artist is not only driven to create by “anxiety or negative feelings,” but art serves as his release for these feelings. In this way the artist’s experiences in the world served to motivate him to create. But, perhaps more importantly, his art is an effort to counter these negative feelings. This prompts us to wonder whether the feelings are countered through the creative process alone, or if the end product plays a role in the “counter” and “release.” In other words, does the artist find *satisfaction* or *validation* from the creative process or the piece of art that might

serve to communicate his feelings? Where does the meaningfulness reside? Given the importance he placed on the spectators connecting to his art in some way, we can assume he looks to spectators for validation. He also finds personal value in the finished product given that he said, once you can “step back and look at it...and if you can still say I’m completely happy with that,” herein lies the meaningfulness. It also seems like the creative process itself is satisfying for him. As he phrased it, “emotions control a lot more than we realize,” suggesting that the artistic process is helpful in allowing the feelings to surface and reveal themselves.

Several other things in the quote seem telling; the believe that art allows for growth (perhaps of the idea or of the individual itself), the need to evaluate your work from a distance, which aligns with Kant’s primacy of the spectator’s judgment, and lastly his use of the word “immersion” to describe this feeling while creating. From this we can gather that while the artist is immersed in the process of creating, he also steps back to provide the distance necessary to evaluate the product, and allow others to evaluate it—and the cycle continues. If we can assume some interaction between these different states within the aesthetic process, then we might conceive of the process looking like this, roughly speaking: feelings build—immersion—counter/release—private evaluation—external validation—satisfaction (cycle continues).

When speaking of the artists whom he respects, he said, “*Artists who couldn’t help but create an art piece I respect the most. They’re on the reaction side of it, not the creation side. I envy those artists the most*” (Interview, 2014). Merleau-Ponty would tend to agree given these artists are like Cezanne, i.e. those who would be most likely to be touched by their environment (Merleau-Ponty, 1968), or for that matter, they are the

artists who are most likely to listen. By using external stimuli as motivators these artists likely work to express their sensations in the world. Instead of imitation, these artists would likely dig deep into their experiences and attempt to express what it is they feel to be there. In this sense Merleau-Ponty would likely extend to this particular artist, and to those whom he admires the “phenomenological nod,” or at the very least a grin. I followed his statement with another probing question and asked, “What are they reacting to?” He responded,

*Most reactionary art is [done by] people who are chaotic and pushed down or defeated. They use this snapping moment. You kind of have to be removed from the world or paying attention to things that others don't pay attention to (Interview, 2014).*

If reactionary art is about responding to environmental pressures, and less about creating, then we might be able to assume that reactionary artists care less about their final product. From what this artist indicates, a reactionary artist is more concerned with a particular pressure than how their art is interpreted by others, perhaps because this type of artist would largely be caught up in the moment, rather than be caught reflecting on their work. This could mean a reactionary artist is more connected to their environment and less connected with aesthetic judgment as expressed by others in the community.

The artist continued to explain this motivation and need to create art. As he phrased it,

*“There's no other animal that feels the need to express themselves on an artistic level. They do it on a primal level” (Interview, 2014).*

Although some biologists would probably disagree, with this quote the artist helps to

remind us that art is done “on a primal level,” suggesting that art as an activity is quite different than thinking, or even merely feeling alone. Merleau-Ponty believed that art served as a way to integrate or bring the living into how we understand the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). This effort to bring the living material in, essentially to try and express the “primal” or what Merleau-Ponty called “carnal,” depending upon the medium, calls for certain a degree of freedom, so that things might come forth to us. As he suggested,

*“There really isn’t a plan when it comes to painting and visual. With more visual things there is more of a process involved. When making music or writing there is no plan at all. It’s more of an exploration. When you aren’t expecting anything it’s more honest and satisfying” (Interview, 2014).*

In his view, music and writing both call for more exploration than planning, whereas visual things call for “more of a process.” If this is true then given the methodology employed in this study it is far from being a piece of art. Perhaps if this study had more freedom, and less adherence to the procedures of the institutional review board, then it would better reveal some of the living material these artists brought to the study. In this sense, this artist might disagree with some of the others interviewed concerning the need for freedom—he believes freedom is more crucial than a conceptual idea or plan of where you are headed with your work.

**Table IV. Summary of Interview with Painter/Musician/Writer**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion Freedom to move between and allow creativity to emerge	"You kind of have to be removed from the world or paying attention to things that others don't pay attention to" "Removed from the world" [reactionary art] "You have an idea of what's going on, but emotions control a lot more than we realize"
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"Anything traumatic... internal struggle" "Anxiety or negative feelings [drive me to create]" "What the artist is trying to get across" "To counterbalance something"
Translation of feelings	"Sometimes it's easier to put in a song, or on paper because it's so abstract"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"Sit back and look at something" "Criticism or feedback helps refine mainly what you create"

(Interview, 2014)

## Part Two: Hybrids

### Director of Development Entity/Cartoonist

The hybrid, in this case, considers himself both an administrator and a cartoonist, and thus he was justified in presenting me with a cartoon at the beginning of the interview. The cartoon pictured a man in lycra riding a bicycle, with a beard, who appeared to be an urban planner from what I could tell. This cartoon was one of many cartoons that he drew to celebrate these individuals (and co-workers) at their retirement parties. I then asked, "Would you tell me a little more about this cartoon you drew? What we you looking to do?" He replied,

*"He's a bike racer. I captured that. He's a character—I captured that. It was fun. [It was meant to] show parts of his life. That's all" (Interview, 2013).*

The notion of “capturing” something is particularly interesting. With his cartoon the hybrid captured something about the person, perhaps their individual essence. It is difficult to capture something that does not exist or does not appear to be there, and so we can assume that his cartoon captured aspects of this person that he knew to be there (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). The cartoon must have captured aspects of this person that everyone else could not simply list or quantify else it would not have been a good cartoon. Instead, it was the cartoon’s originality that made it liked—for it captured things that others sensed to be there that they probably did not have a way to translate using non-aesthetic means.

This prompted me to ask, “What were you trying to capture?” He responded quickly by saying,

*“Who this guy is. Artistically it was fun. I like the process of drawing. Trying to do volumetric drawings. There’s a shadow behind his arm...his legs. There are a lot of brilliant cartoonists whose work I study. Oliphant, Bill Wadden, Will Eisner. If I go to the art museum, [now] that’s an enlightening and interesting experience...if I really see good art. I could be inspired by good governmental process. Lincoln, building of continental railroad (that’s art). As I read the book of the railroad. All of these things roll together. While I call myself an artist. It’s just one part of public administration” (Interview, 2013).*

This artist and administrator was looking to capture “who this guy is.” This statement certainly suggests that he had an idea or mental picture of the essence of this co-worker’s character. The way he referred to the shadow behind his arm suggests that he interrogated him in a way others might have not done. Given his description it is quite

possible that he lent himself to the co-worker so as to study him more deeply. Perhaps this exchange did not occur, but at the very least his description suggests that his aesthetic sense of this co-worker (and it sounds like others as well) was quite rich. If this sense, “who the guy is” was honed enough so that he could interpret and even translate his sense into a cartoon. Chances are that his sense for this individual was not unique and in fact he had a sense for others in the organization that he directed. Moreover, if combined his sense for these individual employees then he would have a strong sense of the organization—i.e. who helps to make the organization and what the organization is like. Chester Barnard believed that a manager uses their aesthetic sense of an organization for purposes of coordination (Barnard, 1966). This sense was useful when attempting to understand how the organization as a whole might respond to different situations, and how these situations might fit with respect to the organization. This idea is not so different from how Camilla Stivers interpreted Hannah Arendt’s ideas regarding aesthetic judgment more generally, which is that it is useful when attempting to discern which scientific understandings might fit or not fit a particular situation (Stivers, 2013). This is not necessarily a type of thinking, as it does not address how we use theoretical knowledge. It is however a form of judgment founded in an aesthetic sense, which relates to what pleases or displeases us (Arendt, 1992).

After hearing his comment, “things roll together. While I call myself an artist. It’s just one part of public administration,” (Interview, 2013) I was curious as to how artistry relates to public administration. I asked, “Why is that?” and he replied,

*“Public administration is an incredibly complicated field. Whatever skill you can muster up is incredibly helpful. [It can] help you when managing, coming up*



*with terms. I want people to be able to connect with writing (which is why I use 14 point font). It helps” (Interview, 2013).*

The way he presented art it seems as though art helps him to communicate and connect with others as an administrator. He calls it a “skill,” leading us to believe that art to this particular administrator is akin to a skill-set, or a tool in his tool bag. It indicates that perhaps other hybrids use their artistic abilities as skill-sets while working as administrators. It also prompts us to not only wonder how he uses his abilities, but why. Moreover, is he always conscious of the fact that he is employing his artistic abilities on the job?

In an effort to dig a little deeper into these questions I asked, “Why did you do the final presentation [at work] with cartoons?”

*“Every year at organization of anonymity there is a final presentation. I drew a cartoon of Fred (made anonymous)- standing in front of a giant blackboard with his giant equation. It read “Jimmy Dimora minus the resolution to infinity.” They were all fun to do. I would spend several weeks coming up with an idea. Part of the festivities of someone leaving office...I discovered that I needed to do that. From my point of view it was just different (from budgets which were the norm). I wanted to lighten up the moment” (Interview, 2013).*

Art allowed this hybrid administrator to connect with his audience on a deeper level. As he explained, he felt a desire to “lighten up the moment” in these budget related meetings, which suggests that he used cartoons in an effort to alter the mood. The concept of the mood of a room is certainly not one that we would consider to be empirical, given that it does not lend itself to being measured or tabulated. Instead, a

mood is based on a feeling or sensation that is then processed by the mind (or between the mind and eye as Merleau-Ponty would have suggested). In this sense, the desire to alter the mood of the room is different than what Kant believed to be either the faculty of intellect, which deals with theoretical knowledge, or reason, which deals with practical knowledge (Kant, 2001). His sense for the mood of the room instead might be seen as a judgment, which deals with what he found to be pleasing or displeasing (Kant, 2001). Moreover, the fact that “he needed to do that [use cartoons]” in an effort to lighten the mood would indicate that he sought to make the conditions in the meeting room(s) more pleasing to him.

Cartooning served as a skill that helped this hybrid to navigate a political environment, and one that provided him with the opportunity to act on the basis of judgment. When he said, “I discovered that I needed to do that,” what he really pointed out is that he used his capacity to exercise his administrative discretion. Given that cartoons had the capacity to speak to his audience(s) on a different level, an aesthetic one, he bypassed many of the issues inherent in appealing to a person’s ability to think or feel. In a way, cartoons bridged the gap between Kant’s two faculties of intellect and reason, and as Kant would have suggested cartoons allowed the conditions under which the hybrid could appeal to their feelings and thoughts—i.e. their judgment. It is perhaps for these reasons that the hybrid refers to his artistic abilities as a skill—because cartooning was a skill-set that he used to communicate in a way that words failed to convey. Indeed, the capacity for music to change an individual’s mood demonstrates that aesthetics has a special capacity to alter a mood—one a spreadsheet certainly could not match in terms of strength or adaptation.

The hybrid went on to explain,

*“[His] doodling article generated phone calls for about a week. [Artistic ability is] a blessing, you have a sense of the world that nobody else has. It’s also a curse, because you can’t make a living at it. An ancestor [of mine] wasn’t allowed to draw. Went to military and ‘put it aside.’ Absolutely, it’s part of who I am. In high school I did cartoons for the school paper. In the work I did, I really was alone [in his artistic ability/love for art]. In college I ended up majoring in economics...[but it] could’ve been anything else. Urban planning was a great field because it has the visual component. Getting into city planning had such an appeal to me because you could look out and see the result. (Desire to see things come to fruition, see the aesthetic sense take shape?) Drawing and designing are two different things. The kind of drawing I did focused on the characters not the environment. Planning requires an understanding of the soil, code requirements. I was willing to do things not everyone was willing to do. Deal with politics, etc.” (Interview, 2013).*

Suggesting cartooning is part of who he is, as a person, certainly seems to indicate that his practice of art was meaningful to him. One might guess that he puts this meaning into his cartoons, otherwise why bother doing them in the first place. His artistic abilities enabled him to deal with politics better than others, and perhaps this capacity or talent explains the origins of his willingness. Then again, given “taste” and “aesthetic judgment” are related to what Kant called a “sensus communis,” perhaps his interest and abilities in art provided him with more respect for what the community finds pleasing (Kant, 2001)?

I then asked him, “Did your artistic sense play any role in that [being able to deal with politics or these other things]? He replied,

*“I’m interested in people. I draw people. At the time I didn’t think I was good enough” (Interview, 2013).*

From this quote we might be able to confirm a prior assertion, which is that (1) as a cartoonist, or artist for that matter, this hybrid likely has an improved sense for the individual. He might have interrogated the objects of his art in a deeper, more intimate way, and (2) this aesthetic understanding translated into improved judgment. In other words, because he knew these individuals more deeply he had an improved sense of the organization, i.e. the substance of it, and he could draw on this sense when determining how to approach different organizational problems encountered, presumably ever changing problems.

In an effort to reveal whether the interrogation I suspected actually occurred I asked, “What does the artistic process feel like?”

He replied,

*“[In the artistic process] I’m struggling to come up with an idea. It’s uncomfortable. When I get the idea it’s the greatest. When it’s finished” (Interview, 2013).*

This draws a sharp parallel to what motivated or prompted the creative process for several, if not all of the artists. This struggle he refers to is likely a result of the fact that he is working to translate his aesthetic sense for what seems to exist within a person, or political environment that serve as the subjects of his cartoons. I then asked, “Does a particularly meaningful piece of art come to mind?” He explains,

*“[Yes] Fred Sawyer (made anonymous) (his retirement). What was going on in that 2 week period? The rest of life. What was going on at home? My mother was sick. The weight of my job...was enormous. The stuff just rolls together. The art’s the art. When I’m doing a spreadsheet I don’t think of drawing. I spend a lot of time in meetings. And I do a lot of doodling. [I thought] What am I going to do that is interesting about him. I stay up very late, [which is] not necessarily a good thing. I keep file cards of ideas. The night before my drawing was due I just leafed through the Plain Dealer and other newspapers and started fresh. I never used my cards” (Interview, 2013).*

The cards served as a way to organize his thoughts in the creative process. Here he spent all of this time using notecards to organize his ideas, but when it came time to complete the drawing or cartoon he abandoned them. The only logical explanation for this is that the concepts could not accurately be conveyed using words on notecards: instead they could only exist or reside as drawings i.e. art, or an aesthetic sense within himself. The notecard helped to remind him of the concepts and the richness of his sense for them.

This hybrid’s aesthetic experiences, and further his aesthetic sense of what he believed to be pleasing and displeasing, seemed to have played a large role in some of the judgments he brought forth as an administrator. He explained,

*“I created a program that pushed transportation for community initiative to create things like streetscape. My role was to say, ‘hey we really need to do a program like this.’ It was a huge issue, because it was a lot of money. Subject of urban design was in the back of my mind. It was a result of visual thinking. If it had been just about paving public streets, it wouldn’t have been anything special”*

*(Interview, 2013).*

Because he believed in allowing the freedom for people to use their own judgment, he advocated for a program like streetscape, one with more creative space for individual communities. As he phrased things, it was his “role to say, hey we really need to do a program like this,” implying that he used his aesthetic sense to exercise his discretion in this particular space. He was honest that this decision was a result of “visual thinking,” suggesting that instead of simply repaving streets, the program became something more. In this way, we are led to believe that he did not necessarily think differently, but instead more accurately judged with the help of his visual thinking. This prompted me to ask him, “What were you trying to do with that initiative?” He replied by saying, “*I wanted to see some way to have money available to communities*” *(Interview, 2013)*. In this case the administrator’s judgment, and perhaps respect for the creative process itself, also led to both an incorporation and continuation of politics.

The hybrid goes on to discuss a project that he considered particularly meaningful. He said,

*“The thesis for Ohio State...That was really cool. My job was with state development department. Staff wasn’t going to give me any work to do. So I drew cartoons, and did my homework. Valentine’s day comes along so I did this cartoon of Dracula - ‘Vhon’t you be my valentine?’ My boss said, ‘Take the \$20,000 (funding) to make a movie and do an animated film.’ I spent the time doing drawings...[an] animator in the film department at OSU [helped]. He took my ideas and made a movie. Used construction paper cutouts. Everybody loved it. The story was brilliant. Animation as a means of changing attitudes. During*

*the war their was a government cartoon of Mickey mouse selling War bonds. This was a movie on planning. No one checked out my thesis, but many people used the film. I wrote a lot. Drawing is part of my life” (Interview, 2013).*

Several things are apparent in this quote. Again, his use of art, in this case, animation, seemed to change attitudes. If animations communicate with people on a different level that is, on an aesthetic one, then animations might have proven useful because they bypassed the other faculties of intellect and reason (Kant, 2001). Given that intellect deals with peoples’ thoughts, ones which are not likely to change over the course of a presentation, and reason deals with peoples’ feelings are not likely to change either, aesthetic judgment—what people believe to be pleasing or displeasing—might have proven more effective at “changing attitudes” (Kant, 2001).

**Table V: Summary of Interview with Director of Development Entity/Cartoonist**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion Freedom to move between	There's a shadow behind his arm...his legs" "The art's the art." "I never used my [note] cards"
Judgment of Experience  Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"I'm struggling to come up with an idea. It's uncomfortable" "He's a character—I captured that" "Drawing is part of my life" "I wanted to lighten up the moment"
Translation of feelings	"I would spend several weeks coming up with an idea"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within  Political Dimension	"Animation as a means of changing attitudes" "I want people to be able to connect with writing"
Exercising Discretion Adaptation  Art as a skill in PA  Appreciation of politics	"I discovered that I needed to do that" "While I call myself an artist, It's just one part of public administration" "I was willing to do things not everyone was willing to do. Deal with politics"

(Interview, 2013)

**Director of Local Library/Poet**

As one might expect, the director of a local library seemed particularly well read. When asked about a situation when he felt as though he lack guidance, and how he went about deciding how to act he said,

*“Most of the time as a public administrator you have to be oriented to the law. Larry Terry’s book on conservative leadership—that was a really useful application of compelling principles. Typically these [principles] would come in during cases of human resources. Sometimes you would have protected*



*classes...[Acting in these situations is about] making sure you have a process with integrity, one that agrees with the law. This is part of an aesthetic process of harmonization, balance, staying in Tao...” (Interview, 2013).*

This director used Larry Terry’s work, a scholar in public administration, to help him align his decision-making process with the law. To him, this process of alignment, between his own human resources related actions and the law, was an aesthetic one that likely called for him to use his judgment to figure out which principles to draw on. The use of the word Tao (or Dao) in this case could be particularly telling. According to Lao-Tzu, “the Dao in its consistency is “nameless,”” (Lao-Tzu, as cited in Bi, p.108) or as Wing Bi surmised “the Dao [or Tao] is formless, not attached to anything, and in its constancy cannot be named, so we use “nameless” to refer to it in its constancy” (Bi, p.108). If the Dao is formless, then how might one use it to orient themselves in the world empirical, i.e. through the use of the five senses? In light of this, the term Dao could have been chosen in an effort to suggest that orienting his actions with respect to the law was in fact more aesthetic than scientific, or more artful than technocratic. Dao also indicates that he might lack a way of describing the judgment he employs—it is by definition nameless. As Carl Friedrich pointed out, the law, or precedent, might very well be made tangible when written, but even if the law is clearly expressed the administrator must go through a process of interpretation when attempting to translate the law into action (Friedrich, 1940). And perhaps this is where the director’s aesthetic sense and judgment comes in? Not just in an effort to balance his own actions with the law, but in an effort to understand the principles of the law, Larry Terry’s book, and what might be an appropriate action for him to take. As Arendt suggested, aesthetic judgment allows

us to discern what pleases and displeases us, and this judgment can be useful when “bannisters” and “yardsticks” do not apply, or fit (Arendt, 1992).

The hybrid administrator further explained this “aesthetic process of harmonization,” suggesting that his judgment might have been employed when attempting to balance different concerns as an administrators. He provided an example,

*“At a meeting one of my staff said these guys are coming in, they’ve been looking at children in bathing suits and seem to be getting into sketchier areas. We didn’t have filters in this day. This is a question of public order, public integrity. An administrator needs to believe that we need to harmonize these individual rights and responsibilities, with legality and sensitivity” (Interview, 2013).*

From what we can tell, because they lacked content filters on their computers (because they had not been developed yet), the hybrid employed his judgment to figure out how to act. He sought to balance the rights and responsibilities of the library patrons with the law. His use of words, specifically, “sensitivity,” and “harmonize,” suggests this is quite a delicate balance that no administrator is really given a how-to manual to learn. In an effort to dig a little deeper into this delicate relationship and perhaps his aesthetic sense I asked how he knew how to act when the law to did not tell him what to do. This prompted him to expand on his story,

*“We were pioneers in electronics, the first library to have CD-ROMs, and the Internet. In the beginning I was charged with managing this. The questions of public space and privacy...a person was downloading child pornography, evidently. Some of the guidelines were flawed (American Library Association). There were some libraries that were putting on privacy screens. There were*

*multiple legal issues involved with managing this public space. My approach wasn't consistent with ALA. We were the first to bust somebody! They were looking at child porn so I called the police. This was the Alfred Alias case (changed for anonymity) that was on national TV" (Interview, 2013).*

This issue of privacy in the digital age was a new one. For this reason the administrator lacked any “good” guidelines that he could apply to tell him how to act. The hybrid suggested, quite clearly, that the ALA’s approach was flawed—a judgment that could only be made if he had a sense for a better approach to the issue. Moreover, he must have used his judgment to discern that the ALA’s approach was not designed or appropriate for this particular case. One would think today, in 2014, given the internet has been around for several decades that the ALA would have developed and redesigned their policies to address this specific sort of thing, but in fact, the ALA has not changed their code of ethics.

The American Library Association (founded in 1876), is a non-profit which is a lot like the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), in that it has a code of ethics, also known as the Intellectual Freedom Manual that serves to guide its members. Two principles of interest from their current code (i.e. in the post-tech era) are:

*“II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.*

*III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted” (ALA, 2008).*

In other words, the ALA’s *current* code of ethics, even if interpreted loosely would still

probably protect anyone viewing any material (including child pornography in a library), as it is considered an aspect of intellectual freedom, which is granted to them by the library. So why did this director of the library and poet go against the ALA, and figuratively speaking “hand in his membership card?” Further, where did his understanding or sense of how to act come from? As he explained, it was this aesthetic process of “staying in Tao (or balance).” The main reason the hybrid went against the ALA code was because he interpreted a good library differently than the ALA, and specifically took issue with one of their policies. In other words, he used his judgment to suggest a library is a public space in which you lack privacy. As he explained it,

*“There were scandals with libraries that were not in balance. You lose that sense of integrity. All of these registers have to be honored and critically scrutinized. You have a franchise (the library itself) that you want the public to invest in. I had some supervisors in technology who installed a device to see what’s on someone’s computer. They did this without my approval. [If] You go into a public space you don’t have privacy” (Interview, 2013).*

With his aesthetic judgment, and perhaps his sense of a what a good library does that resulted from his process of harmonization the director could discern that installing a snooping device on a computer was not necessarily right, but neither was what the fellow did with the library’s computer. As he explained, without calling the police, without stepping up to manage the situation he would risk the library going out of balance. In this way, we might think of balance between an administrator’s aesthetic sense, or taste, and that of the public. If, as Immanuel Kant suggested, taste is a “sensus communis” then an administrator must do everything to maintain alignment. Meaning the administrator must

take their aesthetic sense or taste and vet it through the political process. Whether people agree or disagree with the director's call to the police, what the administrator did was good in the sense that he took his aesthetic sense, what he believed to be good for the library and individuals, and made it public. In other words, given that other people were involved, presumably, police, judges, media, library staff, library patrons, and members of the public, he ran his aesthetic sense past the people and provided a place for alignment to occur. In his view, the library was by nature a public space and not a private one. In other words, he tested his aesthetic sense in this public space through politics, which not only checked his sense, but at the very least he validated it with the members of the public and parties involved.

From the way the hybrid described the event we can assume that the public, in fact, validated his judgment call. As he phrased it,

*“People loved it. (The arrest). Because the ALA statement of public privacy, was vastly overstated and entangled with private interests. They [other libraries or the ALA] didn't want to rise to the complexity. [Rise to] The world of the book and IT. Are they the same? You're going to have to be able to dance with a complex situation, dude. The ACLU they weren't happy [with what I did]. Because they hadn't thought through the complexity. Libraries were sued in Minneapolis (female workers were in a hostile environment). ALA position was to not do anything. It's a loaded difficult situation. And you have to make a decision how to act. I withdrew from the ALA (American Library Association)”*  
*(Interview, 2013).*

This quote would lead us to believe that at least in his locality he made a good decision in

that it aligned with the public's taste (Kant, 2001). This is to suggest that in this case, his "dance" preserved his sense of harmony and balance in the library, which is to say that his administrative discretion, and judgment as he employed it, was validated through politics. As for the ALA and other libraries, given the leaders of this organization did not dance, we can assume they did not act on their aesthetic sense. We cannot say, for sure, whether they lacked an aesthetic understanding altogether, or perhaps they had a different aesthetic understanding.

He went on to describe the aftermath of the incident saying,

*"There was a family friendly library group that wanted me to speak to them in Middletown [about the internet abusers]. They had a sheriff come in and download porn to make a display of how easy it is. I refused to speak with them, it was ridiculous how they make a spectacle of the situation" (Interview, 2013).*

From what I gathered the Middletown (made anonymous) library sought to "make a spectacle" of the situation, basically horrify the people in an effort to justify their policies. This prompted me to ask, "How did you know this wasn't the right way to handle the situation?" In other words, how did you know that you should not go to Middletown? He replied with a statement that suggests a certain humility and high level of self-awareness. He said,

*"You never know. Does one ever know for sure? That's my power to discern. Align with integrity" (Interview, 2013).*

In other words, the hybrid has his aesthetic judgment, but lacks epistemological certainty. Judgment seems to come from his aesthetic sense or taste, what pleases and displeases him, and can be used to discern when different understandings might apply, and complete

knowledge is out of reach. In this way, the hybrid might associate to “know for sure” with Kant’s noumena, since knowing for sure encompasses more than empirical knowledge from phenomena (what we can discern with the five senses). By suggesting, “you never know” he is demonstrating his skepticism regarding the pursuit of knowledge. Or, alternatively, perhaps he made the decision according to aesthetics rather than thinking, thereby affirming Kant’s faculties (Kant, 2001). As a both a poet and administrator, we can assume that his aesthetic understanding is quite developed, and therefore probably allows him to touch the “supersensible,” and yet holding the “supersensible” still remains out of reach. From his statement we can gather that if the public had disapproved of his decision to call the police, then he likely would have refined his aesthetic sense of what a good library does.

Perhaps in an effort to explain his vision of a good library, the hybrid suggested a library should serve as,

*“A space of confidence, integrity, inter-culturality, a space and expectation, [where] each person was capable of participating in that norm” (Interview, 2013).*

In an effort to hopefully hear about an aesthetic experience I asked where he might have learned this appreciation for different cultures. He replied by saying,

*“My dad owned a bar in NYC. That’s where I learned how to stand and interact with human difference, with integrity, respect, with my own personal force in a public space” (Interview, 2013).*

I then asked him, “Do any particular interactions with people come to mind?” He explained,

*“There was the black dishwasher every morning. People getting their Johnny Walker red and milk in the morning. Jack Harper, [a] thin African American man, well dressed, liked his Johnny Walker at 8am before work. I’d give him his Johnny Walker and coffee...might have a straw hat...friendly. There was Lil, another African American woman. They’d often get a kick out of seeing my father in me. It was an older generation. [These people were] in their 50’s in 1968” (Interview, 2013).*

He remembered these individuals on an aesthetic level, and the use of their names suggests these names even meant something much more to him. Their names were perhaps symbolic, suggesting that these individuals were meaningful to him on an aesthetic or even metaphysical level, that even with imagery and a story he could not otherwise convey. Certainly his memory of Jack Harper or Lil is far richer than mine (without having met either of them), but perhaps his imagery of a “thin African American man in a straw hat...drinking a Johnny walker red and milk in the morning” provides us a small piece of his sense regarding who they were. Regardless, it seems that through interacting with these individuals he, at an early age, gained an aesthetic sense for another culture. We can assume that he not only knew Jack and Lil fairly well from his interactions, but he also understood them.

The hybrid went on to explain his experiences growing up, helping to run a bar. He said,

*“There was a time at night. The bar closed at 4am. A group of African Americans came in after 4am and my Uncle wouldn’t serve them. They thought it was because they were black. So they threw a garbage can through a window.*



*There was something about 'the open door to the world' as a metaphor. [Meaning the library has an open door to the world, and requires the similar qualities or perhaps a similar sense to manage] My father, he'd leave money on the floor for the sweeper. There was that question of managing a place with good form. A bar is a piece where you're managing chaos" (Interview, 2013).*

This experience led him to have an aesthetic sense of different cultures, but also a sense for what balance meant, between people of different cultures, attempting to normalize the chaos between the outside streets and inside the bar. The open door was perhaps a metaphor for what lies between the administrator's self and their public actions. From his quote, we can also gather that he probably gained an aesthetic understanding of what managing with "good form" was from his father literally showing him "good form." This prompts one to wonder whether he could have learned it another way, perhaps through a textbook, or did he need to have these aesthetic experiences? As he explained,

*"There was a civic standard. A creating of normative order. That sense of standard. These are some of the innate gifts of one's formation that I took with me. Definitely" (Interview, 2013).*

In an effort to probe further, I said, "this harmonization—what led you to believe that it's important?" He replied,

*"I've always taken a psychosomatic view in life. I've always been interested in psychology with a Jungian slant or point of view. You need to map out the poles, dialectically, where the point of harmony, legality, begin to adhere. It's about balancing public order and public disorder. I had read Carl Jung as an undergraduate. Simply reading it. As a high school student. I'm interested in*

*poetry. I'm definitely a poet. But I should say I didn't broadcast that while on the job. It has to do with how long you've been on the block (whether poetry could be kept secret or made public). The other problem with art is art is propaganda for the self. If that propaganda is self-interested you're diving into a conflicted situation. If I had poets come into the library I never paid them, they did it as a friend (otherwise they'd be in the habit of getting back-scratching)"* (Interview, 2013).

The quote reminds us of his reference to the importance of staying in Tao, staying in balance between these “poles, dialectically.” To him, public order and disorder might represent these poles at a very high level. Although one could probably come up with ways of measuring the degree of order or disorder, it seems that understanding the public order and disorder that might result from making a decision would be particularly difficult. In this respect, determining which decision would keep public order and disorder harmonized might call for judgment. This is to suggest that instead of applying a scientific understanding, the hybrid used his aesthetic judgment rooted in the harmony of public order and disorder, a balance that he found pleasing.

The hybrid continues to explain his aesthetic understanding by suggesting, “*The artist administrator has to have a relationship with the psyche. The deeper the administrator is on the subject of the psyche the more effective the agent. My sense is people are woefully ignorant of what I call the vertical connection. Comes from my background in poetry, Homer...goes Zeus, Poseidon, Hades. Where are these in your city? The post-script of my book you'll see the post-script. It goes back to the question of story, narrative...If you don't manage that*

*chaos, if you don't get into the fire and interact [then bad things happen]*  
”(Interview, 2013).

With this quote we obtain even more insight into this hybrid's aesthetic understanding and his motivation to act on this understanding as an administrator. It seems like he has been able to translate or at least conceptualize his aesthetic understanding into what he calls the “vertical connection.” He said it himself, it is his sense that “people are woefully ignorant” of this connection. He also reveals that his background in poetry has played a major role in shaping his judgment. Suggesting Zeus, Poseidon, or Hades could live in your city certainly implies a responsibility to act at this very moment. This is because in poetry, when one of the Greek gods acted, it was far from being insignificant—when these gods acted it was quite literally earthshaking. From what I recall when studying public administration, the textbooks did not cover the Greek gods, but they covered the different ethical codes. This leads us to believe that these gods have not only allowed for the hybrid to have aesthetic experiences with the narrative or story itself, but they have also helped him further translate his taste that acts as the foundation for his aesthetic judgment.

The hybrid begins to describe some of the areas in which he believes his aesthetic understanding has played a role. He explains that children's programs are particularly important. Of course I asked, “How did you know children's programs were so important?”

He responds,

*“It was vastly under-performing in the city. Politically speaking, psychodynamically, a political community is also interested in developing their children.*

*My hypothesis is one of nurturance. The cult of the child is huge in...the opportunity for the library to become that kind of place. I used to call it the city without patriarchs” (Interview, 2013).*

From the quote we can tell that he had a sense for the city relative to the library, and the role the library needed to play in the city. In light of the ever-changing environment, in which he was operating in, there is reason to believe that this sense was or is rooted in the aesthetic. This is to say that his hypothesis of “nurturance” is something that he believes to be pleasing, therefore serves to shape his aesthetic judgment.

He goes on to explain,

*“It was useful in Logan, they were trying to bring art to the place as sort of a place-making activity. The most important thing in a library is developing your children’s programing” (Interview, 2013).*

After several hours of being interviewed, although exhaustion took hold of the researcher, the hybrid rattled off a profound statement.

*“[There is a]... and Singer article on the cultural complex. I had Arabic people [at the library]. There was a norming process [that occurred]. The library has a role in developing a different community perspective that allows for the many that have spawned from the one. There’s a harmony. Where the individual is called to know, to wisdom, to the beautiful. That’s the aesthetic shot man. The issue you’re dealing with is the loss of inter-subjectivity. Poiesis is making a place for that vision, working itself out. The challenge is managing the irrational vision. I also look to neuroscience. Ian McGillcrest, left-brain, right-brain. The level of being able to subject the impulse to rational scrutiny. To move that hunch*

*through logically...how do you complete that loop?" (Interview, 2013).*

The hybrid, perhaps through his research and aesthetic experiences, quite literally jumped to some of the findings of this study. By suggesting that I am dealing with "the loss of inter-subjectivity" he pointed out that aesthetics helps to bring in politics. From his quote we are led to believe that this administrator has not only had a series of aesthetic experiences that have probably served to shape his judgment, but also that he has been able to translate them and refine his judgment. Perhaps after years of vetting his aesthetic judgment in a public setting he has been able to refine it to a degree that allows for him to invigorate Kant's other faculties of reason and intellect? He closed by suggesting the administrator needs to be adaptable. As he phrased it,

*"As an administrator [or hybrid] you need the capacity to adjust. As it's honed through the loop, that's the lewd serpent, chi. about imagination, visionary space. Spirit/matter space is the invisible" (Interview, 2013).*

If an administrator is to operate within a world that includes the invisible (or Kant's supersensible) then they must have aesthetic judgment that is extremely well developed. Aesthetic judgment in this case might act to allow for the administrator to make decisions in an environment that presents problems that are always changing, and new particulars. In this way, aesthetic judgment might enable the other faculties to adapt.

**Table VI. Summary of Poet and Director of Local Library Analysis**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion	"I'd give him his Johnny Walker and coffee...might have a straw hat...friendly" "Well-dressed, liked his Johnny Walker at 8am before work"
Judgment of Experience (aesthetic choices and creative process) Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"There were scandals with libraries that were not in balance" "It's a loaded difficult situation. And you have to make a decision how to act" "All of these registers have to be honored and critically scrutinized" "If you don't manage that chaos, if you don't get into the fire and interact...[then bad things happen]"
Translation of feelings	"My sense is people are woefully ignorant of what I call the vertical connection"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"The ACLU they weren't happy [with what I did]" "People loved it. (The arrest)"
Exercising Discretion Adaptation	"You're going to have to be able to dance with a complex situation, dude."

(Interview, 2013)

**Director of Various Public Agencies/Painter**

To begin the interview I said, "I'm interested in a time when you felt as though you lacked guidance or rules regarding how to act. Would you mind telling me a story about this situation and how you decided what to do?"

He then explained,

*"All of the jobs I have had, I have not had any education or experience in"*

*(Interview, 2013).*

I replied with a probing question, "So you did you get the jobs?" He goes on to

explain,

*That's a good question. Government gets tied up in politics and programs they forget the mission. So how do I make decisions? I figure out what I'm there for (the mission). I've been able to simplify, does it benefit or sustain the system"*  
*(Interview, 2013).*

Finding “out what I’m there for” implies looking for the mission that guides an organization. Given this mission is literally what he is there for then we can assume that this mission statement is therefore meaningful. Merleau-Ponty would suggest that in the presence of this meaning something more, a substance of being could have been created, at least if we consider the political process by which the mission statement was created a process similar to an artistic one (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Perhaps we cannot extend Merleau-Ponty quite this far, but from the quote, we can assume that this hybrid administrator developed a sense for which missions are worth pursuing. As he phrased it, “I’ve been able to simplify, does it benefit or sustain the system?” By suggesting that he has been able to simplify he tells us that he is able to use his sense or feel for the situation to reduce a large number of organizational goals down to whether they “benefit or sustain the system.” In other words, he uses his judgment to help and determine which organizational goals fit with the mission statement. This aligns with how Arendt suggested aesthetic judgment ought to be used, suggesting it would help and determine what to do when “bannisters” and “yardsticks” fall short of helping us (Arendt, 1992). In this way, the administrator uses the mission statement combined with his interpretation of it, so as to apply his understandings to different situations (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2006; Stivers, 2011).

What we cannot tell from his quote is whether the mission is a reflection of the rational or the political? It could be a mixture of both, but Carl Friedrich and Immanuel Kant would both suggest that the mission statement leaves space for administrators to use their judgment (Friedrich, 1940; Kant, 2001). What is important is what we can discern, and that is that this hybrid administrator used his judgment to make the mission statement more meaningful. In this way, he provided himself with an interpretation of how he determine which types of understandings fit relative to organizational pursuits (i.e. which items in the organizational agenda should be pursued) and a judgment or sense of the organization(s)' mission that allows him to purposefully act.

In an effort to dive deeper into his sense for the mission statement, and possibly even how to interpret the situation around it I asked him, "How did you know what needed to be done? He responded,

*"The best way to learn about the job was to get out of the office. I went to the people served to ask them how to be effective. Go to those closest to being served to learn what needed to be done. Knowing who I serve, being congruent with the mission. Leaders are supposed to make decisions that are extraordinary, and if they benefit those they serve, then they're the right decisions" (Interview, 2014).*

This approach sounds an awful lot like that which is used in phenomenological research. Because this hybrid lacked experiences, he went to people in an effort to understand their experiences. Mary Parker Follett would approve of this given that it incorporates the expert, i.e. these individuals closest to being served, and the people, who are these very same people (Follett, 1921). He expanded on his understanding of politics by suggesting,

*"Let's bring forth all to the table and find what we agree on. That happens*



*through politics...the glue, the blood. You need the tension [that politics provides]” (Interview, 2014).*

Mary Parker Follett suggested that through politics we can learn to integrate our understandings and work toward what might, for lack of a better word, be called progress (Follett, 1926).

At the same time, the hybrid explained that politics is not always appropriate. For example, he also worked on “*taking politics out of the deputy registrar system, because it was good for citizens*” (Interview, 2013). From both quotes we might gather that determining where politics are beneficial is a matter of aesthetic judgment. This prompts us to ask, is there a foundation for this aesthetic judgment? Hopefully this will be revealed through the rest of the analysis.

The hybrid put the brakes on the interview for a moment. He suggested that a brief biography would help me understand where he was coming from. As he phrased it, *Let me provide you with a little background on myself. I spent time running worker compensation system in Ohio, Personnel Department for county, Personnel Director for state of Ohio, and Director of public safety. I didn’t need [the] background, what I have is confidence is that I understand the mission then I’ll be successful. I was able to put two boards out of business (in my current job)...[There were] two reasons – (1) 60-65% of our patients were dually diagnosed (with mental issues and addiction), and (2) [by virtue of organizational constraints] I couldn’t serve them (by treating only one aspect of the individual). It made sense to provide these services to the whole person. Then Alfred (made anonymous) called and said I want you to consolidate these agencies. [In a*

*meeting] They spent 25 minutes listing the reasons why not to do it. Then Alfred said, "If you're uncomfortable I'll get someone else," All of a sudden they figured out how to do it. One side said they'll swallow us up, the other said they'll take our money. They forget the purpose is to serve one person" (Interview, 2013).*

Two large agencies, one in mental health and the other in alcohol and addition treatment, were combined on the basis of his judgment. As he pointed out, most of the patients treated in either organization were “dually diagnosed” (with mental issues and addition), and in an effort to manage their conditions in their entirety he sought to manage both conditions at the same time. As he suggested, “It made sense to treat the whole person,” suggesting that if he wanted to speak to the mission of both organizations, then they needed to be combined into one.

His statement prompted me to ask, “So how did you gain this ability to know the two agencies needed to be combined?” He replied,

*"I've always believed in meeting the people I served. So I met them and saw they always have another illness. Example- The person is inebriated. His alcohol or drunkenness wears off and it turns out he was self-medicating. He is also schizophrenic or bipolar. The alcohol was a mask for the mental illness. I don't have to single a person out. I met many. It was so clear in the field that you had to be blind not to see it" (Interview, 2013).*

The irony here is to an outsider with some background in psychology, on the basis of empirical research alone I would not have known to do this, and perhaps nor would he. Since the hybrid lacked the experiences of mental health or additions treatment workers, he went to the clients themselves to gain the experience he lacked. As he put it, “[the

presence of the client's addition and mental health issue] was so clear in the field that you had to be blind not to see it." From this we might gather that the hybrid had a series of aesthetic experiences with clients so that he could sense this dual diagnosis. As I probed further I learned the great lengths he went to meet these people he served. He told me stories of several occasions in which he would meet a client and give him his direct phone number. At some point the client would call and say they absolutely needed him. On one or more occasions he met these individuals and got to know them even better. He listened to their problems, much like what one would imagine a counselor would, and although he "did not have experience" this changed very quickly. He must have interacted with his clients to the point that he could recognize aesthetic characteristics that related to their illnesses. In other words, through experience he gained an aesthetic sense or understanding of these mental health conditions and additions. It was precisely through these interactions with clients that he gained the experiences needed to form the judgment that the two agencies should be combined.

The hybrid continued to explain how he gained his aesthetic judgment, and perhaps even some of the nature of his judgment. He explained,

*"When I was in public safety I was in squad cars, at role call. In my office I would get a tailored, structured organizational response instead of the truth that I need to make my decision. The truth is probably too strong of a word. It told me what I needed to make a decision. I had to go out and get my own experience, because I didn't have it" (Interview, 2013)*

Through research he was able to acquire the experience to know enough to make a decision. Those with the experience might have known what actually happened, or had a

sense for what needs to be done, and by listening to them he acquired their understanding, at least in part. This experience helped to shape his aesthetic judgment, and this judgment, in turn, allowed him to discern how to act. As he phrased it, “the truth is probably too strong of a word.” Immanuel Kant, and possibly even Maurice Merleau-Ponty would agree with this statement. The truth would refer to their “supersensible” and “invisible” respectively, whereas judgment, for Kant, was a separate faculty that he considered removed from the “supersensible” (i.e. transcendent or realm of objective truth). In this sense he concurs with Kant that judgment as a faculty is removed from the truth, but it certainly still proved to be useful when making a decision. By attending role call the hybrid observed the situation so that he could gain an aesthetic understanding that was not available in a written report or “structured...response.” From this we might gather that the reports did not offer him the depth that his own experiences did.

Of course I wondered how an administrator could justify a decision made on the basis of judgment. After all, this would drive Herman Finer wild given, in his view, discretion was not to be employed—only legislation to be followed—but perhaps even more offensive to Finer, the use of aesthetic judgment, which was based on what the administrator found pleasing and displeasing (Finer, 1941; Kant, 2001). This prompted me to ask, “How did you defend your actions to the public and the media?” He attempted to explain how the public and media received his decisions. In short, his decisions were not typically well received. As he explained,

*“There’s resentment for two reasons; (1) A guy came from the outside and (2) He’s not even in our field. I said, ‘look, the only person who knows your job better than me is you.’ The people that really understand the workings are people*

*doing it everyday. I'd ask them, 'how would you do my job?' [then we had a brief conversation]. I hired people that are really smart, that I trusted (Interview, 2013).*

This suggests that understanding resides with the individual who experiences something—they sensed the aesthetic characteristics. The people who do their jobs each day “really understand the workings.” This was his way of addressing attacks from those in the organization that did not believe he was qualified. It demonstrated an approach toward politics that one might consider quite skillful and therefore perhaps something to be expected from a hybrid. He appealed to the idea that understanding resides in experience, which is to suggest that those experiencing an event, or occurrence while working could sense something within what Merleau-Ponty would call the interaction between the “touching and the touched” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). If the root of a person’s experience lay in this interaction, it would explain how this experience never be fully transferred to their manager. While he asked others what they experienced, and they presumably shared some of the details, their manager would never be able to sense exactly what they did. In this view, his employees really were the experts at their jobs, and his effort to defend his presence and position within the organization is quite accurate.

He also explained he interactions with the media. As he phrased it,  
*“[The] media would say, ‘This guy doesn’t know what he’s doing.’ The media is a big business. They said, ‘don’t you think the public ought to know (that I don’t know what I’m doing), that’s bullshit.’ I tell them [the media] the truth. [I] Don’t avoid them. If I don’t have the answer I say I’ll get back to you when I*

*do...[they once reported inaccurately, so] I called the reporter. I flew up to the Akron Beacon Journal Monday morning. I met him in his office at 8am and corrected their statement. Then they'd say, 'We need a change agent.' The plain dealer ran an editorial that said let Anonymous Alfred do his thing" (Interview, 2013).*

The hybrid was clearly concerned with how he was perceived, especially given he always approached his jobs in an honest fashion. Perhaps when the reporter learned about his phenomenological approach, they decided to change their headline? To some degree the reporter was correct to scrutinize the hybrid administrator, for he had made decisions on the basis of his aesthetic judgment, a faculty that Kant believes is rooted in his concept of taste (Kant, 2001). But from this interview we can suggest that to some degree his taste, what is pleasing and displeasing, or in this case what a good organization entailed was based on three things: (1) his interpretation of the mission statement and whether specific decisions would benefit the people served, and (2) the aesthetic experiences that he went and acquired, such as participating in role call as chief of police, or meeting clients being treated for a mental health issue, and (3) asking others to provide him with their aesthetic understandings, or what they believe needs to be done. These two pieces served to shape his understanding of a good organization and his aesthetic judgment, and they helped him to apply this judgment going forward in an effort to made decisions. To the extent that he can describe his approach, and how he has developed his aesthetic judgment to the public, then this hybrid can be considered to engage in what Hannah Arendt called “wooing” or “courting” (Arendt, 1992). In other words, by describing his taste to others (in politics) he might “woo” them to believe that a good organization is something

similar, and therefore gain their approval and perhaps allegiance.

Toward the end of the interview the hybrid probably had enough of my structured questions and sought to test my ability to adapt. Not surprisingly, his statement called for me to redesign my methodology. He said,

*“I heard you mention creativity before. That’s interesting because I’m a painter. Let me take you up to my office and show you some of my paintings...[elevator music plays] ...these are my paintings [Left- Series of colored red, blue, and yellow downward lines, almost look like a symmetric sideways sound wave]. [Referring to the painting in the Middle] “That’s the special one [because] there’s a painting underneath here. I was a civic activist. There was one of civil unrest, police brutality, and a wall with a urinal that said ‘everyman works for everyman.’ Along with every ethnic slang I could think of. I tried to give it to a friend and he said, ‘What I am going to do with this.’ So I took it and put a 1967 championship game—Browns losing to the Vikings. It’s not the game that’s important, it’s more important what’s behind it” (Interview, 2013)*

As a public administrator, who lacked experience painting, I was really interested in the concept of a painting underneath another painting. I thought, “Wow, for a layperson this really illustrates the concept of meaning within a piece of art quite well.” As he explained, the painting that was visible was not important, but instead the one beneath it was because it stood for all of the things he did as a political activist. Although I did not ask whether he would have hung the painting of a championship game without the other paintings behind it, given that he outright said “it’s not the game that’s important,” suggests he would not have hung it. This suggests that in art the invisible is just as

important, if not more important than the visible, and yet a glimpse of Merleau-Ponty's invisible and Kant's supersensible can only be caught through the aesthetic experience itself—something that public administration really does not value all that much at the moment (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Kant, 2001). This prompts us to wonder what are some of the things that ran through his mind while painting the invisible painting. Merleau-Ponty would suggest that while painting the hybrid gained an aesthetic understanding of the living things that would not have found their way into an organizational report, moreover, Kant and others would suggest that by accessing and translating them the hybrid was able to improve their taste and capacity to make decisions.



**Table VII. Summary of Interview with Director of Various Public Agencies/Painter**

Aesthetic Experience  Respiration (M-P)  Immersion	"The person is inebriated. His alcohol or drunkenness wears off and it turns out he was self-medicating" "I had to go out and get my own experience, because I didn't have it"
Judgment of Experience  Disturbance  Emotion or Feeling  Meaning  Purpose or intent	"There's resentment [toward me] for two reasons" "[The painting] said 'everyman works for everyman.' Along with every ethnic slang I could think of" That's the special one [because] there's a painting underneath here "I've been able to simplify, does it benefit or sustain the system"
Translation of feelings	"The alcohol was a mask for the mental illness"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical)  Judgment of work and meaning within  Political Dimension	"The truth is probably too strong of a word. It told me what I needed to make a decision" "That happens through politics...the glue, the blood. You need the tension"
Exercising Discretion  Adaptation	"I flew up to Akron Beacon Journal Monday morning [in his office]"

(Interview, 2013)

### **Part Three: Interviews with Public Administrators**

#### **Grade School Teacher**

Employing the “selective approach” of hermeneutic phenomenological reflection presented by Max Van Manen, several meaningful themes emerged from the interview with the schoolteacher (Van Manen, 1990, p.94). First, the teacher seemed to have built a strong sense for what a learning disability in a child looked like. The job called for her to recognize and in many cases help begin to diagnose learning disabilities or psychological disorders in order to effectively manage the classroom. In a classroom, with more than

thirty students, she was able to form a judgment regarding the psychological needs of a student, and allow a student to act according to her judgment. In many cases this judgment was the only thing between students that had the potential to be dangerous, and the well being of other students. As she phrased it,

*“He found them (scissors). He knew that what was he wanted to do. It was a self-soothing behavior. He was choosing something that was fitting his needs at the time. You can tell. I knew him well enough to know that was what he needed to do. He couldn’t express what his needs were. [But] I could tell. It was obvious with this kid what was going on” (Interview, 2013).*

In this situation, the teacher allowed a student to strip the paint off a pencil with a pair of scissors because it was “a self-soothing behavior” that this particular student “needed” (Interview, 2013). The teacher would most likely have not allowed just any student to play with scissors in this way, but the use of her words, “knew him well enough” suggests that her understanding of the student was derived from experience (Interview, 2013). Given the student “couldn’t express what his needs were” (at least not verbally), it was likely the image of a student, or this student having been engaged in a self-soothing behavior in the past, that provided the teacher with the mental picture of the student in a soothed state and allowed for a comparison of sorts. She repeatedly said that she “could tell” what this student needed, and “what was going on” (Interview, 2013). This suggests that she not only had seen this student sooth (or calm) himself in the past, but also that she had enough experience to begin to evaluate what he needed. For how else could she “tell” what his needs were without some prior experiences with him? Further, the administrator noted that she was chastised by the school psychologist for

allowing the student to use the scissors in this manner, which suggests that she not only used her discretion to allow him to use the scissors, but more importantly she exercised her discretion against the orders of the school psychologist on the basis of her aesthetic sense of this student. This suggests her aesthetic sense for this student was strong enough for her to act according to it, even if possibly risking administrative action by the school, which could very easily have meant the loss of her job.

Even though the student had not been officially diagnosed as bipolar, the teacher determined that he was “most likely bipolar” (Interview, 2013). A formal bipolar diagnosis would require empirical observations, and the absence thereof suggests that the essence of being bipolar, or *bipolarness*, might be found elsewhere. This is to suggest that Arendt’s “yardsticks” could not be applied because the teacher’s judgment could not be translated into scientific terms (Hummel, 2006). Given the teacher “knew” something that the psychologist did not—this was validated by a future incident with the student biting another child while under the care of substitute teacher—the teacher’s judgment might have required more than the use of her five senses. In fact, when asked how she knew a student had attention deficit disorder she did not put it into words, but instead demonstrated it with a physical action (Interview, 2013). By acting out what a student with a learning disability might look like she indicated that her sense for a learning disability went beyond what she could explain using the five senses, whereas, the empirical could likely be explained and diagnosed. In other words, her judgment of “what was going on” with the student seemed to be based on what Chester Barnard might have called an overall sense for the individual, rather than empirical cues (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Barnard, 1966).

After further discussion the teacher shared her technique for communicating with students in an effort to get to know them better. This technique has similarities to what Merleau-Ponty found Cezanne to employ when painting. In other words, her sense for the individual was acquired much like the artist experienced their environment. This set of experiences allowed for her to interact with a student on a deeper level. The teacher would tap on the students' desks when lecturing, not to wake them up, but to see how they would respond to her tapping. When asked how she knew student's had a learning disability she explained,

*“When you walk around the room and tap on the desk to see if they're there.*

*Sometimes they're good, sometimes not” (Interview, 2013).*

This process of interaction, or what Merleau-Ponty might call interrogation, allowed for an exchange between the teacher and student (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). This interaction allowed her to explore whether the student was “there” or present in the classroom. Given these students were sitting in their desks, they were most certainly “there,” or at least observable sitting in their desks. But what did she mean when she said she could see if “they're there...[and] good?” What could she sense through this interrogation? Merleau-Ponty would suggest that tapping on a desk allowed for her to communicate with the student so as to reveal a little of who a student was. Merleau-Ponty stated that an artist's interrogation with the environment allowed the invisible, in this case the substance of the student as a human, to be unconcealed (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). As Merleau-Ponty further explained, part of the task of the artist is to weld together “all of the partial views one catches sight of” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.304).

Much like the artist, the teacher could pick up on these “partial views” through

communicating with the students on a deeper level. The teacher recalled another student whom she interacted with, “I’m remembering one girl who would shake her head, like this (back and forth). She was trying to clear her head to be able to focus” (Interview, 2013). Many people shake their heads for many different reasons, disapproval, disbelief, or frustration, to name a few, but how was this teacher was able to recognize this student was trying to clear her head by shaking it? Moreover, how was she so certain that the physicality of shaking was the embodiment of a learning disability? Perhaps, while interacting with a student she was able to listen to them in a way that allowed her to get to the root of why they shook their head? Beyond the physical movement of shaking her head, beyond her eyes, or other empirically observable *physicalities* she might have even caught a glimpse of the invisible (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Merleau-Ponty might have suggested that this aesthetic notion of what a learning disability is, and even who an individual is, might have been revealed through interaction with the environment. When she tapped on a desk she was not looking for a “who’s there,” but the presence of that student in the room. She was looking to align or validate the student’s response with her own sense of them as a person—a fully alive human being. In this view, tapping might have functioned as a tool to see beyond the empirical. It was a means to more closely examine a student, who they are, and how they ought to behave based on this understanding. Tapping is much like what Cezanne did with Mont Sainte-Victoire—it served as a way to begin Merleau-Ponty’s process of respiration so as to allow for her to lend herself to the class, and for the class to speak back to her on a level beyond what she could plainly see. It allowed her to build a sense for each student and what lay within (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

In a follow-up interview the administrator explained this interaction with the student further. As she put it,

*“The desk tapping is part of a classroom teacher's repertoire of non verbal redirects, much like Cesar uses with dogs. During most of the day the teacher is walking around the room either talking or helping or just watching to see how everyone is doing. If you notice someone who doesn't seem to be paying attention, you tap on their desk while you walk by. Subtle, but effective and it doesn't embarrass the kid. If you're addressing the whole class, as in a lecture situation, a verbal cue using a student's name is useful...using the name before the meat of the message also helps ensure that the student also a student is hearing the message. If you use the name at the very beginning of the sentence though, others tend to tune out. So much of successful teaching is just acting and salesmanship...I'm really better at demonstrating rather than explaining methods, I think, since they just are second nature to me” (Interview, 2014).*

Although her methods are second nature and therefore difficult to explain, she seems to have explained things pretty well. Her desk tapping is a “non-verbal redirects” designed to engage with the student. In an effort to communicate she also used verbal cues like the student’s name. What she calls acting and salesmanship, I would suggest, is actually artfulness. The “desk-tapping” method is probably not listed in a teaching textbook given that if it is done improperly could lead to an unruly class. In this way, we might consider desk tapping to allow for respiration to occur between the teacher and student, basically it creates the conditions to have an aesthetic experience. This aesthetic experience is then used as the foundation for the teacher’s judgment. In other words, through this aesthetic

experience she has further honed her judgment and used it to assess how certain students should be taught. Moreover, her aesthetic sense for her students was used to defend certain grades that she assigned, and also go to the school psychologist, principal, and parents to present her concerns for further action. This is to suggest that she felt strongly enough about her aesthetic sense that she decided to act on it, and even bring it to other members of the school community, which is to say that she brought this aesthetic sense forth so as to be interrogated by politics.

**Table VIII. Summary of Interview with Grade School Teacher**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion	"Desk-tapping" "I'm really better at demonstrating rather than explaining methods"
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"I'm remembering one girl who would shake her head, like this (back and forth). She was trying to clear he head to be able to focus" "Sometimes they're good, sometimes not" "He couldn't express what his needs were"
Translation of feelings	"It looks like this [she then proceeded to act ADHD out]"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	Parent teacher conferences, meetings with school psychologist, and principal
Exercising Discretion Action Adaptation	Called a meeting for formal diagnosis, allowed scissors

(Interview, 2013)

### **Child Support Caseworker**

The caseworker was asked if he would mind sharing a story about a situation where he lacked guidance on how to act, and how he decided what to do. He replied,

*“So there are many things I could say. There was an individual excited about his girlfriend’s pregnancy. Mid 20’s construction worker, he’d come in wearing his construction outfit. Not the usual client [given he was excited]. He asked about the law, and his legal rights. In the state of Ohio they kind of ambush the client in the delivery room with the paternity acknowledgement form. You have 60 days to rescind the signature if you’re not the father. He was beaming, so happy. He asked me ‘what should I do?’ I said, ‘I’m not allowed to give you legal advice.’ I gave him my opinion that he shouldn’t sign because you’re paying (obligor) years of child support through false established paternity. This guy kept coming back for genetic testing. They [administration] used scare tactics saying you could get fired [for providing legal advice to clients]. Emotions are at stake, people’s lives. He got the genetic test. The state of Ohio switched vendors, and he had to get another test. He kept coming in, asking ‘are the results in?’ They finally came in and read ‘0.00% chance of paternity.’ I printed it, he said, ‘that’s cool,’ and teared up. Overall, I think I did the right thing” (Interview, 2014).*

This public administrator must have felt strongly enough about his actions in this situation so as to knowingly disobey the agency’s rules, which is to suggest that he, used his discretion. This prompts us to ask, where did his judgment of what was the right course of action come from? As he suggested, this was “not the usual client,” because he looked to be excited about visiting child support. The caseworker explained that most potential fathers we not thrilled to be given a paternity test and find out that they not only have a kid with a person in which the relationship had failed, but that they are in arrears. In other words, these clients actually owe money for the time that had already past, as



well as going forward. The public administrator must have had some sort of aesthetic feel for this particular individual to know that he was happy. It could have been something as small as body language, a smile, smirk, or twinkle in the client's eyes that clued him in, or perhaps his feel for a client was more honed than this. As he put it, "he was beaming, so happy." He interacted with roughly 60-80 clients and members of the public each day, and delivered this type of news quite regularly. It stands to reason that he might have observed enough people processing the news that he had a sense for what he might expect as a reaction. This is to suggest that he has experienced a similar exchange in the past, and allowed the spot between his eyes and mind to make sense of these experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) and gain this aesthetic feel, so he could see that "he was excited."

A couple of other things are evident here. First, the process of respiration presented by Merleau-Ponty, one of back and forth, between the subject and object, or in this case the administrator and client, likely occurred. The administrator's experiences might have consisted in him lending his own emotions to the clients (self-investment to some degree), and his clients doing the same, creating a back-and-forth exchange on a deeper level. Second, the administrator believes he "did the right thing" even though he acted against organizational guidelines, or even rules. So how did he know that it was the right thing? Was it ultimately because he sought to preserve the emotional health of a human being over the agency's rules? As he pointed out, "emotions are at stake, peoples' lives." The end outcome of the paternity test certainly could be used to justify his actions, but we dove deeper into how he knew throughout the course of the interview.

In an effort to uncover the roots of this decision I asked, "Where do you think the

basis for this decision came from?” He replied,

*“A sense of justice embedded in my psyche and my moral upbringing. To try and encompass all of these people with these rules, it’s harmful to individuals, because they’re [individuals] different. Sometimes things aren’t black and white. My sense of compassion. Emotional drain led to an average 3-year tenure in the job. “Old timers wouldn’t have intervened.” The psychological damage it would do to the child. Everything is geared towards the woman [in Ohio]” (Interview, 2014).*

Here the administrator suggests the bureaucratic system in Ohio is a one size fits all approach that often hurts individuals. This statement not only displays a sense of appreciation for the individual, but it suggests the administrator is also keen to the differences between people. This is to suggest that he recognizes difference, which is probably particularly helpful when working to understand individuals on an aesthetic level. Moreover, this eye for difference probably helped to enable him to apply his “sense of justice.”

The administrator went on to explain how he could have gotten fired for the interaction with the construction worker. This prompted me to ask, “What if you were caught? How would you defend yourself?” He replied,

*“I’d probably use the government’s tools against them. I’d use ambiguous terms. If my job were on the line I’d be deceitful (but not outright lie). I could explain my actions by saying, if a child’s born out of wedlock it should be a mandatory paternity test. I’d present my argument. The government is trying to make order out of chaos, sometimes backfires. I always try to do right by people” (Interview,*

2014).

What is interesting is that his first inclination was to suggest that he would lie to his employer. This suggests that in a way his employer would not understand his actions, even if rooted in an aesthetic understanding or how he conceptualized justice. If pushed further it seems that he would stand his ground and “explain his actions.” He knew he did the right thing and demonstrated some desire to change the governmental system. As he explained, “the government is trying to make order out of chaos, sometimes backfires.” In other words, he does not believe the governmental system is working correctly and perhaps in an effort to help people he would like to “present [his] argument” in an effort to change how things are done. He feels strongly that when children are born out of wedlock there should be a “mandatory paternity test,” suggesting Ohio’s approach is not what is “right” for the people.

In an effort to explain his frustrations while working for the government he said, *“For a creative...individual like myself, for everything to be so clear cut and dry, you really couldn’t get creative [frustration].” I looked at the human elements, the person affected. Where I could be creative...I dealt with the case narrative. I’d get very creative, always be called the frustrated novelist by coworkers, got poetic, writing long narratives about each situation” (Interview, 2014).*

Here, the administrator suggested that he had creative ability and used it on the job to perhaps communicate a sense of the aesthetic that he saw with others. Perhaps these novellas were the only way to communicate what the administrator picked up on during his aesthetic experiences with the clients? In light of his co-workers response, we might wonder whether his co-workers read his case narratives. Did they start reading, chalk it

up as the efforts of a “frustrated novelist” and stop shortly after, or did they read his narratives and use them when dealing with each of these clients? This would make for an interesting project in itself, but in light of their remarks we could assume these narratives probably were not read to the fullest, meaning they were not read in a manner in which they would adequately convey the administrator’s aesthetic understanding(s).

Perhaps how his case narratives were received helped to inform the administrator that how he approached clients was different than the approaches used by other caseworkers. He knew his approach was different, and he seemed to worry about not only subjectivity, but also about being manipulated by clients. As he explained,

*“The problem with this was each client would kind of manipulate someone like me with their feelings. I’d look at the narrative and see the game of chess. Each person would be trying to spin their own web. The role that I took was to play both sides, not take sides, and take each on a case-by-case basis. A lot of the women in the agency were jaded and be nasty with male clients. I was nice to everybody and people respected me for it” (Interview, 2014).*

What really happened, or what Merleau-Ponty would call what is really there might be behind the game (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). In this sense, the administrator seems to have used his aesthetic understanding in an effort to dig deeper into what is really there. In other words, his aesthetic understanding, along with an open yet skeptical attitude, could have provided him with what he needed to know to unravel their web to reveal the web’s spider and how he began to spin it.

In an effort to probe further, I asked, “How did you discern how to act when dealing with these webs? By how people looked or acted?”

He replied,

*“You can tell a lot about the person. One fellow overpaid to his ex-wife. She forged his name on the check. He was a dentist, several thousand-dollar check. He came to me, my team lead laughed at him because he was crying. I presented him with his options. It’s a legal matter, you should prosecute for forgery. Ultimately he couldn’t do that to the mother of his children. They [clients] look down on me. When that was the case I was a lot less sympathetic. Perhaps that’s why they failed at their relationship(s). I had one guy I could tell was fibbing. He went to prison for child abuse. He wanted custody, speaking badly about his wife. He was playing the victim. You could never tell [on the basis of his actions/conduct]. Not at all” (Interview, 2014).”*

But he could tell, how? He referenced his case file and record, but it was clear he had a sense for him beyond his file. To some degree this administrator was probably caught by some of the administrative red tape. He knew he that he should have stuck to the file, and to some degree this “visible” record is certainly more believable, but at the same time he was very clearly aware of these people on the basis of the aesthetic experiences that revealed a glimpse of the “invisible” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). He goes on to explain,

*“Another client is a girl who sold her child for cash. I saw her in the hall getting a genetic test” (Interview, 2014).*

From this we can see that empirical evidence (i.e. the phenomena of the woman visiting the office for a paternity test might have helped to shape his aesthetic sense. In this respect, we can see that the visible and invisible create a feedback loop with one another. In other words, the visible and invisible enable each to some degree, which probably

explains the administrator's earlier statement.

I probed, perhaps more directly, and asked, "So how did you know this about the fellow [that he was fibbing]? He responds,

*"That was based on prior experience on how dark the world can be. Dealing with people on a daily basis. How people can hurt those that mean the most to them. The nature of the job was based on failed relationships. The human experience can be very dark and confusing" (Interview, 2014).*

His aesthetic sense for what a "fib" consists of is informed by his experiences and daily interactions with people. This is quite different than saying he learned "how dark the world can be" from the use of his imagination, or ability to reason. To some degree he went on to attempt to make sense of his experiences. By saying the world can be dark and confusing he suggested that he is really trying to understand what he has experienced. In other words, he attempted to make sense of his aesthetic experiences and the understanding that resulted from having these experiences. Immanuel Kant might have suggested that his aesthetic judgment was rooted in the community, therefore a "sensus communis," which is why he is attempting to understand what he sensed (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992). Alternatively, if you think of the community as playing a role in forming his judgment, perhaps even on a subconscious level, then to him, aesthetic judgment might tell him certain things that thinking on his own might not.

In an effort to probe further I asked another question—"When is the human experience dark?"

*"When I first started thinking about death...The triviality of being...You see how people \*\*\*\* their own lives up...you try to piece it together as best you can. It's a*

*very human thing. You see something wounded and in need of help. It's an instinctual thing. Maybe inwardly I feel wounded and I see this everywhere else"* (Interview, 2014).

This statement struck me as particularly profound. Here the administrator suggests that his overall sense for the world was informed his dealings with people—suggesting that he could be projecting his own feelings onto the rest of the world. From this quote we might also gather that he was motivated by his desire to help others, i.e. helping others was meaningful to him.

In response to my earlier question the administrator really began describe his aesthetic experiences. As he phrased this understanding,

*"Some of the guys straight out of the joint, you could tell they were physically in shape. They were some of the kindest folks I dealt with. Conversely, the privileged folks treated me the worst. This is possibly a generalization. Most of it would be done through probing questions—Different ways to frame it, of essentially getting at the same answer. A lot of it would be just from talking. Different vibes. You know an aura, a negative vibe. Has someone ever given you the creeps?"* (Interview, 2014).

In light of his comments we can assume that when interacting with a client he did more than merely record responses. And yet, to my knowledge, there was no handbook that suggested he should frame questions in different ways, or to observe the clients on an aesthetic level (i.e. observe their build or how they treated him). The administrator asked things in different ways and used his questions to probe, which in a way allowed him to interact with a client on a deeper level. He not only observed certain physical attributes

of the clients, but he felt “different vibes...an aura, [or] a negative vibe” (Interview, 2014). He seemed to have engaged with the clients much like Merleau-Ponty’s process of respiration, which is to say that he got to know clients on a deeper level through his interactions with them. These experiences allowed him to get an aesthetic sense for each client that probably could not be translated into case narratives. In other words, his probing questions allowed him to interpret their responses and form his understanding on the basis of his judgment. His question, “Has someone ever given you the creeps?” suggests that his aesthetic judgment is quite difficult to translate into words, but might be best understood as a feeling.

The administrator expanded on his experiences by saying,

*“The typical delusions of grandeur, nonsensical talk. Things I see within myself. Ha, Ha. One guy was sitting on the floor. I asked him his address and he said ‘Public Square.’ His payments were consistent, then all of a sudden he lost it” (Interview, 2014).*

We can almost be certain that “delusions of grandeur” was not defined in his employee handbook, so how did he know how to access clients using this as a concept? Kant’s thinking faculty would probably suggest the fellow who had an address of “public square” had certain mental issues, but getting a sense for “delusions of grandeur” or “nonsensical talk” required him to draw on judgment to discern what was going on, and what to do. Most, if not all of the situations he encountered were unique, which meant that any pieces of knowledge did not readily fit the situations and tell him what to do. And as he joked, perhaps he recognized “delusions of grandeur, [and] nonsensical talk” by comparing the behavior of the client with his own. Ralph Hummel might have



suggested that in this way, he wrote himself into the story so as to be able to compare where he is similar and different from the client (Hummel, 1991; Gendlin, 1973). The administrator might have also used this story to see how he might act in a particular situation and phrase and hone his probing questions in a way that targets the specific behavior that he might expect from himself.

The administrator continues to explain the basis of his judgments,  
*“I would’ve picked up on frustration, anxiety, non-verbal cues, signs of anger, getting loud, antsy. Body language. Pacing around. Not comfortable in their surroundings. It was a general thing. The key is listening. Telling someone to calm down is not always a good thing. But if you listen to someone and their situation and have a general care...open yourself up and they’ll open up to you. If they’re feeling angry then be patient and keep trying to listen. If no common ground can be met then prepare for the next client. Because everyone would want to monopolize your time, you know, because there was a long line” (Interview, 2014).*

As Cezanne suggested, “nature is on the inside” (Cezanne, as cited in Merleau-Ponty, 1968). “Frustration, anxiety, non-verbal cues...not comfortable in their surroundings”—all of these things are aesthetic by nature. Although psychology handbooks could list empirical signs of anger, actually seeing and interpreting whether these particular signs fit with a definition is done through the administrator’s judgment. He explains, “the key is listening,” suggesting that he did not just ask the questions so as to populate a case narrative, but instead he listened to each client. In this way, we have some confirmation that he engaged with them on a deeper level. As he phrased it, “If you listen to someone

and their situation and have a general care...open yourself up and they'll open up to you" (Interview, 2014). Although listening implies the use of one of the five senses, here the administrator uses it to suggest a deeper interaction is needed, and one that involves lending himself. Finding "common ground" might suggest that he had, in fact, written himself into their stories and not only lent them his time, but perhaps even his essence as an individual. This certainly has some similarities to Merleau-Ponty's idea of respiration. In his aesthetic experiences with clients we might think of the administrator inspired by that which he sees, and expiring that which is seen (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). In other words, it was through lending himself to clients that he could listen more deeply. That said if the clients did not provide him with a story, or perhaps did not lend his/herself to him, then the administrator lacked what he needed to interact with them. As he pointed out, it was a definite judgment concerning when to move on to the next clients as, "there was a long line" of clients hoping to be *listened to*.

**Table IV. Summary of Interview with Child Support Case Worker**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion	"Open yourself up and they'll open up to you"
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"When I first started thinking about death" "Has someone ever given you the creeps?" "You see something wounded and in need of help" "You try to piece it [their lives] together as best you can"
Translation of feelings	"The typical delusions of grandeur, nonsensical talk. Things I see within myself"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"Overall, I think I did the right thing" "If my job were on the line I'd be deceitful (but not outright lie)...I'd present my argument"
Exercising Discretion Action Adaptation	"[Administration] used scare tactics saying you could get fired [for providing legal advice to clients]" - He did "I gave him my opinion that he shouldn't sign"

(Interview, 2014)

### **Director of Finance for Local Government**

I began the interview by saying, "I'm interested in a time when you felt as though you lacked guidance or rules regarding how to act. Would you mind telling me a story about this situation and how you decided what to do?" He replied,

*"[My] first city finance position was with the city of Simon (made anonymous). I took a pay cut to be finance director. I was a technician in Worcester (made anonymous), created record machine, [and there was] no guidebook to do it. I created a program in lotus. 640 lines of code... I took the steps logically. Before this, records were maintained on a card-roller, maintained summary sheets by hand. There was no requirement that gov't had to keep these things on record.*

*Payroll, fixed assets, capital accounting... My boss gave me the direction to put it together...and make it work. They were getting into automation at Arthur Anderson, so [my boss believed] we should too” (Interview, 2013).*

From this quote we can see that even in a seemingly technical job like programming there is plenty of room for interpretation, and employing individual judgment. In particular, his bosses’ direction, “make it work,” implies that there was very little guidance and certainly room for administrative discretion. Even the administrator’s choice of words, “I took the steps logically” probably imply the use of judgment. This prompts us to wonder what serves as the basis for his judgment.

The administrator explains his process of navigating his field—a process from what we can gather helped to shape his judgment. As he phrased it,

*“I made wrong decisions in my career. They were technical. [So] I was purely black and white, inputs and outputs. It was finance. You talk about theory x [and theory y management style], I was a nasty son of a bitch. [And] That did not get the job done. [In Worcester] the utilities department got a program for free. It needed \$2 million in updates. It kept track of accounts receivables in a water system. I kept this management style [x] in Worcester. I became a true director. I recognized I couldn’t do it myself, nor did I want to do it” (Interview, 2013).*

The administrator made a series of decisions that were “wrong” and served as learning experiences. Judgment is not necessarily important here, but what is important is how these decisions led to having meaningful aesthetic experiences. From his statement and self-descriptors we can tell that he gained a sense of self-awareness that led to his experiences becoming much more meaningful in terms of how he interacted with other

people while at work.

As he explained, the next experience was particularly meaningful in terms of refining his judgment. As he put it,

*“When working as director of finance for the city of Simon (made anonymous). I invoked professionalism against politics. (Defending decision) Council meeting is when I really got my eyes opened up. I told her (the council person) what I was doing; She kept saying ‘I don’t understand, I don’t understand.’ In the paper they published what I said, ‘Well you obviously don’t have the capacity to understand.’ This was an eye opening experience for me! In a political environment I can’t yell at people for not understanding technical work. I had to write a formal written apology and apologize at the next meeting. I became sensitive to the political environment. It was the right thing to do, although I needed to be cajoled into doing it (by his boss). I went from being a theory x to something more sympathetic. I had to go back to school because I lacked the CPA and MPA. I had to get other people with professional competence to corroborate what I was doing. Accounting is an art not a science” (Interview, 2013).*

This experience really served to illustrate the importance of politics to the administrator. During the interview he seemed to allude to the fact that he still believed the woman “did not have the capacity to understand” his technical work, but through the experience he changed his approach. This is to suggest that the process of seeing the newspaper printed, having words with his boss, and writing a formal letter of apology really allowed him to understand these people in a deeper way. When writing a letter of apology, or any good letter, for that matter, the writer typically spends some time thinking about the

person that they are writing to. This is in an effort to get to know them better, their likes and dislikes, so as to write a letter that speaks to them more deeply. In this way, the experience of writing a letter was likely an aesthetic one described by Merleau-Ponty's concept of respiration, moreover, the letter writing process was a creative one that allowed for a deeper interaction with the councilperson (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Assuming the administrator's experiences helped him gain an appreciation of both other individuals and politics, then it follows that his taste, what he finds pleasing or displeasing, is more likely to be brought to the political realm and refined by incorporating the tastes of others into his aesthetic judgment.

The administrator went on to describe a controversial decision he made. He said, *“Grant accounting [deals with] how federal grants are absorbed. We’re going to build a road, we’ll (the city will) contribute \$2MM, and the gov’t will put in \$10MM. If you follow contractual terms so federal government provides funds. I increase estimated revenues to offset the negative balance. I run a negative balance in my budgetary statements. I don’t take money out of the general fund. 99% of entities would advance monies from the general fund. By using the equity and pool cash I was...a city’s credit rating is predicated on the general fund, so I didn’t want to drain it. We all have an understanding based on prior history or experience. Preserving the cash in general fund was drilled into me from day one (father). As a kid I learned don’t spend money if you don’t have to. My father said it takes an expert to run a business with no money. The reason I know to do that is there’s no reason to give up cash if that’s what gives them their reputation of worth. I knew to do that instinctively more than anything else”* (Interview,

2013).

Although he attributed his decision to “run a negative balance” to instincts, and what he was taught as a child, this decision seems like it is a matter of judgment. In other words, he needed to have a sense of what running a good business was from somewhere, in this case his father, to that he would have a concept of taste to act on. Perhaps he watched as his father conducted business during different situations and scenarios? This would have provided an understanding that resonated with him. As he pointed out, many others believed this was against GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles) and therefore illegal, so this sense for how to run a good business had to have been quite strong to go against legislation. Further, his taste for how to run a good business must have aligned with the tastes of others otherwise it would not have made it through politics.

At his next job, he largely bypassed politics by way of professionalism. As he explained,

*When I got to the city of Centerville (made anonymous) I was real emphatic about doing that. In 2005, and there was significant grant activity. My staff, and the mayor yelled at me that it was inappropriate. I was a CPA and also had finished my master's degrees. I had worked with UNIS for 20 years (at the internal auditor's office). [When justifying the negative balance to others] I said, I am using my professional judgment and that was all” (Interview, 2013).*

In this case, he avoided politics. A more difficult route might have been to take his aesthetic sense of what a good business entails, how it runs when encountering different situations, what it feels like, and attempt to explain this good business. Further, if others had the opportunity to listen to him describe even one aesthetic experience about his

father's business, how it behaved and what it means for good business, then others probably would have accepted his negative balance. This is to suggest that instead of defending his judgment through insulation, behind professionalism that he could have taken a more integrative approach (Follett, 1926).

This prompted me to ask, "What if you were asked to further explain your actions?" He answered,

*"I'd say 'on a full accrual basis this money is due back to the city. It represents a valid receivable. If I know you owe me money, why would I give you the money?' That's not written in any accounting book. My father's teaching that you need to preserve your wealth and not spend it. My job as a finance director is to preserve our [city] assets" (Interview, 2013).*

This illustrates that in fact the administrator could have taken this integrative approach, but chose not to. In other words, he could have translated his aesthetic sense for what makes a good business that he gained as a child into terms that others might understand. From what we can gather, the difficulty in employing this aesthetic sense, and putting it into practice as judgment is in the process of translation (Arendt, 1992), therefore he was already ninety percent of the way there. All that remained was the political.

When referring to the assumptions on the front page of a FY 2014 city budget, he said,

*"They're all gut feelings (that go into the assumptions). Judgment comes from my conservative nature. I'm simply indicating whether or not we can afford it. There's all kind of discretion in there. Is \$4MM enough? That's really the big issue [and where judgment comes into play]. 'Where did I come up with \$4MM*



*from?’ People will accept that you underestimated, but not overestimation”*  
*(Interview, 2013).*

This statement is helpful in many ways. It confirms Kant’s notion that there is no rule for following a rule (Kant, 2001). In other words, even in a seemingly, perhaps even an overly technical document like a city budget, there is a great deal of discretion employed. As the administrator pointed out, in a budget, there is no rule for determining how much money is enough—this is judgment. He continued to explain that the entire first page of the budget lists these judgments—a move that seems to suggest respect for and incorporation of politics. The judgments are listed on the very first page of the budget as assumptions within, presumably in an effort to encourage and direct political discourse so as to refine these judgments. In this way, the budget sought to encourage political discourse and perhaps also attempt to find integration among residents and administrators, suggesting that by discussing these assumptions people might be able to confirm, and if necessary, realign them according to their tastes.

And yet, as the administrator pointed out, people typically do not believe what budgets tell them. As he explained,

*What stops people (city departments, like fire) from employing more and going over their budgets each year? If I go into each department head and say look we’re really short this year with enough force, then they believe me” (Interview, 2013).*

This indicates his use of politics to achieve his goal, a value, which was probably learned from his prior experiences. It also prompts one to ask why the city’s budget is not considered sufficient grounds to listen to city council and residents. Perhaps because the

aesthetic judgment employed within the budget needs to be explained by an individual so that it can be better understood. Or, alternatively, maybe the city departments simply want to know that their tastes are truly represented within those aesthetic judgments in the budget?

**Table X. Summary of Interview with Director of Finance for Local Government**

Aesthetic Experience Respiration (M-P) Immersion	<i>"She kept saying 'I don't understand, I don't understand.'"</i> <i>(While writing thank you note)</i>
Judgment of Experience Disturbance Emotion or Feeling Meaning Purpose or intent	"I had to write a formal written apology and apologize at the next meeting" "I became sensitive to the political environment" <i>"It was the right thing to do, although I needed to be cajoled into doing it (by his boss)"</i> "I took the steps logically"
Translation of feelings	"They're all gut feelings (that go into the assumptions)"
Meaning-Making (i.e. Metaphysical) Judgment of work and meaning within Political Dimension	"That's not written in any accounting book" "I had to get other people with professional competence to corroborate what I was doing"
Exercising Discretion Action Adaptation	"My boss gave me the direction to put it together...and make it work" "[There was] no guidebook to do it"

(Interview, 2013)

### Summary of Analysis of Interviews

After analyzing the interviews from artists, hybrids, and administrators, we are left wondering what these findings mean for public administration and the specific issues encountered in the field. If we reference the table identified by the committee (please see the methodology), we are reminded that the aesthetic experience relates to three basic

levels of analysis and areas that are of specific concern for the practice of public administration. These levels were (1) “Bringing forth” / Aesthetic reflection (Heidegger; Merleau-Ponty; Kant; Arendt) (2) Judging / Taking a stance toward a situation / Deciding / Acting (Heidegger; Dreyfus) and (3) Justification of the stance / Persuading / “Wooing” / Accountability (Arendt; Kant).

When we examine the interviews with respect to first area identified, that of “bringing-forth” (Heidegger, 1977), we are drawn in to look at the aesthetic experience in more detail. In other words, did artists, administrators, and hybrids have experiences that allowed the world (and what is in it) to become more real to them? Moreover, in the aesthetic experience, what did their minds do in relation to the task (i.e. creation, or situation) at hand? Almost all of the interviews suggest that in the aesthetic experience the individual allowed for a certain freedom, between his/herself and the environment. Many of the artists and administrators allowed for the lending that Merleau-Ponty suggested occurs, and this, in itself, suggests freedom—to experience the world more deeply. They also used this situation as the basis for their actions, and in this sense, the aesthetic experience served as the foundation for not only what they believe to be in the world, but acted on this experience and the understanding gained from it.

Interviews suggest that the aesthetic experience played a role in how artists, hybrids, or administrators decided how to act. Moreover, even in the presence of a clearly articulate piece of legislation, Immanuel Kant would suggest that there is no rule for following a rule (Stivers, 2011), which is to suggest that the work of administration requires the use of judgment. The caseworker in particular seemed to *listen* to his clients in an effort to determine what his or her needs might be, and use this understanding as the

basis to act from, or take a stance. The teacher also used her aesthetic understanding of what a learning disability is, mind you, an understanding that conflicted with the school psychologist, as justification to allow or disallow certain student behavior(s), adjust her approach toward particular students in the classroom, and even make recommendations regarding the formal diagnosis of students. From this we might gather that these administrators not only acted on the basis of their aesthetic understanding(s), but their aesthetic experiences helped to improve their judgment of how to act. This is to suggest that their aesthetic understanding(s) helped them to judge how to act, and decide how to interpret rules (in both, the presence, or absence of rules).

Hummel and Stivers would suggest that when administrators (and perhaps hybrids) encounter certain situations in which they lack a scientific understanding of how to proceed that they use this aesthetic understanding as the basis for their judgment concerning how to act. In this view, the aesthetic experience, and understanding that results, not only involves the use of judgment within the experience itself, concerning how much freedom to allow oneself to experience an environment, and perhaps how deeply, but it also helps them to shape their own judgment of how to act. So how aesthetic experiences find their way into the actions of an administrator is a hermeneutic process. In other words, the aesthetic experience requires judgment concerning how much freedom to allow, and the aesthetic experience is also simultaneously shaping judgment—the very thing the experience employs. This hermeneutic circle related to aesthetic judgment would make anyone concerned with administrative responsibility or accountability nervous, and rightly so. For by acting on aesthetic experiences in a public setting, their aesthetic understandings become not only the basis for judgments, but they

have more often than not, also impacted the lives of other people.

This prompts us to ask whether public administrators acting on the basis of aesthetic experiences, and further, the use of their aesthetic judgment as the basis for their exercise of administrative discretion is merely something subjective, or something different altogether. Moreover, it also calls for us to ask what is keeping the administrator in check, or as Friedrich would have suggested, to whom does the administrator answer? Merleau-Ponty would suggest, at least in terms of the artist, that his or her aesthetic experience becomes real in the process of respiration and is therefore something different than the subjective or objective debate (Merleau-Ponty, 1964), Hannah Arendt would suggest that artists, and by extension, administrators must “woo” the people in an effort to get them to understand and accept their actions (Arendt, 1992). For the purposes of this dissertation the nature of what public administrators do (i.e. their work impacts the public therefore it is public in nature), suggests public administrators will naturally be required to answer to the public concerning any decisions they make that involve the use of their judgment(s).

While several of the administrators interviewed suggested that their actions are simply judged by others on the basis of their result or outcome when applied, other administrators suggested that they are continually required to answer to the public, or as one artist phrased it they must “give an account of things” (Interview, 2013). One administrator suggested that he was continuously not only critiqued by virtue of occupying his position as a director of an organization, but, even further, his decisions were also critiqued by members of his organizations, the media, or the public at large. When presented with this criticism he responded with, “what would you do?” In this way

he began to incorporate the understanding of the individuals with whom he was speaking with, and he began dialogue with the public. He then proceeded to explain his own aesthetic understanding of the situation, and in both senses. he engaged in what Arendt called “wooing” or “courting” these individuals to accept his own very presence as an individual who directs a public organization, and his decisions. His efforts to “woo” or “court” others to accept his decisions is not to necessarily suggest that these people are required to believe what he does. In other words, administrators and the public cannot be expected to have understandings that are the same and therefore integrated thoughts (Follett, 1926). Since aesthetic understandings are based on experiences, and although an experience could technically be shared with others, the interviews would suggest that how that experience is shared is particular to an individual and the choices they make. An administrator or individual could however, work to align his or her understandings, or work to identify and reveal understandings that are compatible to the degree which is necessary with respect aligning to a particular action taken.

If the interviews with administrators can serve as any indication regarding what administrators can tell us about how administrative discretion is exercised, then we might gather that administrators can work to “court” or “woo” the consent of other people (Arendt, 1992). This process helped at least one administrator who was interviewed to build consent, and based on the interview in its entirety probably helped the administrator build political alliances and helped to legitimize his actions. In this sense, even Herman Finer might have believed that public administrators, when required to answer the public and participate in this process of “wooing” or “courting” (Arendt, 1992) were in fact responsible to the public, therefore their use of discretion is not unchecked. In light of

this there is value in revisiting the policeman who was placed on the stand in court to answer questions regarding how he knew the suspects were “hauling dope.” The interviews with administrators and hybrids suggest that the policemen could have done more to “woo” or “court” those in the court. Although the attorneys or judge might have lacked the policeman’s aesthetic experiences, he could have better explained his feel for who and what a “dope hauler” is. In other words, he might have told a story about an encounter with a dope hauler, and the ways in which the hauler spoke to him (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). If possible, the policeman could have disclosed the particulars that helped to speak to the overall essence of a dope hauler, worked to align with the aesthetic understandings of others, or at the very least the courtroom might have sensed his frustration in the effort to communicate the aesthetic. In this sense the policeman in New Mexico might have learned from the administrators who were interviewed in this project, as well as the work of Mary Parker Follett and Hannah Arendt.

## **Chapter V**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Findings**

Artists helped to better understand the aesthetic experience, more specifically, what it looks and feels like, so that this experience could be recognized in the interviews with administrators. From these interviews with artists we might gather that the aesthetic experience is usually prompted by a disturbance of some kind. Artists described it as a “botheration,” “something uncomfortable,” a “personal tragedy,” or even a “nightmare” (Interviews, 2013; 2014). This disturbance usually brought about certain feelings and allowed emotions to surface. From the analyses, we might gather that much of the challenge associated with art is related to their effort to translate these feelings into an artistic piece. If Merleau-Ponty was correct, then this challenge might be explained by the fact that these feelings or sense for what the artist recognized to be there in the world was really a glimpse into the invisible (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

Each of the artists seemed to suggest that either in the process of being in the world, they engaged in a deep level of interaction or interrogation with their environment. Their interaction was probably captured best by Merleau-Ponty who suggested with the help of Cezanne that the artist lends his/herself to the world, and it in return lends itself to it, an idea he called respiration (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). This process of respiration seemed to be crucial to interact with the world on a level where they could gain an aesthetic sense for what was there. Depending on the type of art they engaged in, the artists would need a different degree of freedom. Many suggested that you absolutely



needed to have the freedom necessary to allow creativity or “accidents” emerge.

Although often contrary to what I understood about art, each artist suggested that they need a plan before and during the process of creation.

For some artists beginning with a plan was absolutely crucial so as to allow them to illustrate the meaning that lay within their aesthetic experience. All of the artists insisted that their work was meaningful to them, and hopefully others as well. In this sense they sought verification from the community, perhaps to validate they made something meaningful, or even that they successfully translated the meaning that they had intended. Each artist, and even some of the hybrids, independently suggested that they felt a need to “give a reason or account” of their artistic choices, which is to suggest that to some degree their creations were guided by the tastes of others in the community (Kant, 2001).

These interviews with artists were particularly helpful in an effort to understand the aesthetic experience as a layperson, and they provided a foundation that served to help to identify and recognize the aesthetic experience as found in the interviews of hybrids and administrators. In this way the artists helped to improve my own aesthetic sense for what an aesthetic experience is, so that I was better prepared to recognize it when described by public administrators as the basis of their judgment. They also pointed out, at least in part, how deep this process of respiration is, and how deep their understanding of nature went.

The interviews with hybrids called for me to ask many of the same questions as with the artists, like those relating to their aesthetic experience and meaningful pieces of art that they had created. What these interviews helped pointed out that was unexpected

is the role that artistic abilities could play in the practice of public administration as a skillset. Some hybrids utilized art as a way to better communicate with the public, and some engaged in politics itself much like the way in which they might paint something. In this sense most of the hybrids engaged in a skillful practice of public administration because they drew on their creative abilities. The hybrids also used their artistic understanding, or sense for the world, to shape how they went about addressing problems in the field of public administration. In other words, some, if not most of the hybrids took their aesthetic sense and applied it to discern what to do, which is to say that their discretion employed their aesthetic judgment. These interviews certainly seemed to indicate that their aesthetic experiences had played a large role in helping to shape their judgment.

With respect to the interviews with public administrators, all of them admitted to exercising discretion, and at least two of the three administrators provided specific examples of experiences that might have helped them to know what to do. The more we dug into these experiences in the interview, and in light of the analyses, we are led to conclude that most of their experiences were aesthetic ones. In other words, through their experiences they were able to interact with their environment, be it in the form of an individual, thing, or phenomena, in a deeper, more meaningful way. In this respect their interaction with the world resembled those of the artist. As you might recall from the analysis, one administrator pointed out that he engaged in the practice of truly listening to the client. He listened to the clients' stories in an effort to find "common ground" (Interview, 2014). In this respect, the administrator might have engaged in what Ralph Hummel suggested in his work on the importance of stories as a form of knowledge. By

listening to his clients he was able to insert himself into their story to see how he might have acted (Hummel and Gendlin called this looking for what is similar and different; 1991; 1976), and this in turn prompted him to examine each case according to what he think might be necessary. Basically, through listening to clients he was able to gain an aesthetic sense of who they were, and utilize this sense or understanding so as to adjust his judgment depending on the situation or circumstances at hand. One of his clients in particular seemed to be particularly happy to be paying child support (i.e. he was happy to be a father), and he seemed to sense that he was happy on the basis of aesthetics alone. Using his aesthetic judgment, he determined that it was his duty to go against organizational guidelines, and even risk being terminated, to tell that client that a paternity test was in his best interest. Given the outcome (0.0% chance of paternity) it seems that it was in his client's best interest.

Some of the interviews findings were a little unexpected. Particularly, the similar summary of themes that resulted from each of the interviews, i.e. the findings for each of the three groups were very similar when summarized. Given that the interview findings of artists, hybrids, and administrators could be placed according to several characteristics or characteristics of the aesthetic experience, then we are led to believe that most, if not all of the administrators interviewed, including those who even claimed to not be artistic, were, in fact, quite artful in their practice of public administration, and their exercise of aesthetic judgment. In other words, the hybrids and administrators seemed to have aesthetic experiences that resulted in an aesthetic sense for someone or something, and even further they acted on this understanding. Moreover, while we might expect administrators to be concerned with how their use of administrative discretion was

received by the public, and the role of their aesthetic judgment in what is essentially this issue of administrative responsibility, many of the artists also seemed to be concerned with how the public perceives their art and artistic choices. In other words, all groups seemed equally interested in vetting their aesthetic sense with members of the public, or community.

### **Discussion**

*“We are not now master of our experience; we do not know what it is and we could not express it if we did. We need an articulate experience. And I should like to add, for it seems to me important, that from such experiments a new type of leadership might appear (Follett, 1924, p. 141).*

This dissertation asked whether we can consider administrative discretion, as we understand it, to be an example of aesthetic judgment, and further, asked what the use of aesthetic judgment means for how we, in the field of public administration, understand the role of the expert. Further, it does this in an effort to hopefully address Dwight Waldo’s concern that administration is functioning on “too low a plane” (Waldo, 2007). This is to suggest that by attempting to understand aesthetic judgment more deeply this dissertation might provide the field of public administration with information that is useful when teaching and training future administrators.

In this effort to uncover what Merleau-Ponty might have called the carnal substance of administrative discretion this research dove into the concept of aesthetic judgment, and aesthetics itself. Based on the findings, it seems that aesthetic judgment is indeed developed and honed through an experience. Nearly all of the interviews could

not only point to examples of aesthetic experiences that influenced their judgment, but further, these aesthetic experiences also seemed to be places in which Merleau-Ponty's concept or idea of respiration occurred. This is to suggest that based on the interview findings, artists, hybrids, and administrators already engage with their environment in a way that allows for them to understand the world in more than scientific terms. This dissertation merely sought to translate and hopefully articulate what these people already understood. In this respect, given that Follett suggested that, "we need an articulate experience," she was extremely ahead of her time. The experience not only offers us the possibility to shed light on what administrative discretion consists of, but it also offers us the possibility to reveal some of the understanding that is found behind the concept of aesthetic judgment. Through a relatively involved set of phenomenological interviews this dissertation hopefully helped to articulate the aesthetic experience in particular, so to some extent it answers Follett's call.

Merleau-Ponty proposed the relationship between the artist and the landscape involves both touching, and being touched, suggesting there is a circular feedback between the artist and the landscape. As Merleau-Ponty put it, the artist is *inspired* by what they see, and *expires* that which is seen (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). This captures his idea of respiration, and based on the interview findings, some degree of respiration seems to have occurred among the artists, hybrids, and artful administrators, specifically when they participated in an aesthetic experience. Not surprisingly, Follett believed that "circular response is the psychological term for the deepest truth of life. We move always within a larger life than we are directly cognizant of" (Follett, 1924, p.83). So much like Merleau-Ponty, who sought to find "the being of this being" through a study of

painting and the philosophy or vision, Follett sought to find “the deepest truth of life,”— and both did it through a circular process. Follett also believed that “the doctrine of circular response involved in the theory of integration gives us creative experience” (Follett, 1924, p.83). This suggests this creative experience is something she believed crucial to public administrators not only being able to articulate their experiences, but also when leading in a democracy.

Hannah Arendt and Mary Parker Follett would suggest that our need for objectivity, or our desire to have the right answers, has encouraged public administration to elevate science to the status of something that is beyond the influence of human imperfection. Science is preferred because it provides public administrators with some degree of certainty, and citizens with the veil of objectivity. To the extent that this objectivity comes from the scientist, the person with whom expertise resides (through the application of science), we might suggest that science actually provides us with the notion of the expert. Aesthetics on the other hand brings in politics, and displaces our notion of the expert. Perhaps more succinctly put, with Aesthetics “the expert is out” (Stivers, 2014). This idea makes sense with respect to the analyses of the interviews. The hybrids and artists were particularly conscious of politics, and its role in helping to shape the artist’s taste, for they sought to align their tastes with those held by the community in an effort to create something beautiful. In many respects, thinkers in the field of public administration like Follett, Hummel, Stivers, and Spicer, have been calling for public administrators to incorporate politics to a greater degree while artists and hybrids have been engaging in politics all along, because of their participation in the field of aesthetics.

So what do the results mean for the study and practice of public administration? They suggest that if we bring aesthetics into the study of public administration, then the conflict that comes from the reality that we do not completely understand the role of the expert in our field, in a way, disappears (Stivers, 2014). As the interview analyses suggest, aesthetic experiences allow for individuals (artists, administrators, and hybrids) to gain a sense, feel, or understanding for something that they could not otherwise grasp with Kant's two faculties of intellect and reason (Kant, 2001). In other words, this sense or understanding has not been translated into scientific terms (Hummel, 2004; 2006), perhaps because it is by nature aesthetic and not scientific. This sense or understanding gained, provided it is seriously pursued, leads to the formation of aesthetic judgment, which is by its very nature political (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2006). As pointed out by Kant and others, aesthetic judgment is guided by our notion of taste, what we find to be pleasing or displeasing, a notion he calls the "sensus communis," or a sense rooted in the community (Kant, 2001). So instead of arguing, as Friedrich and Finer did, over the role of the expert and administrative responsibility, instead our task as public administrators would become to:

- (1) Continue to experience the world more fully by attempting to interact with our surroundings in a deeper way, possibly immersing or lending ourselves so as to participate in an interaction or exchange with an individual or environment (Merleau-Ponty, 1968),
- (2) Continue to use these aesthetic experiences to gain a sense or feel for a person, thing, or phenomena, so that we might gain and hone our aesthetic judgment (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992),

(3) Continue to do our best to translate our aesthetic sense or feel that we gain from these aesthetic experiences, which could mean telling a story, creating a work or art, or perhaps even translating this aesthetic sense into words (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 1991),

(4) Bring our notion of taste, what we find pleasing or displeasing, to a political environment in an effort to, both “woo” or “court” others toward our conception of taste, but also seek both alignment and integration (Kant, 2001; Arendt, 1992; Follett, 1925),

(5) Continue to employ our aesthetic judgment to help us to discern how to act in the presence of new and ever-changing circumstances—aesthetic judgment helps us determine how different scientific understandings (“yardsticks”) might fit relative to the problem (Arendt, 1992; Hummel, 2004, 2006; Stivers, 2011, 2013),

(6) Work to continually refine our aesthetic understanding(s), i.e. have new aesthetic experiences, and strive to check these understandings with reason, legislation, and politics, else administrators will be “loose cannons rolling on the deck” (Rohr, 1998).

As Dwight Waldo argued, “If the demands of present world civilization upon public administration are met, Administrative thought must establish a working relationship with every major province in the realm of human learning” (Waldo, 2007, p.212). More recently, David Farmer cautioned that overly broad expansion, beyond combining neuroscience and public administration, could hurt the field and inquiry in general, suggesting epistemic pluralism beyond two fields could simply lead to an intellectual state of constant impasse (Farmer, 2008). His view reflects an underlying belief in the limitations of human rationality, something Merleau-Ponty and Waldo were certainly aware of. But Merleau-Ponty believed his philosophy was apart from this



dispute over rationality that presents itself as a pendulum on the objective-subjective spectrum. While not claiming to be a form of rationalism, one in search of an objective method to establish what exists, his philosophy of vision seems to suggest that art, and painting in particular is a way of studying the “carnal” substance that makes up the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). Painting or art provides the means to study being in the world, for as he put it, “essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible—a painting mixes up all our categories in laying out its oneiric universe of carnal essences, of effective likeness, of mute meanings” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.169). So to Merleau-Ponty, painting is not merely the subjective exploration of an artist who might lack an education in philosophy, nor is it an effort to simply imitate or ape what the artist sees, instead it is an effort to “paint pre-world,” and a means to “fuse” the self and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In this sense art allows a person to discover a type of thought that is mutually consistent with both their experiences and thoughts, and it seems any level-headed citizen would prefer an administrator whose thoughts align with their experiences making a decision that affects them over an administrator whose thoughts do not align (Zingale & Piccorelli, 2013).

But would Dwight Waldo still suggest Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy reeks of subjectivity, or better yet, would he suggest it is value-laden? Given Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of vision and ontology requires an individual to open their minds to this concept of reversibility, it might escape from being classified as subjective. Waldo, would still probably stand his ground when it came to values, for as Hugh Miller noted Waldo believed there was “no fact as such” (Miller, 2007). Then again, Merleau-Ponty never claimed his philosophy of vision would produce facts, only experiences from

which we might be able to understand things. And as Hummel pointed out, experiences can be the basis of a story, which is a legitimate form of knowledge for managers to both have themselves, and also to pass on (Hummel, 2006). In this sense Merleau-Ponty may in fact be talking around the Waldo-Simon debate. Even if this is the case we should ask whether Merleau-Ponty's philosophy leaves a dangerous amount of room for researcher bias and subjectivity? After all, how different is Merleau-Ponty's idea of the invisible from that of Plato's transcendental realm where things are said to exist in their absolute form (Plato, republic, 1999). At first glance it seems that perhaps Merleau-Ponty's invisible draws more heavily on experiences in the world. But a realist like Plato would admit these experiences can be part of a well-reasoned conjecture, so in this sense the invisible is compatible with Plato's transcendental, except Plato's transcendental is not compatible with Merleau-Ponty's invisible. Merleau-Ponty believed his invisible to be different than the transcendental in that it cannot be discerned with only the use of reason; instead it required experience and sensation. Back to the issue at hand, Waldo was certainly skeptical of experts like Plato's Guardians (who had knowledge of the transcendental), but at the same time he asserts, "the present gap between the content of our administrative curricula and what we announce to be the responsibilities of our Administrators is appalling" (Waldo, 2007, p. 210-1). In light of this, if administrators had the value of democracy it seems as though Waldo would be willing to use Merleau-Ponty's philosophy to help administrators fill this gap, and further to operationalize their aesthetic understanding as the foundation for aesthetic judgment and discretion.

One critique of the idea of aesthetic judgment is that it, as a notion, would not hold up in a multi-cultural environment. In other words, the aesthetic sense or tastes of a

person living in one culture are completely different than another, and therefore an administrator's aesthetic judgment would not work too well if applied in an environment that is rich with people from several different cultures. Instead of getting hung up on the complexity of the modern world I would ask that they please redirect their efforts to the basic idea behind this research—the idea that the aesthetic experience can play a role in helping public administrators to understand how to act. This research does not claim to know other cultures, nor to have a conception of aesthetic judgment that fits all cultures, instead it argues that the field of public administration is largely one shaped by western thoughts like Immanuel Kant, and further that in a multi-cultural environment the public administrator would still be well served if he or she sought to have more profound, and deep aesthetic experiences. If anything, these experiences would lead to an improved form of aesthetic judgment and act to integrate cultural awareness and perhaps understanding.

Another potential critique of this dissertation, and a critique of phenomenology as a mode of inquiry was illustrated by Tom Sparrow. He asserted that phenomenology results in metaphysical assumptions and yet it, as a form of methodological inquiry, lacks the means to engage in metaphysical inquiry (Sparrow, 2014). As he phrased it, “Even Husserl and Heidegger make metaphysical claims that are not legitimated by phenomenological evidence,” suggesting phenomenology as a method lacks a certain comprehensiveness (Sparrow, 2014, p.2). If, as he contends, phenomenology at the core is a field that studies “essences” and “essential structures,” then it lacks the means to access these “essences” (Sparrow, 2014, p.9-10). In other words, he questions “how these essences are to be seen” given that phenomenologists study within the confines of

human consciousness itself (Sparrow, 2014, p.10, 13). This reflects a belief that because phenomenology studies the world within the confines of human consciousness it is therefore anthropocentric. In other words, phenomenology as a methodology lacks the capacity to study the world that “precedes our existence and, especially, our thought” (Sparrow, 2014, p.13).

Sparrow’s objections against phenomenology as a methodology and perhaps even as an attitude for inquiry are taken quite seriously, and the research design used in this dissertation reflects an attempt to strategically address these limitations related to the use of phenomenology. To some extent he is right to assert that phenomenology lacks the capacity to “see essences,” but I would contend that perhaps phenomenology does not claim to see or reveal these essences so much as simply assert that they are “seen” by others (Sparrow, 2014). In this sense, phenomenology might fall short of establishing the “essential” (Sparrow, 2014) framework of the world, but perhaps it gets us closer to Kant’s noumenal, which is to say that it validates the glimpse of the noumenal as experienced by an individual. This dissertation intentionally departed from aspects of Immanuel Kant’s noumena and drew on ideas from Hannah Arendt as well as Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s “Eye and Mind,” because like Merleau-Ponty it postulates that “essences” (Sparrow, 2014) might be better articulated by the individual who experienced them, in this case the artist, hybrid, or administrator. In other words, this dissertation acknowledges Sparrow’s view that phenomenology is an anthropocentric mode of inquiry that only studies things within the framework of human consciousness, but it also argues that phenomenology instead has the potential to “get us to the noumenal” (Sparrow, 2014).

Sparrow's call for speculative realism is indeed welcomed as an alternative to the post-modern intellectual schizophrenia catalyzed, at least in part, by Dwight Waldo, but this does not mean phenomenology as a method is useless. In fact, one of the advantages of phenomenology as a method is its openness to the pursuit of knowledge. In this respect, instead of seeing phenomenology as a method that makes metaphysical claims without direct access to the metaphysical, we might consider phenomenology as a form of inquiry to be marked by a certain openness to inquiry itself. A co-author and I have referred to this openness as an aspect of the phenomenological attitude (Zingale & Piccorelli, 2013). Phenomenology as both a method, and way of thinking, might be viewed as offering flexibility in terms of the method employed (i.e. the method is not pinned or wedded to a doctrine of phenomenological rules), as well as a method marked by a sense of self awareness regarding what the researcher does not know. As difficult as it is from the standpoint of the ego, a good phenomenological researcher always approaches an interview and research project assuming that there is a very real possibility that what they think they know could be altogether wrong, and in fact, the interviewee might reveal something about the world to them. Then again, it has also crossed my mind that phenomenology is simply a means to disguise metaphysical inquiry so that it might be more readily accepted within a post-modernist world. Perhaps this is reflective of the fact that everyone, even a closet metaphysician, could use a job, so perhaps for good reason we have not reached "the end of phenomenology" (Sparrow, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Hannah Arendt believed the faculty of thought, associated with theoretical knowledge put society in a particularly difficult place (Arendt, 1971). As one of Kant's

three faculties these thoughts, or the byproduct of intellect, lacked access to what Kant believed to be the “supersensible” (Arendt, 1992). Arendt also recognized, and perhaps partially due to Dwight Waldo that metaphysics were essentially removed from, or cast out of modern philosophic study. In other words, without access to metaphysical constructs to base our thoughts on, peoples’ thoughts, or principles resulting from the faculty of reason could easily be manipulated or changed, and possibly lead to crises, or even what Camilla Stivers called “dark times.” At the same time Arendt considered aesthetic judgment to be the “wind of thought,” suggesting that judgment clears away concepts that were perhaps overlooked, and therefore judgment allows for the faculty of thought to some degree (Stivers, 2014). In short, for this reason, Arendt sought the help of aesthetic judgment. Judgment, as Hummel and Stivers pointed out, is particularly useful in public administration given the environment typically lacks an already solved problem, or rules for following rules (Kant, as cited by Stivers, 2011). In this sense, aesthetic judgment, which is based on the discriminatory sense of *taste*, can be useful when “bannisters” and “yardsticks” fail (Arendt, 1992). If aesthetics, and the pursuit of beauty allows us some small encounter with Kant’s *supersensible*, then aesthetic judgment could help us “when the chips are down” (Arendt, 1971; 1992). Further, if aesthetic judgment is really the source of administrative discretion, then it might allow us the ability to learn from artists and artful administrators—specifically, it incorporates their experiences into how we understand the world and pulls in politics, which makes everyone a potential expert in his or her own way.

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