

Creativity As Concept

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of
Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Michael Scott Kellner

Graduate Program in Arts Administration, Education, and Policy

The Ohio State University

2014

Dissertation Committee:

Sydney Walker, Advisor

Philip Armstrong

Michael Mercil

Jack Richardson

Copyright by
Michael Scott Kellner
2014

Abstract

The problem this dissertation addresses is the over-determined understanding of creativity in contemporary Western culture. I argue that popularized scientific understandings of creativity limit both the historical understanding of the term, as well as its potential. This dissertation utilizes a methodology that draws from the work of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Felix Guattari. The duo, working in conjunction with one another, develops an understanding of a philosophical “concept.” According to the authors, a “concept” is encyclopedic and multidimensional; when a concept becomes “commercial professionalized training” it is robbed of its encyclopedic form. Therefore, by employing the concept as a methodology that addresses creativity, I work to resist easily definable ideas of creativity; in other words, the task of the concept is to keep creativity as encyclopedic as possible.

This dissertation employs the concept in two ways. First, I present a series of three conceptual arguments utilizing historical understandings of creativity in Western culture. In the first conceptual argument, creativity requires a structure to make itself manifest; in turn, the results of the creative act often reify this structure. As part of this argument, an individual’s refusal of some dominant

socio-cultural parameters can create a space where other, previously less visible, socio-cultural parameters are brought to attention. The second conceptual argument begins with a Platonic reading of creativity before pressing forward chronologically through the Scientific Revolution. Through this history, the process of creativity is often individualized, but its reception is socialized. Within this framework, I argue that the dominant reading of creativity in Western culture is masculine, even if creativity's association with madness and isolation troubles attempts to simplify this reading. The third conceptual argument brings to the fore a feminist reading of creativity. Here, the traditional, historical pairing of female creativity with birth is identified. Creativity as birth provides a space to explore the more embodied and disruptive affects of feminist creativity, a research focus only hinted at in the previous two conceptual examples.

The second way Deleuze and Guattari's concept is employed is by utilizing some of the authors' other philosophical ideas to understand creativity as production. Production is addressed broadly by considering desire; here, an individual's desires are inextricably intertwined with the desires of their surrounding environment. Creativity as production is then addressed more specifically by considering sensation in artwork. Sensation asks us to consider both the reception and creation of the work of art as a Deleuzian encounter, which "forces us to think." In considering creativity in relation to desire and sensation, creativity is recognizable as process driven. It is here that I argue

creativity becomes pedagogic. Creativity, as a concept, resists being captured as commercial professionalized training and, instead, is tilted it to its encyclopedic form by way of desire and sensation.

Dedication

For Shannon, Miles and Eleanor

Acknowledgments

In writing this dissertation, I have been the beneficiary of a tremendous amount of help. If I tried to thank everyone proportionally to the help they have given me, this section would be longer than the document that follows; an emphatic thank you will have to do instead. Let me just say that I feel very, very fortunate.

Thanks to my committee: Sydney Walker, Philip Armstrong, Jack Richardson, and Michael Mercil. All have contributed meaningful feedback and support to me throughout this process. By virtue of opening his studio and class to me, Michael provided an example of how a person might operate in the world as both an intellectual and artist. Jack provided a relentless enthusiasm for my work, suggestions for more books than I could ever have hoped to read, and well-timed pep talks over coffee. Philip provided the initial kernel of an idea for this dissertation and then continued to offer suggestions, support, and *many* necessary edits throughout this process; it has been humbling to receive this level of attention to my writing and thoughts from a scholar like him. My deepest gratitude goes to Sydney for being my advisor. From my first meeting with her, I knew that I had hit the advisor lottery. Her support and encouragement

throughout my time here has helped to make this experience everything I hoped it could be.

It is impossible to acknowledge all the varieties of support I received throughout my time at Ohio State. Please know that I have been deeply appreciative of the financial support given to me so that I may pursue this work. Of course, all the financial support in the world isn't worth anything if you aren't surrounded by really wonderful and interesting people. Some of the people who made this a rich experience include: Theresa Delgadillo, Kris Paulsen, Jennifer Eisenhauer, Ann Hamilton, Laura Lisbon, Debbie Smith-Shank, Matt Fleming, Verónica Betancourt, Bee Kim Koh, Morgan Green, Nicole Rome, Ruth Smith, Julie Pfeiffer, Kate Collins, Melissa Crum, Juuso Tervo, Liz Kengeter, Meaghan Brady Nelson, Justin Sutters, Manisha Sharma, Marissa Nesbit, Courtnie Wolfgang, Tim Smith, Ramya Ravisankar, Mindi Rhodes, Chris Purdie, Monika Laskowska, Brittney Denham, Anne Keener, Leah Frankel, Nick George, Sage Lewis, and David Knox. There are more, but I will thank the rest in person.

In addition to the Ohio State community, I thank my parents, my brother and sisters, my in-laws and all my non-school friends (especially: Alexandra Robinson, Jonas Angelet, Shane Holzderber, Aaron Abell, and Jon Graas) for all at least pretending like this was an admirable idea. Additionally my old North Carolina family (Andrea Van Engelenhoven, Kevin Mertens, Jamie Schmidt, and Donald Williams) was incredibly thoughtful and supportive throughout this

process. Most importantly, I offer my thanks to those above for being a respite when I needed it.

Finally, I offer my thanks to my family: Eleanor, Miles, and Shannon. The depths of my appreciation cannot be expressed adequately here. Let me just say that I couldn't imagine a more loving and supportive home if I tried.

How did I get so lucky?

Vita

May 1995 Covington Catholic High School

2000 B.F.A. Studio Art, University of Louisville

2002 M.F.A. Studio Art, University of
Cincinnati

2002 to 2005 Lecturer, University of Louisville

2004 to 2005 Adjunct Assistant Professor, University
of Cincinnati

2004 to 2005 Lecturer, Jeffersonville Community
College

2006 to 2010 Instructor, Coastal Carolina Community
College

2010 to 2011 University Fellow, The Ohio State
University

2011 to present Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio
State University

Publications

Kellner, Michael S., "Most Likely You Go Your Way and I'll Go Mine (The Function of the Studio)," *Visual Arts Research* 40, no. 1 (2014): 85-86.

Fields of Study

Major Field: Arts Administration, Education, and Policy

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Vita	ix
Table of Contents	xi
Chapter 1: A Context for Creativity.....	1
Total Noise Culture	3
Creativity Definitions and Context.....	6
“The past is never dead. It’s not even past;” Two works from Ori Gerbst	17
Chapters	26
Fragment: Ease Yourself Down	29
Chapter 2: A Methodology	31
My research position	32
I and We	36
Ethics in Creativity	41
A “Concept” As a Methodology.....	47
In Pursuit of Creativity as a “Concept”	57
Fragment: The Manyness of Things	62
Chapter 3: Creativity Rules, Refusals, and Repetitions	67

The Rules in Sports	71
An Issue With the Rules in Art.....	77
Creativity and The Shape of Time	80
The Lucky Point of Entry	85
The Avant-garde, the New, and Creativity.....	92
Parsing the Avant-garde and Modernism	102
Repeating Repetition	108
The Change	114
Fragment: Message Received.....	125
Chapter 4: Troubling Masculine Creativity	129
The Vessel.....	132
Platonic Creativity and the Social Good	135
Plato's Aesthetics and the Divine Madness of the Artist	138
Creativity Between Heaven and Earth.....	145
Ascetic Focus	150
Alone, Together in the Monastery	156
Scientific Creativity and Copernicus	164
Creating Space for Kepler and Galileo	168
Creativity, Together	177
Fragment: Silence	179
Chapter 5: On Birth, and Embodied Creativity	183
Hearing and Listening.....	185
The Male Cast of Creativity	187
How Shall This Be?	191
The Mary/Eve Dichotomy	196
Subjected to Hear Sound.....	201
A Room of One's Own	209
The Structure of Patriarchy.....	212
Overtly Gendered and Embodied	216
The Physical Nature of Creativity	224
Laying Fallow.....	230
The Labor of Hannah Arendt	232
Human Action	235
Nativity.....	239
Silence Is Golden.....	244

Fragment: Renew/Repeat	247
Chapter 6: Creativity As Production	250
Duchamp's "The Creative Act"	253
From The Binary	257
The Desiring Machine.....	266
Connections.....	272
Le pli	279
Sensation.....	285
The Gift.....	289
Desiring Studio Thinking.....	296
The Repetitious Work of the Studio	303
Fragment: The Paradise Institute.....	316
Chapter 7: Conclusion	321
360 Degree Room for All Colours, Part 1	322
Suggestions For the Field of Art Education	330
Areas For Further Research	338
360 Degree Room for All Colours, Part 2	341
References	345

Chapter 1: A Context for Creativity

Everything has a story.¹

Since the rise of the Scientific Age, science has become an increasingly powerful and alluring tool in Western culture. Perhaps it is for this reason that so many researchers have sought to understand creativity scientifically. Some scientists will argue that science can ultimately explain everything; if we have not yet understood something like creativity it is because our scientific tools need to be more refined and more elegant. To some extent, these scientists are correct. Our tools will get more sophisticated and our understanding of creativity will become greater and richer. However, there are large groups of scientists who prominent theoretical physicist Marcelo Gleiser refers to as “naturalists,” of whom he writes:

The naturalists humbly accept that we will never have all the answers, that knowledge is an ongoing process, and that it's okay not to know. Instead of embracing fear, they embrace our ignorance as a means to inspire

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness : Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995* (New York; Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(E) ; Distributed by MIT Press, 2007). 319.

personal and collective growth, as a challenge and not a prison. Although death is painful and so is loss, they accept it as a part of life.²

Naturalists present science in a truer, fallible state, which gives cultural permission to *not* know, but to investigate.

It is in the spirit of the naturalists that I address creativity in this dissertation. As science recently, and sometimes dogmatically, has pursued creativity to understand how it works in individuals, it has inevitably created under-investigated ideas and silences. In writing this dissertation, I seek to highlight some of these silences. What follows will address issues of agency in the creative act, tensions between individual and group understandings of creativity, and sensation and desire in creativity.

Being that this is the first chapter of the dissertation, its predominant task is to set the socio-cultural context for such an investigation. This is not to say that every aspect of Western socio-cultural context will be established; rather, some dominant frameworks from culture will be presented alongside the dominant understanding of creativity in the fields of Art Education and Psychology, perhaps two of the more dominant fields to address creativity. To begin this chapter, I will set the stage by briefly noting a categorization of our contemporary culture as that of "Total Noise." This will be followed by a review of some literature that

² Marcelo Gleiser, "Science, Belief, and the Search for Meaning - 13.7: Cosmos and Culture Blog : Npr," http://www.npr.org/blogs/13.7/2010/03/science_belief_and_the_search.html files/38/science_belief_and_the_search.html.

explores some of the popular understandings of creativity both inside and outside the field of Art Education. Once this working understanding of creativity has been laid, two examples of artworks from the artist Ori Gersht will be addressed to trouble the dominant narratives frequently associated with the scientific understanding of creativity. The chapter concludes with a description of the structure of the dissertation and a brief outline of the subsequent chapters. Again, in the spirit of the naturalists, the point of this dissertation is not to resolve every issue surrounding creativity but, rather, to open a space where the process of exploring creativity remains a challenge but is not bound to a particular viewpoint.

Total Noise Culture

In his editor's introduction to *The Best American Essays 2007*, David Foster Wallace uses a term I am not sure that he coined but, regardless, paints a succinct and effective portrait of contemporary Western culture. The term "Total Noise" is never specifically defined, but Wallace comes closest to articulating it when he writes, "[Total Noise] is a culture and volume of info and spin and rhetoric and context that I know I'm not alone in finding too much to even absorb, much less try to try to make sense of or organize into any kind of triage of saliency or value."³ There are both advantages and disadvantages to living in a culture of "Total Noise" but the advantages and disadvantages are themselves

³ David Foster Wallace, "Deciderization 2007—a Special Report," in *Both Flesh and Not : Essays* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2012). 301.

hedged. As a quick example of what I mean here, consider academic research in the Internet age. I can judge, positively, the plethora of information available through the Internet as an aid to academic scholarship. At the same time this plethora of information also lends itself to confirmation bias (sometimes referred to as epistemic closure⁴), where even the most serious thinkers can pick, choose and discard information that proves or disproves their specific point. This is enough of a trap for most people (myself included) but even this understanding withholds the infrastructure we don't see at work. And this infrastructure is itself fraught with issues, not the least of which is that every Google search we conduct consumes enough energy to boil a pot of water.⁵ It is not enough for discerning individuals to sift through the information of "Total Noise" culture; we also have to parse the infrastructure that presents this information. In our culture, even the caveats have caveats.

If "Total Noise" is an apt descriptor for our contemporary age in the West, I am both a product of this culture and producer in this culture. That the rigor of popularized, scientific thinking is attractive in this culture is because its parameters appear more strictly defined. If something like art has the potential to withhold attraction in this culture, it is because it is harder to identify the

⁴ Steven Luper, "The Epistemic Closure Principle," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2012). In reading the SEP here, the term is obviously more complex in philosophical practice than its frequent appearance as the replacement for confirmation bias in online commentary, where the term is used to say that a person or group of people are often unaware of scholarship that dissents from their opinion.

⁵ James Glanz, "Google Details Electricity Usage of Its Data Centers," *The New York Times*, 2011/09/08/ 2011.

parameters that drive the production of artworks. This is a characteristic that holds art in common with theoretical scientific fields. Though we might consider creativity in a scientific or artistic context, neither an artistic nor scientific approach adequately coalesces the vastness of information we have access to into a theory of creativity. So then, what does it mean to create or be creative in the face of such a distracting infrastructure?

My argument is that ideas of creativity are over-determined by the dominant role of late capitalism in our culture. As such, creativity is often situated in such a way that makes it appear easily achievable. To rupture this understanding of creativity requires both an examination of how creativity operates inside cultural norms in some cases and reshapes cultural norms in others. A culture of “Total Noise” paradoxically makes this possible *and* impossible; creativity will be understood differently but cannot be completely understood, which, by default, opens up an understanding of creativity beyond a popular conception of the term. The difficulty of the task is furthered by the overuse of the term “creativity.” To attempt to understand what exactly one means when using the term “creativity” in our culture, the following section will establish a baseline for creativity as it is found in both Art Education and Psychology, two of the more popular fields investigating creativity. It is the hope that in establishing an understanding of the terminology at work here, we might note the ways that certain ideas of creativity dominate a culture of Total Noise.

Creativity Definitions and Context

This section gives the reader a baseline for some of the dominant understandings of creativity. I will first begin with Art Education's conception of the term before branching out to capture a broader understanding of creativity in the scientific community. These scientifically broad characterizations of creativity admittedly compliment definitions from Art Education. As a result of pursuing these ideas, a pithy definition of creativity, even in its most popular sense, will remain elusive. Rather than look at this section for a short definition of creativity, consider its purpose as the establishment of a foundational context for creativity that must first be considered before attempting to rupture the term.

Art Education as a field appears to have a fluctuating relationship with the word creativity. In general terms, we see Lisa Phillips writing in the Washington Post that the foremost skill learned from the arts is creativity.⁶ Phillips specifically addresses parents invested in educating their children, stating: "Being able to think on your feet, approach tasks from different perspectives and think 'outside of the box' will distinguish your child from others...If children have practice thinking creatively, it will come naturally to them now and in their future career."⁷ Enid Zimmerman, the Art Education professor, writes that she believes this type

⁶ Lisa Phillips, "Top 10 Skills Children Learn from the Arts," <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/01/22/top-10-skills-children-learn-from-the-arts/files/9/top-10-skills-children-learn-from-the-arts.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

of thinking is typical of the general public and education's views on creativity: "[S]tudying the visual arts is synonymous with creativity and is the place where creativity should be located in public schools."⁸ While Zimmerman highlights the dominance of this viewpoint amongst "the general public", she sees creativity as not a primary concern for Art Education as a field in her 2009 article. She highlights this fact by the paucity of presentations at the National Art Education Association conference in 2008, finding few books on creativity on the NAEA reading list, and seeing few articles published on the topic in *Studies in Art Education*, the preeminent journal in the field. However, things have changed for the field in relatively short order. Whether it is by the push of her article or by the turning of larger cultural forces, the popularity of current Art Education research on creativity within the field of Art Education cannot be denied. This is particularly evidenced by the recent publication two large collections on creativity.⁹

Zimmerman's 2009 article champions creativity being taught both to

⁸ Enid Zimmerman, "Reconceptualizing the Role of Creativity in Art Education Theory and Practice," *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education* 50, no. 4 (2009). 382.

⁹ The first publication is *Handbook of Research on Creativity*, edited by Australian art educators Kerry Thomas and Janet Chan. The second is edited by art educators Flavia Bastos and Enid Zimmerman and is titled *Connecting Creativity Research and Practice in Art Education: Foundations, Pedagogies, and Contemporary Issues*. When reading about these texts, my obvious fear is there is a potential of overlap between the research presented in these books and my dissertation. My intention is not to position my dissertation as a counterexample to these books. Instead, my hope is that the examples used in this dissertation will at least open new space in which to reconsider creativity. I would like to think of my dissertation as adding another facet to creativity that moves away from the popularized scientific conceptions of the term seen below.

develop a student's individual creative process¹⁰ as well as considering creativity as part of larger cultural practices in an ever changing world.¹¹ To this last point, Zimmerman's article runs lockstep with much creativity research in other fields. In 2013, The New York Times ran a series of columns on the topic of creativity being endangered, and in these pieces, many dealt with the idea that creativity worked with both the individual and their culture. Richard Florida painted creativity as a process that is enhanced by cities and living in proximity with other creative people;¹² Susan Linn wrote about marketing drowning out innovation in children;¹³ Idris Mootee addressed business management shifting to better work with their creative employees;¹⁴ Richard Louv stressed that our creativity is directly tied with our interconnection with nature.¹⁵ In many ways, the work of Sir Ken Robinson, the education expert, dovetails nicely with these other authors when he writes in his book on creativity that creativity is "essential for personal security and fulfillment."¹⁶ Robinson believes the future of our civilization lies in

¹⁰ Zimmerman, "Reconceptualizing the Role of Creativity in Art Education Theory and Practice." 382.

¹¹ Ibid. 395.

¹² Richard Florida, "Cities Are the Fonts of Creativity - Room for Debate," <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/cities-are-the-fonts-of-creativity> files/11/cities-are-the-fonts-of-creativity.html.

¹³ Susan Linn, "Marketing to Children Drowns out Innovation - Room for Debate," <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/marketing-to-children-drowns-out-innovation> files/13/marketing-to-children-drowns-out-innovation.html.

¹⁴ Idris Mootee, "Managers Can Nurture Creativity - Room for Debate," <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/managers-can-nurture-creativity> files/15/managers-can-nurture-creativity.html.

¹⁵ Richard Louv, "Environmental Challenges Invite Creativity - Room for Debate," <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/environmental-challenges-invite-creativity> files/17/environmental-challenges-invite-creativity.html.

¹⁶ Ken Robinson, *Out of Our Minds : Learning to Be Creative* (Oxford: Capstone, 2011).13

closer coordination between “[our] education, business, and the cultural sector,”¹⁷ which moves our understanding of creativity from an individual and immediately recognizable trait to something that can shape, and is shaped by, institutions and organizations over a longer period of time.

Already we begin to see a bit of tension in the term as the clamor for immediate recognition of a creative act can operate at odds with a longer-term cultural shift. Robinson highlights a presentation on electro-magnetism given by Michael Faraday as an example of this tension:

[Faraday] stood in a gas lit lecture theater before a distinguished audience of scientists and showed bright blue sparks leaping between two copper spheres. The audience was impressed but many of them were at a loss to know what to make of it. “This is all very interesting, Mr. Faraday,” said one of them. “But what use is it?” “I don’t know,” Faraday is purported to have said, “What use is a newborn baby?”¹⁸

In this example, creativity is bluntly intertwined with the recognition (or lack thereof) that something creative has happened. Here, we see the difficulty of bearing witness to creativity when the creative act is too new. And while Robinson earlier called for closer coordination between education, business, and culture, the longer term thinking evident in Faraday’s quote provides a space where tension might arise when these three areas work in close consideration of each other. One consideration of creativity in this framework would lead to

¹⁷ Ibid. 14.

¹⁸ Ibid. 156.

questioning why creativity is so frequently paired with capitalism's constant need for immediate economic growth. Is creativity for education the same as creativity in business? Or in culture?

These questions would be easier to answer if we were to have a working, popular definition of creativity before going forward. Unfortunately, this, too, proves difficult. Robinson gives his reader the pithiest definition early in his book writing, "[C]reativity...is the process of developing original ideas that have value."¹⁹ Immediately, "value" needs to be parsed, and while this definition proves simple, it would prove difficult to employ. More complex understandings come from returning to Zimmerman's article, which cites a host of psychology research in compiling her definitions. Zimmerman first notes the complexity inherent in understanding creativity:

Many contemporary psychologists and educators agree that creativity is a complex process that can be viewed as an interactive system in which relationships among persons, processes, products, and social and cultural contexts are of paramount importance...People are not creative in a general sense; they are creative in particular domains such as the visual arts...Creativity from this point of view is an *individual characteristic* as a person reacts with one or more systems within a particular social context.²⁰

This definition acknowledges the multi-faceted ways people can be creative and the complexity of the system that produces a creative act, but leaves the act itself

¹⁹ Ibid. 2.

²⁰ Zimmerman, "Reconceptualizing the Role," 386, emphasis added.

as the result of a specific individual. Leaving aside for a moment that attributing creativity as an individual characteristic is problematic, Zimmerman illustrates the difficulty of considering creativity on the individual level when she writes:

There is...[a] source of difficulty about defining creativity in that a number of scholars distinguish between expert, adult creative acts and those of children. Some think that children can demonstrate talent in a number of areas, but cannot be creative because creativity involves changing a domain and ways of thinking within that domain...A case can be made, on the other hand, for differentiating creativity at an individual level as a person solves problems in daily life at a societal level that can lead to new findings, programs, movements, and inventions.²¹

While Zimmerman's points here have merit, the purpose of her article is important to identify as it gives her points context. Zimmerman wants to advocate for creativity to be taught in Art Education, a field that largely, but not exclusively, looks to deal with art pedagogies on a kindergarten through high school level. In the context of K-12 education, Zimmerman's argument to differentiate creativity and focus on the day-to-day act of creative thinking is a form of advocacy that every individual has the capacity for creativity. "It would not be productive in art education," Zimmerman writes, "to adopt the point of view that children and students cannot be viewed as being creative."²² To illustrate this point succinctly, researchers in Psychology see a difference between shifting the larger culture with a creative act and associating creativity with divergent thinking, which is an

²¹ Ibid. 387.

²² Ibid.

important intellectual skill for *any* individual.²³ Rather than fret about how exactly individuals could cause larger cultural shifts, Art Education advocates for the teaching of skills like divergent thinking on an individual scale. From a pragmatic point of view, this skill is easier to assess. Furthermore, following this line of thinking, Art Education would argue that these skills are best instilled in students through exposure to the visual arts. Zimmerman further supports this argument by citing a book out of Teachers College and Project Zero called *Studio Thinking: The real benefits of visual arts education*. In the text the authors list “Eight Studio Habits of the Mind” observed in art classrooms including “envision,” “express,” and “stretch and explore,” all of which have characteristics that cross-over to the psychology inspired, divergent thinking definition of creativity.²⁴ I do not wish to state that the field of Art Education is incorrect in pursuing the aims of teaching divergent thinking as creativity in schools, but rather to demonstrate how this

²³ This idea, sometimes referred to as “Little-c creativity versus Big-C creativity,” is a popular concept in psychological research. For example see James C. Baer John Kaufman, *Creativity and Reason in Cognitive Development* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁴ Ellen Winner Lois Hetland, Shirley Veenema, Kimberly M. Sheridan, *Studio Thinking : The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007). 4-7. The authors never actually use the word creativity in their text, but they do cite research from popular creativity researchers including the concept of ‘flow’ from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Additionally, all the authors come out of Project Zero whose history first lies with the psychologist Jerome Bruner and, later, Howard Gardner, who both have deep histories in the psychological study of creativity. As Gardner mentions in his history of Project Zero, most of the early faculty were psychologists who were looking at a variety of arts. David N. Perkins, co-founder of Project Zero and also a psychological researcher in creativity wrote the foreword to the text. I mention this here not as an indictment of the text but to place it in a specific context of positive characteristics in education and scientific method. The goal of the text is to “make the case for the importance of art education” and cultivate a type of thinking that first is appreciated in art and, additionally, has the “potential to transfer to other areas” (p. 1). The general public’s conceptions of art and creativity as suggested by Zimmerman are well supported by *Studio Thinking*.

conception of creativity tends to focus primarily on the individual and on a small scale. Nevertheless, admitted gaps would remain if we were to focus only on divergent thinking in individuals. Would pursuing a specifically scientific definition of creativity on a larger scale lead us to a more totalizing understanding of creativity?

For an ambitious attempt at thoroughly defining creativity through a scientific lens, consider prominent creativity researcher and psychologist Keith Sawyer's *Explaining Creativity*. Sawyer provides two definitions for creativity. The first he categorizes as the "individualist definition" in which creativity "is a new mental combination that is expressed in the world."²⁵ He further explains this definition by putting the emphasis on newness, which does not repeat "already mastered behavioral patterns" like driving a car or making coffee.²⁶ He also emphasizes that creativity is a combination of existing thoughts and concepts and this combination must be expressed in the world, meaning it is not enough for someone to have a new thought in their head, it must have some physical manifestation that is observable. Sawyer places the origination of this mode of thinking in a form of psychology called "associationism" from the nineteenth-century psychologist Alexander Bain. In this method any individual combining new elements is being creative. Unique to this insight is that the

²⁵ R. Keith Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity the Science of Human Innovation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). 7.

²⁶ Ibid.

combination of new elements is creative only if the individual is making the connections for the first time.²⁷ While maintaining some unique traits, this definition is not wholly dissimilar from the definition of creativity supplied above by Zimmerman's article.

The second definition presented by Sawyer is identified as the "sociocultural definition" and begins to put force on some of the other definitions we have seen so far in this chapter. Here, "creativity is the generation of a product that is judged to be novel and also to be appropriate, useful, or valuable by a suitably knowledgeable social group."²⁸ In the "sociocultural" understanding of creativity "only solutions to extremely difficult problems, or significant works of genius" are recognized as such.²⁹ Sawyer also points to the fact that the "sociocultural" definition subsumes the individualist definition of creativity, in effect denying recognition of a creative act until the social group approves it. With this idea in mind, Sawyer points to the twentieth century psychological idea of creativity that function on a spectrum of originality to "appropriateness"³⁰ where appropriateness signifies the given constraints of a system.³¹ Additionally, appropriateness also signifies historical timeliness and significance. In short, a

²⁷ Ibid. 8.

²⁸ Ibid. An easy association for academics would be something like a peer-reviewed journal.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. 9.

³¹ An example of a common system would be the twelve-tone music scale and the history of music constructed inside these parameters.

committee of contemporary experts becomes the validating body for the individual's work of creativity.

And so Sawyer, out of his definition of creativity, seeks to cultivate an understanding of the term that deals with both the “sociocultural” and “individualist” definitions. He ends the introductory chapter with lofty ambitions for his text:

My goal in this book is to present all of the research on creativity—at both the individual level and the sociocultural level...Every bookstore contains books about creativity, but almost none of them are based on solid scientific research...My goal...is to take us beyond any one cultural model of creativity, and give us a scientific explanation of creativity.³²

It is clear in this quote that Sawyer views science as having the widest possible parameters for constructing a definition of creativity. In looking back over the definitions and texts from both Zimmerman and Robinson and the extent they rely on psychological and scientific research, it is also clear that Sawyer would hope to subsume their definitions into his own. Despite these wishes, Sawyer still appears to see creativity as the province of the individual. At least three tensions arise in these definitions. The first tension that begins to be identified by Sawyer appears between individual notions of creativity and broader cultural characterizations of the term. As I will show in future examples, a creative act is sometimes only known as creative in retrospect; for Sawyer and others,

³² Ibid. 14.

immediate characterization of a creative act appears to be the norm. The second tension comes about when using only a scientific lens to understand a term. This lens has the ability to bring something into focus but, at the same time, gaps remain where areas that surround the lens' focus go under recognized or ignored. The third tension is the unrelentingly positive cast of creativity given by all these authors. In light of this idea, the question must be asked that has not been considered so far in this section: "Can a creative act be destructive? Can creativity be unethical?"

In this section we have seen that creativity is most often associated with an individual. In Sawyer's "sociocultural" definition, the validation of outside experts becomes important but the creative act itself still relies on the individual. The tensions that arise in timeliness, scientific, and positive understandings of creativity will lead to different tensions when put under focus in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation. In the section that follows, I want to further complicate the positive characterization of creativity as a matter of setting the stakes for the rest of the dissertation. This tension will be addressed in the extreme by briefly exploring two pieces by an artist whose work addresses a significant Western cultural issue of the twentieth century. Or, to put it another way, "What would it mean to think of creativity in the context of the Holocaust?" Ori Gersht gives his viewer some compelling artworks in which to consider this very issue.

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past;”³³ Two works from Ori Gersht

I wonder what it would be like to walk in and view Ori Gersht’s video artwork *The Forest* with no knowledge of the artist’s biographical history or intent. The video is a simple one to describe. The viewer sees a dense forest before them and “Trees start to fall, one by one and from no apparent cause, crashing thunderously before an ominous tranquility is temporarily restored.”³⁴ The video is a 13-minute loop and so while trees collapse, the forest never really seems to go anywhere. Learning the process of how the work was made offers no real help either. The artist produced the work outside Kosiv, Ukraine in concert with “the British Consulate and the Ukrainian government to accelerate the chopping down of diseased trees marked for removal.”³⁵ So, would the artwork feel terrifying on its own with no context? Would we really feel loss?

What is clear is that when the context is added to the work, the sense of horror and loss feels crushing. Gersht draws from the history of his father-in-law, who, in 1941, was a boy living in then Kosów, Poland (currently Kosiv, Ukraine) when “on October 16 and 17 German soldiers, assisted by Ukrainians, murdered

³³ William Faulkner in Ori Gersht Al Miner, Ronni Baer, *Ori Gersht : History Repeating* (Boston; New York, N.Y.: MFA Publications : Museum of Fine Arts, Boston ; Distributed by ARTBOOK/D.A.P., 2012). 25.

³⁴ Hilarie M. Sheets, "Ori Gersht: 'History Repeating' at Museum of Fine Arts in Boston," *The New York Times*, 2012/08/23/ 2012.

³⁵ Ibid.

almost 2,200 Jews and dumped their bodies into two mass graves.”³⁶ Gersht learned about the incident from his father-in-law who gave a first hand account, and also gave Gersht the diary of his grandfather-in-law, who detailed the horror and is quoted at length here:

Next to the jail there were trucks, which the Jews boarded—thinking they were going to work but [they] quickly found out they had been tricked. After a few minutes ride they reached their destination. They were let out next to the open pits which had been prepared ahead of time on top of the mountain overlooking the town, were ordered to take off their clothes and at the point of a whip were forced to jump into the pit, being fired on one by one while jumping. Many were killed and there were also those who were not hurt by the bullet, but buried alive under the bodies of those who followed...The terrible screams of those who did not die could be heard throughout the forest of Moskalovska.³⁷

The curator of Gersht’s exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Al Miner, notes that, “Today, barely a hint of the village’s tragic history is visible. New homes stand next to the site of the mass graves, and tourists come to relax and enjoy the river and waterfalls.”³⁸ With context, a viewer of *The Forest* is forced to reconcile the bucolic landscape and the terror it once held. “[The] shift happens for the viewer looking at Mr. Gersht’s ethereal images after reading the captioned information.”³⁹ This forest was privy to the screams of the executed, it housed Jews who hid to escape this terror, and, now, has become a popular destination

³⁶ Al Miner, *Ori Gersht : History Repeating*. 26.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sheets, "Ori Gersht."

for hikers on holiday. Miner's use of a quote from Roland Barthes at the beginning of his essay, "'whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe,'"⁴⁰ takes on a sickening resonance in this context.

Almost ashamedly, I ask the question most relevant to this dissertation: Where is the creativity here? I could certainly argue that Gerscht has shown individual creativity in making *The Forest*. He traveled to a site where he found a drastic contradiction between a place's current appearance and how it appeared seventy years ago; his artwork, respectfully and metaphorically, brings the history of this place to the forefront. The fact that the video loops is both cathartic and maddening as the viewer feels as if they can grasp the horror they have seen but, at the same time, are powerless to stop it. Engendering this feeling of empathy in our social-cultural context is certainly of use too, which takes on some of the broader definitions of creativity addressed in the previous section. With this in mind, given the general scientific definition of creativity—something new that has value—one could argue this idea has been fulfilled.

But I want to mine this scientific idea a little more. What is our understanding of creativity in the wake of something like the Holocaust? If creativity is a particularly innovative solution to a socio-cultural problem, what if a society's goal was to eradicate a given race? Nazi Germany provided a specific social context for such a question to be examined, as macabre as it might be to

⁴⁰ Al Miner, *Ori Gersht : History Repeating*. 21.

consider from our current perspective. What is the fastest way to eliminate a mass of people? How do you accomplish such a task that you leave virtually no trace of the act of execution behind? If we consider a camp like Treblinka (50 miles northeast of Warsaw) where between July 1942 and August 1943, almost 750,000 people were executed,⁴¹ the sheer scale of the operation is impossible to comprehend. The camp was disguised from the outside to be a work camp. 5000 to 7000 people would arrive at one time, they would be directed into the “work” camp, their heads were shorn, and they were encouraged to write postcards to friends and relatives to move east to join the camps.⁴² From here:

Prisoners were told that they were going in to a bath house to be cleansed. They would enter through one door. Once the prisoners were inside the chambers, the order "Ivan, water!" shouted from a German to a Ukrainian guard would begin the gassing. The gassing did not always happen quickly. Because the victims were packed in to the room tightly, there was no room to move around. Consequently, the victims might stand for thirty to forty minutes before they actually died.⁴³

The chambers were then cleared, the bodies burned or disposed in mass graves, and the scene was reset so that there would be no appearance of what had occurred when the next train arrived.⁴⁴ This is the starkest example of what we mean when we say ruthless efficiency. When, in 1943, the Allied forces were

⁴¹ "Treblinka – Shtetl," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shtetl/treblinka/files/21/treblinka.html>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

encroaching on the camp, “Orders were given to destroy the camp so that no traces of its existence would remain. A farm was built on the Treblinka site and it was offered to a Ukrainian to run it for income.”⁴⁵ It seems impossible to comprehend: an infrastructure can exist for a little over a year, murder 750,000 people, and disappear without a trace. And this isn’t the only time the Nazi government did this; the forest of Sobibor was planted with fast growing pine trees by the Germans toward the end of World War II “to conceal evidence of the systematic killing that took place there; the trees are, in fact, feeding off the ashes of the 250,000 bodies buried there.”⁴⁶ Isn’t this creativity and science at its most sinister? And, as abhorrent as it might seem, wasn’t this seen as good in this particular social context? If it were argued that creativity inherently has an ethics, than the horrors of Treblinka and Sobibor prove that ethics cannot be held as inherent.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Al Miner, *Ori Gersht : History Repeating*. 235.

⁴⁷ I saw Gersht’s work at the Gund Gallery on the campus of Kenyon College in the spring of 2013. Two other things haunted me that I have not written about here. The first was Gersht’s images of blooming cherry trees in contemporary Hiroshima. Gersht is quoted as having said, “I see the dropping of the nuclear bomb as the most important event of our time. It became such a landmark in our engagement with other human beings” (p. 51). The second was a work by Alfredo Jaar called *Untitled (Newsweek)*. The work features the covers of 17 Newsweek magazines beginning on April 6, 1994 and lasting until August 1, 1994. Alongside each cover is a simple description of the major events occurring in Rwanda. For example the description paired with the July 21 Newsweek (the magazine’s front cover adorned with the headline “To Walk on Mars”, accompanied by a picture of a small Earth dwarfed by a huge Mars) is “The United Nations Security Council reaches a final agreement to send an international force to Rwanda. One million people have been killed. Two million have fled the country. Another two million are displaced within Rwanda.” As I left gallery in a somber mood, two the thoughts popped in my mind. First, my culture made that bomb and two, my culture ignored that slaughter. I am sure at some point both in the making of the bomb and the layout of the magazine people felt certain they

We have seen this type of unethical creativity unaccounted for in the popular definitions of creativity, but another of Gersht's works highlights another silence: the act of refusal by a conscious non-participant can also be a creative act. An artwork that illuminates this point is the two-channel piece *Will You Dance For Me*. This video projection is presented side by side; on one screen we see the striking visage of an old woman seated in a chair, on the other screen, total blackness projects for some time before the camera fades up on a snowy field. A haunting and simple melody on piano and violin accompany the scene with occasional ambient noise from the field. The film of the woman begins with her voice-over in stating, in Hebrew, "For the first time in my life, I was able to say no." As the video progresses, the woman performs a series of deliberate movements; this is her dance. Eventually she rocks back and forth in the chair slowly. Her forward rocking bathes her in light; her backward rocking swallows her up in an almost inky darkness; the camera pulls farther and farther back; the woman continues her slow rocking until, like a flame flickering out, she is gone.

The mood of the film is somber and elegiac and, like *The Forrest*, this tone is only intensified once the viewer reads the explanation accompanying the piece. The dancer is the eighty-five-year-old, Yehudit Arnon suffering from

were producing good, creative work. A slow terror crept up on me: What *absolutely certain* good, creative work am I producing?

osteoporosis.⁴⁸ Her story is equal parts cruel and inspiring:

In 1944, SS guards had discovered the nineteen-year-old Arnon doing acrobatics for other prisoners at Auschwitz. When the guards demanded that she perform a dance at their Christmas party, she refused. Left to stand barefoot in the snow as punishment for her defiance, the young Arnon promised herself that if she survived, she would dedicate her life to dance.⁴⁹

Arnon would later found and direct the Kibbutzim Dance Company. "In June 1997, Arnon received the Distinguished Artist Award of the International Society for the Performing Arts in recognition of her extraordinary contributions of creative talent and inspiration to the world of dance."⁵⁰

Much in the same way that the viewer can appreciate the creativity of *The Forrest*, the technical creativity on display in *Will You Dance For Me* is equally evident. Everything is carefully refined and not a movement is wasted in the almost fourteen minute film. But where *The Forrest* is very much Gersht's work, *Will You Dance For Me* is a collaboration with Arnon. Gersht traveled with a fifteen-person crew to Israel to meet with Arnon.⁵¹ Arnon couldn't work more than two hours per day due to her health and, unfortunately, the shoot went long,

⁴⁸ Jonathan Jones, "Ori Gersht, David Shrigley and Jmw Turner – the Week in Art," <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/jan/27/ori-gersht-david-shrigley-jmw-turner/files/23/ori-gersht-david-shrigley-jmw-turner.html>.

⁴⁹ Al Miner, *Ori Gersht : History Repeating*. 28.

⁵⁰ "Founder," <http://www.kcdc.co.il/en/founder.html> files/25/founder.html.

⁵¹ *Ori Gersht : History Repeating*. 28.

running over a three-day period.⁵² The curator Al Miner writes:

As the shoot went on, Arnon became visibly frustrated. She wanted her voice in the film; she considered herself Gersht's collaborator. He gave her one more take, this time without direction. It was then she came to life for the camera. She gave Gersht, the lens, and in turn, us, one last commanding performance.⁵³

In context, the work is somber and beautiful; it is a testament to Arnon's resilience and life.⁵⁴

When Arnon *chooses* to participate, the viewer gets to witness the results of the collaboration between herself and Gersht. Here, creativity is a process and product of *their* efforts; to place the emotional thrust of the work with *an* individual would be unjust. However, the viewer learns something else from Arnon: there can be creativity in refusal, to *not* participate. In reading her biography, no one doubts Arnon's gifts. These physical gifts of Arnon are recognized at a distance by Nazi guards who perhaps (maybe likely) thought of her as unworthy of dignity. Some of these physical gifts may have been characterized by what we might call natural talent but, certainly, are also cultivated by hard work and practice. Arnon chose when to deploy these gifts. In a positive sense, she wanted to entertain her fellow prisoners, to distract them from their surroundings, or maybe even try to

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ And I cannot help but think of Deleuze's "What is the Creative Act?" where he writes: "Malraux developed an admirable philosophical concept. He said something very simple about art. He said it was the only thing that resists death." Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness : Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995*. 328.

engender hope. The viewer is the recipient of these same gifts when watching *Will You Dance For Me*; her choice to participate as a collaborator captures an emotionally charged work for the camera. However, her refusals are equally important. With Gersht and his crew, it is her refusal to fully participate until the last take that allows the artwork to come into existence. Bravely, it is Arnon's refusal to entertain her captors at their Christmas party, to deny these soldiers the privilege of viewing her gift, which leads her to increased physical and emotional torture. As strange as it seems, it is this darkest of moments when Arnon decides to dedicate her life to dance; her refusal is her agency. Now, any professional dancer experiences pain from constant rehearsal and injury, but this pain and injury are in a space where the choice to refuse is more obvious and apparent to both the dancer and outside observer. However, conscious refusal is a creative act here because it gives a person agency, even in a time and place where there is no real claim to agency. Arnon's actions are a stark example of this agency at work but, as we will see in later chapters, there are numerous ways people use refusal to demand space and recognition for themselves and, as a result, their actions often appear to be creative in retrospect.

As we leave these emotional depths I want to stress that these themes of creativity—ethics,⁵⁵ refusals, silences, the tensions between the individual and

⁵⁵ As a counterpoint consider: Mark A. Runco, "Creativity Has No Dark Side," in *The Dark Side of Creativity*, ed. Arthur J. Cropley David H. Cropley, James C. Kaufman, Mark A. Runco (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). The psychologist Mark A. Runco writes that creativity cannot be unethical because it is a process and we make a mistake if we conflate the process with its

group—are the thrusts of this dissertation that we will return to again and again. Many examples will address these themes overtly, but some will recede and simply hang in the background. I argue these are the spaces where the conventional scientific understandings of creativity fall short. With this in mind, here is the structure of the dissertation:

Chapters

This section will provide a brief mention of the outline of the dissertation as well as a short reference to the way it is structured. A longer breakdown of each chapter will be addressed at the end of Chapter 2; this is done so that the reader will understand the methodology utilized to address the particular topics that follow.

Chapter 2 not only addresses the methodology for this dissertation, it also addresses my position as researcher. Two other topics are dominant in this chapter: I devote some space to some of the linguistic decisions made in this

product (16). He writes of creativity as an evolutionary process where, “Values do come into play, but only during a late stage, when there is something to evaluate. They are not effective during variation, generation of alternatives, or creation. They come into play afterward, in judgments and implementation” (18). In his conclusion, Runco argues, “The trick is to recognize creativity is a form of deviance and then determine how and why it is sometimes used in a benevolent way and sometimes in a malevolent way” (29). My argument utilizes Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of desire, which I believe is distinct from this line of thinking because, quickly here, individual production and social production are impossible to untangle. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 6. There remains a problem with time that Runco recognizes, namely that something can be judged benevolent/malevolent depending on the time period. I indirectly deal with this ethical idea below and the idea of an accumulation of meanings in both Chapter 3 with George Kubler and Chapter 5 with Hannah Arendt, but there is certainly more thought to be done here.

dissertation as well as a brief exploration of the difficulty and necessity of an ethics of creativity. Chapter 3 argues that creativity requires parameters to make it manifest; in turn, the creative act often reifies the existing parameters. This chapter also presents the idea that an individual's refusal of some dominant socio-cultural parameters creates a space where other, previously less visible, socio-cultural parameters are brought to attention. In Chapter 4, creativity is presented as an idea that has been dominated by masculine characteristics, including madness. Also addressed is the tension between individual creative acts and that of communities where I argue the distinctions are harder to maintain than often recognized. If Chapter 4's focus is said to be primarily masculine, Chapter 5 examines the sole historically attributed creative act of females: giving birth. Creativity in this context is addressed as embodied and as a form of agency. Chapter 6 changes focus to examine what casting creativity as production might do to our understandings of creativity. The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari are heavily relied upon in this chapter, as is the work of two artists: Tino Sehgal and William Kentridge. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with an examination of Olafur Eliasson's piece *360 Degree Room for All Colours*. It is in this final chapter that I address the implications for the field of Art Education and suggestions for further research.

In between each of these chapters, the reader will find a fragment. The purpose of the fragment is to utilize an example that will set the tone for the

chapter that follows. Admittedly, the fragments are spaces where I found I could write outside the confines of the formal structure found in dissertations. While they address relatively well-known events or artworks, my initial experience with each of them represented a personal encounter where I found a sensation but no words to adequately describe that sensation. So the fragments written here are full, but inadequate. They present a frame for the sensation but, paradoxically, the frame cannot contain the sensation. With that in mind, this dissertation is the frame for creativity as concept, a frame that is necessary *and* wholly inadequate by design. A culture of Total Noise makes this all too much to absorb, but we proceed anyway. A futile *and* meaningful act follows.

Fragment: Ease Yourself Down

How does one write a methodology, especially when you want to arrive at something that is truly capacious¹ in its scope? You could do worse than Lewis Hyde twisting Ralph Waldo Emerson's words around:

I've thought of doing a version of Emerson in which you simply take every sentence of 'Self-Reliance' and flip it...so like at the beginning he says, 'Yesterday I read in a book somebody stating very well an idea I had myself, and I felt ashamed that I hadn't expressed it myself.' Well, you could say, 'Yesterday I read in a book somebody stating very well an idea I had myself, and I felt *glad* that I was not alone, and that my ideas were not *my* ideas.' You know, where is the master who could teach Emerson?²

A dissertation that set about honoring the work that resonated with you, that made you feel like you belong, well, that would be something.

Of course, you might find yourself lost on that particular journey and you would need a way to center yourself. The work has to feel honest and like yours after all. Amy Hempel helps to find your pulse:

¹ Daniel B. Smith, "What Is Art For? - Lewis Hyde - Profile," *The New York Times* (2008), <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/16/magazine/16hyde-t.html?pagewanted=all>. "Capacious" becomes a key word in this profile of Hyde and I use it here to honor its use in the profile. Also, after reading the profile, it became clear this was exact word that needed to be written.

² Ibid.

Most of the time you don't really hear it. A pulse is a thing that you feel. Even if you are somewhat quiet. Sometimes you hear it through the pillow at night. But I know there is a place where you can hear it even better than that

Here is what you do. You ease yourself into a tub of water, you ease yourself down. You lie back and wait for the ripples to smooth away. Then you take a deep breath, and slide your head under, and listen for the playfulness of your heart.³

A good methodology would lead you to work that *felt* true. Of course, this being academia, you would have to articulate it, and you would. You would do so knowing that someone got it right before you, in fewer words, more eloquently. But you would still try.

³ Amy Hempel, *The Collected Stories of Amy Hempel* (New York; Toronto: Scribner, 2007). 4.

Chapter 2: A Methodology

To pursue a topic as well trod as creativity and hope to say something new about it requires a methodology that will facilitate such a task. The aim of this chapter is to outline a methodological approach to think differently about creativity. My approach is four-fold. First, I will outline my position as a researcher so that the reader can identify my proclivities and biases. Second, the language of this dissertation will be addressed, as the constant shift from first person singular to first person plural is important in thinking about identity as both a universal and individualized construct. Third, ethics in creativity will be addressed. This is done not to sum up a tidy ethical position but rather to state that one must remain mindful of ethics in thinking about creativity as a process. Finally, the methodology of this dissertation is identified. This dissertation utilizes Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "concept" as a methodological approach. This chapter identifies the "concept's" uniqueness as a philosophical position and as a methodological approach to a topic. Once the methodology has been established, I will conclude with a brief summary of how this methodology will work in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

My research position

An underlying personal goal for this dissertation, which shall not appear again once this section ends but, despite my best intentions, will float specter-like in the background, is to work with as much critical distance from the topic of creativity as possible. The poet H.L. Hix gives a nice characterization of the author in the wake of Roland Barthes when he writes: "Previously, the text was a cloth to be unraveled by the reader; if the cloth were unwound all the way, the reader would find the author holding the other end. But Barthes makes the text a shroud, and no one, not even a corpse, is holding the other end."¹ It would be easy to get sidetracked by Hix's point but I want to address its relevance in this dissertation. I would characterize my writing from the end of this section forward as that of an author mistaken for dead. Certainly, for some readers, the text will perform on its own, but given the intensity of both my participation and the participation of my dissertation committee, I cannot see the text with this critical distance. To my mind, if you were to unravel the shroud at the other end you would find it tenuously tangled up in my fingers and it is necessary to identify a few key characteristics of my writing and research before proceeding any further.

My lens, the lens that I increasingly feel defines me, is that of an artist. At the risk of being too general here, my artwork can be characterized in two ways. Half of my artworks draw on architectural spaces that my work remakes in ways

¹ In David Foster Wallace, "Greatly Exaggerated," in *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again: Essays and Arguments* (1998). 141.

that are both conceptually and visually interesting to me. These works are finished when some unquantifiable aesthetic is achieved; in short I am searching for these works to emit a sensation that resonates with me. The working process is one of discovery but the stopping point of the piece is dictated very much by its formal qualities. The second types of artworks I pursue are works where I establish specific parameters and force myself to perform as a rational actor within these artificial constraints. These projects are finished when the logic of the parameters is exhausted. In these works, the form the artworks take are solely dictated by my activity within these parameters. I mention this for two reasons. First, there are elements of my artistic decision making throughout this dissertation. Some of these decisions are visible in the formal qualities of how the dissertation appears, like my choice to use Chicago as a citation method instead the normal citation system for Art Education, APA,² or my choice to use Helvetica³ as the font.

Second, and not as easily categorized, are the artistic desires I have to even write this dissertation. To illustrate these desires, let me first say what the

² My reasoning for this citation structure is more complicated than I want to devote space to here but I will mention two reasons for this choice. First, APA privileges dates and authors in its citation system. Being that my argument is conceptual, to have dates be primary in the body of the text may prove confusing to the reader since my references are historically broad. Also, since I am so reliant on my sources, I wanted to provide exactness in terms of page numbers that APA does not always provide. Second, Chicago allows for the main body of text to appear uncluttered by leaving citations to the footnotes. But the footnotes also allow for space to branch out when necessary, essentially fracturing the straightforward narrative of the text and creating a multiplicity of its own.

³ Gary Hustwit, "Helvetica," ([London]; Brooklyn, NY: Swiss Dots Ltd.; Plexifilm: Distributed by Newvideo, 2007). In the film, the designer Wim Crouwel refers to Helvetica as neutral font that is "a little more machine."

desire is not. There has been some recent scholarship in Art Education on the artist as researcher.⁴ While I find much to value in the thinking of these researchers, I am not ascribing my work to their structural lenses. A host of terms and ideas need to be parsed when utilizing artist-researcher. Perhaps the most important parsing that would need to occur is the push for artists to conduct the production of artworks in such a way that the bastions of traditional academic research will acknowledge their validity. Pursuing the argument of “Is art production research?” seems both evident to me (of course it is) and worthy of space where it will receive its due diligence.⁵ Instead of operating in the Art Education field as “artist-researcher,” I prefer to think of this dissertation as simply written in the messiness of the term “artist.”

Two pithy quotes from Marcel Duchamp are relevant in explaining what I mean when I use the term artist here. First, “art is a road which leads towards regions which are not governed by time and space.”⁶ And, second, “There is no solution because there is no problem.”⁷ Both quotes speak to both fluidity and aimlessness in artistic thought, but they also represent an aspect of surrender to the production of artworks. What do I mean by surrender? It is an attempt to not

⁴ Two examples are: Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2005). And, G. James Daichendt, *Artist Scholar Reflections on Writing and Research* (Chicago: Intellect Ltd., 2012).

⁵ Trying to find a way to argue that artwork could fit the academic research model of the university, while useful, carries with it a whole host of issues worthy of their own dissertation

⁶ Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis : An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). 101.

⁷ Marcel Duchamp, *Salt Seller; the Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). 6.

put an emphasis on solving an issue directly or producing a product that can easily be consumed. The artist Robert Irwin's summarization of Edmund Husserl's concept of phenomenological reduction⁸ as, "How might it be otherwise?"⁹ is another example of this type of thought. There is not a claim in the production of artworks that an artwork will necessarily have value as capital.¹⁰ Instead, art production is recognition that even *trying* to think differently is a worthwhile value. Here, a culture of "Total Noise"—identified in Chapter 1 as the massive amount of information, rhetoric, and spin we are expected to navigate in a Western socio-cultural context—in the best sense accommodates not only our creative successes but also our failures too. This kind of "artistic thinking," for lack of a better term, grants permission for the space of this dissertation.¹¹ What's more, I see the dissertation itself as a work of art.¹² This is my position as

⁸ Phenomenological reduction is referred to as an "intentional consciousness" and refers to our perception of reality as bracketed with an un-bracketed understanding of being present. Christian Beyer, "Edmund Husserl," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2013).

⁹ Ólafur Eliasson and Robert Irwin, "Take Your Time: A Conversation between Ólafur Eliasson and Robert Irwin," in *Take Your Time : Ólafur Eliasson*, ed. Madeleine Grynsztejn Ólafur Eliasson, and Mieke Bal (San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007). 61.

¹⁰ Of course there are exceptions to this as several artists play with capital in interesting ways. This idea will receive more attention in Chapter 6 when I address Andy Warhol and his famous interview in *Art News*.

¹¹ This is not to say that artistic thinking should be valued above all other types of thinking. I draw heavily on philosophy for my work. I also draw from historical studies, science, and ethics. It is my understanding that all of these fields embrace a thinking that might be similar to artistic thinking, even if it is only on the margins of these respective fields. This also would embrace any crossover thinking that would happen between fields or in the dissolution of a field.

¹² I want to stress here that I am not qualifying a work of art as successful or unsuccessful. I prefer to think of my artwork as a series. Some works stand out to me as more successful than others because, over time, they continue to resonate. I will mark this dissertation as successful if it continues to be meaningful to my thinking going forward. If it loses its importance, that is fine

a researcher that will undergird this dissertation and guide my approach to rupturing an over-determined idea of creativity. Now that I have identified my position as an artist writing this dissertation, I will address the linguistic choice to switch between “I” and “we” in the text. In addressing this switching, I want to call attention to the tension between individual and group conceptions of creativity as well as the complicated idea of identity.

I and We

While my choice to write this dissertation “artistically” might appear as a dismissal of a scientific understanding of creativity that is not my intention; science, philosophy (including ethics) and art are all incredibly useful as tools to understand and think differently about complex issues. This section will first address the linguistic shifting in the text from “I” to “we.” As a result of this switching, the work of a psychologist who deals with examinations into how humans in the Western world tend to respond to stories of mass suffering will be highlighted. My intention is to give the reader a foundation for the choices I am making as my argument progresses in my methodology. By nature of this argument, we will run squarely into a question of ethics; I will attempt to summarize the stakes of this argument as succinctly as possible.

too. The dissertation was then something I needed to move *through* to get to the next thing, whatever the next thing may be.

One of the questions bound to arise when following my argument is a question of focusing on the individual or a larger socio-cultural framework. How might studying individual ideas, examples, and philosophies help us to gain a sense of what is happening on a larger scale? This issue will appear throughout the dissertation in (at least) two ways. First, on the formal writing side of the work, any shift from first person singular (I) to first person plural (we) is an obvious rhetorical move to envision the reader drawn together with me in the argument. Also, it acknowledges the multiplicity¹³ of one's self, which registers as the ever changing way we operate in the world. Deleuze and Guattari write in the first lines of *A thousand plateaus*, "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several there was already quite a crowd."¹⁴ These lines are deceptively simple and disarming, but they are useful for examining a host of issues.

By utilizing examples of individuals, general readers connect to ideas in a more manageable way. This is a very real problem of allowing individuals to perceive agency and belonging in a seemingly hopeless situation. Dan Ariely, the

¹³ In Adrian Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010). As Jonathan Roffe notes in his description of multiplicity, the term multiplicity is *not* to be understood as many parts of the whole. Roffe uses the metaphor of a house to illustrate the term: "a house is a patchwork of concrete structures and habits. Even though we can list these things, there is finally no way of determining what the essence of a particular house is, because we cannot point to anything outside of the house itself to explain or to sum it up – it is simply a patchwork" (181). Roffe goes on to illustrate that multiplicities are affected by encounters; there is no multiplicity that remains immutable. I use multiplicity here to acknowledge this is true even in the ways that we conceptualize our identities. We can be, and are, changed by encounters.

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980). 3.

psychologist and behavioral economist, has written about why people seem indifferent to large tragedies while at the same time allow themselves to be personally and economically more invested in an individual tragedy. Pulling quotes from both Joseph Stalin—“One man’s death is a tragedy, but a million deaths is a statistic”¹⁵—and Mother Theresa—“If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at one, I will”¹⁶—Ariely lays out the stakes showcasing that although there may be drastic moral differences between Stalin and Mother Theresa, both quotes address the same issue. To put this issue bluntly, we have proven cold to mass suffering and slaughter in ways that are unconscionable while being significantly more empathetic and giving to individuals. Why might this be?

Ariely identifies a trio of psychological factors at work that seem to motivate people to “spend money, time and effort to help identifiable victims yet fail to act when confronted with statistical victims.”¹⁷ These factors—closeness, vividness, and the ‘drop-in-the-bucket’ effect—work in concert in most research subjects making it hard to identify which factor, if any, is the dominant factor in motivating us. Closeness, defined by Ariely as a “feeling of kinship,”¹⁸ is certainly applicable to family members but can stimulate action across thousands of miles if the individual *appears* to feel similar to us. With vividness, our actions seem to be triggered by seeing acts in a tremendous amount of detail in contrast to vague

¹⁵ Dan Ariely, *The Upside of Irrationality : The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home* (New York: Harper, 2010). 238.

¹⁶ Ibid. 239.

¹⁷ Ibid. 242.

¹⁸ Ibid. 243.

news reports that make it hard for us to comprehend any lived similarity with the victims. Finally there is the drop-in-the-bucket effect, apparently motivated by the perception that we do not have the “ability to single-handedly and completely help the victims of a tragedy;”¹⁹ in short, a task that is too daunting with no drastic perceivable outcome for measurable good is not worth doing. What further intensifies this last point is the fact that Ariely’s initial research also showed reluctance in individuals for effort to be expanded toward a victim if *any* statistical information was given about a victim’s predicament. It seems that we have a difficult time being both rationally *and* emotionally invested in a problem. In contrast, we might find that this is why we respond so enthusiastically to works of individual creativity. The vividness of someone inventing a new idea *feels* familiar, even if nothing could be further from the truth.

One of the recommendations Ariely suggests to combat these issues is, “[T]o come up with a set of rules to guide our behavior. If we can’t trust our hearts to always drive us to do the right thing, we might benefit from creating rules that will direct us to take the right course of action, even when our emotions are not aroused.”²⁰ Here we see both the importance of boundaries in guiding our behavior and why the philosophical foundation of this dissertation is so important. This foundation has to function in a way that individual examples are used

¹⁹ Ibid. 244.

²⁰ Ibid. 254.

responsibly to point at larger issues. I will return to this idea in the next section so that I can make one last point about the role of “I” and “we.”

The tension of the individual and the group is not ameliorated with Ariely’s research and it will remain throughout this dissertation. Moreover, as I will argue in the chapters to come, it is impossible to separate the individual from the group. This point becomes especially complicated in our contemporary world with the issue of globalization. When it becomes difficult to distinguish the “we” from the “I” in creativity, there is the potential for the “I” to find himself or herself lost. “I” want my work to be recognized as creative; “I” want to be apart of a “we.” How does this desire to be recognized as creative shape my creativity?

The Palestinian artist and art historian Kamal Boullata utilizes a short essay to examine the history of the word “belonging” through both its English and Arabic roots. When considering the history of Arabic poetry he notes that this poetry was, “[F]or the roaming nomads who belonged to the language of their ancestors more than they ever could belong to any definable piece of territory.”²¹ Poetry bound people together in a way that disrupts attachment to a specific place. The results of creativity have the potential to resonate in a way that disrupts other markers of identity. Boullata writes that in Arabic poetry, “To *be* in and to *long* for were intimately associated.”²² With this in mind, my choice of individual examples or philosophies is not meant to provide a historic, totalizing

²¹ Ibid. 14.

²² Ibid.

picture of some alternative definition of creativity. Instead I wish to highlight ideas often discarded when the “I” or “we” is taken as a monolith. Individuals whose creative act appears to challenge cultural norms might appear to be iconoclasts but they still long to be connected. The refusal of some cultural norms does imply a refusal of all culture or all norms. When culture appears to be a monolith, some individuals see their creativity as establishing a new community where, in the starkest sense, they have dignity.

This topic of belonging could certainly be critically elaborated further on distinct terms from creativity but that would be outside the framework of this dissertation. What I want to note is that even in the lexical space of this dissertation, this complicated idea of “belonging” is present. The relationship between / and we is both a clamor for autonomous recognition under the umbrella of creativity and attempt to highlight under-recognized ideas in the Western, scientific understanding of creativity. With this idea of “belonging” established, we return to Ariely’s suggestion of establishing a set of rules to guide our behavior.

Ethics in Creativity

The earlier suggestion from Ariely to establish a set of rules to guide our behavior has led us squarely into the topic of ethics. The philosopher Simon Blackburn makes two quick points in the beginning of his short introduction to

ethics that are relevant in light of these last few paragraphs. First, ethics is the “surrounding climate of ideas about how to live;”²³ however helpful, any pithy definition of ethics belies its complexity. As evidenced by Ariely’s research, we do not always think as deeply about our actions as possible. The reason for our inaction in some circumstances might lie with Blackburn’s second point, which begins to hint at how complex ethics can become. He writes, “Ethics is disturbing...to be entrenched in a culture, rather than merely belonging to the occasional rogue, exploitative attitudes will themselves need a story.”²⁴ These stories that we tell ourselves can justify even the most reprehensible behavior.²⁵ Ethics, employed rigorously, holds the ability to upset these stories.

Ethics as a field is so vast that it can easily overwhelm the topic at hand. For that reason our exploration of ethics will be limited to two issues here. The first issue comes in the form of philosopher Brian G. Henning’s excellent book, *The Ethics of Creativity*²⁶ and the second issue will with what might be called a Deleuzeo-Guattarian ethics. First, Henning draws heavily on the work of Alfred North Whitehead, a mathematician and philosopher whose main philosophical assertion is, “that the world is composed of deeply interdependent processes and

²³ Simon Blackburn, *Being Good : An Introduction to Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). 1.

²⁴ Ibid. 7.

²⁵ Ibid. Blackburn uses slavery and the antebellum slave owners in the United States to illustrate this point. Given my example from Gersht’s work in the previous chapter, this idea can easily be extended to soldiers and citizens in the Holocaust.

²⁶ Brian G. Henning, *The Ethics of Creativity : Beauty, Morality, and Nature in a Processive Cosmos* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).

events, rather than mostly independent material things or objects.”²⁷ Henning utilizes Whitehead’s philosophy to set the stakes for morality in very broad terms.

He writes:

No longer can [morality] be limited exclusively to those relations obtaining between human beings or even those between sentient beings. Rather, morality must concern how we, as humans, ought to conduct ourselves with each and every aspect of reality.²⁸

Henning works through this idea through Whitehead’s position that being human is a process that will inevitably draw on the resources of the world. We must eat, we must excrete, and we must breathe and all of these acts affect the resources of the world; in short, being human is a form of “robbery.”²⁹ What morality requires in this light is justification for the robbery.³⁰ This is a particularly useful idea for Henning as he utilizes it in an extended example to think through the food that we eat and the resources consumed by the production of food; this is a consideration of the very ethics of what it means to be human with the world.³¹

Henning’s work is attractive in this dissertation because of its call for thought into “every aspect of reality.” Particularly attractive is his prescription that

²⁷ Andrew David Irvine, ed. *Alfred North Whitehead*, Winter 2013 ed., Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1996).

²⁸ Henning, *The Ethics of Creativity : Beauty, Morality, and Nature in a Processive Cosmos*. 2.

²⁹ Ibid. 166.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. 166-172. One of Henning’s examples of this comes from the United Nations Food program which states that we have more than enough grain to feed everyone in the world but that almost half this grain is used to support livestock. To consume meat is not a small robbery in this context (169).

an ethics of creativity requires first and foremost education, which he describes as “the attempt to understand and appreciate the beauty and values of individuals involved in a given situation.”³² This is in an admirable prescription in considering ethics. But as Henning himself highlights, the reliance on beauty is both a key to understanding Whitehead’s philosophy and potentially troublesome to some readers.³³ It is in this fact that the every event of the universe is “aimed at the achievement of beauty” in Whitehead’s philosophy that we must part ways in this dissertation.³⁴ We part ways here not because this is false; after all, this may very well be true. The reason for setting aside Henning’s work here is because the achievement of beauty marks an end point in the ethics of creativity. The journey could appear predetermined.³⁵ Because of the focus on the achievement of beauty, the direction appears more finalized. It is more useful in the spirit of this dissertation to think of the drives for creativity without a specific goal and these initial drives require a different ethic in proceeding. I argue that this ethic is Deleuzeo-Guattarian.

A Deleuzeo-Guattarian ethic maintains some similarities with the ethics of creativity from Henning. Foremost it does not fall into the trap identified by

³² Ibid. 151.

³³ Ibid. 6.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ This is an issue that will receive some attention in Chapter 6. Again, this may very well be true, but this dissertation focuses more on the beginnings of creativity and the actions associated with what it means to begin.

philosopher Levi Bryant as “rule-based models of ethical deliberation.”³⁶ Here, Bryant argues that the role often granted to ethics, a role that fails, is that a situation is outlined where everyone already knows the outcome. To return to the Holocaust as an example, because enough chronological time has passed since the death camps were running efficiently, we can speak of ethics with ease. We know this event is a travesty of ethics. To speak of ethics often applies ethical thought in retrospect to a problem rather than consider ethics as intertwined with the event itself.³⁷ This retains an idea that is similar to Henning’s approach to ethics, which wants to supply a method to approaching an ethical dilemma in our midst rather than in hindsight.³⁸

With what might be called a Deleuzo-Guattarian ethic, we are not granted the critical distance of historical hindsight. Instead we are asked how we are complicit in a given action; Nathan Jun succinctly characterizes our complicity:

They – *we* – play a role in the generation, operation, and transformation of other assemblages, other machines. The task, which is ultimately ethical in nature, is not to understand these things as they are but as they might be: the conditions of possibility for thinking, doing, and being otherwise.³⁹

A second characterization of this ethic is equally important, which is the fact that

³⁶ Levi R. Bryant, “The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without *Αρχή*,” in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan J. Smith Daniel W. Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011). 22.

³⁷ Ibid. 26.

³⁸ Henning is particularly concerned with environmentalism, a topic that has potential for analysis in hindsight and in our midst.

³⁹ Nathan J. Jun, “Introduction,” in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan J. Smith Daniel W. Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

we are multiplicities and, as such, are not fixed entities. Here is Bryant, again, describing the difference between a classical utilitarian ethics and a Deleuzeo-Guattarian ethics:

[In utilitarian ethics] we must assume that our capacity to be affected is more or less fixed...But this requires the homogeneity of our capacity to be affected. Yet what are we to do if *action itself* transforms our capacity to be affected by generating *new* capacities to be affected?⁴⁰

This ethics is remarkably complicated in comparison to a classical fixed ethics. The world changes *and* we change. This leaves ethics in a state where it constantly needs to be generated because we, ourselves, are generating. Bryant writes that it is “invention and creation that lies at the heart of the ethical, constituting its very being.”⁴¹ And while applying this ethics is certainly difficult, it reveals our capacity for creativity. And it remains distinct from Henning’s ethics of creativity because it is impossible to quantify at what point something like a *Deleuzeo-Guattarian* ethics would reach completion. It does not strive to a point of arrival; it remains a process.

While a process-oriented ethics can be established through Deleuze and Guattari, this is not the overt goal to understanding creativity in this dissertation. However, Deleuze and Guattari do provide another philosophical idea that is useful as a methodological approach to the topic of creativity. In the penultimate

⁴⁰ Levi R. Bryant, "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Αρχή," Ibid. 25.

⁴¹ Ibid. 26.

section of this chapter briefly takes up the duo's "concept" to illustrate the methodological lens for the dissertation and following chapters. Here, the potential of treating creativity as "concept" comes to light.

A "Concept" As a Methodology

In the first chapter when the context for creativity was presented, I argued that a scientific lens often defines creativity. In the previous section on ethics, the close reader will already have begun to see space to consider creativity in other ways; this section seeks to make the consideration of creativity more overt. What would we reveal if we looked at creativity through a philosophical lens?

Specifically, utilizing the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, what we understand about creativity if we looked at it as a "concept"? To attempt to use a Deleuzeo-Guattarian "concept" as a methodology presents a unique challenge because a "concept" does not have a "single purpose or referent," which, in turn, leaves a "concept" open-ended.⁴² There is no singular way to employ a "concept" but there are guides. The aim of this section is to mark a series of guideposts under which creativity could be considered as a "concept." As much as possible, I will use the author's own words because, as has been established, I am an artist not a philosopher and "philosophy is the discipline that involves *creating*

⁴² Cliff Stagoll, "Concepts," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). 53.

concepts.”⁴³ In other words, the task of this section is to take the creation of “concepts” as a methodology to rupture an over-determined creativity.

First, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, “There are no simple concepts. Every concept has components and is defined by them...it is a multiplicity.”⁴⁴ At first blush, a “concept” will appear to compound the problem of understanding something like creativity; this is a *benefit*, not a detraction. “The concept is a whole because it totalizes its components, but it is a fragmentary whole,” Deleuze and Guattari write, “All concepts are connected to problems without which they would have no meaning and which can themselves only be isolated or understood as their solution emerges.”⁴⁵ I may easily understand small components of the “concept”—take Ken Robinson’s pithy definition from Chapter 1 where creativity is concerned with “developing ideas that have value” as one example—but if I am truly utilizing creativity as a “concept” then this “concept” must “become the means by which we move beyond experience so as to be able to think anew.”⁴⁶ In the language of this dissertation, treating creativity as a “concept” opens a space for creativity to move towards something that resembles a “Total Noise” state, where multiple meanings can be possible and it will require work to distinguish these meanings.

If we were to use and understand “concepts” in their most basic form, the

⁴³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 16.

⁴⁶ Stagoll, “Concepts.” 54.

information from the previous paragraph would be enough to proceed forward, but Deleuze and Guattari further complicate our understanding of “concepts” in the examples they choose because “concepts” are not simplistic.⁴⁷ The first chapter from *What Is Philosophy?* makes use of two philosophical examples from Descartes and Kant to explicate this idea. Focusing first on Descartes, Deleuze and Guattari note that Descartes’ “concept” of self “has three components—doubting, thinking and being,”⁴⁸ and work to demonstrate that Descartes’ novel “concept” “presupposes nothing objective”⁴⁹ before, somewhat surprisingly, stating that it is not important if his “concept” is right or wrong. Why is this necessary and important here? We must remember that Deleuze and Guattari’s task for philosophy is the continued creation of “concepts” and that a “concept,” by nature, resists easy judgment or moralizing. “If one can still be a Platonist, Cartesian, or Kantian today, it is because one is justified in thinking that their concepts can be reactivated in *our problems* and inspire those concepts that need to be created.”⁵⁰ Any “concept” must be used in a way to try to comprehend our problems; any number of “concepts” from the Western philosophical cannon can be drawn upon to think in new ways, but it must not be limited to a fossilized state if the “concept” will allow us to truly think otherwise.

This is why, in part, Deleuze and Guattari readily draw on examples and

⁴⁷ Ibid. 53.

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 24.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 28. Emphasis added.

ideas from art, science and literature. These topics are *encounters* that hold the possibility to stimulate worlds as they are and as they might be. Deleuze and Guattari saw possibilities for encounters in the Western philosophical tradition *and* in the world and readily use the world for demonstration. While it is clear they do not conflate the purpose of art and science with philosophy, it is equally clear that their interactions with the arts and sciences have stimulated ideas and language for ways of speaking about “concepts” in philosophy. The duo’s encounters with arts and sciences stimulate new and unexpected ways of thinking that are then worked back into philosophy, since they are themselves philosophers and psychoanalysts and not artists or scientists. It is in these encounters that what we might call a Deleuzean-thinking occurs, an idea drawn from his work in *Difference and Repetition*, where, “the act of thinking which is neither given by innateness nor presupposed by reminiscence but engendered in its genitivity, is a thought without image.”⁵¹ The image traps our thought in specific ways, which, problematically, keeps us from considering things in a new way. As an example of this, think of Paul Valéry’s quote, “To see is to forget the name of the thing one sees.”⁵² Once we move past the readily identifiable symbol of a thing, it has more possibilities for discovery; we *might* even discover it anew.

This leads to Deleuze and Guattari’s second philosophical example from

⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968). 167.

⁵² In Lawrence Weschler, *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees : Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). 207.

Kant to understand what a “concept” might be. At the end of the first chapter on “concepts” in *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari present their example on how “concepts” develop and change. Referencing first Platonic time and then Descartes’ repression of time in his ideas on the cogito, the authors show how Plato’s work “puts time into the concept, but it is a time that must be Anterior.”⁵³ Here this can be simply understood as the idea that Plato recognized there was a world that existed before he was present in that world. Descartes did away with the idea of preexistence by asserting, “Innate ideas do not exist ‘before’ but ‘at the same time’ as the soul.”⁵⁴ One way to understand this is to think of Descartes, alone in his room, trying to prove his existence. He is essentially having an argument with himself in this room, trying to use philosophy to understand how he comes to this specific moment. Descartes does this by presupposing *nothing*:

Thus I will assume that everything I see is false. I believe that, among the things that a deceptive memory represents, nothing ever existed; I have no senses at all; body, shape, extension, motion, and place are unreal. Perhaps that is all there is, that there is nothing certain...Is there not some God, or whatever I might call him, who puts these thoughts in me? Why should I think that, when I myself may perhaps be the author of those thoughts?⁵⁵

Descartes is striving to be totally present at a specific moment, which is why

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 29.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 30.

⁵⁵ René Descartes, *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings* (London; New York: Penguin, 1998). 23.

when Deleuze and Guattari arrive at Kant, they write “Kant demands the introduction of a new component into the cogito, the one Descartes repressed—time.”⁵⁶ It is in this ‘criticism’ of Descartes that a new “concept” of time is created where “time becomes a form of interiority with three components—succession, but also simultaneity and permanence.”⁵⁷ A Kantian notion of time gives thinkers in his wake the ability to consider time as chronological, present, and both before and after the philosopher’s existence. This is complicated enough on its own but time gains an even more complex character when coupled with ideas from Deleuze’s *The Fold*. Here, the reader sees that while time through Kant has become a form of interiority with these three components, what is happening in the exterior also affects the interior and vice versa. What this does is allow for what Deleuze calls a condition of “closure,” which is:

[T]he determination of a being-for the world instead of a being-in the world. Closure is the condition of being for the world. The condition of closure holds for the infinite opening of the finite: it “finitely represents infinity.” It gives the world the possibility of beginning over and over again in each monad.⁵⁸ The world must be placed in the subject in that the subject can be for the world.”⁵⁹

This idea allows for both a complex, even counter-intuitive, sense of time and a

⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 31.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 32.

⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold : Leibniz and the Baroque*, ed. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Deleuze attributes the term “monad” to Leibniz, as “the name...ascribe[d] to the soul or to the subject as a metaphysical point...[it is] a unity that envelops a multiplicity” (23).

⁵⁹ Ibid. 26.

complex sense of how we interact with the world. What is more is that all these ideas—time, an individual, the world—all have infinite ways to be read and all influence each other, despite any desire we might have to think of them as fixed entities. This is a true opening up of a “concept.”

It is not by accident that the two examples philosophical ideas from Descartes and Kant in the first chapter of *What Is Philosophy?* deal with the thinking individual and time. When we reshape our lived experience, we can make use of a “concept” that allows us to think of “space, time, matter, thought, [and] the possible as events,”⁶⁰ in short, we can rethink *anything*. In utilizing the “concept” from Deleuze and Guattari, we are not attempting to recognize “ourselves or the things in our world, but rather have [an] encounter with what we can’t yet ‘determine’—to what we can’t yet describe or agree upon, since we don’t yet even have the words.”⁶¹ The “concept” provides the ability to flummox, which, in turn, will only be a fragment of a greater “concept.”

Treating anything as a “concept” can, obviously, become very overwhelming very quickly. We understand that if creativity is a “concept” it has the potential of an infinite number of meanings in the world and an infinite number of meanings in those who have an encounter with the term. These meanings shift over our understanding of the varieties of time illustrated here. However, for as complex as the “concept” has just become, Deleuze and Guattari

⁶⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 33.

⁶¹ John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000). 20.

present a guiding principle of to consider if we are really treating something a “concept.” This guiding principle is what they characterize as the three ages of the “concept”: “encyclopedia, pedagogy, and commercial professional training.”⁶² Here, the “encyclopedia” is the stand-in term for the complexity of the monad, which resembles, but is not the same, as the idea of “Total Noise” introduced at the beginning of the first chapter. “Pedagogy” is our ability to think and consider “concepts”, which is “the more modest task...of the concept”⁶³ and where we need “to analyze the conditions of creation as factors of always singular moments.”⁶⁴ The trap for the “concept,” “commercial professional training,” implies that we understand the “concept” in a way that its value is obvious; this allows for its exploitation. In this final stage, the “concept” has been shut down and denied its true complexity. Again, “pedagogy” is very important to understanding the “concept” as Deleuze and Guattari write, “only the second [pedagogy] can safeguard us from falling from the heights of the first [encyclopedia] into the disaster of the third-an absolute disaster for thought whatever its benefits might be, of course, from the viewpoint of universal capitalism.”⁶⁵

Pedagogy, in the form of this dissertation, efforts keeping creativity tilting toward its encyclopedic form and holds at bay “commercial professional training.”

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 12.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 12.

It is also here that we see the power of over-coding achieved in universal capitalism as outlined in *Anti-Oedipus*, where the authors show their reader exactly how powerful universal capitalism has become. And here, again, is a shift of our perception of time: It is Deleuze and Guattari's "concept" that returns us from their last book together (*What Is Philosophy?*) to their first (*Anti-Oedipus*) and, in the process, continues to make their first book together vital and pedagogic. Simultaneously, while Deleuze and Guattari give us the "concept" and pedagogy, they make sure the reader knows they are not the only practitioners of pedagogy. We can have these pedagogic moments when we encounter something that upends or undermines our initial understanding. This generous idea frees their readers to go looking *in the world* for encounters, which is, in a sense, the entire point of the "concept" in the first place.

For the work at hand here, the philosophical "concept" creates a methodology to investigate creativity in its multiplicity. The idea that as a "concept", creativity will be steered away from its frequent use as an increasing tool of "commercial professional training" is important to this dissertation. It can be argued, with several examples from the business community, that creativity has become a powerful tool for universal capitalism. For these reasons, when I speak of artwork and the production of artworks in this argument I will use terms like *work* and *production* and shy away from other words like *make* or *create*. Work and production have history as words used in the study of economics.

Deleuze and Guattari use production to speak to economics, biology, and the unconscious, which casts production in economic, biologic, and psychoanalytic terms.

In the spirit of the duo's frequent invocation of Marx in *Anti-Oedipus*, I want to briefly mention Marx's *Comments on James Mill* where Marx addresses the idea of "non-alienated labour."⁶⁶ It is in this analysis that Marx describes production by human beings as affirming our collective dignity.⁶⁷ And, as I frequently classify the artwork as *both* the work of an individual and series of connections with others, this statement from Marx is especially meaningful: "In the individual expression of my life I would have directly created your expression of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have directly *confirmed* and *realised* [sic] my true nature, my *human* nature, my *communal nature*."⁶⁸ It is in characterizing creativity as confirming our communal nature and as a "concept" that more traditional, hierarchal and scientific understandings of creativity will cease to dominate the noise of our culture. The complexity that comes from reading creativity as a "concept" is positive; it allows new connections to be made and these new connections have the potential to alter the way we think of our communal nature. With this in mind, I conclude this chapter by presenting how treating creativity as a "concept" will affect the subsequent chapters of this

⁶⁶ Jonathan Wolff, "Karl Marx," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2011).

⁶⁷ Friedrich Engels Karl Marx, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1975). 227.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 228.

dissertation.

In Pursuit of Creativity as a “Concept”

Now that the philosophical foundation has been marked out for the dissertation with Deleuze and Guattari’s “concept,” I will present how it works in this dissertation. The argument presented in these subsequent chapters draws from different historical examples but the argument remains a conceptual one. To emphasize this I have placed small sections of text I call fragments between each chapter. My intention is that these fragments clear space for the rupture of creativity that occurs in each chapter as well as provide their own particular idea in discovering creativity as a multiplicity. And, to reiterate, my interpretation of these examples is *not* the only interpretation possible; the goal is to introduce flexibility, not dogma. In treating this document as an artwork I hope the same thing for it that I hope for all my artworks, which is that conversation and ideas are stimulated and new thoughts and connections are discovered. With this in mind, presented below are the remaining fragments and chapters.

The second fragment briefly addresses one of the most famous homeruns in baseball history and its subsequent poetic role as the opening chapter in Don DeLillo’s *Underworld*. The purpose of this fragment is to demonstrate how a past experience remains ripe for a rupture. Chapter 3 follows this fragment and presents the first of three conceptual arguments I make about creativity. The

main point of this chapter is that creativity requires a structure to make itself manifest; often as a result of the creative act, the structure that makes it manifest is reified. For my examination here I draw on examples from sports and art history. While these two subjects may appear to be a curious pair, both art production and production in the sports world provide examples of how cultural norms have the ability to dictate and liberate creativity. But this pair also provides examples of how even the strictest boundaries are permeable to larger cultural trends. In this sense, a creative act can also be a refusal of a norm, not unlike Yehudit Arnon's defiant act in the concentration camp illustrated in Chapter 1 when discussing the artwork of Ori Gersht.

Next comes a fragment that briefly addresses the quizzical relationship between Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei. Galileo sent anagrams to Kepler that were misinterpreted by Kepler but these misinterpretations turned out to be true. The purpose of this fragment is to disrupt the idea that creativity must be categorized in a short chronological sequence and that there are larger social factors at play than a simple conception of individual creativity. Chapter 4 follows, presenting the second of three conceptual arguments on creativity. The main purpose here is to demonstrate the dominant masculine cast to creativity. It is in this masculine cast that creativity has been historically associated both with madness and as a sole product of the individual. I draw from three examples in this chapter. First, through Plato's philosophy, I demonstrate how creativity was

associated with madness and how the reception of the creative act was associated with misleading the public from the common good. Second, I show how creativity in the monastery shapes our idea of what creative work looks like through ascetic focus. Also, I demonstrate that medieval monks moved toward individualized notions of life as chronological time approached the Scientific Revolution. Finally, I address how the collaborative nature the Scientific Revolution required in its creative acts complicates ideas of individualized creativity.

The next fragment briefly addresses Doris Salcedo's installation *Shibboleth* at the Tate Modern in 2008. Based on Mieke Bal's monograph on Salcedo, the goal of this fragment is to suggest that silence holds many possibilities. This leads the reader to Chapter 5 where the third of three conceptual arguments on creativity deals with a decidedly feminist cast of creativity. Sound and the giving of voice—in actuality and metaphorically—ground this chapter as a way to investigate the sole historical act of creativity that is attributable to women: giving birth. The patriarchal nature of voice in the Christian church gives two possibilities for female creativity: miraculous and painful. Virginia Woolf ruptures this dichotomy by showing female creativity as historically stifled while granting attention to its embodied nature. Through Hannah Arendt's philosophy, the metaphoric *and* actual giving of voice is theorized, while the use of that voice becomes harder—if not impossible—to characterize as an end in

itself. In short, through a feminist lens, the dominant focus of creativity is on the *process* of being creative, rather than on a final product.

In the next fragment the artwork and manifesto of Mierle Laderman Ukeles is addressed. Ukeles' focus on the maintenance infrastructure as one that protects and maintains culture provides an aesthetic of the everyday. Creativity in this form occurs through (the often unnoticed) repetition of general, seemingly menial, tasks but carries with it an artistic force all the same. Following this, the goal of the penultimate chapter is different than the previous three while building on the foundation of the work that has come to this point. Here I work to link creativity and desire to sensation. I explicitly return to the work of Deleuze and Guattari to understand individual desire as a biological force inextricable from larger social desires. Deleuze's work with sensation, particularly with works of art, demonstrates that an encounter has the potential to stimulate new thoughts and new connections. This combination of desire and sensation flattens established hierarchies between the artist and the audience; additionally it works in ways that are not always conscious. Utilizing examples from Duchamp, Warhol, Tino Sehgal, and William Kentridge as well as ideas from Lewis Hyde, I argue that creativity is a process first and foremost. And while I address studio production, the emphasis of this process falls on the audience of the work who, in this context, hold the potential to be equally creative.

The final fragment addresses Janet Cardiff and George Miller's 2001 artwork, *The Paradise Institute*. In experiencing the installation, a force is stimulated in the viewer, which resonates as sensation and is not easily captured linguistically. This leads to the concluding chapter, which bookends my suggestions for the field of Art Education and further research with an examination of Olafur Eliasson's *360 Degree Room for All Colours*. We find creativity at the end of this dissertation in a state that is not easily categorized but remains for the world. Which is to say creativity as a "concept" still retains its ability to be pedagogic, even if much of Western culture finds it, comfortably, as commercial professional training.

Fragment: The Manyness of Things

On October 3, 1951 the New York Giants' Bobby Thomson hit a three-run homer off the Brooklyn Dodgers' Ralph Branca in the bottom of the ninth inning to win both the game and the pennant for the Giants. The feat inspired one of the most famous radio calls in baseball history when Russ Hodges almost yelled himself hoarse screaming, "The Giants won the pennant!" It also inspired one of the best sports writing ledes of all-time when Red Smith of the New York Herald Tribune wrote:

Now it is done. Now the story ends. And there is no way to tell it. The art of fiction is dead. Reality has strangled invention. Only the utterly impossible, the inexpressibly fantastic, can ever be plausible again.¹

What, really, could be left to say?

If you felt that way, no one would blame you; history in retrospect can appear impenetrable. But, if you felt that way, then it would also be a big surprise to pick Don DeLillo's *Underworld* up off the shelf and see the story of Thomson's homerun again. This time the story appears in the introductory chapter for

¹ Red Smith, "Miracle of Coogan's Bluff," in *The Best American Sports Writing of the Century*, ed. David Halberstam (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999). 151.

DeLillo's massive novel under the foreboding chapter title of "The Triumph of Death," which is borrowed from the Pieter Bruegel the Elder painting.² The chapter, with some slight edits, had been earlier published as a short story in Harper's under a different name. In its magazine form, the story is called "Pafko at the wall," which references the Dodgers outfielder, Andy Pafko, who stood helplessly at the base of the outfield wall looking up for a ball that would never be found.³

From the beginning of the story, DeLillo paints the scene for the reader in a way that sets the stage for this iconic homerun. There is the fourteen year-old truant, Cotter Martin, who hops a turnstile and ends up in the center field bleachers as a result of his illicit act. There is the off-mic talk of Russ Hodges and his engineer, musing on the nature of the afternoon crowd. There is Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, Toots Shor, and J. Edgar Hoover sitting in the crowd, drinking and cavorting. The crowd hums. The reader ping-pongs through the stadium for a while; slowly, you find yourself spinning around the field, swept up in a vortex that gradually channels all of the energy of the crowd, the announcers, the players, and the whole city, into the baseball in Ralph Branca's hand. When Branca throws that fateful pitch to Thomson, you know what was going to happen but it feels impossible not to read faster and faster. The excitement builds and

² Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1997).

³ Don DeLillo, "Pafko at the Wall. (Fiction)," *Harper's Magazine* 285, no. 1709 (1992).

builds until, with the crack of the bat and that famous call from Hodges, it reaches its climax.

To this day, no one knows what happened to the baseball. Someone caught it, or fought for it in a dog pile, but no one ever owned up to actually walking out with the thing. One of the intriguing characteristics about DeLillo's piece was that he put it in the hand of fourteen year-old truant, who had somehow fought his way through the crowd, and ended up with a prized piece of baseball lore. The reader's last image of the boy is his bounding up the steps of his family's apartment building with the ball, holding it secret because he skipped school to catch it. That is a beautiful enough image on its own but DeLillo unfolds the scene a little more, letting his reader into the clubhouse, and then back into the head of the announcer, before once more lingering with the crowd that remains in the stadium, who are focused on a drunk running the bases in celebration.

A casual baseball fan probably knows about the Thomson homerun; if you follow baseball for a while it just becomes one of those plays that you know but can't remember where you learned about it. However, among baseball experts, the play is common knowledge; the story of it has been refined down to some shorthand like 'Bobby Thompson's homerun.' Experts can reference it amongst their peers and expect knowing, nodding heads in return. That is one of the beauties about sports: the seeming attainableness of it. For fans, baseball's

history becomes *their* history; the stories become condensed, assumed, and refined while retaining the ability to call up the intensity of a particular experience.

DeLillo's fame has come as a result of his fiction writing. This particular chapter is unique for him because of its engagement with historical fiction. Like good historical fiction writers, he is able to pick up a tiny thread of history and craft a rope from it that pulls his reader back into a specific moment. Where this moment might have seemed long past before, the emotion of being present at the event floods back into the scene. As a result, something that was so familiar to the point of cliché appears real again. Because the history he is dealing with is so well known, especially amongst baseball fans, DeLillo can freely play around with history to arrive at an emotional truth. He can write broadly or specifically here because his audience knows *exactly* where all this is going *and* yet not. DeLillo ends the piece by writing about that celebratory drunk circling the bases:

All the fragments of the afternoon collect around his airborne form. Shouts, bat-cracks, full bladders, and stray yawns, the sand-grain manyness of things that can't be counted. It is all falling indelibly into the now.⁴

⁴ Ibid. This is the same ending to both the short story in *Harpers* and the chapter in *Underworld* with one major exception: the last word. In *Harpers* it appears as quoted above, but in *Underworld* DeLillo changed "now" to "past" (60). Perhaps the difference in *Underworld* can be accounted for by the fact that this is the end of the first chapter of DeLillo's epic novel. DeLillo would be using the first chapter to set up the historical precedent that occurs in the past of some of the characters in the book. But, *just maybe*, DeLillo wanted an ending and a beginning *at the same time*; if he did, time would take on a much different character than a marker of traditional, chronological time.

This is the end of the experience for both the fans in the stadium and the reader of the short story/chapter. There is a realization that someone has taken something we may have taken for granted, as a historical *fact* devoid of its richness, and allowed us, briefly, to see the possibilities that exist in any moment and in any history, right down to the biological specificity of the crowd and reader. It's poetic. That feeling is real...and then it's gone, cast aside, seemingly fossilized; until, of course, you begin the text again.

Chapter 3: Creativity Rules, Refusals, and Repetitions

Please indulge me for a moment: One thing a person who does not regularly watch sports might not understand is the momentary, transcendent joy that can come from seeing something so unbelievable in front of you eyes that it renders the viewer without language. Faced with a human being, seemingly like you or I, in front of us using their body in a way that is both like us and not is indescribable. All we can do is cheer, hug, or jump in response. Part of this is the spontaneous nature of the act; most of these moments are unexpected, which makes their appearance otherworldly. And because this happens so fast that the viewers cannot believe their eyes, in the age of televised replay the audience becomes the personification of 'doubting Thomas,' wanting to see the act played out again and again, as if watching it a dozen times will make it somehow more understandable.

To elaborate on this idea, take two quick examples. Here is David Foster Wallace writing about watching Roger Federer play tennis:

Almost anyone who loves tennis and follows the men's tour on television has, over the last few years, had what might be termed Federer Moments. These are times, as you watch the young Swiss play, when the jaw drops

and eyes protrude and sounds are made that bring spouses in from other rooms to see if you're O.K.¹

Wallace goes on to describe a particular point versus Andre Agassi where Agassi managed to wrong-foot² Federer on his backhand side. Federer reverses his momentum instantaneously, managing to not only get to the ball to return it, but quick enough to get around it to hit a *forehand* down the line for a winner. No one can do this and *yet*, it occurred. And, as Wallace mentions, if you have ever played a game of tennis, you only begin to understand the difficulty of what just transpired.

This idea does not need to be confined to the tennis court though.

Consider Dave Hickey writing about watching Julius Erving execute his famous lay-up against Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. In the play, Erving jumps toward the basket from the side, but behind the backboard, soaring past Kareem to execute an unbelievable, scooping reverse lay-up for the score. Hickey writes:

Jesus, what an amazing play! Just the celestial athleticism of it is stunning, but the tenacity and purposefulness of it, the fluid stream of instantaneous micro-decisions that go into Erving's completing it... Well, it just breaks your heart. It's everything you want to do by way of finishing under pressure, beyond the point of no return, faced with adversity, and I

¹ David Foster Wallace, "Federer Both Flesh and Not," in *Both Flesh and Not : Essays* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2012). 5.

² To 'wrong-foot' someone in tennis is to understand the basic concept from Newtonian physics that a body in motion tends to stay in motion. If your opponent is moving in one direction across the court, their momentum will continue to carry them in that particular direction. The smart play is to hit a ball towards the space in the court that is opposite your opponent's current direction. Done properly, this is almost assuredly a winning shot.

am still amazed when I think of it.³

Here Hickey elaborates on a point that could be also seen in Wallace's writing. In both cases, the player seemed to not have an out; Agassi *should* have won that point and Abdul-Jabbar's defense *should* have prevented that shot *but* in both cases their respective opponents found a way out. As spectators, we recognize this and are rendered inarticulate if not quite speechless.

Both writers use these examples as a way to get into larger philosophical issues. Wallace takes on the sheer beauty of Federer's game as a counterpoint against a sick child who is an honorary ball boy at Wimbledon. In this comparison, Wallace reexamines the clichéd question of 'How could bad things happen to good people?' and, more specifically, ponders how a deity could create something both as beautiful as a Federer forehand *and* troubling as a child riddled with cancer. All the issues that Wallace grapples with (privilege, luck, world view, free will, talent) will remain largely in the background in this chapter to more directly focus on Hickey's larger issue, which is how he utilizes the Erving/Abdul-Jabbar play to address an idea that the rules put in place to govern the game of basketball (and society) are the very same rules that made a play like Erving's possible. Hickey smartly identifies that the play is not solely Erving's, "since it was Kareem's perfect defense that made Erving's instantaneous,

³ Dave Hickey, "The Heresy of Zone Defense," in *Air Guitar : Essays on Art & Democracy* (Los Angeles; New York: Art issues. Press ; Distributed by D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers), 1997). 155.

pluperfect response to it both necessary and possible.”⁴ Erving’s play is creative but this creativity is only visible because of both Kareem and the structure of the game of basketball. Hickey writes that the basic rules of basketball have been in place for more than 100 years: “By 1894, the size of the court and the five-player team were normalized. The backboard was added to discourage spectators from goaltending, and the rules defining passing and dribbling were codified.”⁵

Because all of this is codified, any person can step onto the rectangular court and, rather quickly, pick the game up and spectators who watch the sport take these rules as a given. All conversation and focus turns to what *occurs* inside this structure.

This is the dominating theme of this chapter: in its popular cotemporary form creativity *requires* a structure to make it manifest and, as a result, reifies the structure that makes it visible. In this understanding of creativity, the creative response shows us the inherent structure, reinforces the structure and, in rare moments, redefines our understanding of how the structure operates. From the beginning of this chapter, my argument is that something like sports, where the rules are readily identifiable and understandable, allows its viewer is an easier way to understand creativity than trying to simply understand creativity in the culture at large. Once creativity is established in the context of sports, I switch focus to art. Because art is often used as a prime example of creativity, I examine

⁴ Ibid. 155-156.

⁵ Ibid. 158-159.

how four prominent art historians have dealt with modernism in their attempts to understand art as a creative practice whose primary emphasis is on producing something new. In highlighting the work of these art historians, I will show how, even in a field like modernist art history, small differences in understanding “the new” bear significant conceptual resonance on contemporary perceptions of creativity. This becomes particularly relevant when the shift from modernism to post-modernism brings about what Briony Fer calls the twin functions of art production: discarding and retaining. These functions are inextricable from each other and how an artist chooses to utilize them dictates which parameters dominate and which diminish. The chapter concludes with a return to sports to demonstrate how ideas from contemporary art can fracture even the most hard and fast rules. It is in this final example that we can see outside socio-cultural perceptions creep back into a seemingly hermetically sealed structure. What happens in sports when someone, in the case of this chapter this someone is Serena Williams, *refuses* to even *play*? A refusal can cause our entire perception of cultural norms to shift; old rules that once seemed so dominant recede in their importance and new norms appear and dictate possibility in creativity.

The Rules in Sports

In seeking to understand how traditional creativity works I want to remain with Hickey’s essay for a moment. It is through Hickey’s article that we see both a

connection between sports and art. It is also in Hickey's article that we are introduced to the idea that these rules reflect held cultural norms and beliefs. With this in mind, let's focus the moment Hickey is particularly interested in between Erving and Kareem because of the example it provides.

Hickey writes: "Julius Erving's play was at once *new* and *fair*! The rules, made by people who couldn't begin to imagine Erving's play, made it possible."⁶ Here, "the rules" are the guidelines by which basketball is played. The rules serve to delineate the borders within which the game will occur. The players internalize these rules and the court becomes a space where play can be predicted. In the extreme, this ability to predict play leads teams in our current time to amass data points and statistical information on players in an attempt to predict on-court performance.

As a recent example of this, one of the newest technologies utilized by teams in the 2013 season of the NBA is called sportsVU, a computer program that maps every play on the floor during a game. Zach Lowe, a basketball statistics expert who has written about the program, discovered that this mapping does two things for the teams that utilize its capabilities: it shows the defense the players executed on any given basketball play and shows players where they *should* have been positioned in the respective defensive sequence.⁷ The

⁶ Ibid. 156.

⁷ Zach Lowe, "Lights, Cameras, Revolution," http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/9068903/the-toronto-raptors-sportvu-cameras-nba-analytical-revolution.

idealized computer version of the player is called their “ghost” and players can learn about proper spacing and rotation in film sessions by watching what their ghost did on a particular play. Given this level of computerized sophistication, the tendency is to assume that the ghost is always a better defender than the actual player. Despite the technological capability of the system, Lowe writes that in rare cases this is not always true. For example, in the 2013 season LeBron James frequently beats his ghost to a particular point on the floor. The *idealized*, digitized LeBron James is a *worse* defender than the *actual* LeBron James in this system. In our time, this fact is just as amazing as Erving’s play. In much the same way that Erving’s play is new and fair, so is the regular defensive play of James. No serious student of the basketball would have predicted both players’ acts in the normal run of the game. If there is a shift in understanding between the two plays, it comes from knowing that Kareem’s role in Erving’s play has been replaced by the predictive ability of digitized software and data collection. As viewers, we cannot predict that either Erving or James’ play are even possible and are left to marvel at the abilities of both players and their respective outcomes. Basketball’s basic rules are over a hundred years old, but players are continually seeking ways to master the game inside these parameters; the outside viewer watches in the hope of seeing something new, transcending what they previously thought capable in the human body.

Hickey keeps one eye on the body in his article but there is other issue of

the human mind lingering in the background. The rules of basketball were famously invented by the mind of James Naismith. These rules exist for the game at large; an individual player steps out onto the floor and accepts these rules as fact. The rules, established in the mind, allow for the body to move through space in a specific way; because of this mind/body split, the rules appear Cartesian in nature. Hickey argues two points about the body in the realm of these rules of the mind. First, living our day-to day lives in a Western society with constructed rules is far better than the alternative:

To this day, I never stop at a stop sign without mentally patting myself on the back for my act of good citizenship, but I *do* stop (usually) because the alternative to living with rules—as I discovered when I finally learned some—is just hell.⁸

Our minds perceive these rules and we succumb to this perception because they suggest a larger culture that surrounds us. To operate in this culture, we willingly accept some regulation on how we will move through space. Our minds learn these rules and direct our bodies to try and stay within their limits.

Second, these rules, while necessary, must constantly be renegotiated to understand when these rules allow bodies to be liberated and when they engender repression. The NBA, and other sports leagues, have a legislative body that determines where the liberation/repression line falls and alterations occur

⁸ Hickey, "The Heresy of Zone Defense." 156.

based in the lived experience of play witnessed on the court. The basic spatial boundaries of basketball court have remained standard since the NBA's inception, but the play occurring within these boundaries is constantly changing due to a rewriting of the rules and the way these rules are enforced. Many of these rule adjustments are made to improve the offensive flow of the game, increasing scoring and viewer enjoyment and, therefore, usually take on a positive cast. Since these rules are finite, teams (players, coaches, analysts) constantly work to master the game within the rules and exploit any weakness that can be found. Sometimes within the mastery of the rules, a person does something completely unexpected and something really creative occurs that could not have been anticipated. It is these moments that are especially admirable because most viewers understand the normal, expected outcomes in these situations and, because of the expected behavior is routine, this new, creative act creates a feeling of awe. This awe is often engendered in the viewer because it seems as if the mind has been left behind; this creative act in sports often appears as the body over the mind; in other words, the calculations needed to make a play on the floor seem to happen faster than the mind can operate. It is only because the rules are perceptible, known, and enforced by both the players *and* the outside viewers that this awe is possible. The uneasy relationship between the mind and body in understanding this creative act continues.

It is important to remember that the writers referenced here, David Foster

Wallace and Dave Hickey, are not professional athletes and function in the role of the viewer in their respective articles.⁹ While both Wallace and Hickey write about these creative acts as a type of escape from what might be thought of as the drudgery of the average game, their writing also speaks to another truth in watching sports: *Any* viewer of sports knows that it is the nature of the rules that bring these games into position where the viewer can heartily critique the action as it unfolds before them. The seemingly attainable nature of the game and the identifiable nature of the players in front of the viewer as fellow human beings cultivate the belief in the viewer that he or she could play this game. And, while the creative act in sports often leaves the viewer wordless and breathless, the failure that occurs in the normal run of play in a game can create a potentially crass and hyper-intelligible critique from the viewer. In perceiving the boundaries of sport, we believe we can see how the play within these boundaries *should* work and any deviation from the norm has the potential for an emotional response, both positive and negative. This is the nature of sport, as we understand it: we like the order that plays out in front of us. We believe that this makes sports generally fair and generally a meritocracy. What happens on the court in front of us lends itself to both celebrating and criticizing the action that takes place.

⁹ Wallace was a promising junior tennis player who was nationally ranked, which puts him a few degrees closer to the sport that he is writing about than Hickey. If anything, Wallace's prior experience as a tennis player makes him *more* awed but what he is seeing: "[G]reat athletes seem to catalyze our awareness of how glorious it is to touch and perceive, move through space, interact with matter." In Wallace, "Federer Both Flesh and Not." 8.

An Issue With the Rules in Art

As illustrated above, sports can feel attainable. Contrast this feeling of attainability with the viewing and making of artworks, which can be surprisingly fleeting. For one reason, as definable as sport is, the demarcation of what is and is not an artwork can be permeable in our current culture. When Hickey writes about the permissions and mandates given and directed by a set of rules, the topic of art momentarily bubbles to the surface to serve as an example to both demonstrate Hickey's point as well as speak to the mutable nature of rules.

Hickey's point comes, perhaps unsurprisingly, from the modernist avant-garde tradition. Here, Hickey writes of seeing Pollock in *Life* magazine, dripping paint like some sort of madman. The pictures being published in a magazine codified the act of painting for Hickey and presented it as a new freedom: "*It's okay to drip paint*, Jackson said. The magazine seemed to acquiesce: *Yeah, Jackson's right*, it seemed to say, grudgingly, *Dripping paint is now within the rules.*"¹⁰ This buoyed Hickey until, years later, he enrolled in an art college only to learn that the dripping of paint had transformed, "into a prohibitive, institutional edict: *It's bad not to drip!* the art coaches said. *It means you got no soul!* Yikes!"¹¹

While this example from art is only a brief point in Hickey's essay, it opens up a space for a larger discussion. Hickey's argument is primarily about the dual

¹⁰ Hickey, "The Heresy of Zone Defense." 157.

¹¹ Ibid.

liberating-restrictive nature of rules, but what he does not explicitly address in his essay is the force that prior historical experiences exert on the life and cultural context of a particular individual. This allows us to have two understandings of Jackson Pollock's paintings almost simultaneously. With the first understanding, the artwork can stand on its own as a contained thing; the viewer can appreciate a painting by Pollock or Dr. J's lay-up on a level of aesthetic beauty. Here the artwork can use a particular combination of colors or handling of material that a viewer might appreciate in much the same way a viewer might appreciate Erving's athletic grace. In the second understanding—perhaps, because of its aesthetic resonance—it can be understood contextually within the momentum and force of history. In short, the work suggests a particular place in time. A fan of basketball who witnesses an astounding in-the-air play around the basket in our current time and knows their basketball history is aware that Erving's play has created a space where this more recent play is possible.¹² They can be read in a sequence of events where Erving's play gains more importance as a key play in the development of what is possible on a basketball court. And while a Pollock painting can be admired for many reasons, the critical discourse that arose to prominence around Pollock's work laid the foundation for fifty years of art historical argument and beyond, carrying with it the ability to shape culture.

¹² Michael Jordan's shot against the Lakers in Game 2 of the 1991 Finals where he drove to the basket looking to dunk the ball with his right hand before shifting the ball to his left hand in mid-air to complete a lay-up is one example of a play that could be seen to have a historical linkage to Erving's feat.

Because of the historical force of both Pollock and Erving, their work is important in understanding creativity inside known boundaries because, on some level, the boundaries made their work possible. As their work gains importance, the boundaries themselves gain importance.

To this point in the chapter, I have cited examples by individuals in demonstrating how creativity needs rules to be made visible and at the same time reinforce the importance of these rules, primarily through a culture of sport. If we follow an art historical path from here, we will find present some characterizations of creativity that place the role of individual artistic genius under pressure. It is in examining this idea of individual artistic genius that we will begin to see a substantial historical force take shape. Here, the promise of the individual artistic genius to overcome or reshape these historical forces is not always easy or obvious. To address this in detail, I will focus on examinations of modernism in art and art history. I will first deal with the notion of the individual artistic genius especially as it appears in George Kubler's¹³ work *The Shape of Time*.¹⁴ This discussion will be brief because I will put the very historical and gendered notions of the "individual" under a more critical lens in the two chapters

¹³ Kubler was a prominent twentieth century art historian who spent most of his career at Yale. The book I reference here was cited as influential by numerous artists, foremost amongst them the sculptor Donald Judd. I am drawn to Kubler's work because the text attempts to take a long view on the process of art production; in short it is decidedly macro view of a process that attempts to avoid micro examples. There are few individual works referenced in the text and it reads more anthropological than traditional art history.

¹⁴ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time : Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1962).

that follow this one. The second point I will explore will be the art historical argument that has sprung up around Pollock from Clement Greenberg going forward, addressing the avant-garde's understanding of modernist art. I argue that the avant-garde's conception of new is one that has profoundly affected our understanding of creativity inside our cultural norms. From here I proceed with Briony Fer's understanding of Eva Hesse's work, which I believe synthesizes some of the dominating points from both the specific discussion of the avant-garde artists and the broader argument present in Kubler's work. By leaving sports momentarily behind and focusing on art, I illuminate how this idea of creativity both needing and reifying rules exists in broader aspects of culture.

Creativity and The Shape of Time

From the very first page of the art historian George Kubler's book *The Shape of Time*, it becomes clear that Kubler's purpose is not trying to create a framework for understanding the latest and most contemporary art and artists in his time but rather to grasp the work of art and artists in broader terms over the scope of human history. He first does this by addressing the topic of desire as it applies to objects that are made by humans. "To say that man-made things are desirable is redundant," Kubler writes, "because man's native inertia is overcome

only by desire, and nothing gets made unless it is desirable.”¹⁵ While Kubler raises several issues worth considering in his book, the two issues I want to focus on here relate to the way Kubler characterizes the artists that make the subset of these “desirable objects” he calls artworks.

In reading Kubler, that creativity is easily paired with desire is evident. Contrast this with most contemporary uses of creativity. The popularized understanding of creativity—referenced in the first chapter in its most simplistic state by Ken Robinson as “The process of developing original ideas that have value”¹⁶—often appears in two forms. The first form is that of a creative genius who causes monumental shifts in a given field. The second form of creativity is an individualized act where any person performing a task in a new way is counted as creative. But Kubler complicates this dualistic idea of creativity by speaking of desire and the production of “desirable objects” in at least two ways. First, objects are desirable for different reasons. If an object functions as a “useful” object it might be desired for its utility and ease of use. Faced with the challenge of building a fire as quickly as possible, the contemporary lighter has its distinct advantages over the friction of two sticks; but, at the same time, the fact that the lighter now exists does not undermine the initial usefulness of two sticks. The creative, inventive act that discovered the possibilities of rubbing two sticks together privileged the usefulness of two sticks cut down to a manageable

¹⁵ Ibid. 1.

¹⁶ Robinson, *Out of Our Minds : Learning to Be Creative*. 2.

length. Once proven that two sticks can be rubbed together to create a fire, these objects are now, in short, things worthy of desire. In this example, the first use of these sticks, utilizing Kubler's terminology, would be as "prime object."¹⁷ Almost immediately, the "prime object's" successful use generates replicas that "vary from their archetypes by small discoveries based upon simple confrontations of what has already been done,"¹⁸ which is how we would end up, in due time, with a lighter or automatic fire starter. When looked at from a historian's distance, Kubler can note, "Useful inventions, when seen in historical sequence, show no...great leaps or discontinuities." These "useful" objects lend themselves to the work of chronological history as well as building context to further the understanding of the civilizations that utilize the object.

The second way Kubler complicates our understanding of creativity is the way he captures the evolution of a particular object. In Kubler's coupling of replication of things with the process of evolution, this process of a useful object is complicated by something that appears at times with the randomness of natural selection. He writes:

The replication that fills history actually prolongs the stability of many past moments, allowing sense and pattern to emerge for us wherever we look. This stability, however, is imperfect. Every man-made replica varies from

¹⁷ Kubler, *The Shape of Time : Remarks on the History of Things*. 64.

¹⁸ Ibid. 63.

its model by minute, unplanned divergences, of which the accumulated effects are like a slow drift away from the archetype.¹⁹

Here, Kubler points to the fact that it is *impossible* to repeat without variation. New objects are constantly formed no matter how strong the desire to preserve the original object. This opens the possibility that even within the parameters of a manufactured object, creativity can occur by happenstance or in failure. That happenstance or failure might present us with an object that is useful belies the idea of an individual inventive genius in control of his or her craft as it is directed to an over-determined outcome. Furthermore, it is within these parameters that a cultural paradox appears: “Our whole cultural tradition favors the values of permanence, yet the conditions of present existence require an acceptance of continual change.”²⁰ Through this line of thinking, the idea of truly being in control of anything becomes suspect; an inventive genius might simply be in the right place at the right time, an idea that we will return to shortly.

While a bare bones understanding of a “useful” object has been presented here, there is another type of object Kubler addresses as distinct from this line of thinking: the artwork. “Works of art are distinguished from tools and instruments by richly clustered adherent meanings. Works of art specify no immediate action

¹⁹ Ibid. 65.

²⁰ Ibid. 56.

or limited use. They are gateways.”²¹ This is not to say that artworks aren’t useful themselves, its just their use may be a little less obvious. Kubler writes:

Artistic inventions alter the sensibility of mankind. They all emerge from and return to human perception, unlike useful inventions, which are keyed to the physical and biological environment...[A]esthetic inventions enlarge human awareness directly with new ways of experiencing the universe, rather than with ne objective interpretations.²²

One of the caveats we can add here is that while artworks “alter our sensibility,” the length or breath of time required to create this altered sensibility so that it is recognizable and readily categorized is harder to quantify. In the realm of every day objects, we can see progress occur when a new, but not *too* unfamiliar object, is introduced. With the everyday object, especially one that is commercially marketed, the sequence of improvement can be quickly perceived; it maintains some of the characteristics of an object that we know from our chronological history but also “new.” In contrast, the artwork can play with human perception in more oblique terms and its history becomes harder to exactly pin down. Even in modern art history anthologies, attempts are made to categorize and date specific movements with the knowledge that there will be outliers. Despite all this, and perhaps because of it, the function of an artwork in Kubler’s words as a perceptually altering object gains traction and plays significantly into

²¹ Ibid. 23.

²² Ibid. 59.

demonstrating why the making and viewing of artworks proves useful and necessary in understanding an altered concept of creativity. Taken positively here, the artwork as creative act reconsiders the very parameters we have set in place to govern our lives. It emphasizes that both the artist and the viewer can and will be changed. However, we must remember Kubler's earlier point that constant change undermines Western civilization's dominant desire for permanence. Because of this ability to significantly alter our parameters, creativity can also be perceived as a threat.

The Lucky Point of Entry

We have seen through Kubler's writing two types of useful objects: an everyday object and an artwork. While we have considered the object and its relation to the desire for permanence in an impermanent world, we have not focused intently on the individual producer of an artwork. How might the individuals who produce artwork differ from other individuals in Kubler's long view of history? How might we understand their respective creative genius? Kubler does not deify these individuals. Rather, he seeks to demonstrate how artists might exist within the force of social culture by arguing that they are *not* a symbol of free will. Kubler writes:

[T]he artist is not a free agent obeying only his own will. His situation is rigidly bound by a chain of prior events. The chain is invisible to him, and it limits his motion...The conditions imposed by these prior events require of him either that he follow obediently in the path of tradition, or that he rebel against the tradition. In either case, his decision is not a free one.²³

Perhaps this chain is invisible or, possibly, these chains have been historically articulated in different forms. Throughout history, artists have invoked the idea of a muse or outside force working through them. Looked at through Kubler's text, D.H. Lawrence's exclamation, "Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me"²⁴ demonstrates not the power of the muse, but the power of tradition and cultural constraints. If Lawrence is subject to the wind, he is constrained by its whims. And when Lawrence casts the inspiration for his work with the wind he is turning over personal responsibility to something that only is visible in the way it affects objects and people; Lawrence's work is limited to his historical context. Rebelling against tradition is truly difficult, with Kubler providing an apt metaphor invoking centripetal force: "Every society functions like a gyroscope to hold the course despite the random private forces of deflection...Thus the human situation admits invention *only as a very difficult tour de force*."²⁵ Fortuna's wheel spins fast enough to lock us into our fate, except for those lucky enough to navigate their escape.

²³ Ibid. 45.

²⁴ D. H. Lawrence, *Complete Poems* (New York: Viking Press, 1964). 195.

²⁵ Kubler, *The Shape of Time : Remarks on the History of Things*. 62. Emphasis added.

A substantial part of this difficulty to escape this force comes from the desire to discover the chain put in place by historical and contextual force. Seemingly, if we could only understand our historical and cultural position we would be able to find easier avenues of escape. But try as we might, we cannot gain enough distance to appreciate structure we are contained within. Kubler notes:

We cannot clearly descry the contours of the great currents of our own time: we are too much inside the streams of contemporary happening to chart their flow and volume. We are confronted with inner and outer historical surfaces. Of these only the outer surfaces of the completed past are accessible to historical knowledge.²⁶

Ironically, our own history since the publication of Kubler's text demonstrates how Kubler himself was unable to perceive the shift of cultural forces. For one, and maybe most obvious to the contemporary reader, is the heavily gendered nature of Kubler's text, i.e. all the uses of 'he' and 'his', which are now, rightfully, called into question. Additionally, Kubler identifies the education of craft and repetition as the "activity of groups of learners performing identical actions, but artistic

²⁶ Ibid. 27. To explain the difference between the inner and outer historical surfaces, Kubler refers to mathematics. Kubler writes: "In the foregoing pages we assumed that most classes are open-ended sequences. Here, however, we will assume that most classes can be treated as closed series. The difference between the two points of view depends upon the viewer's position, whether he wishes to be inside or outside the events in question. From the inside, most classes look like open sequences; from the outside they seem to be closed series" (48). This is not the first time in this chapter where the positioning of the viewer will come into play.

invention requires the *solitary* efforts of *individual* persons.”²⁷ From our position, this seems antiquated, as the examples of artists working and pushing each other in groups are numerous. Additionally, and more substantially, it seems hard to square Kubler’s later argument that the intense force of social norms (unknowingly) limits the artist with this early idea that an artist as individual is only capable of artistic invention as the result of a solitary effort. Kubler’s text is complicated further in the mind of the contemporary reader who accounts for the influence of Duchamp, Warhol, Kaprow and others who seem to blur the distinctions between “useful” objects and artworks. All of this is not meant to take anything away from his argument; it simply provides another example of allowing the reader the ability to consider what seems permissible and meaningful in his or her own social context.

I began this chapter by speaking about rules and how an understanding of the rules allows us to recognize creativity and, at the same time, make the rules more visible and permanent in appearance. In reading Kubler, we see how desire plays a strong function in creativity but we also see that our own understanding of the rules that more broadly shape our lives become hard, if not impossible to distinguish. Despite this acknowledgement that our cultural parameters are unknowable to us, hints of the way we set boundaries begin to appear in idiosyncratic ways.

²⁷ Ibid. 13. Emphasis added.

For example, in his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell recounts a weird quirk observed in Canadian junior hockey: there is a birthday bias.²⁸ Briefly here, children that are born in the first quarter of the year are significantly more likely to play elite junior hockey than children born later in the year. The theory, known in the social sciences as the relative-age effect, posits that the deadlines imposed on age groups skew participation in the sports and at school that benefit, at least initially, older children.²⁹ This grouping affects the level of coaching and training a child receives; it also allows for children who were born shortly after the cutoff date to develop physically and intellectually faster than other children. The combination of the biological, physical, and emotional human development with more access to advanced training methods provides an obvious advantage to older children. In this way, the parameters put in place to group children created a system where some children luckily benefited by having an earlier birthday.

Kubler astutely addresses a similar phenomenon in the history of art in his book. Beginning by noting the importance of artistic biography in training young artists, Kubler quickly points out that by simply focusing on artists' biographies the "historical question in artists' lives, which is always the question of their relation to what has preceded to what will follow them" is left untreated.³⁰ This is

²⁸ Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers : The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2008). 16-17.

²⁹ Jochen Musch and Simon Grondin, "Unequal Competition as an Impediment to Personal Development: A Review of the Relative Age Effect in Sport," *Developmental Review* 21, no. 2 (2001).

³⁰ Kubler, *The Shape of Time : Remarks on the History of Things*. 5.

not to say that the artist's individual biography is irrelevant in art historical studies, but that, if isolated, the historical picture is woefully incomplete. Artists are governed not only by their "temperament and his [or her] training" but also "the moment of his [or her] *entrance*, this being the moment in the tradition with which his biological opportunity coincides." Fortune, then, becomes key. "By this view, the great differences between artists are not so much those of talent as of entrance and position in a sequence...Times and opportunities differ more than degrees of talent."³¹ Explicit in Kubler's argument here are two points. The first is that any idea of 'creative genius' we might have becomes rooted significantly more in the fortune of good timing than an inherent characteristic possessed by the individual. The second point is that a history of art, along with everything else including creativity, must be treated as a process where the end is not knowable. The historian most accurately functions like an astronomer dealing with "past events perceived in the present;" the historian's quest is unique because the historian's future events are "human and unpredictable."³² The artist is producing his or her artwork in the flow of this process, but any worth this creation might have over a longer duration of time is often lost on the artist in the moment of its creation. As Kubler writes, "[A] work of art transmits a kind of behavior by the

³¹ Ibid. 6.

³² Ibid. 18.

artist, and it also serves, like a relay, as the point of departure for impulses that often attain extraordinary magnitudes in later transmission.”³³

As a concrete cultural example of this, Sir Ken Robinson’s book on creativity recounts a story from Richard Nixon’s presidency. In making his first visit to China, Nixon is advised by his then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger that the Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai is a history buff with a particular interest in French political history. Looking to stimulate conversation, Nixon asks Premier Chou what were his thoughts about the importance of the 1789 French Revolution on the shape of civilization in the current Western world. The Premier’s response? “It is too soon to tell.”³⁴ Kubler’s text gets the tension in this paradox right. We seek to understand our current conditions as well as we are able and, if we are really mindful, we understand that truly creative acts will magnify in unanticipated ways long after we are gone. This gets the tone of creativity right, too. We want to perceive the creative act as *immediately* creative—the oh-my-god moment apparent in sports—rather than to acknowledge that our perception of this act presumes to understand the parameters within which this act is considered valuable. Our currently perceived cultural parameters might seem charmingly misunderstood in retrospect, but it is in seeking to understand the parameters we function within that we help shape and direct future understanding, and which acts get magnified and which appear to fall into

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Robinson, *Out of Our Minds : Learning to Be Creative*. 201.

obsolescence. Having looked at creativity in art with long view through Kubler where we have seen how desire, luck (in the form of good timing) and a more expansive view of history demonstrate creativity as potentially disruptive to the idea that result of a creative act is of immediate use, it is now beneficial to look at how this might work upon closer inspection. For this task, I will draw from the not-too-distant modern art past in the hope that by analyzing some of the arguments that appear around modern art, we may again catch a glimpse of the ways we have drawn our cultural boundaries in which we perceive creativity.

The Avant-garde, the New, and Creativity

For a moment I want to return to Hickey's essay as a way of setting a foundation for the next section of this chapter. In Hickey's essay, the choice of Jackson Pollock as his example of "the rules" at work in the latter half of the twentieth century is worth considering in more depth. One of the dominant art critics of the twentieth century, Clement Greenberg, trumpeted Pollock's career, which subsequently helped to make Pollock's work and the method by which the work was made, a cultural shaping phenomenon. Ultimately, Pollock's paintings would, for a period of time, dictate the parameters of how art was made and what art meant. In this section I will focus on Greenberg's early pre-Pollock arguments that presented a foundation for understanding the avant-garde. Greenberg's work possessed a particular resonance that inspired two other critics, T.J. Clark and

Michael Fried, to debate both their understanding of Greenberg's argument and the exact nature of the avant-garde movement.³⁵ These essays will function as a close inspection of the forces of modernism and the avant-garde as a counterpoint to Kubler's attempt at a longer view. In the process of this section, by illuminating how the avant-garde relies on conventions of art production and art history, we might see these forces shape creativity in nuanced ways.

Greenberg, and Clark and Fried later, are primarily writing about the nature of culturally dominant art since the late nineteenth century in Western civilization. Stating that Marx heavily shapes Greenberg's argument in "Avant-garde and Kitsch"³⁶ and "Towards a Newer Laocoon"³⁷ may be obvious but it is necessary to note here because it implicitly places capitalism as a—if not *the*—dominant shaping parameter in the analysis of the cultural production of artworks. Greenberg writes in part to define the dominant artistic culture he sees as emerging as part of the "Western bourgeois society...avant-garde culture."³⁸ This avant-garde culture is specifically generated by a "superior consciousness of

³⁵ My choice to use Greenberg's work here is because of its overt dealing with capitalism in the creation of artworks and the avant-garde. The choice of T.J. Clark and Michael Fried are important for their prominence as contemporary art historians and their own positioning of taking up Greenberg's importance to the field of art history. As I have noted earlier, Kubler writes of desire and, now, Greenberg, writes of capitalism; these are important precursors to my argument using Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* in Chapter 6.

³⁶ Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (London; New York: Routledge, 1939).

³⁷ "Towards a Newer Laocoon," in *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (London; New York: Routledge, 1940).

³⁸ Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." 49.

history,”³⁹ which suggests that it is only in this time period, when the study of art history by artists has gained popularity, the learning of art has moved beyond a master-apprentice relationship. Additionally, Greenberg ties this movement to the scientific revolution when he writes: “It was no accident...that the birth of the avant-garde coincided chronologically—and geographically too—with the first bold development of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe.”⁴⁰ Most interestingly, Greenberg works to identify how the avant-garde and ruling class are inextricably linked by an “umbilical cord of gold”⁴¹ because the avant-garde required, as part of its development, the capital the ruling class provided. In spite of its dependence upon the ruling class, it is the avant-garde whose “most important function” is “to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture *moving* in the midst of ideological confusion and violence.”⁴² Years later, and more succinctly, Fried will characterize Greenberg’s argument:

Starting around the middle of the nineteenth century, the major arts, threatened for the first time with being assimilated to mere entertainment, discovered that they could save themselves from that depressing fate ‘only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained from any other kind of activity.’⁴³

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. 51.

⁴² Ibid. 49.

⁴³ Michael Fried, "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark," Ibid. (1982). 89.

Clark and Fried might quibble over the type of “experience” generated by artistic activity but the main summarization of Greenberg as viewing the avant-garde as tied to *and* attacking the bourgeoisie is the characterization worth retaining here. By pairing the avant-garde and the scientific revolution, the avant-garde is given the distinction of “progress” and newness becomes a prized characteristic. To achieve progress, the avant-garde must be aware of where the shaping parameters of the historical art world fall so these artists can produce new works that will not simply be categorized as entertainment.

The disagreement that arises between Clark and Fried stems from their respective readings of Greenberg. Both critics view Greenberg’s writings as monumentally important but the differences arise in both their respective interpretations of his work and the function of the avant-garde in shaping culture. Much of what they write is outside the purview of this particular chapter but two points are particularly germane here. The first contentious point lies with Clark’s characterization of modernist art. Clark sees the modernist movement as having what he describes as a “practice of negation,” where the reaction against the perceived historical constraints of painting in particular dictate the very possibilities of what the outcome of the artwork would be.⁴⁴ This idea of a “practice of negation” drew a lot of attention when his article was originally published, and so when the article was republished along with Fried’s response

⁴⁴ T. J. Clark, "Arguments About Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried," Ibid. (1983). 78.

as part of the anthology *Pollock and After*, Clark took the opportunity to define more exactly what he meant when he used the phrase. He writes:

By 'practice of negation' I meant some form of decisive innovation, in method or materials or imagery, whereby a previously established set of skills or frame of reference—skills and references which up till then had been taken as essential to artmaking of any seriousness—are deliberately avoided or travestied, in such a way as to imply that only *by* such incompetence or obscurity will genuine picturing get done.⁴⁵

To Clark's thinking, the tradition of producing artworks is well known to the artists who operate in the avant-garde—they have a "superior historical consciousness." These artists are well aware of the both the current work being made around them and the historical weight of the tradition they are working under; the parameters of what is considered an artwork are well established and understood, even if unspoken. With Clark, the motivating factor for an artist making an artwork leads the artist to create in a way that resists the tradition of what has come before them. And, although on its face this way of working might be incredibly limiting, Clark lists as examples everything from automatism to parody as ways that the avant-garde chose to deal with this problem. Another way of stating this would be to say that art has become the embodiment of the sometimes-derisive phrase, 'art for art's sake.' Clark finds this line of thinking with

⁴⁵ Ibid. 79.

art to be troubling since, for him, art is most meaningful when it engages *specifically* with the culture at hand.

To emphasize this point, Clark builds to a conclusion in his article, a conclusion he characterizes as a direct refusal of Greenberg's belief in modern art. First, to restate Greenberg's argument: modern art as it appears in the work of the avant-garde is *the* tool that threatens the existence of late capitalism.⁴⁶ Clark does not agree. Modern art cannot, Clark writes, "substitute *itself* for the values capitalism has made valueless."⁴⁷ What are these values? Late capitalism, in Clark's reading, has rendered a world where the quest for capital has so exhausted the bourgeois that they are simply too worn-down to pay attention to anything like an artwork.⁴⁸ Subsequently, art turned inward and bound itself to its own history. If we accept Clark's argument here, where exactly would the parameters fall for artists' creative expression and examination? Do we limit our understanding of the avant-garde to their personal limitations or art historical limitations? Or do we put the onus for these parameters on late capitalism? And, what if by placing the parameters with late capitalism, we have placed them outside of the concerns of the artists themselves? Does it matter if the avant-garde artist became more concerned with something like the limits of their materials rather than playing a more overt game attacking late capitalism?

⁴⁶ Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Ibid.* (1939). 58.

⁴⁷ T. J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," *Ibid.* (1982). 83.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 82.

Fried offers one response to these questions in his critique of Clark's essay. In his essay, Fried quickly seeks to contest Clark's cast of modernism as a "practice of negation" with his own idea that "particular modernist developments in the arts have often involved a negative 'moment' in which certain formal and expressive possibilities were implicitly or indeed explicitly repudiated in favor of certain others."⁴⁹ Fried acknowledges that there are movements or careers in modernist art that may have a cast of negation⁵⁰ but, ultimately, Fried's characterization of the modernist movement is positive. Fried invokes Manet's *Dejeuner* as an example of this point where:

[U]ntelligibility in Manet, far from being a value in its own right as mere negation of meaning, is in the service of aims and aspirations that have in view a new and profound and, for want of a better word, positive conception of the enterprise of painting.⁵¹

Here, Fried has laid the foundation to assert that in a negative *moment* a pivot occurs, and what emerges is a "fundamental set of positive values, conventions, [and] sources of conviction."⁵²

As with Clark's response, Fried's reader might wonder what values and convictions Fried is speaking to when he is asserting the positive nature of his argument. Fried rejects outright that the artist, in this case primarily painters, is

⁴⁹ Michael Fried, "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark," Ibid. 88.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid. 89.

looking to find an “irreducible essence of all painting;”⁵³ what he sees instead is that “the task of the modernist painter is to discover those conventions which, at a given moment, alone are capable of establishing his work’s identity as painting.”⁵⁴ The actions of the painter—or any artist for that matter—are not always easily or overtly tied to political action. Fried makes this point explicit: “the modernist painter is represented in my account as primarily responsible to an exalted conception or at any rate to an exacting practice of the enterprise of painting.”⁵⁵ Here Fried goes to some length to say that he is not arguing that art and society are mutually exclusive, but that any person’s beliefs have been so influenced by a variety of forces that their convictions have become a part of their identity; replacing one conviction with another generates a different person or, as Fried succinctly puts it, “Some convictions are part of one’s identity.”⁵⁶ Therefore it follows that the modernist painter is influenced by the conventions of the medium of painting and these conventions:

[B]ear a perspicuous relation to conventions operative in the most significant work of the recent past, though here it is necessary to add...that significant new work will inevitably transform our understanding of those prior conventions and moreover will invest the prior works themselves with a generative importance...that until that moment they may not have had.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid. 93.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 91.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 93.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

This is a point worth stressing: the artwork, or creative act, that comes in the wake of other artworks (or creative acts) validates the prior act while, at the same time, altering our understanding of what was possible in the first place. Pollock becomes an important artist because artists that followed immediately in his wake chose to work with the problems his paintings addressed. Pollock's importance continues because critics like Greenberg and Hickey, fifty years apart from one another, utilize Pollock's work as a way of understanding their place in the world. That Greenberg or Hickey's world is different demonstrates how the force of Pollock's work, as well as the parameters formed around it, shift over time. Simultaneously, Pollock's work itself changes in our perception; Greenberg utilizes Pollock to demonstrate the manifestation of creativity in the avant-garde and Hickey uses Pollock to demonstrate how quickly something can shift from being new to being a trope. That Pollock's creative act can hold all this meaning, and more, stands as a testament to its mutability and reflection of the culture that utilizes it in criticism.

The question then, once again, turns to the discovery of these conventions or rules and how exactly they function in a given period. In reading between Clark and Fried, it appears that one of the strongest contentions between the two is exactly what conventions are being revealed and reinforced. Clark writes, "Art wants to address someone, it wants something precise and extended to do; it wants resistance, it needs criteria; it will take risks in order to find them, including

the risk of its own dissolution.”⁵⁸ Clark goes on to characterize this as the state that modernist art finds itself in 1981 at the brink of its own dissolution where, “an art whose object is nothing but itself, which never tires of discovering that the self is pure as only pure negativity can be, and which offers its audience nothing, tirelessly and, I concede, adequately made over into form.”⁵⁹ In other words, the viewer has an object that is a well constructed yet hollow gesture and Clark puts this squarely on the cultural shaping effects of late capitalism. In this way, the vapidness of late capitalism is reinforced by the modernist artwork Clark observes.

Fried’s understanding of modernism and its relationship to conventions are significantly different from Clark in that Fried’s perception of the movement is markedly less dire. Fried presents his argument for constraints as he works through a description of the development of Anthony Caro’s table-top sculptures. As Fried notes, Caro was well known for making large sculptures and developed an interest in making smaller sculptures in the late 1960’s. Caro chose to forgo the obvious solution of making his large sculptures small because, to Fried’s way of thinking:

[I]t failed to respond to the *depth of Caro’s need* for something, call it a convention, that would articulate smallness in a manner consistent with the prior logic of his art, that would be faithful to his commitment to a particular mode of thinking, feeling, and willing sculpture, in short that would not run counter to his acceptance...of a particular set of constraints,

⁵⁸ T. J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," Ibid. 83.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

the initial and at first only partial unearthing of which roughly six years before had been instrumental in his sudden emergence as a major artist (itself a characteristically modernist phenomenon).⁶⁰

Fried adds a footnote to convention, which shows the level of thought he has given his language choice here, relating to Wittgenstein's philosophical tying of the term 'convention' to the term 'essence':

It is as if this expressed the essence of form.—I say, however: if you talk about *essence*—, you are merely noting a convention. But here one would like to retort: there is no greater difference than that between a proposition about the depth of the essence and one about — a mere convention. But what if I reply: to the *depth* that we see in the essence there corresponds the *deep* need for the convention.⁶¹

Essence and convention are inextricable. To consider creativity in this context once again binds the creative act to the perception of parameters.

Simultaneously, Fried's characterization of an artist puts the artist in a position where their creativity seems to have found a home inside the constraints of these parameters.

Parsing the Avant-garde and Modernism

The parts of the argument between Clark and Fried that have been highlighted here call to mind one of the dominating themes of Peter Bürger's

⁶⁰ Michael Fried, "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark," Ibid. 95.

⁶¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein in Ibid. 101.

Theory of the Avant-Garde, which, in different ways, shades both Clark and Fried's respective arguments because of the way Bürger draws a distinction between the modernist project and the avant-garde.⁶² Both modernism and the avant-garde share cultural characteristics but the way these movements interact with the boundaries cultivated by these characteristics is different. Creativity, if paired with modernism, falls closer Fried's idea of artistic conviction presented above, while if creativity is coupled with the avant-garde, Clark's idea of how art and capital are intertwined gains importance. Is there a common ground idea that we can take forward in our characterization of creativity?

Let us first reconsider an argument from Clark. Clark is demonstrably presenting a historicized argument, of which he characterizes:

[T]he argument is rather (1) that it should strike us as important that these accounts depended on such a 'casting off of norms and conventions,' one which in the end included most of the kinds of descriptive work which has previously given art its *raison d'être*, and (2) that this process progressively tended to overwhelm modernist practice and become a peculiar end in itself, or at least to obscure all others.⁶³

Clark is considering the historical context of modernism from a distance and trying to create a theoretical understanding of modernism. His characterization of

⁶² Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

⁶³ T. J. Clark, "Arguments About Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried," in *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, ed. Francis Frascina (London; New York: Routledge, 1983). 103.

the modernist movement, by admission, conflates modernism with the avant-garde.

To reiterate the differences between modernism and the avant-garde, we turn to the foreword in Bürger's book, where Jochen Schulte-Sasse complicates this idea somewhat by parsing the definitions of modernism and the avant-garde again. He writes, "Modernism may be understandable as an attack on traditional writing [or art] techniques, but the avant-garde can only be understood as an attack meant to alter the institutionalized commerce with art."⁶⁴ Recalling Greenberg's "umbilical cord of gold" is useful here because we see the avant-garde attacking the monetary element that created a space for their artwork to exist. Artistic creation through Bürger is not confined to the uses of an artistic medium like paint but as an attack on the way art is transformed into capital. Schulte-Sasse notes: "The category *art as institution* was not invented by the avant-garde movements...But it only became recognizable after the avant-garde movements had criticized the autonomy status of art in developed bourgeois society."⁶⁵ Or, in other words, the work of the avant-garde movements made the way art could be transformed into capital distinctly visible. No longer was art confined to the Medici, monastery, or government institution; in modernism art exists *both* autonomously and under the constant threat of being assumed by the rules of capital.

⁶⁴ In Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. xv.

⁶⁵ Ibid. lii.

Fried, as we have seen, would certainly argue that this is too cynical a view and that modernist artists are searching for constraints in which they produce and understand their artwork. While artworks are not entirely separate from capital, capital is not the driving force in the artwork's production. But Bürger has something to offer in reading Fried's positive cast on modernism as well, despite Bürger's close study of the avant-garde. Recall that Fried has noted the linear nature of art where an artist seeks to have their work identified as art and, in the process, gives importance to the prior work of the recent past. Fried, however, is unspecific about what characteristics of prior artworks an artist will draw from in creating their avant-garde work; I would like to think this is purposeful on Fried's part. Bürger notes that in the process of this creation: "The historical avant-garde movements were unable to destroy art as an institution; but they did destroy the possibility that a given school can present itself with the claim to universal validity."⁶⁶ Therefore, reading Bürger through Fried, we see the possibility for reception of an artwork becomes multi-faceted; one artist is responding to compositional concerns, another to material use, and another to content.

One more note from Bürger here is relevant before proceeding. Bürger demonstrates the way the avant-garde has changed and directed the concern of the recipient of the artwork when he writes: "The recipient's attention no longer

⁶⁶ Ibid. 87.

turns to a meaning of the work that might be grasped by a reading of its constituent elements, but to the principle of construction.”⁶⁷ This further emphasizes the way the avant-garde has shaped the recipient’s understanding of artwork by trying to understand the way an artwork was produced. The process now is the product and the artist perceives himself or herself freer to choose exactly what part of the process he or she will attend to in producing his or her artwork.

And so, moving forward, I note three points. First, Clark’s historical characterization of modernism is as a movement that constantly negates the past. Second, Fried’s characterization of modernism presents artists responding to personal constraints and, through this process, makes the past visible and identifiable. And three, Bürger’s understanding of the avant-garde as one who shifted the attention of the recipient of the art work to the way it was made and, in the process the idea that any one art movement could be universal. In all cases, the artwork can be seen as trying to wrestle with the dominant nature of capitalism where it resists being categorized as mere entertainment. At the same time, the artwork’s refusal to be overcome by financial structures demonstrates how we come to understand the very nature of late capitalism. Creativity in our culture adopts the avant-gardist notion of newness with the creation of artwork often as the primary example of how this ‘process of newness’ works. Through

⁶⁷ Ibid. 81.

Clark, Fried and Bürger, we see creativity not only as newness but also as a refusal of *some* cultural norms be it by personal conviction or overt capitalist critique. In turn, the way our personal notion of the historical past channels our creative output we, often unknowingly, are reifying the very structure we are attempting to move beyond.

If we think back to Hickey's example of Jackson Pollock, we could view Pollock's work in three simplistic steps. First, Pollock creates by dripping paint, a new, creative technique in the scope of the modernist movement—borrowed, of course, from another culture. Second, artists following after Pollock seek to create work that honors Pollock's concerns by creating something different. Finally, in the creation of a new artwork, Pollock's work is elevated to iconic status as worthy of being refused. Capitalist concerns aren't damned here because, as is self-evident from our current historical position, the next substantive art movement after Pollock, namely Pop art, becomes inextricably and overtly intertwined with capital. Recall, though, that this argument is not historical but conceptual. In repetition, the cycle repeats but, of course, the repetition is always different. In this repetition, new rules are discovered and old rules are ignored in a process of negation; constraints are put into place and discarded on conviction. Capital *can* play a role in the concept of an artwork because of its identifiable ability to shape cultural parameters, but the artwork had proved idiosyncratic enough to deny being subsumed by capitalism. The

results of this thinking become more apparent in the work of another art historian, Briony Fer. It is in pursuing repetition through Fer that both Kubler's long view on art historical production and the avant-garde view become intertwined.

Repeating Repetition

While in many ways creativity maintains a decidedly avant-garde cast, the art world continues to trouble the label. The art historian Briony Fer attempts to offer one possible lens to understand the transition from the more modernist concerns of art to artworks in their current form.⁶⁸ Recall from the first chapter that art is supposed to be one of *the* demonstrative acts of creativity; it becomes imperative to understand what might be taking place in post-modernist art production.⁶⁹ Through Fer, the art historical trope of linear progression begins to lose its force. Her dominant argument that contemporary art production is notable in its repetition presents a space where the universal concerns of Kubler can be connected with the modernist analysis provided by Clark, Fried and Bürger.

Fer begins her book *The Infinite Line* by blurring distinctions between the dominant characteristics of modernism and post-modernism:

⁶⁸ My choice of Briony Fer here is due to her use of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* in constructing her argument. Fer is an art historian who shows how Deleuze's philosophy *works* in conceptualizing artworks. She also constructs her argument without the philosophy always dominating. Since I draw from the D/G concept and individual and collective works by both Deleuze and Guattari, I find her book to be a nice map for how to use their concepts. This is to say that this chapter and dissertation are not about Deleuze and Guattari but what might happen when you utilize their thinking to explore creativity.

⁶⁹ Modernist, or post-modernist, are terms that have issues worth parsing. I choose to employ the term post-modern here because it is one that Fer uses in her book below.

It would be foolish to suggest that there was a neat and finite ending of modernism and then a clear beginning of post-modernism. But my aim is to concentrate on the moment of transition as a moment not only of negating or mourning the past but of reconfiguring a new terrain.”⁷⁰

This new terrain is one of repetition. Recall Kubler’s idea that our desire as human beings is to recreate sameness while the reality of our lived experience is one of constant change. There is a tension apparent between the *desire* for lived experience and the *perception* of lived experience. If we consider Fer’s use of the concept of repetition in her art historical analysis, the lines between this desire and perception become less distinct. Where, I believe, it is fair to say that Kubler’s characterization of this change is always positive, which, by extension, makes creativity always positive; Fer acknowledges that, for her, repetition can be more complex. Fer writes, “Repetition could be partial or infinite, redemptive or destructive. It is from the *point of view* of repetition as the ground of representation that I begin.”⁷¹ It is from “this point of view” that leads Fer to later, when discussing Eva Hesse’s work, write of the “twin functions” of “discarding and retaining;” the manifestation of the work of art as a result of the back and forth between these twin functions and cannot be characterized as precisely one or the other.⁷² In repetition, these “twin functions” are not ordered as always

⁷⁰ Briony Fer, *The Infinite Line : Re-Making Art after Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). 2.

⁷¹ Ibid. 3.

⁷² Ibid. 132.

discarding then retaining, or vice versa; the artist works *between* the two terms. Earlier, Kubler wrote of a desirable object as improving upon what came before; one way to characterize popularized creativity in this light would be to say that it solely focuses on what is *retained*. Through Fer, the discarding is on equal footing with retention, which in turn makes creativity significantly more complex.

There is not only repetition in art production though; there is also repetition present in viewing. Here, Fer addresses the recipient of the artwork. And here, too, the recipient is not passive and the experience generated by being in relation with the artwork is complex. Fer writes, “The time of the artwork is not only a matter of the time it takes to look. But the phenomenological encounter with the art object as it occurs in time is a starting point—against which a range of other temporal modes are set in play.”⁷³

The range of temporal modes in play is vast. Again, consider the historians I have referenced earlier in this chapter. Kubler writes of the entrance of the artist into the field as one of timing. The artist is born into certain historical moments where they are presented with opportunities to respond (or not) to prior artworks. Bürger’s characterization of the recipient of artwork is set in such a way as to assume artists as recipients of an artwork, too. And, because the artist is aware of their history, they are subject to the full temporal force of the historicization of art. Similar in some ways, Clark’s avant-garde artist produces

⁷³ Ibid. 4.

their artwork by discarding the achievements of prior artistic moments. Fried's avant-gardists respond to the constraints of their own past to create a work that conveys presentness. These are only some of the temporal modes set in play by the encounter of an artwork, and these modes are further complicated and multiplied when the creation of the artwork is taken into account. Recall, too, with Bürger that claims to universality in art styles are shattered. The artists who rummage through the shards of ruptured artistic movements to make new artworks are predetermined by the process to address an even wider variety of issues that reflect their current culture.

To demonstrate one way this process might work, Fer takes up the artwork of Eva Hesse in her chapter entitled "Studio." Fer is not interested in analyzing a singular artwork from Hesse. What is captivating to Fer is the *totality* of Hesse's artwork and process, which serves Fer to quantify a specific type of thinking. For Fer, one work of Hesse's cannot be isolated from the whole of her production. Rummaging through Hesse's writing, Fer isolates a short sequence from Hesse, "thought seen touched,"⁷⁴ as a shorthand for this type of thinking. Fer notes:

In my experience, it is quite hard to remember and fix on a single work by Hesse without thinking of a whole host of others. Hesse said something similar about working on it: 'I never remember working on one thing it always is in at least pairs and further ahead.' It is as if trying to pin down

⁷⁴ Ibid. 117.

the memory of making one work inevitably opened the floodgates onto what she made after.⁷⁵

What Fer points to here is a slight variation from the earlier examples I have discussed in this chapter in which a specific sequence of events was demonstrable in perceiving constraints. Fer implies a chronology implicit in Hesse's work—this much is true; but there is a broader point to carry forward. For artists specifically in the midst of producing an artwork, the process of art production is full of artificial constraints and these constraints are historical *and* personal *and* possess future possibilities; these are temporal disjunctures with no obvious or predictable order. These disjunctures work somewhat paradoxically, much like Bürger and Fried pointed out earlier, making a structure both visible *and* permeable. This is not unlike having the realization that ice floating in your glass of water plays across several registers at once. Here is water in its solid, liquid and gaseous state all simultaneously; there is both a consistency here—the molecular model of water is the same no matter its physical state—and, also, an identification of a process that things shift over time. The infrastructure that brings the water to the glass, or the liquid to the solid state, or even the construction of the glass itself, is dauntingly complex. It becomes possible to observe these states from the comfortable distance of an observer or we could take a small action to speed up or slow down these processes. The specific choice to disrupt

⁷⁵ Ibid.

is not what counts here; instead it is the realization and attention to the situation that you *can* disrupt that counts.

It is here with Fer's writing of Hesse's studio that Fried's positive characterization of modernism takes on greater significance. Fer notes:

I want to stress that [Hesse's studio practice] is not just a negation or deconstruction of modernist or minimalist protocols, but a way of making that I have categorized as Hesse's studio economy. It involved retrieving something from obsolescence by mining our relationships with ordinary things in the world in order to make them extraordinary; a way of making those feelings about textures and things in the world last.⁷⁶

Recalling that Kubler writes of desirable objects that I previously teased apart as being useful either practically or perceptually. In Fer's terms, Hesse's work reunites the practical and perceptual objects and, through their reunification the (potentially) obsolete object appears new. When Fried writes of "presentness" and gratification when viewing Caro's work, it appears that he is appreciating the decisions Caro made that brought him to this smaller work. When Fer writes about Hesse's work as "thought seen touched" she is appreciating the type of thinking that shifted the turn away from modernism: namely, the ability to find perceptual awareness with objects that we only had previously seen as practically useful.

⁷⁶ Fer, *The Infinite Line : Re-Making Art after Modernism*. 140.

If we cast creativity as solely a modernist idea, where newness is paramount, we draw on the paradigms presented in this section from Clark, Fried, and Bürger and certainly some of their characterizations of avant-gardist art can be useful to understanding creativity. However with Fer, creativity is the ability to make *possibility* present. The artwork does not need to be only one thing and its meaning can shift as culture shifts. In Hesse's studio, objects can play across several registers of time and 'usefulness,' which is exactly what makes the work creative. Unbeknownst to the artist is how the creative act will gain importance over time or fall by the wayside; with either result, both are productive and creative. It is with this in mind that we return to sports to once more look at how creativity works. However, in this final example, the rules that seem so rigid begin to appear as more porous when considering in relationship to the culture at large.

The Change

To conclude here, I want to engage in my own bit of repetition and return to the first example I began this chapter with: the awe-inspiring tennis player. As a viewer of the tennis player, we are able to see their marvelous ability and spectacular shot making. We think, because we have a body too, that their ability is just outside our grasp; we can recognize the movements their bodies make and even imitate them. We can yell at our television sets in both awe when

the tennis player does something amazing and in agony when they make an 'easy' mistake. What is even easier to discount when watching tennis is the type of practice and ascetic focus that brings a tennis player to the very point where they play a match on television.

The shape and size of the tennis court present a frame. To succeed inside this particular frame a good tennis player must be of the moment by first utilizing the current technology available to them like graphite racquets, maximizing training methods, and having proper coaching. Additionally they must spend an inordinate amount of time practicing on the court, mastering strokes and strategy until exceptional play comes second nature. In his profile of Serena and Venus Williams, John Jeremiah Sullivan asks their sister, Isha, about the familial nature of their training in Compton during their formative years: "Life was get up, 6 o'clock in the morning, go to the tennis court, before school. After school, go to tennis. But it was consistency. I hate to put it [like this], but it's like training an animal. You can't just be sometimey with it."⁷⁷ Sullivan notes that Isha still can't sleep past six in the morning, which speaks to both the rote nature of the practice and its personal shaping effects. The sisters were trained by their parents and despite the characterization of their father, Richard, as the more demonstrative of the two it is their mother, Oracene, who apparently delivered the brunt criticisms of their daughters' respective games in practice. Isha's phrasing of "training an

⁷⁷ John Jeremiah Sullivan, "Venus and Serena against the World," (2012).

animal” is particularly interesting here because it speaks to a discipline and dedication. The object of the training, the animal, has, at least initially, no apparent agency; training is so regimented and so focused on the body that it can appear *inhuman*. This is the price of greatness. And when a viewer watches Serena lay waste to her opponents on the court, we appreciate the greatness apparent in front of us, but not really. The reality is that the other woman Serena is playing has been likely trained in a similar manner. What we are watching inside these boundaries is the result of thousands upon thousands of hours of practice made manifest in front of our eyes. When a truly spectacular shot is hit, we feel like we could have done that, when the reality could not be further from the truth. We appreciate the results of their ascetic focus, but have no real sense of the truly spectacular athlete’s investment of time, effort, and sacrifice.

It is in the results that the tennis viewer sees a type of creative genius. The informed tennis spectator is a student of the game. This viewer has probably watched hundreds of hours of tennis on television and, perhaps, dozens of hours of high-level professional tennis in person. They, like the players they are watching, are aware of what is possible on the tennis court. So when someone like Roger Federer is able to hit a winning forehand after being wrong-footed to his backhand side, the spectator sees this as an amazing shot for the match and, at the same time, historically. The spectator can attempt to place this amazing shot in a historical context against other great shots and consider the ability of

other historical and contemporary players to perform a similar feat. They can even sympathize with the player who has been beaten, knowing that player realizes they played the point perfectly, according to the known rules of the game, only to be bested by something they didn't consider possible. This is tennis genius.

At the same time, we must realize that although historically the boundaries of the tennis court have been the same, what occurs inside these boundaries has changed. The switch from wooden racquets to graphite racquets, the bounce and construction of the ball, and the construction of the surface tennis is played on, have all altered the game in numerous ways. It would be possible to speak to the history of tennis and of the court only in terms that related specifically to what exists inside these boundaries. However there are real people playing the sport, who sometimes overtly shape the culture by their excellence within the court. Serena Williams is one of these players.

That Serena is exceptional at tennis is not in doubt. What has only been directly addressed recently is the way that she has affected culture, in particular the culture that watches tennis. Sullivan's article recounts one of the touchstones of Serena's early career at Indian Wells, California in 2001. Serena and Venus were scheduled to play each other in the semifinals of the tournament when Venus had to withdraw due to injury. When Serena came out to play in the finals, she was reportedly booed throughout the stadium, her father got into a shouting

match with other people in the crowd and, allegedly, there were racial epithets hurled at Serena. Sullivan notes the ridiculousness of blaming Serena for playing in the final when he writes, “it was Venus, after all, who committed the sin” of withdrawing from their semifinal match.⁷⁸ Serena won the match—a measure of incredible poise and mental discipline—and walked right off that court, never to return again. Actually, neither sister has returned to play Indian Wells since, despite routinely being two of the top-ranked players on the tour.⁷⁹

It is the tennis and football writer Brian Phillips who brings the impact of all this most directly to the fore. Phillips states:

Simply by virtue of being black, confident, from Compton, and physically on a different plane from their competitors, they raised a swarm of issues — about race, class, gender, who was inside, who was outside, what we were supposed to identify with in sports — that society, much less the WTA Tour, barely had the vocabulary to address.⁸⁰

That the sisters were “physically on a different plane from their competitors” is what made their relevance to the sport unavoidable inside the frame of the court.

Because they looked different than the majority of their opponents and tennis

⁷⁸ Ibid. Sullivan also notes the role the event played in the whole affair. According to Venus, she had informed the tournament staff that she would not be able to play and the staff waited hours hoping that Venus would heal enough or perhaps will herself onto the court. It was only late in the day when, with a full stadium, the staff made the announcement that Serena would advance due to Venus’ injury.

⁷⁹ In 2014, Serena apparently considered ending her boycott of Indian Wells before withdrawing again. She cited the death of Nelson Mandela as an inspiration for social change and forgiveness. Bill Dwyre, “Serena Williams Enters 2014 Indian Wells Tennis Tournament,” (2014), <http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-serena-williams-20140123,0,2907722.column>.

⁸⁰ Brian Phillips, “The Favorite: Learning to Appreciate Serena the Conqueror,” *Grantland* (September 6, 2013), http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/8343811/serena-williams-conqueror.

fans, it made the fact that “[s]emi-serious tennis fans, as a class, were whiter, richer, and better educated than society overall” equally hard to avoid.⁸¹ Serena’s creative brilliance in one area, despite any intention she might have had, made her creatively disruptive in a larger arena. By virtue of her play, Serena showed how much she could do in the limits of the court and, simultaneously, began to address some of the limits not previously addressed in other realms.

This type of culture force has been downplayed in my earlier argument about the creativity of artists; in fact if you return to the beginning of this chapter you will notice I attempted to hold the larger cultural questions at bay. But in much the same way that sports illuminates creativity within the rules, in this rare moment with the Williams sisters, the rules cannot hold the larger culture at bay. This is also the area where Clark’s “practice of negation” takes on increased significance in thinking about creative production. Both Venus and Serena have, in Sullivan’s terms, a “tyranny of talent” that is evident from the age of eight, but the work they did to perfect that talent is humbling.⁸² Additionally, despite serious health issues, both Venus and Serena return to the court again and again to both practice and play matches.⁸³ They are both fiercely dedicated to the sport of tennis and aware enough of what they are doing to refuse to return to Indian

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Sullivan, “Venus and Serena against the World.”

⁸³ Ibid. Venus suffers from, “Sjogren’s syndrome, an autoimmune disorder that often causes severe joint pain, among other symptoms” and Serena freakishly cut her foot on a piece of glass, which sliced a tendon causing several surgeries resulting in a pulmonary embolism.

Wells. When Sullivan raises the question of refusing to play Indian Wells, Serena responds thoughtfully:

I thought, people like Martin Luther King Jr. boycotted things. And this is nothing on that level. Look at Muhammad Ali, he didn't even play, he went to jail because he didn't want to go to war. The least I can do is stand up for my people and not go there. That's the very least I can do... They can penalize me to death, I'm never going back.⁸⁴

It is clear that Serena's refusal is purposeful and thoughtful and that it comes from a "superior consciousness of history." You can practice inside the lines for so long and make your creativity visible to everyone but, perhaps, it is the refusal that causes the most uproar and in turn is the most creative act that can be propagated. In rejecting one cultural arena (Indian Wells), Serena has aligned herself with another (political and social justice) that takes on more prominence as time passes.

Brian Phillips references Tony Hoagland's controversial poem "The Change" in his piece on Serena.⁸⁵ The narrator of the poem is a white male, who reminisces on the time he walked past a lounge and got distracted by the tennis match on television featuring "some tough little European blonde pitted against that big black girl from Alabama."⁸⁶ The narrator marvels and almost cowers in fear as the "black girl" was "hitting the ball like she was driving the Emancipation

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Tony Hoagland, "The Change," in *What Narcissism Means to Me* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 2003).

⁸⁶ Ibid. 20.

Proclamation down Abraham Lincoln's throat, like she wasn't asking anyone's permission."⁸⁷ Serena is never named in the poem and perhaps it isn't her that the narrator is speaking about when he recounts his experience, but the incredibly short list of successful African-Americans female tennis players make her the obvious association. There is a weird timeliness to Serena's arrival on the tennis scene. Through luck, perhaps, she came into the sport at just the right time and played such exceptional tennis that she was able to make all the racism and classicism present but not really visible in tennis to this point painfully obvious. And, although it is recent history, it feels like a shift in the greater culture. Hoagland captures it this way:

There are moments when history
passes you so close
you can smell its breath,
you can reach your hand out
and touch it on its flank,

and I don't watch all that much Masterpiece Theatre,
but I could feel the end of an era there

⁸⁷ Ibid.

in front of those bleachers full of people
in their Sunday tennis-watching clothes

as that black girl wore down her opponent
then kicked her ass good
then thumped her once more for good measure

and stood up on the red clay court
holding her racket over her head like a guitar.⁸⁸

When thinking about creativity, there is a relentless notion that it is only positive, but it is more true to say that creativity is always *productive*. This productivity is shown in Hoagland's poem in the idea that a sporting event has the potential to exemplify creativity in shaping culture.⁸⁹ This understanding of

⁸⁸ Ibid. 21.

⁸⁹ Brian Phillips notes that there is a lot of critical debate around Hoagland's poem namely, is the poem racist? If so, is Hoagland, who is white, racist? Or is it Hoagland's narrator who is racist? Or is this poem simply frank in its description of contemporary culture? It seems to me the tension around Hoagland's work is some of the same tension that arises when discussing Venus and Serena's tennis experience at Indian Wells, which is to say the experience of Indian Wells is complicated. We must consider the possibility that there were racist jeers at Indian Wells *and* people who were upset because they really wanted to see this tennis match and, maybe, people who were both racist and wanted to see the match (and every variation in between). This makes this event all the more complicated. I think this complication is a good thing because, like people who are analyzing Hoagland's poem, it gives the individual some options for considering how we individually respond to what takes place in front of us as well as how being in a crowd changes and shapes our behaviors. It allows us to, in Fer's words, "open the floodgates" how we consider

creativity is closer to what is given to us by Briony Fer when she examines Eva Hesse's work; the work that comes, even on a tennis court, is in a sequence and is full of the past, present, and the future. We often don't bother to consider how most contemporary understandings of creativity have taken idealized versions of avant-garde "newness," and we certainly don't give consideration to the fact that this *positive* conception of creativity often reifies the very structure it is supposed to move beyond. We desire creativity, but not too much. And then a triumphant and creative Serena Williams comes along and is successful across at least two registers.

The first way this registers is in her tennis excellence. This is her ability, refined by intense focus and practice on the court, to do things that we, as viewers, have never seen take place inside this constructed system and this awe registers almost instantaneously. This is the creativity we readily and easily appreciate. But there is also the second register of Serena's creativity; this comes from her refusal to step inside these parameters at Indian Wells. The immediate repercussions of this act are harder to track but the act demonstrates some of the ways that while the rules can dictate behavior, they cannot withhold cultural influence, despite our wish that they do just that. Perhaps, somewhere, someplace, several years from now, there will be a refusal by someone who was inspired by Serena, therefore giving Serena's refusal historic significance. Or,

our thoughts and actions and how those thoughts and actions are shaped. This is a kind of complication that doesn't feel present in a loud way in most creativity discourse.

perhaps, Serena's refusal had an unsettling affect on the viewers at Indian Wells, sparking increased awareness of their behaviors. Or, perhaps, this will not even be a mere footnote in history. From my position it is too soon to tell if this refusal is creative in ways that shape culture, but the *possibility* is there. And with this possibility, as viewers in the midst of this action, we are left with the incontrovertible fact that everything changes and, additionally, at least the barest possibility of what could change.

Fragment: Message Received

On September 28, 2012 the public radio program This American Life broadcast episode 475 entitled “Send a Message.”¹ The eight-minute prologue of the episode featured Ira Glass, the show’s host and producer, in conversation with reporter Josh Bearman about a series of communications between Galileo and Johannes Kepler. Bearman had heard this story from his dad, who is a physicist, when he was much younger. For reasons that become self-evident, it became one of those stories Bearman just couldn’t forget. It goes something like this:

In 1610 Galileo was a young scientist and inventor in Italy while Kepler was already well established as a court astronomer and mathematician in Prague. Because of the geographical distance between the two, Galileo and Kepler communicated through letter writing. Galileo had recently invented his first telescope and was using it to observe planetary motion and stars. In a letter, Galileo detailed one of his discoveries to Kepler in the form of an anagram. Why an anagram? There are two reasons: First, it became a de-facto means of copyrighting the discovery without actually disclosing what the discovery was; if

¹ Ira Glass, "Send a Message! This American Life," <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/475/transcript>.

later challenged, Galileo could point to the date and the decoded anagram and claim credit for his finding. The second reason for the anagram was to use it as a means of capturing Kepler's attention. The first reason for using the anagram did not prove useful, but the second reason definitively worked. In fact, one of Kepler's assistants wrote Galileo to request that he stop torturing Kepler with the anagram, demanding that he disclose this discovery in short order.

What Galileo sent to Kepler was just a jumble of letters; they were completely nonsensical. After months of pleading from Kepler to solve the puzzle, Kepler finally seemed to unscramble the letters and published what he believed to be the new discovery. Unfortunately for Kepler, he unscrambled the anagram incorrectly. Galileo's original message in Latin was, "Altissimum planetam tergeminum observavi." Essentially, the message translates to, "I have discovered the highest planet and it has three bodies" meaning that Galileo had observed Saturn (at the time the most distant, known planet) and what would eventually come to be discovered as Saturn's rings. Kepler's mistranslation was rough but eventually he came up with, "Salve, umbistineum geminatum Martia proles;" essentially, "Hail double-knob, children of Mars" which Kepler published as saying Mars has two moons. Now Kepler was wrong but—and this is a little weird—he was also right: Mars does have two moons. However, this fact wouldn't be discovered officially for another two hundred years.

Kepler's wrong-but-right anagram solution is a scientific coincidence, a lucky guess and nothing more. Except that it happened again. Galileo's second anagram had to do with the planet Venus, which he had observed as having phases like the moon. This discovery was a major one because it went a long way to proving the Earth was not the center of the universe, countering the dogmatic teachings of the Catholic Church. The anagram Galileo sent to Kepler was, "Haec immatura a me iam frustra leguntur oy." When Kepler decodes this anagram he reads it, again roughly, to mean that Jupiter has a large red spot that is moving mathematically. And Kepler is wrong again, but also right. Jupiter does indeed have a red spot on it and its rotation makes its appearance to our vantage point deducible by mathematic formula. Of course, this would also not be discovered officially for another two hundred years.

It is hard not to be awestruck by this story. And while the individual creativity of both Kepler and Galileo could be discussed at length, this story disrupts that analysis of creativity. Something happened when these two people worked together that outpaced their lives. How do we account for that? At the very least, this shows a type of creativity not so easily categorized.

While the transcript of the radio show contains the majority of the dialogue between Glass and Bearman it does not contain the original Latin. If you search for the story as it appears on the radio on the Internet you will come upon a blog

by a University of Richmond physics professor named Ted Bunn.² Bunn wrote about the show right after it aired and, in his write-up, included the Latin not featured in the transcript, which is certainly helpful in getting the accuracy of the story. But Bunn also noted something strange about his personal experience with this whole affair. About a week prior to the radio program airing, he was sharing this exact same story with his Physics students about Galileo's anagrams and the relatively unknown nature of them. Bunn found it incredibly eerie to be talking about this idiosyncratic, relatively unknown thing in his lecture only to hear it broadcast back to him on the radio a week later. Was it just in the air? Bunn titled his blog entry "This American Life is narrowcasting at me." Sometimes it feels as if there are things in the world made just for you.

How could you even describe that?

² Ted Bunn, "This American Life Is Narrowcasting at Me « Ted Bunn's Blog," <http://blog.richmond.edu/physicsbunn/2012/10/04/this-american-life-is-narrowcasting-at-me/>.

Chapter 4: Troubling Masculine Creativity

I was listening
Listening to the rain
I was hearing
Hearing something else¹

The popularized understandings of contemporary creativity—what is it, what can it be, and how it is observed—can be seen to have both a spiritual and secular influence. If we were to pick a particular point in history one influence may seem to take precedence over the other; but even if, say, secular notions dominate spiritual notions as might be said in our current age, our understanding of creativity and how it can be achieved retains influence from both. In this way creativity resembles a reciprocal Rorschach test, where understandings of creativity says as much about the person who is viewing the term as the person who created the inkblots on the paper in the first place.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that sports offered a day-to-day basis for readily identifiable examples of creativity; in these particular cases, I argued the rules both dictate what is possible in creativity and, as a result, the creative act reifies the rules. A similar trend can be seen the analysis of

¹ Television, *Marquee Moon* (Burbank, CA: Elektra/Rhino, 2003).

modernist artworks where the perceptual parameters of an artist sets a context for their own artistic production. I also suggested a second form of creativity appears as a type of refusal, where a star athlete or an artist allows the larger culture to permeate their worlds and, as a result, changes outside perception of our cultural parameters. The results of these refusals are harder to immediately quantify but reinforce the idea that creativity offers possibility as it manifests itself. In this type of creativity, it can be said that creativity is not always positive but it is always productive. Additionally in this second type of creativity, we need a significantly longer chronology to appreciate these creative acts. With this in mind, I will step back over these next two chapters to examine conceptual ideas carried forward into our contemporary understanding of creativity by primarily drawing from historical examinations.

What this chapter will chart is the foundational Western notions of creativity in Ancient Greece through Plato's philosophy particularly, followed by the shift in Western thinking when creativity becomes the province of a Christian God and the monastery, to, finally, the foundation of a more secular and specifically internal idea of creativity. This last idea is a product of the Scientific Revolution. With this in mind, another way to view this chapter would be to think of it as exploring the tensions between science and religion and how this affects individual actors in social contexts while pursuing creative work. The dominant characteristics of creativity (individuality, divinity, and madness) found in Platonic

creativity will shift throughout our progression through a chronological history but will never lose their conceptual force. In the process of charting this course, many tensions will be observed: community versus individual, spiritual versus scientific, an individual as a vessel versus an individual with agency, and a changing notion of economic wealth. These accounts of creativity will account a rather large time period but, once again, I am interested in the conceptual argument over the historical argument. While I do not wish to conflate religious thinking with artistic thinking, there are similar characteristics between the two types of thought and, by embracing these similarities, possibility is provided for creativity to exist outside the overly scientific understanding of creativity in our contemporary time.

One other characteristic of creativity arises in this chapter that must be acknowledged: through this lens, creativity has a decidedly masculine cast. This is worth mentioning for two reasons. First, although I would argue creativity maintains its masculine cast in popularized contemporary understandings of the term, there are more nuances in this position to be explored. This chapter, in particular, attempts to highlight some of these nuances and, while I use masculine pronouns throughout the chapter, this is done intentionally in deference to the historical sources I have chosen. The second reason for mentioning the masculine cast here is to be overt about its historical influence. This influence and, more specifically, the silences created as a result of this

influence, are examined in the next chapter, which more directly addresses the nuance present in a feminist reading of creativity.

The Vessel

In the interest of showing how a particular culture shapes our contemporary understanding of creativity, I will address a conceptual origin of creativity here. In this specific case, the historical Western conception of creativity draws on both early Greek understandings of the creative act as well as Biblical interpretations. In both cases, creativity in these first conceptions begins with an early understanding that we are not in control of our own minds. My initial focus on this phenomenon will be with Platonic philosophy in Ancient Greece before, in the middle sections, dealing with Biblical understandings of this origin. Both understandings are important because, as I will show, they come to coexist in the monastery before shifting again with the onset of the Scientific Revolution.

As historians and scientists have come to understand some of the earliest conceptions of creative thought, they noted how a human might previously have demonstrated creativity. The dominant theory surrounding early understandings of the human mind is that the brain was divided into two chambers. The psychologist and historian Julian Jaynes refers to this early conception of as the

“bicameral brain.”² How does the bicameral brain work? One chamber of the brain is controlled specifically by the individual, who uses their half of the brain to operate in the world as they see fit.³ The other chamber of the brain is the province of a god’s; this god is able to stimulate and offer ideas into the world.⁴ And while conceptions of which god was stimulating the individual’s brain would be up for debate in the Ancient world, the idea that a person’s activity in the world might be divinely inspired was not at issue.

While different cultures might have different understandings of the inner mechanics of the human mind, there is a benefit to looking at the culture of Ancient Greece for clues on how the brain was theorized. Specifically in Greek culture, the first chamber of the brain was a receptacle for creative acts and ideas from the gods, who operate through:

[T]he *mediation* of a muse, a sort of intermediary for the gods. A person who felt a creative impulse would invoke the appropriate muse for assistance: Calliope for epic and heroic poetry, Clio for history, Erato for love poetry, Euterpe for music and lyric poetry, Melpomene for tragedy, Polyhymnia for songs or hymns to the gods, Terpsichore for dance, Thalia for comedy, and Urania for astronomy.⁵

² John S. Dacey, *Understanding Creativity : The Interplay of Biological, Psychological, and Social Factors* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998). 16.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. As noted in Dacey, Lennon and Fiore, there might be a quick leap to say that early humans had a conception of a two-hemisphere brain, but that would be an incorrect assumption. The scientific notion of a two-hemisphere brain comes much later and with a much different understanding.

⁵ Ibid.

Here, the individual is *not* creative; instead, the individual has a type of wherewithal to call upon a specific muse to help cultivate creativity. The purpose of the mind's second chamber was then responsible for transferring this supernatural inspiration into "the more ordinary mechanisms of speech and writing. It was considered to be the *public* representation of the first chamber."⁶

As a result of this particular conception of the human mind, not only is the ancient mind split in terms of the processes it carries out, it is also split into private and public realms. Creativity occurs in the private areas of the mind, away from public view, where the spirits can work their magic away from prying eyes. The public only bears witness to the results of creativity, never the act itself.

Also worth noting here are the formal ways that this divine inspiration is manifested. We see the muses inspiring several types of poetry and plays as well as history and astronomy. This falls in contrast to the first chapter of this dissertation, where I noted some of the prominent contemporary research on creativity, most Art Education researchers associate creativity as manifested in arts such as painting, sculpture, and drawing. The classical Greek process for contextualizing creativity appears significantly broader than any one area of focus. Furthermore, because the muses invoked inspired *specific* types of creativity, there is no early suggestion that creativity in one area (art) would lead to creativity in another area of focus (history). If early Western ideas of creativity

⁶ Ibid. Emphasis added.

are different from our current understandings of creativity, what then can be gleaned by remaining with Ancient Greek conceptions of creativity? I would argue that it is through Plato's philosophy that a particular understanding of creativity is given form and that form continues to reverberate today. Why does art prove to be a captivating idea for Plato in the functioning of the republic? More specifically, why does Plato see creativity as potentially damaging for the republic?

Platonic Creativity and the Social Good

One answer to this question lies in Plato's *Republic*,⁷ but to answer this accurately, an understanding of how Plato conceived of the creative act separately in poetry, painting, and philosophy must first be developed. Poetry and painting are the first terms to parse in terms of their meaning and function in the republic, which we can grasp through Plato's criticisms of the arts. The difference in the acts of painting and poetry for Plato are noted not only in their form but, more importantly, in their intent. Specifically in "Book Ten" of the *Republic*, Plato defines the painter as being similar to the poet but criticizes the activity of the painter in very specific ways, which he ultimately utilizes as a way to critique poetry. Painting, as Plato chronicles it, is the art of appearances; this art is slower, but not more sophisticated, than simply "turning a mirror round and

⁷ Plato, *Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004).

round” reflecting what is in the world back to a viewer.⁸ To illuminate this point, Plato uses the example of three beds made by three different artists: “God, the maker of the bed, and the painter[.]”⁹ The first bed is created by god, he who, “desired to be the real maker of a real bed...the natural author or maker of the bed[.]”¹⁰ In this form, the bed as object is perfect. The carpenter makes the second bed; this bed is real, but lacks the perfection of the bed made by god. Also, the bed was not *solely* the creation of the carpenter since there is a perfect, idealized bed in existence, but it retains value because it has *use*. The third bed is made by a painter who is, “fairly designate[d] as the imitator of that which the others make.”¹¹ The painter is an imitator and the imitator “may deceive children or simple persons, when he shows them his picture...from a distance.”¹² For Plato, the painter doesn’t have to have any knowledge of the thing he is painting in his physical reality as long as the *appearance* of the thing is recognizable. The painting, then, is “thrice removed from the truth,” meaning that any person who

⁸ Ibid. 320.

⁹ Ibid. 321. For the edition of *Republic* I use, Elizabeth Watson Scharffenberger writes the introduction and endnotes. Her endnote on the use of capital G God by Jowett is worth noting: “Although Socrates does refer here to “god” (*theos* in Greek) in the singular, Jowett’s use of the capital G is misleading. The god of whom Socrates speaks here and elsewhere should not be identified with the God of today’s monotheistic religions, even though many qualities he attributes to god (perfection, immutability, beneficence, truthfulness) are in accordance with the conceptions of monotheistic systems of belief...Greeks regularly spoke of god in the singular if they did not have a particular deity in mind, or if they wanted to refer to divine power in some general way.” (362). It is worth reiterating that *Republic* is a treatise on the ideal state. God, then, could be understood more in terms of ethics instead of as a monotheistic morality.

¹⁰ Ibid. 322.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. 323. I find it hard to not think of Magritte’s *Treason of Images* here, where Magritte paints the image of the pipe convincingly and then undermines the image with a particular script that informs the viewer “This is not a pipe.”

gazes upon a painting is seeing only an appearance generated by an imitator.¹³ If the goal for a person in the republic is to gain knowledge, the painting does nothing to bring a person closer to knowledge; in fact, it withholds it.

Plato's exploration of painting appears to be established because in his criticism of painting's utilization of imitation, Plato sets the stage for the true focus of his critique: poetic mimesis.¹⁴ For Plato, poetry possesses a power "of harming even the good;"¹⁵ or in other words, as Greek scholar Morris Partee writes, "[P]oetry is treated as significant, a powerful force possibly for good, probably for evil."¹⁶ The idea that poetry might be good or evil is complicated because superficial examinations of Plato might logically suggest a conflation of terms art and beauty; this conflation could seem logical from our contemporary standpoint where popular conceptions of beauty and art are often considered to be one in the same. Plato, however, has different tasks for beauty and art. This is succinctly demonstrated by the philosopher Nickolas Pappas who, when writing about Plato's aesthetics, notes:

If aesthetics is the philosophical inquiry into art and beauty (or a contemporary surrogate for beauty, e.g. aesthetic value), the striking feature of Plato's dialogues is that he devotes so much time to both topics but treats them oppositely. Art, mostly as represented by poetry, is closer to a greatest danger than any other phenomenon Plato speaks of, while

¹³ Ibid. 323-324.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Watson Scharffenberger in Ibid. xlv.

¹⁵ Ibid. 332-333.

¹⁶ Morris Henry Partee, "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 30, no. 1 (1971). 88.

beauty is close to a greatest good.¹⁷

While this idea may rightly appear at odds with those who would conflate art and beauty, understanding the artwork's creation through Plato's philosophy and the parsing of art from beauty offers insights.

Plato's Aesthetics and the Divine Madness of the Artist

Of the two issues that make up aesthetics, I will first address beauty. If Plato does not conflate beauty and art, where exactly is the beauty? Partee notes that for Plato it is the philosopher who demonstrates the pursuit of beauty by "moving towards" knowledge through thought.¹⁸ The neurobiologist Semir Zeki further illuminates Platonic beliefs:

Plato believed in a system of universal Ideas that have an existence independent of man. He believed that true knowledge can only be knowledge of these Ideas and that the only way of obtaining such knowledge was through a thought process since ideas were, to him, supra-sensible...It is arguable whether Plato was ever convinced that he should make Ideas of things such as houses, or trees, or horses and he acknowledged his hesitation in this regard...[H]is main preoccupation was with the idealization of abstract concepts such as justices, honor, beauty, and love.¹⁹

¹⁷ Nickolas Pappas, "Plato's Aesthetics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2013).

¹⁸ Partee, "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato." 89.

¹⁹ Semir Zeki, *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain : Love, Creativity, and the Quest for Human Happiness* (Chichester, UK; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). 46.

And so we recognize that we are probably not looking for the manifestation of a material thing (like a painting) in Plato but, rather, the pursuit of knowledge in general. In reading both Plato's *The Ion* and *Phaedrus* against each other, Partee notes the similarities in thought in both the poet and the philosopher; it often appears they are both pursuing beauty as an end goal.²⁰ Despite the considerable overlap of their respective characteristics, Plato never suggests the poet is close to the philosopher.²¹ Partee efforts to make the goal of the philosopher specific:

The philosopher is enraptured, ravished of all earthly senses, by his perception of the divine, a state necessary for all good poetry. If man could see true beauty, "pure and clear and unalloyed," he could rise above the pollutions of the flesh.²²

The philosopher is characterized as capable of seeing "pure" and, as a result, able to rise above "pollutions of the flesh," where as a poet would not rise above such a state.

If the poet and his poetry hold the potential to lead men down an illicit path, Plato's critique is more explicit in the *Republic*. The idea of imitation, first introduced through Plato's critique of painting, is the act that holds destructive power. Plato writes not of the poet himself, but on the audience's reception of

²⁰ Partee, "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato." 90.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

hearing poetry: “The best of us, you know, delight in giving way to sympathy, and are in raptures at the excellence of the poet who stirs our feelings.”²³ And while this does not sound like a particularly evil deed, having one’s feelings stirred is not a prized characteristic of the republic. In the face of sorrow, the best men, “pride ourselves on the opposite quality—we would fain be quiet and patient; this is the manly part, and the other which delighted us in the recitation is now deemed to be the part of a woman.”²⁴ Through Plato, we see characteristics split along the lines of gender and occupation. Rational thought is the ideal characteristic of man and the philosopher; demonstrating emotion, especially if one is swayed by poetry, is the province of a woman and the arts.

Now that we see how beauty is masculine, stoic, and philosophic for Plato, we must consider with more attention the other half of aesthetic focus, which is the art itself. More accurately, more attention must be given to the artist as creator of the art. As is obvious now, the artist is distinct from the philosopher because he is not creating in such a way that the pursuit of true knowledge is addressed as a specific goal. The artist appeals to popular sentiment, which grants him the power to “harm even the good.”²⁵ That the artist himself holds this power remains problematic for Plato too, so much so that Plato will advocate for his exclusion from the republic. In Plato’s words, the artist is, “concerned with an

²³ Plato, *Republic*. 333.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. 332.

inferior part of the soul; and therefore we shall be right in refusing to admit him to a well-ordered State, because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason.”²⁶ The artwork of the artist corrupts the well-ordered State from within, promoting weakness through feelings.

Illuminatingly, Plato does not specifically use the word “creativity” in his philosophy. This is understandable from a contemporary vantage point because to think of art as creative in Platonic terms would mean acknowledging that art is damaging and negative. Holding this negative connotation aside in artistic creativity, as tall a task as that seems, the Platonic term most closely associated with what our contemporary understanding of artistic production is “inspiration.” This leads us back to the idea of the bicameral brain where muses can work through a person, rendering the individual as a vessel. It is in this idea of the vessel that we see two effects of inspiration, which extend Plato’s critique of the artist beyond the artist’s ability to arouse feelings in his audience.

Recall from above that Plato’s philosophy presents a complicated look at art and beauty where something like poetry has a force that is powerful and might be for good, but is probably evil. Morris Partee identifies the two effects of inspiration on an artist: he is both divine and mad.²⁷ To consider the divinity and madness of an artist suggests a complicated understanding of an artist’s mind. It also suggests that the product that comes from such a mind might be problematic

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Partee, “Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato.” 92.

before it even reaches its audience. Partee notes that this grouping of terms makes our understanding of Plato's intent all the more ambiguous.²⁸ After all, how could someone be both divine and mad?

The divinity of the poet comes from the idea that the poet is a vessel through which the gods operate. Because poetry is so compelling to the populace, "Plato has decided that the beauty of poetry cannot be explained solely in terms of a human creator."²⁹ Such poetic beauty is so enthralling that it must lay "outside the province of human skill."³⁰ At its best, this form of beauty exposes a form of truth that only the gods could share. But even in cases where Plato would understand that a truth had been shared through poetry, Plato praises the work and not the poet. The poet knows nothing.³¹ The illumination of truth through poetry is almost done in spite of the poet. The only praise that could be heaped onto a poet would be to say that he has placed himself in such a way as to allow the gods to work through him.³² Here, again, is Plato, this time in *The Ion*:

Many are the noble words in which poets speak concerning the actions of men; but like yourself when speaking about Homer, they do not speak of them by any rules of art: they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels them...Had he learned by rules of art, he would have known how to speak not of one theme only, but of all; and therefore God takes

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. 87.

³⁰ Ibid. 92.

³¹ Pappas, "Plato's Aesthetics."

³² Ibid.

away the minds of poets, and uses them as his ministers, as he also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God himself is the speaker, and that through them he is conversing with us.³³

“God takes away the minds of poets;” Plato sees the poet as a simple tool whose function is only apparent in its use.

While Plato wrestles with the divinity of the poet, the effect of madness is less obvious but still connected to the gods. One way that we might understand this madness is hinted at earlier in this chapter with Plato’s statement that poets must be withheld from the state because of the emotions they inspire in their audience. Plato recognizes that poets must be more familiar with their own emotions, which are less rational. For Plato, the poets arise “lust and anger and all the other affections” in their actions instead of controlling them.³⁴ But it is through *The Ion* that Nicklos Pappas notes: “Now inspiration means additionally that poets are irrational, as it never meant before Plato.”³⁵ The ability for the poet to be the vessel that the gods work through is the same ability that recalls a lack of control over oneself for Plato. A philosopher understands the work of the gods while retaining their own humanity; the poet can do no such thing. From a contemporary understanding of creativity, it would be Plato’s philosopher who

³³ Plato, *Selected Dialogues of Plato : The Benjamin Jowett Translation* (New York: Modern Library, 2000).14.

³⁴ *Republic*. 334.

³⁵ Pappas, "Plato's Aesthetics." The trait of artistic madness will rise again with the Romantics in the nineteenth century and, I would argue, still holds some influence in popularized understandings of artistic work. Again, more scholarship could be useful on this topic.

demonstrates creativity by pursuing the knowledge of the gods without losing a sense of personal agency.

To reiterate here, the artist, who we might call a poet in Plato, is a vessel that a muse works through. The artist can point to truth and the good because of the power of the muses and gods that work through him, but he is mad because he does not control his craft like the philosopher. Followers of the artist and the results of their creativity are often led astray by these powerful messages, which in turn, leads artistic creativity in Plato's time to be understood as primarily destructive. One more characteristic should be clarified here before proceeding: While the role of the deity is not in doubt in the creative act, the result of the creative act is attributed to a *specific* human. In Plato's examples, the work of Homer is often referred to when Plato is making his argument about poetry and the state. From our perspective, we can see that Plato views Homer as *the* vessel chosen by the gods operate through. Here, Homer's mind becomes the private province of the gods; Homer's physical presence in the world is what makes the work manifest. Partee's work with inspiration confirms that in Plato's dialogues, poetry is often viewed as the domain of the public, but the work itself comes from the individual.³⁶

No matter the philosopher or artist, the gods work with and through the *individual*. This individual has manifested a divine power that so enraptures the

³⁶ Partee, "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato." 91.

public that it is seen as a threat to the state. The artist is captivating *and* dangerous; the artist's work is specifically tied to social reception but Plato's argument holds the artist himself as separate from this social space. This placing of creativity in the realm of the earth-bound individual and the tension between the recognition of the individual and the populace is a point I want to carry forward into the next section. It is in this next section when we will again think of a human as a vessel despite switching focus from Plato to medieval Christian monasteries.

Creativity Between Heaven and Earth

The overlap between the early Greek characterizations of creativity and early Christian characterizations is notable for some prominent reasons but before arriving at those reasons, I want to first address how early Christianity characterized creativity. The Bible and, by extension, the world begins with a creative act of God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."³⁷ The heavens are split from the earth and the Spirit of God 'hovers' above the earth; God will interact with the earth from outside and above it, or through intermediaries. The split is important because it contains a foundation of dualistic logic that will be used throughout the

³⁷ Gen. 1:1, New International Version

Old Testament. There is good and evil, God and man, life and death, and inclusion and exclusion. It is not until the New Testament and the arrival of Jesus do we get a more, albeit uniquely, paradoxical idea that a person can be both God and man simultaneously. After Jesus' final ascension into heaven, he leaves in place his disciples to carry on his legacy on earth. The church of Christ becomes the way God directly interacts with the population of the world. The intermediaries between heaven and earth are either otherworldly angels or decidedly human beings who have pledged their lives in the service of God. Their human acts are God's work made manifest here on earth. While this overlaps with Greek ideals, decisive shifts occur. As mentioned above, the creative acts of Greeks remain characterized by the *individual* who generated the act. But as time progresses, creative works done in the Christian God's name are rendered unto God; the human who perpetrated the act remains anonymous. Another significant difference between Christianity and Greek creativity is that the creative works done in God's name are for the *benefit* of society, where Plato saw the poet's creative act as potentially destructive to the social fabric.

I want offer one more clarification on this idea of social good before moving forward in time here. Both Greek and Christian conceptions of creativity are not wholly positive. A creative act is not always a constructive act but can also be a destructive act. As suggested in the first chapter, our contemporary lexicon assumes creativity is implicitly a positive act; in support of this statement,

the work of psychologist Mark A. Runco's was referenced, which emphatically states that creativity has no dark side.³⁸ In Greek culture, as creativity makes a turn toward the individual, acts of creativity and genius are driven by a person's "abilities and appetites," which are sometimes destructive. Creativity here had taken on the social characteristics of a frenzied mania.³⁹ The destructive nature of creativity is equally evident in the Old Testament in the stories of destruction in Sodom and Gomorrah or even the slaying of Goliath by David. Murder and the raining of hellfire become creative, yet destructive, acts by either God or his stand-ins.

Why hold Greek and Christian conceptions of creativity together beyond the point that both cultures seem to have influence on the shaping of our Western society? The answer is simply that the Christian church is the preserver of Greek culture. It is the monks, living in the protected confines of the monastery, who translated Greek works to Latin and preserved these works as part of the monastery libraries until the invention of the printing press. The historian Christopher Brooke references the fifth-century scholar turned monk, Cassiodorus, who was "the last of the great scholars of the ancient world seriously to engage in transmitting Greek thought and literature to the West."⁴⁰

³⁸ Runco, "Creativity Has No Dark Side."

³⁹ Robert S. Albert and Mark A. Runco, "A History of Research on Creativity," in *Handbook of Creativity*, ed. Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). 19.

⁴⁰ Christopher Nugent Lawrence Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages* (Mahwah, N.J.: HiddenSpring, 2003). 53.

After Cassiodorus' death, his monastery and library mostly vanished but some works were carried to Rome for preservation. Brooke also remarks that in the wake of Cassiodorus' death, a second tenant of education was lost; prior to this time, knowledge of the "chief Roman disciplines—grammar, rhetoric and the rest"⁴¹ were required of men before they proceeded to study the Bible. It is not until the eleventh and twelfth centuries that these two modes of knowledge, the sacred Christian theology and the profane Roman literary science,⁴² were brought back into alignment in the monastery.

As we arrive in the middle ages, this tension between the world and heaven and the intermediaries between the two becomes more evident. This tension becomes a contextual pivot point in historical scholarship on monks and monasteries. Brooke writes it thusly "Can the good life, the Christian life, be led in the world; is it compatible with earthly joys and pleasures?"⁴³ This notion of being separate from the general social contract in order to serve God is illustrated by Brooke pointing to a chapter in the Gospel of Matthew about the need to refrain from marriage in order to serve God faithfully.⁴⁴ Perhaps, even more succinctly, the title of Ludo Milis' historical study of monastic life, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men*, describes this tension between being a man of God and a societal man

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

manifested the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Milis traces this shift of positioning man between sin-free and sinful back to the creation story itself, finding its roots in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden. "The World, once good, had become bad"⁴⁶ and, as Milis writes, "[There is a] pessimism about the World of early Christianity" where religion was suspicious of earthly matter. At the same time, being in the world was seen as positive step, if one only lived correctly, "towards the final victory of Good, and thus towards the final reward."⁴⁷ The correct path through the world would lead to salvation and eternal life.

This idea that to be fully with God men are required to deny the world in some way begins to shed light on the idea of what it means to have ascetic focus. The characterizations of true creativity in our modern culture draw from an expectation that a truly creative person must bring this level of dedication to their work. As an example, think back to the end of Chapter 3, where Serena Williams' sister described their tennis regiment as being "like an animal."⁴⁸ This is intense and dedicated repetition. Consider in opposition a dilettante. There is no doubt an amateur appreciator or dabbler can have an interest in things, but they would never be mistaken for an expert in a specific area. To continue the tennis example, the difference in skill between an accomplished weekend community tennis player and Serena is a gulf wider than any canyon. Now imagine when

⁴⁵ Ludovicus Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men : Monasticism and Its Meaning to Medieval Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell Press, 1992).

⁴⁶ Ibid. 9.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Sullivan, "Venus and Serena against the World."

matters of faith are at hand or something like the eternal fate of the human soul is at stake. Is there any room for a person who does not take this faith seriously? Could you stand before God and beg for forgiveness with half-measures? The monk's answer to this question is obvious: In the monk's journey to be closer to God, a type of focus to a single task appears that is largely unfamiliar to the contemporary reader.

Ascetic Focus

This section outlines in detail exactly what it means to possess ascetic focus in pursuit of something. This focus largely takes place outside the public view where the public can do little but admire the results of this focus. The example of a tennis player is one example but the translation and preservation of scholarly works on Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire are another example. It is worth asking what, exactly, is the day-to-day experience of a medieval monk? Christopher Brooke paints one picture of this lived experience.

A medieval monk in winter would proceed to bed around 6:30 PM and arise around 2 AM to begin their day.⁴⁹ The day was longer in the summer and also in more southern regions as daylight permitted; in this case of a longer day, permission for a siesta was granted.⁵⁰ In the winter and Lenten times, only one

⁴⁹ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

meal a day was allowed, while two were received in the summer.⁵¹ Essentially, the monks were in a state of constant fast. Generally meat was not eaten but certain birds were seen as an exception to this rule.⁵² Wine was allowed—in fact many monasteries also had or were located by vineyards⁵³—but in moderation. Younger monks who had difficulty with the fast were sometimes allowed a breakfast or an extra drink.⁵⁴ On Sundays and holy feast days, extra meals were often given.⁵⁵ And all of this was done in relative silence; in lieu of most speaking, a complex series of hand signals was utilized to communicate when necessary.⁵⁶ With this level of regimentation, we begin to grasp the characteristics associated with true ascetic focus: the discipline involves some training of the body, as well as the mind, to limit focus and survive on the barest of necessities.

Silent and hungry, the monks went about their work. Work, which would take on many different forms in monasteries, is significant because it helps to dissuade “idleness...the soul’s enemy.”⁵⁷ Brooke presents three possible approaches to work: a job that needs to be done (like dishwashing), a way of

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid. 80.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 71.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 71-72. The food you consume is measured and the words that escape your lips are also highly limited. If we consider the bodily experience of a monk, the mouth has been thoroughly deemphasized. What escapes if you talk too much? If you fill yourself with too much food and wine? And, conversely, if the mouth is deemphasized, what does it allow the mind to do? Some of these ideas are interesting to consider against Virginia Woolf’s *A room of one’s own*, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

⁵⁷ Benedict in Ibid. 72.

passing time to avoid boredom, or a sacred thing where the work is dedicated to a higher purpose.⁵⁸ In removing the first characteristic of work, the job that needs to be done, we are left with two types of work that may consist of the same activity with the only difference being a mental orientation to the work at hand. An example here could be gardening. A person who has all their basic human needs met may garden to avoid boredom or because it produces some level of personal satisfaction. If the person is of a certain mental disposition, the garden becomes an offering where the bounties of God are maximized through the human hand; the garden now has a spiritual significance.⁵⁹ And with this in mind, we can once again include the first type of work because if a job that has to be done is carried out in a manner honoring God, that work is useful in two ways. St. Benedict recognized usefulness in work that was both manual—like gardening—and more intellectual—like being engaged in spiritual reading; both were valid forms of labor. His ninth century monastic experience was one where the monasteries were small and a part of poor communities. The variety of work in a monk's day was necessary to complete specific tasks as well as break up the monotony of their routine. As monasteries would grow in both size and wealth,

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Since I am addressing Western tradition here, I have ignored the obvious association with the Zen garden here. The role of work to root oneself in the world through a process is not a trivial experience but its obvious base in Eastern philosophy would not be emphasized in our generic monk's mind.

the role of work would change in the monastery and the surrounding community.⁶⁰

It is here that we find another point of tension in the monastery. Is work a solitary experience? Or should it be undertaken as part of a community including the laity? There was much debate between orders about the role of the monastery in the community and this debate shifted over time. The first and most obvious distinction is between the hermetic monks and those monks who operated more oriented toward the world. Like the other distinctions in monastic behavior laid out here, it is too simplistic of a division. But it should be noted that there are real differences in how monasteries understood their calling and even if we closely examined the attitudes of different types of monasteries, they overlap in more ways than one. No matter which of these (hermetic or pastoral) paths is followed, the precedents of these behaviors, found in the writings of the pre-Carolingian monks St. Benedict and St. Gregory, will go on to define the initial foundations of monastic culture as a relationship between spirituality and grammar (grammar meaning that the way this spirituality is expressed).⁶¹ To further understand the life of an individual monk presents a challenge, because there is no autobiography from a twelfth century monk.⁶² What we are left with to

⁶⁰ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 72-73.

⁶¹ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God : A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961). 10.

⁶² James G. Clark, "Introduction: The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism," in *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2007). 4.

understand day-to-day lives are handbooks for the monasteries. An anonymous twelfth century handbook for hermetic monks describes the daily routine inside the monastery as akin to a sheep that grazes with purpose. “There is nothing wasted in the life of a sheep. It produces wool, leather, meat and milk.”⁶³ When considered with what has been already noted about the relationship between monastic chores and spirituality, we again see the hermitic monk as one who views any activity as a way of refining their faith.

One of the prominent hermetic monks, St. Benedict began his life as a student in Rome before fleeing to the monastery to escape the immoral trappings of school and to devote himself completely to the search for God. Even as Benedict seemingly fled the world, he brought his love of learning with him creating a dual purpose in the monastery. For a Benedictine monk, “grazing” involves both the search for God *and* the “knowledge of letters,” which is the common scholarly foundation of reading and writing, as we now know it.⁶⁴ In this reading, we see another curious feature specific to the time. Reading for monks was done as much through the mouth as it was through the eyes (monks would quietly speak the written word) so that any reading would become a much more embodied experience. The verbal and the visual were interconnected; and while monks often read Biblical writings, the same process played out in their secular

⁶³ Evans in Ibid. 77.

⁶⁴ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God : A Study of Monastic Culture*. 12-13.

readings.⁶⁵ As we see, the hermit has sequestered himself from the world, but not entirely. St. Gregory picks up on this thread between being separate from the world and apart of it; he encourages the separation to create a detachment from the world, which, by extension, would limit the occasion to sin.⁶⁶ In turn, a profound desire for God is inspired. The study of secular works gives knowledge of the trappings of the world and it is through serious study of these trappings that the monk is liberated from the weight of the world. Only now would the love of God shine down upon these monks. It is by this logic that a monk becomes freed from his attachment to his body—and by extension, the Earth—and comes to accept his death as a uniting with God.⁶⁷ A monk's lived experience therefore is never completely bound to the earth in his life, but instead focused on eternity and transcendence. What might be understood as the usual confines of an average human life span do not apply to the monk; they work to only consider eternity.

In spite of this apparent rejection of the secular, the results of this dedicated scholarly learning would inspire a Carolingian renaissance, which was manifested in numerous ways. Latin was taught and perfected throughout monasteries. Great classical works were translated with care and libraries were established. The interaction between the monks and these pagan works inspired

⁶⁵ Ibid. 15-16.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 29-31.

an act of creativity that gleaned what was needed from a text and sought to reshape it to Christian thinking. Rhabanus Maurus, the monk, wrote that, “when the books of worldly wisdom fall into our hands[,] if we meet therein something useful, we convert it to our own dogma” and if something “superfluous” that shows a “preoccupation with the things of the world” it should be eliminated.⁶⁸ The classical texts of the Western world were swept up and reformed by the force of Christianity. By way of this preservation of the texts, they were given eternal life and, at the same time, provide a foundation for new thinking and new ideas. Additionally, where creation was once good—God’s operation in Genesis—and then evil—in the incarnation of the devil and temptation—creativity once again became a force for good. Where once early Christianity had a “fundamental pessimism” to it, viewing the world skeptically, now Christianity more fully embraced the world.⁶⁹ Through the monasteries interaction with the classical, scholarly texts, the monks were able to reform this pagan creativity into a good and Godly creativity.

Alone, Together in the Monastery

Rigorous and solitary living in the monastery is the assumed norm for hermetic monks. However the architectural design of the monastery puts monks

⁶⁸ Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God : A Study of Monastic Culture*. 47. This argument would not seem out of place in *Republic* and the Platonic critique of poetry.

⁶⁹ Milis, *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men : Monasticism and Its Meaning to Medieval Society*. 9.

in closer proximity to each other and to their respective towns than we might imagine, further complicating the ways we might understand ascetic focus. Take the abbey church of San Zeno Maggiore at Verona as an example, “a great Italian city of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries” where the citizens of Verona saw the abbey church “as an expression of piety and civic pride.”⁷⁰ The bishop was the de facto leader in the community, but an influential laity also held considerable influence and exercised their control in (at least) two ways. The more subtle and patient way the laity influenced change in the monastery was to remove a seated bishop by gradually placing people of influence into the church and letting them rise through the ranks; eventually a bishop would be replaced with one friendlier to their own interests.⁷¹ The more direct means of influence was through the financing of these monastery and church structures through the pre-Reformation act of granting plenary indulgences.⁷² This is a very direct example of how the church and laity were interrelated at this time, but there are other examples of the interaction between the laity and the monastery in the structure of the church itself.

In one way, the structure of the church mirrored the larger understanding of the religious hierarchy. San Zeno is essentially one large room with a great

⁷⁰ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 121.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² William Kent, "Catholic Encyclopedia: Indulgences," Robert Appleton Company, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm>. These indulgences were essentially pardons, granted by the church in exchange for significant monetary donations. As these indulgences became more egregious, they would ultimately inspire Martin Luther to protest the practice, leading to the development of Protestantism.

crucifix fresco adorning the top of the structure. This part of the church was “God’s alone, too lofty for man to walk there.”⁷³ Below, there was the monks’ choir and sanctuary; it was to be inhabited by the religiously dedicated but mortal members of the church. Finally, there was an “arcaded lower church” that surrounded a crypt where pilgrims could come to pay homage to the entombed saint.⁷⁴ The monks and lay were separate but, by the building’s design, their activities were in full view of one another. As a result, neither group had anything that could be considered privacy. The monks remained silent and saw their discipline and piety as a modeled way of existence for the lay. However, this was important beyond the monks’ inspirational behavior, since new members needed to be attracted to the church in order to sustain it; in essence, the behavior of the monks who were in full view of the laity was meant to serve as a recruiting tool.

This cautious relationship between the monks and laity ultimately shapes the structure of the church itself. It was commonly believed that the artistic creations that adorned the monastery—like frescos, for example—were the responsibility of the monks who resided there. Furthermore, it was often believed that the monks were responsible for the creation of the structure of their own monastery. Throughout the twentieth century, historical scholarship has gone to great lengths to attribute certain creative acts, like book making, to monks where that credit was due. This same scholarship has also shown that the laity was full

⁷³ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 122.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

of talented craftsmen and professional masons who in actuality are responsible for a large part of what we now consider monastic culture.⁷⁵ Monks did not try to claim credit for these acts. The twelfth-century German monk, Theophilus, generated a manuscript demonstrating various art processes, like “illuminating books, making glass vessels and stained glass, and creating ornaments in metal.”⁷⁶ In the manuscript, he identifies the careful practice of a skill as a gift from God. And he goes on to note that, much in the spirit of the Gospel parable where the servant must repay his master with interest, if a craftsman does not practice his gift he is liable to God’s judgment.⁷⁷ In this way, Theophilus has rendered the practice of craft as a divine gift that belongs in a spiritual setting.⁷⁸ As the craftsman and masons practice their gift in the creation of the monasteries and churches, they have an elevated role in society; this role is certainly different from monks, but it is not independent from them. Conversely, the monks are not independent from the craftsman, making the monks increasingly apart of an earthly community.

While it should now be clear that life in the cloister was not walled off from life outside of it, it should also be noted that life inside the cloister was not as isolated as it might seem amongst the monks. It was mentioned earlier that monks were trained to read and write and that reading was an embodied activity.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 134-135.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 137.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 138.

⁷⁸ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 138-139.

Monks were directed to be respectful of their fellow clergy by choosing appropriate times to read. And despite the commands for silence, monks did still manage to develop friendships between one another. This friendship was cultivated through letter writing and helped form a “culture of community.”⁷⁹

As an example, consider the writings of Aelred of Rievaulx, a twelfth century monk. Aelred writes of taking great pleasure at being with his friends when he was younger until he discovered the Scriptures and was filled with the realization that “there was more to life than larking around with one’s mates.”⁸⁰ Here, Aelred’s conception of friendship shifts so that it becomes less a relationship between two people and more of a relationship between three. He writes to Ivo, another monk, “Here am I and here are you and I hope that Christ will make a third.”⁸¹ Through these letters it becomes apparent that interpersonal companionship here on earth can gain a spiritual characteristic when properly framed. The community that is formed in these friendships is paradoxical in that they begin as small, inward looking groups and at the same time strive to be a “microcosm of the world of eternity and therefore in the largest sense outward-looking.”⁸² They are searching for the intersections of spirituality and the material world. Furthermore, their understanding of the spiritual world as found in the

⁷⁹ G. R. Evans, “The Meaning of Monastic Culture: Anselm and His Contemporaries,” in *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2007). 78.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 78.

⁸¹ Aelred in Ibid. 78.

⁸² Ibid. 85

scriptures colors their perception of the material world. The emphasis of these communities to create something spiritual here on earth, even if it is an insufficient reference to the eternal, is an intellectual process shaped by connections between people and not of sole isolation.

Recall from the previous sections on Platonic creativity that creativity in the form of inspiration had the characteristics of both divinity and madness. Also recall that this creativity was often attributed to the sole individual. The experience in the monastery diverges from this last point. It is clear that at its height, collaboration was both necessary and anonymous in the creative works of monks. All works were in the service of God. And while this characteristic makes monastic creativity different from Platonic creativity, a monastic creativity could be argued that it retains the ability to be both divine and mad. The divinity of the creative act is not in doubt, summarized succinctly by Aelred above: "Here am I and here are you and I hope that Christ will make a third." However, to characterize these activities as a form of madness may appear as a step too far for readers of a certain disposition. Instead, it can be safely said that, at the very least, religious piety could cause madness to foment. Plenary indulgences, as mentioned above, provide one example of this madness in action. But an even more drastic is the story of the Templar monks, who were once a Benedictine Order before becoming Middle-Age crusaders who conquered Jerusalem in the

twelfth century.⁸³ The Templar Order provided a steady stream of soldiers who would not be distracted “by thoughts of personal ambition and gain;”⁸⁴ instead they would fight as anonymous martyrs in the name of Christ. Bernard of Clairvaux, “chief propagandist and recruiting agent for the Second Crusade”, propagated this violent shift.⁸⁵ In the same manner that monks would translate “worldly wisdom” and recapture it into their own dogma as addressed above, Bernard took Paul’s epistles and reworked Paul’s military metaphors into advocacy for violence in Christ’s name.⁸⁶ That the monastery could now be both a meaningful part of a community and a war machine would prove problematic as public dissent built against the church.

Leading up to the Reformation, various monasteries began to feel a strain in numbers and influence.⁸⁷ While there are several reasons for this, we can note the most prominent ones. There was mention of the economic and community support needed to sustain the monastery previously in this chapter. The ebbing of economic support combined with fiscal mismanagement in the monastery led

⁸³ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades Vol. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1997). 157.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 158.

⁸⁵ Christopher Tyerman, *The Crusades : A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 65.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 65-66.

⁸⁷ Christopher Brooke’s book charts monastic culture right up to his books publication in 2003. He makes a compelling but brief connection between the monastic culture in the twelfth century and its relationship with the intellectual current of the time to contemporary monastic society. Obviously no one knows if this will hold true but it is a good reminder that Christianity is still vibrant in our global society and monastic culture has been subject to an ebb and flow of influence since the fourth century CE. In short, we are about to stop our progress forward with the monks but this does not mean the monk’s progress stopped.

to monasteries letting in smaller and smaller amounts of monks.⁸⁸ As a result of these fiscal constraints, monasteries were forced to cap their numbers.

Additionally, when the bubonic plague swept through Europe, it killed off so many townspeople that the economic base of a community was ravaged, furthering the fiscal troubles of monasteries.⁸⁹ Another cause for the diminished stature of the monastery can be found as a result of the effects of Reformation. The Reformation's negative influence in England and other parts of Europe on the economic support of the Catholic Church depleted both financial support *and* social standing of the monastery in the community.⁹⁰

There is one other underlying current in the monastery that made this ebb of influence possible in the monastery: the loss of community inside the walls of the monastery itself. Simply put, monks shifted toward more individualistic pursuits in the later thirteenth century and early fourteenth century. Benedictine life was dedicated to the collective expression of spirit but it became so harsh in its execution that more and more monks sought refuge for silent meditation.⁹¹ These changes were reflected in the construction of the monastery, as individual chambers replaced the group dormitory. Additionally monks began to receive cash allowances that allowed for purchases of books and clothes, which would

⁸⁸ C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism : Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London; New York: Longman, 1989). 274.

⁸⁹ Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*. 282

⁹⁰ Ibid. 283-284.

⁹¹ Ibid. 282.

have been unheard of Carolingian time periods.⁹² These changes were even reflected in the surrounding communities where new economies replaced the agrarian collective economy. Lay attitudes about religion and spirituality became more internal and less outwardly demonstrative.⁹³ Collectively, these shifts undermine and ultimately redefine what monasticism and ascetic life meant. The self-made man, free to make his own choices and who will succeed (or not) dependent upon his own efforts begins here. Intertwined with this, and most importantly for this dissertation, is the idea that an individual could now, again, be solely responsible for his own creativity, which is not entirely dissimilar from the spirit of Greek creativity. This tension between the creative individual and the creative group will remain as we proceed in this chapter into the beginnings of the Scientific Revolution in the next section.

Scientific Creativity and Copernicus

To this point in this chapter we have seen two forms of historical creativity that maintain a decidedly masculine cast. In the first, through Plato, we saw creativity as associated with an individual that the muses would work through. Furthermore, the particular type of creativity usually associated with the arts was connected to madness. In the second form, we saw creativity as associated with the Christian God. This creativity occurred in groups of men in monasteries who

⁹² Ibid. 276.

⁹³ Ibid. 282.

saw their work positioning themselves as a bridge between heaven and earth. We have also seen that, as the economy of Europe shifted, monasteries lost their popularity and moved toward solely individual acts of creativity. In many ways, this historical move sets the stage for the individual creativity associated with the Scientific Revolution. But just as creativity in the monastery cannot be associated with the group, creativity through the Scientific Revolution cannot be solely attributed to the individual. The remaining sections of this chapter aim to demonstrate how creativity in the earliest stages of the Scientific Revolution functioned while remaining focused on creativity's masculine cast.

The physician, lawyer and church administrator Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) is credited with disproving Ptolemy's concept of a geocentric universe and replacing it with a heliocentric model.⁹⁴ Additionally, math and astronomy were avid pastimes for Copernicus.⁹⁵ Truth be told, Aristarchus of Samos (ca. 310-230 BCE), the Greek philosopher and astronomer, had been playing around with the idea long before it reached the Fifteenth-century.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the name most often associated with pinning the Sun at the center of our universe was Copernicus. With this move, Copernicus becomes a key

⁹⁴ Sheila Rabin, "Nicolaus Copernicus," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2010). Copernicus is roundly considered to be the father of the Scientific Revolution and the shift to less godly understandings of our world. In the historical Christian traditions this also marks the beginning of discoveries being credited to an individual rather than a collective. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galilean approaches to astronomy and their discoveries are attributed to them and them alone...with exceptions.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Al Van Helden, "The Galileo Project I Science I Johannes Kepler," Rice University, <http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/kepler.html>.

historical figure for the Scientific Revolution; he is a scientist that will engender respect and inspiration to others. To see how creativity in the Scientific Revolution worked in its infancy, both Copernicus' discovery and the cultural context around his work prove meaningful.

The need for a new model of charting the stars was great for (at least) three reasons. First, fifteenth century scientists were reviewing and translating the work of ancient Greek astronomers and in the translations, they found some facts to be wanting. The ancient tables that were supposed to predict astronomical phenomenon like eclipses were proving not to be accurate.⁹⁷ Second, as the Portuguese and Spanish sailors were heading out into uncharted territory where land would not be visible for weeks on end, they became wholly dependent on consistent astronomical readings for navigation guidance.⁹⁸ Finally, the calendar first proposed by Julius Caesar was also found to be inaccurate. Christians had been using Easter's proximity to the equinox to set their calendars and found themselves as many as ten days off when planning religious holidays. It was essential that these disparities be corrected and "Europeans turned to astronomers" to help recognize and alter historical missteps.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Rabin, "Nicolaus Copernicus."

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Helden, "The Galileo Project | Science | Johannes Kepler."

There is a definitive cultural push in Europe to get the charting of the stars correct in institutions of higher education, specifically in the Italian universities where Copernicus spent a decade of study. One of the degrees that Copernicus pursued (but apparently didn't complete) was a degree in medicine. A common practice at the time was that of "astrological medicine." This type of medical practice varies from what we might consider conventional medicine in four ways: first, an individual's birth sign or sign under which they were conceived might play some bearing into the medical treatment; second, the treatment would need to varied dependent on differing celestial conditions; third, there were associated critical days in illness with differing conditions like the phases of the moon; and finally fourth, celestial events were used to predict and explain epidemics.¹⁰⁰ Given Copernicus' stature as both a church official and nephew of a bishop there is further evidence that even if the Catholic Church did not explicitly support this conflation of astrology and medicine, it was not actively discouraged.¹⁰¹ With his income from being a church official and an interest in basic astronomy supported by his medical degree, Copernicus became an active and persistent astronomer as a hobby.

Copernicus' most influential astronomical work was not published until he was on his deathbed, although he had been working on the book for years.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Rabin, "Nicolaus Copernicus."

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The English translation of the title, *On the Revolutions*, details a heliocentric solar system with seven planets orbiting the sun in a perfect circle and the Earth making one complete rotation of the star per year.¹⁰³ Its reception was something of a paradox. Everyone who read it immediately rejected the main thesis of the book—the heliocentric solar system; but the research and the depth of the book and its general observations on the nature of the stars were impressive to note, even if the majority of its readers found the main thesis to be implausible.¹⁰⁴ It stimulated significant response and discussion amongst a variety of astronomers, but its full effects would not be felt for over a generation, as we shall see below.

Creating Space for Kepler and Galileo

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) was theologically inclined at the beginning of his life but eventually shifted his focus to mathematics and theoretical creativity as his studies progressed.¹⁰⁵ While he is most predominantly known for his astronomical work and his strident defense of Copernicus in our present time, he was never actually employed as an astronomer in his lifetime. His primary vocation was mathematics, but he also was a cartographer; subsuming all of these activities was his devout faith in God, which he practiced as a Lutheran.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Helden, "The Galileo Project I Science I Johannes Kepler."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Daniel A. Di Liscia, "Johannes Kepler," (2011, Edward N. Zalta (ed.)).

¹⁰⁶ At the risk of being too brief here: the shift from Catholicism to Lutheranism was drastic. Luther's translation of the Bible into vernacular German made it much more accessible to the lay

His scientific discoveries became the foundation of optics—he understood the anatomy of the eye—and through years of experimentation and failure, he was able to discern the path of the planets around the sun. He also was a dedicated letter writer and apparently used the form to engage everyone he found interesting included his old astronomy professor (who would scold Kepler for bringing physics and astronomy together) and, most importantly, Galileo.¹⁰⁷ Unlike Copernicus, who died holding the finally published manuscript that was his crowning achievement, Kepler's publisher destroyed 300 of the thousand printed editions of his *Rudolphine Tables* because they were considered too difficult for the target audience.¹⁰⁸ Kepler died alone, abandoned by the Lutheran church over disagreements over interpretation of the scriptures, hopelessly pursuing moneys owed to him.¹⁰⁹ His burial site remains unknown, but we do know his planned tombstone inscription: "I measured the skies, now the shadows I measure. Sky-bound was the mind, earth-bound the body rests."¹¹⁰

The more renowned scientist historically is Galileo Galilei (1564–1642).

population. That larger groups of people could now read the Bible certainly had an effect of destabilization on the Catholic Church. Luther upended the hierarchy and in the process created a space or permission for Kepler to pursue his work. It was because of Lutheranism that Kepler never had to give much thought to the possibility of being excommunicated from an organization like the Catholic Church. While we work to separate science from religion in our modern time, Kepler's science was more possible *because* of his religion. And yet, as we see below, Kepler's refusal to bend on the freeness of the scripture will eventually cause the Lutheran church to denounce him.

¹⁰⁷ Dave Sobel, "Searching Heaven and Earth for the Real Johannes Kepler I Discovermagazine.Com," *Discover*, Sunday, October 5, 2008 2008.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ David Love, "Who Was Johannes Kepler?," *Astronomy & Geophysics* 50, no. 6 (2009).

His father was a court musician who moved his family to Florence when Galileo was a boy. While in Florence, he began his initial studies to become a priest before attending the University of Pisa to study medicine. He never completed his degree but instead studied mathematics in collaboration with a member of the Tuscan Court. He never obtained a degree but his mathematical prowess led him to professorships and chair positions in mathematics with different universities.¹¹¹ One of the common traits between Kepler, Copernicus and Galileo was that astronomy was never their dominant mode of income. Galileo's requested that his title be "Philosopher and Mathematician" while he was employed at the court of the Medici in 1611.¹¹² His reasoning was that he wanted a title that reflected the breadth and seriousness of his interests rather than be thought of one-dimensionally.¹¹³ The multifaceted interests and ambitions of Galileo stand in stark contrast to the more myopic Kepler. Most famously, and slightly inaccurately,¹¹⁴ the devoutly religious Galileo was excommunicated from the Catholic Church at the end of his life for his refusal to recant the publication of his *Dialogues Concerning the Two Great World Systems*, which trumpeted the

¹¹¹ Peter Machamer, "Galileo Galilei," (2005, Edward N. Zalta (ed.)).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ J. L. Heilbron, *Galileo* (Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). He was a true Renaissance man. His hobbies included literary criticism and poetry (225).

¹¹⁴ This is the dominant popular narrative of Galileo's history but, in actuality, the story is more complex. To sum it up quickly, Galileo's work, while challenging to the church, could still be read with special papal permission. Pope Urban VIII (a college friend of Galileo's) was upset with the rampant publishing of Galileo's work and his general boisterous nature in not deferring to Urban's wishes (in Heilbron, 345-65). Over time, the story has ossified into the Church's prohibition against science.

Copernican theory of a heliocentric solar system.¹¹⁵

It is the commonality of belief in Copernicus that puts Kepler and Galileo in contact with each other. Kepler had given a music teacher, Paul Homberg, two copies of his early book *Mysterium Cosmographicum* to take back to Italy. Homberg must have known Galileo and thought he might be interested in this stranger's work. Galileo wrote the first letter thanking Kepler for publishing the book, of which he had only had time to read the preface, and to remark that he was heartened to find another lover of Copernicus. "I've written out many reasons for [supporting Copernicus' theory] and many responses to reasons against it," Galileo wrote, "which I have dared not publish as I've been deterred by the fate of our master Copernicus."¹¹⁶ Kepler wrote back immediately to support and encourage Galileo but Galileo did not respond. The dominant reason for not responding to Galileo's mind was that Kepler was a Lutheran and a former student of the mathematician Michael Mästlin, whose books had all been banned by the Catholic Church.¹¹⁷ Kepler wanted an inroad for his work into Italy and believed strongly that the truth present in his work on Copernicus was undeniable by any rational thinker.¹¹⁸ Kepler's goal was for the two of them to address the academics in science rather than the unlearned individual; his thoughtful plan was that if the intellectually powerful could be convinced, the unscholarly would

¹¹⁵ Machamer, "Galileo Galilei."

¹¹⁶ Heilbron, *Galileo*. 113.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Aviva Rothman, "Forms of Persuasion: Kepler, Galileo, and the Dissemination of Copernicanism," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 40, no. 4 (2009). 404.

follow.¹¹⁹ The truth of Copernicus' work was undeniable to Kepler's mind, why pretend otherwise?

Three things should remain apparent here. The first is that Kepler sees himself as doing God's work by bringing the sophistication of his creation to light, a pursuit of truth that would make Plato proud. His earliest desires were to be a Lutheran minister, which were only interrupted by recognition of his mathematical prowess.¹²⁰ As the Catholic Church was persecuting Galileo late in his life, Kepler wrote in support of his fellow scientist. He acknowledged his Lutheran faith but noted his personal attachment to Catholic doctrine while quoting "Ecclesiastes 3:11 in which 'God had given over the world to the disputes of men'."¹²¹ Despite his best efforts, his words fell on deaf ears. Which brings us to the second point, Kepler was so confident in his work he believed the truth of it would influence all readers. This is apparent first in his letters to Galileo where he writes, "since [the claims of Copernican theory] are true why should they not be forced upon [others] as irrefutable?"¹²² And it is also apparent when he was seeking financial support for his work from various by trumpeting the novelty of his own work while saying that, "Copernican theory, which formed the foundation of his text, was accepted by all those with *real expertise*, and thus was neither dangerous nor

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 405.

¹²⁰ Love, "Who Was Johannes Kepler?." 15.

¹²¹ Michel-Pierre Lerner, "'Copernicus Is Not Susceptible to Compromise': New Light on Galileo, Kepler and Ingoli," *Studies in History & Philosophy of Science Part A* 29A, no. 4 (1998). 672.

¹²² Rothman, "Forms of Persuasion: Kepler, Galileo, and the Dissemination of Copernicanism." 406.

controversial.”¹²³ Thirdly, despite Kepler’s perceived confidence, he struggled to convince people of his correctness and seems to need a colleague to validate his work; his work could be viewed as madness in the face of popular opinion. Galileo does not write to Kepler again for thirteen years and when he does, Kepler offers his public support of Galileo’s work. When asked his opinion of Galileo by another mathematician, Kepler’s immediate response is, “we are both Copernicans; like rejoices with like.”¹²⁴

Galileo’s work was appealing to Kepler for several reasons but it is Galileo’s invention and use of the telescope that truly makes his work irresistible. In short, Galileo was able to observe some of the behaviors in astronomy through the creative invention of the telescope. Kepler, never too proud to isolate himself in scientific pursuits, deeply appreciated Galileo’s invention. Kepler writes, “Should I, dim-sighted, disparage someone with keen sight? Or someone equipped with optical instruments, while I myself, bare, lack this equipment?” By writing this, Kepler further presents Galileo’s discovery as unassailable as well as utilizing the discovery as proof of Kepler’s own ideas.¹²⁵

That Galileo’s invention of the high-powered telescope is a uniquely creative act is not in doubt, but it is not immediately judged to be an obvious

¹²³ Ibid. 407. Emphasis added.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 408.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 409.

moral (or ethical) good.¹²⁶ A Spanish priest, Benito Arias Montana, writing in 1575 referred to a passage in the Bible from Luke 4:5 where Jesus is taken to the mountain top and is shown all the kingdoms of the world in a brief period as the basis to object to perspective, optical art, and any instrument that would bring “very distant objects very exactly before the eyes.”¹²⁷ It is apparent that there is a religious climate that will not always be welcoming of scientific invention. When Galileo is first informed about the existence of a Dutch eyeglass, he takes little interest in it, perhaps because it was framed as the “Devil’s” device.¹²⁸ Despite the potential for moral quandary, Galileo eventually takes interest in this “devil’s” device, which magnified anything it was pointed at by a factor of two or three, and was sold only by traveling salesman.¹²⁹ Ultimately, Galileo used information gathered second hand, along with his understanding of optics, to make an initial version of the telescope that could magnify by a factor of nine.¹³⁰

Galileo found himself in the fortunate and precarious position of having a new technology, potentially at odds with the morals of the church, and a market advantage over any Dutch invention. Instead of choosing the private market, Galileo, in counsel with a religious advisor Paolo Sarpi, offered his invention to

¹²⁶ In the previous chapter I addressed George Kubler’s *The Shape of Time*. In this book, Kubler brings up the idea of a repeater signal, meaning that an object or artwork acquires value dependent upon how it is treated as time moves forward chronologically. Important inventions become more important as time goes forward. Can the same be said for the ethics of an invention? I address this in part in Chapter 6.

¹²⁷ Heilbron, *Galileo*. 148.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 149.

the government of Venice.¹³¹ This appeared to be the most careful path to getting the invention into other's hands while at the same time avoiding the full force of the Catholic Church. In a letter Galileo wrote, "[I present] with every affection for your Lordship as one of the fruits of the science that he has professed at the university for 17 years, with the hope of being able to offer you better [spyglasses] in the future, if it pleases God and Your Lordship."¹³² In exchange for allowing the Venetian admirals and generals sole proprietorship of the telescope, Galileo was granted a raise and tenure at the University of Padua for life. With this newfound freedom, Galileo turned the more powerful telescope he had been working on, with a magnifying power by a factor of 20, toward the moon to observe its phases and create detailed renderings of it for other scientists and mathematicians.¹³³ Shortly thereafter, he began detailing observations about Saturn and Venus, which he would encode as anagrams in letters to Kepler. Kepler, after all, was heartened to have the support of a fellow scientist with a significant technology capable of verifying both Copernicus' and his own theories.

Kepler's mistranslations of Galileo's anagrams that are presented in the fragment before this chapter make for an intriguing story but they also seem to put Galileo in the position of being more knowledgeable than Kepler. This is simply not true. His mathematical and astronomical prowess allowed him to

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. 149.

¹³³ Ibid. 150-152.

predict the first observable transits of Venus and Mercury before they came to be verified after his death.¹³⁴ It is in Kepler's methodical, ascetic practice that we see the result of a process that appears to predict the future. And recall that Kepler was the diligent letter writer too. He reached out to Galileo and pushed him to be more assertive with his findings. He also wrote letters detailing not only the science he was working on but addressing the deaths of his children and his struggle to flee religious persecution. It is in these letters that you get a humanized Kepler and not a monolithic scientist. He, in turn, humanizes Galileo, particularly when he advocates for his fellow scientist with the scripture in hopes of protecting Galileo from persecution. Kepler's actions demonstrate humility for Christians that would follow him in this world because his writing is peppered with his constant thanks to God for his insights.¹³⁵ At the same time, he generates respect from atheists for not invoking God's name to get him out of a scientific problem.¹³⁶ More than anything, readers of these letters can see that Kepler was not toiling away on his own. What would be the point of toiling away on an issue by yourself when there was someone in the world who could push your insights farther than you thought possible?

¹³⁴ Sobel, "Searching Heaven and Earth for the Real Johannes Kepler | Discovermagazine.Com."

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Creativity, Together

Here we conclude this chapter by reflecting again on that notion from Aelred—"here am I and here are you and I hope that Christ will make a third"—we see the power of reaching out to another in the hope of producing unintended (positive) consequences. Several historical realizations about creativity in Western creativity come to light. First, whether creativity comes from a muse, like in Ancient Greece, or from prior creative work, like Kepler utilizing Copernicus, even if creativity is attributed to one person, that person is building on a foundation for which they are not solely responsible. Second, the work done in the service of creativity is not cavalier; ascetic focus has historically been about a dogged pursuit of an idea. Finally individual recognition of creativity is misleading. It must be through connections with others that true creativity is realized. The connection, at its most generative, produces something that neither can anticipate. In this case, Aelred's "third" can be God or a muse if you are so inclined, but if you are of another disposition, you can simply call it humility.

Creative humility is characterized by ascetic focus and is inextricable from the social connections that surround it. Above all, creative humility is the realization that a fantastical creative act might not unveil its possibility until the perpetrators of that act are long gone. As a result of this, in the moment, unfortunately, creativity may even appear like madness. A masculine creativity holds all this, and more. It is in this space that creativity with its masculine cast

holds significant promise. At the same time, it holds a significant silence. If we are to find any sort of truth in creativity, this silence must be highlighted too.

Fragment: Silence

I was in the Tate Modern shortly after it opened in 2000. Formerly Bankside Power Station, the structure was built to power the reconstruction of London after World War II. The space sat dormant for almost 15 years before the idea was conceived to revive it as a contemporary art space. While the structure of the building remains mostly the same, the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron helped subtly refine it to be an example of a modern architecture.¹

I have a hard time imagining visitors not being a bit awed when they enter Turbine Hall for the first time. In 2000, the space felt both elegant and colossal to me. It wasn't a white cube—it felt far too proletariat for that—but it inspired the same sense I had when visiting the cathedrals of Western Europe. Humans built that. And while one might wander the landscape of Europe and notice the still affected infrastructure from two massive and destructive World Wars, this building, read rosily against this destruction, could symbolize a society's will to regenerate itself in the face of all that suffering.

¹ "Archive Journeys: Tate History I the Buildings, Tate Modern, Architecture I Tate," TATE Archives, http://www2.tate.org.uk/archivejourneys/historyhtml/bld_mod_architecture.htm.

A different feeling washed over me a few years later when visiting the Contemporary Art Museum in Saint Louis. I walked around the corner and there were some shoes, mostly women's I believe, inserted into the walls, hidden in niches covered by a thin translucent material. It was completely indistinguishable where the wall stopped and the piece started. As I moved a little closer to the piece, the translucent material looked more like dried skin. This observation was reinforced when I noticed the material was stitched into the wall with what appeared to be medical sutures. The stitches retained the touch of the human hand, as they were clean but not perfect. The sense of loss was profound as I looked at this wall. These were *someone's* shoes. And that person was gone. I had read about Doris Salcedo's work before, but before this point I had never seen it in person. In the catalogues and contemporary art history books it looked macabre but captivating, like a strange cocktail of morbidity and skillful flourishes. In person, in the *flesh*, I felt different. That wall was a sarcophagus and I was overwhelmed with sadness.

So, in a way it makes sense that Salcedo cracked the floor of the great modernist Turbine Hall. The piece was installed in the foreboding entrance of the Tate Modern, from October 9, 2007 through April 6, 2008. It started as a simple crack, something that would go unnoticed by most visitors, and grows into a larger split, echoing the image of an earthquake fracturing the space. The viewer is given no visual clue that this is not real and the artist refused to discuss how it

was constructed. The artist uses “Shibboleth” as a title for her installation to deal with “addressing [the] long legacy of racism and colonialism that underlies the modern world.”² In this light, the installation attempts to address the voices that have been silenced in our supposed march towards progress. Silence, and how we create silence, is worth probing a little more here.

In her introduction to her monograph on Salcedo, Mieke Bal writes of silence and two understandings of the term. First, is the silence of “things we do not understand, things we cannot know.”³ For Bal, who utilizes Wittgenstein here, this silence is a humbling of oneself as admitting limitations. The second type of silencing is perhaps more disturbing; it is characterized as a forced silence, a silence “which makes itself invisible.”⁴ Paradoxically, this silence remains full, which is best understood by Bal’s lovely phrase describing the affect of Salcedo’s work on the viewer: “To make audible in the mouth whereof one cannot speak.”⁵ This can lead the viewer to a type of understanding in silence where the viewer recognizes his or her limitations *and* does not seek to limit the voice of others. Moreover, the viewer retains a capacity to be moved.

What is most interesting to me about the work is how that silence completely changed how I experienced Turbine Hall. Before, I only wanted to

² “The Unilever Series: Doris Salcedo: Shibboleth,” (2008), <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-doris-salcedo-shibboleth>.

³ Mieke Bal, *Of What One Cannot Speak : Doris Salcedo's Political Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). 28

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

stare upwards in the space and marvel; now, for a period of time, every visitor was drawn to examine the ground. The piece is now long-finished and the floor has been filled in with concrete, but there remains a scar where that crack once was. And of course it's trite, but it's also true: things aren't ever as simple as they seem.

Chapter 5: On Birth, and Embodied Creativity

In 1952 John Cage composed silence. Another way of saying this would be to note that Cage's famous artwork *4' 33"* was performed by pianist David Tudor; in the piece the pianist was directed to make no *intentional* sounds for four minutes and thirty-three seconds.¹ The word "intentional" is key here because from our present state of increased, Cage-inspired awareness, *of course* there would be ambient noise in the space. This was not a one-off performance; the piece is still performed from time to time by both pianists and orchestras. Often in performances of the piece, time will be kept with a stopwatch, the pages of the score will turn, and the audience breathes; *all* of this will make sound.

In writing about the artwork, Lewis Hyde references another experience Cage had months earlier, suggesting that Cage had participated in an event that inspired his creation of the work. Here is Hyde:

The same year the piece was written, 1952, Cage had a chance to visit an anechoic chamber at Harvard University, a room so fully padded that it was said to be absolutely silent. Alone in the room, Cage was surprised to hear two sounds, one high, one low; the technicians told him these were the sounds of his nervous system and his circulating blood. At that point

¹ "Moma | There Will Never Be Silence: Scoring John Cage's *4'33"*," <http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1421>.

he realized that there is no such thing as silence, there is only the sound we intend and sound we do not intend.²

Hyde rightly reminds his reader of the lesson that Cage drew from being in that anechoic chamber by highlighting the idea of unintentional sounds, but this experience is worth pondering further. First, no matter how alone and how quiet a person wishes their space to be, their body is whirring along like mad, pumping out sound that goes unobserved unless they are in a highly controlled environment. And while that point is itself worth deep consideration, the fact that if you *can* hear you *must* hear is the point I want to carry forward. What I mean is if a human possesses a sense of hearing, this human cannot help but hear. This does not mean that the listener perceives *exactly* what they are hearing (remember Cage heard the two sounds but couldn't identify them), only that some sound is transmitted and received. Now, it can certainly be argued that we have some control over the sounds we hear; we could, for example, alter the intensity of sound by muffling our ears in some way; or we could avoid certain environments like a concert hall if we are looking to avoid a specific type of sound; but, try as we might, we cannot totally ignore sound. Therefore, one way to consider sound would be to say that we are subjected to it.

² Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010). 149

Hearing and Listening

Before arriving at the outline of this chapter, let us consider what it might mean to be subjected by sound; additionally, the long shadow that masculinity casts over creativity in the West must be briefly addressed. In the previous chapter as part of the examination of the masculine cast to creativity I referenced Galileo's invention of the telescope. Recall that because the telescope brought distant objects into close proximity, it was given the moniker "the devil's eyepiece," calling the very morality of the object into question. Despite this characterization, the telescope becomes an undoubtedly important invention in the Scientific Revolution and, perhaps, it is for this reason that the observable in science becomes so tied to vision. But vision dictates a particular orientation of the body as noted by Don Ihde in his groundbreaking book on sound:

Within the visual field, focus displays itself as a central vision within the field. To turn my focus, I turn my eyes, my head, or my whole body. The visual field, moreover, displays itself with a definite *forward oriented* directionality. It lies constantly before me, in front of me, and there it is fixed. As a field relative to my body it is *immobile* in relation to the position of my eyes, which "open" toward the World.³

If we were to say that we are subjected to our own vision, we imply that we are forced to turn and focus in a specific "forward oriented" direction. Vision is always in front of us, and dominant; because of its overt influence in the Scientific

³ Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice : Phenomenologies of Sound* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). 75.

Revolution we could describe vision as a masculine sense.

Contrast this with sound, of which Ihde describes:

[T]he auditory field as *a shape* does not appear so restricted to a forward orientation. As *a field-shape* I may hear all around me, or, as a field-shape, sound *surrounds* me in my embodied positionality...In the shape of the auditory field, as a surrounding thing, the field-shape “exceeds” that of the field-shape of sight.⁴

The auditory field surrounds us; we are sensitized to pick up sounds from any direction. What’s more, with focus, we can begin to describe the directionality from where the sound comes. Ihde’s point here is accurate but does not capture its full strength until we pair it with Cage’s experience above. Sound surrounds us *and* comes from within us. Because so much attention has been given to vision from the Scientific Revolution forward, sound, until more recently, appears ironically to have been silenced. For this reason, sound can be described as a feminine sense. While the intention of this chapter is to pursue a feminist reading of creativity, it is also the intention to utilize a feminist reading of creativity to expand our sense of creativity beyond any easy duality. Not sound, but sound *and* vision *and* the body. Not easily feminine or masculine, but feminine *and* masculine embodied, each with their own force.

In the above example of Cage in the anechoic chamber our question then becomes, “How could we best describe the embodied nature of Cage’s act?”

⁴ Ibid.

Was Cage *hearing* his own body or was he *listening*? A helpful parsing of the terms is done by Jean-Luc Nancy in his book, *Listening*:

If “to hear” is to understand the sense (either in the so-called figurative sense, or in the so-called proper sense: to hear a siren, a bird, or a drum is already each time to understand at least the rough outline of a situation, a context if not a text), to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible.⁵

Listening probes and strives to recognize the possibility, but it does so with a nod towards agency, as it acknowledges that we can strain “toward a possible meaning.” Listening in this framework gives primacy to the idea that we have the ability to experience something in an embodied way. An embodied creativity deserves its own critical elaboration in the light of the overly masculine cast of the previous chapter, especially when I have only hinted at the full historical weight a masculine cast of creativity carries.

The Male Cast of Creativity

This idea of being subjected to sound becomes powerful when we look at an argument presented by Leo Steinberg on historical representations of the impregnation of the Virgin Mary.⁶ Before laying out Steinberg’s argument in

⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007). 20.

⁶ Leo Steinberg, “How Shall This Be?” Reflections on Filippo Lippi’s “Annunciation” In London, Part I,” *Artibus et Historiae* 8, no. 16 (1987).

greater detail here, some, perhaps obvious, historical precedence is required. I have shown in the previous chapter that, in the lead up to the Scientific revolution, creativity, often associated in monasteries as the work of a collective, began to trend towards being identified with the individual. As the Scientific Revolution gained momentum, it brought with it an idea that creativity was the work of an individual genius; at the same time, somewhat paradoxically, the relationship between Kepler and Galileo demonstrated the interdependence of scientists in the infancy of the Scientific Revolution, especially in the face of the ever-present threat of religious persecution. However, in reflecting back on this chapter, there is a notable exclusion in my argument: I never used any examples of women. I attribute this, in part, to the largely patriarchal cast over creativity in Western culture. In their "History of Research on Creativity," psychologists Robert Albert and Mark Runco illustrate the concept of genius, which precedes creativity, and show that genius is, in most known historical cases, endowed to men.⁷

In illuminating the understanding of creativity in pre-Christian times, Albert and Runco show genius as linked with "mystical powers of protection and good fortune" only to have this characterization later complicated by Greek thinking in two ways. First, by placing the emphasis of genius on an individual's "guiding spirit," ancient Greek conceptions of genius become "mundane

⁷ Albert and Runco, "A History of Research on Creativity."

and...progressively associated with an individual's abilities and appetites."⁸

Second, as it develops in ancient Greece—shown in the previous chapter through Plato—creativity takes on a social value that gets associated with madness and “frenzied inspiration.”⁹ The conception of genius gains an additional characteristic through the chronological progression of Roman culture; now, creativity is seen as illustrative of man's power and that this could be passed onto “*his* children.”¹⁰ Through this lens, the final statement of Albert and Runco's historical characterization of creativity gains additional importance: “At this point creativity was a male capacity. Giving birth was the sole exception.”¹¹

To simply say that giving birth is the sole creative capacity for females would be a denial of the power in this act. For one, the proliferation of the human species is obviously *the* key component of our historical development, a development that literally gives form to the passing along of the characteristics of genius in these historical characterizations. But it is true that creativity has maintained its overtly masculine characteristics in human beings. A rejoinder might be issued here asking what gender a muse is, as the muse may be represented as a female form; but she is otherworldly and, at best, works through a vessel that would be male. What can we learn, then, when we look at creativity through a distinctly human and feminine point of view? What can we learn by

⁸ Ibid. 18.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.

¹¹ Ibid.

putting the focus of our attention on the sole historical exception for creativity in women: giving birth? What otherwise dormant understandings of creativity come into our presence? And what can this show us about *the beginnings* of creativity that would extend beyond a gender binary?

The remainder of this chapter considers these questions for Westernized conceptions of creativity through three specific examples. First, I use Steinberg's art historical examination of the Annunciation as a jumping off point for looking at the Eve/Mary dichotomy as presented in the Bible and Christian feminist scholarship. The purpose is to give a sense of the patriarchal ideology women have to operate against in exercising their creativity. I also argue that glimpses of human agency appear in both the stories of Mary and Eve that still carry forward to this day. Eve's punishment for her famous transgression also plays a role in this first example, as it is her sentence that in part gives creativity its characteristic as an embodied experience. My second example utilizes the works of Virginia Woolf, particularly *A Room of One's Own*, to understand Woolf's argument for physical and social structures that would support women's creativity. In short, Woolf is claiming privacy and economic support free of obligations as necessary for women who seek creativity. Along with this claim, Woolf continues to stress the embodied activity of creativity in several ways that put the creative act in the human form alone. Finally, my third example comes through the work of the political philosopher Hannah Arendt. Again, birth is a key

component, but this time I substitute birth with Arendt's concept of *natality*, which she utilizes to demonstrate potentiality in human action and beginnings. By putting the emphasis on creativity as beginning, the act of creativity—that is, the process of creativity—is given primacy, not its reception. It is here that creativity again assumes the character of sound but it is a sound that we *listen* to, instead of simply hear, which makes this idea of creativity embodied. And while we have agency in this embodiment, we assume no particular point of arrival.

How Shall This Be?

In 1987 the art historian Leo Steinberg wrote an article examining early Renaissance artist Filippo Lippi's *Annunciation* paintings where the power of sound and voice becomes immediately apparent. As a precursor to examining the paintings, Steinberg went back through archives of Christian writings to understand the impregnation of the Virgin Mary that would lead her to deliver and make manifest the savior of the world, the corporeal Son of God. Steinberg writes that Mary's initial query to the archangel who announced the impregnation to her was, "How shall this be, since I know not a man?"¹² And, as Steinberg points out, the question that Mary asked could be interpreted in several ways, but the framing of the question Gabriel chose to respond to was "not *whether* it would be

¹² Steinberg, "'How Shall This Be?' Reflections on Filippo Lippi's 'Annunciation' In London, Part I." 25.

done, but *in what manner*.”¹³ Steinberg notes Gabriel’s response: “The impregnation, he explained, would be accomplished by the Holy Ghost ‘coming upon’ her, and by the power of the Highest ‘overshadowing’ her.”¹⁴ Apparently Mary did not question the response but, as Steinberg wryly notes, “Christian imagination was not appeased.”¹⁵ This curiosity becomes the foundation for Steinberg’s examination of Lippi’s paintings. How might an artist represent Mary’s impregnation?

Steinberg leads his reader through a historical understanding of how Christianity dealt with this miracle. He begins by showing how it was early third century poetry that takes up the cryptic biology of the Annunciation, where poets imaginatively described the act of Mary’s impregnation as an encounter with the breath of God, the *spiritus sanctus*.¹⁶ When subsequently demonstrated in medieval paintings, this poetic act was captured in the representation of a dove blowing air towards Mary; sometimes, more literally, it was God himself, positioned in the heavenly sky, who was blowing down upon Mary.¹⁷ But where exactly was this breath directed? In its earliest representations, it was generally directed at the halo around Mary’s head.¹⁸ But this proved to not be specific

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. 26.

enough as scientific understandings of reproduction came into understanding.

Steinberg notes the difficulties of the task:

And this more delicate question, hardly thought of by painters until well into the Quattrocento: should a narrowly focused light bypass the Virgin's head and aim at her bosom, or should it target her womb—as indeed it does in a Gentile da Fabriano panel...in Piero's Annunciation (Arezzo), and again in Lippi's Doria panel? And if the Dove, or its breath, was the procreant agent, how close should it come? Would the avian sign of the Holy Ghost forfeit its ethereality if it came nearly touching, like a tame bird? Of all Christian mysteries none demanded more tact in the telling, for surely the very purpose of ascribing the wonder of Mary's pregnancy to the breath of God was to shield an unsearchable secret from too diligent investigation.¹⁹

Ultimately, it is decided that Mary will be impregnated aurally, through her right ear canal. Rays of light springing forth from a dove's mouth symbolize the act of impregnation; this is how painters would represent the performance of "the Creator's greatest deed."²⁰

This characterization of the act as aurally conceived and represented by rays of light is interesting for a few reasons. First, a point that deserves more analysis than it will get here: the Creator is given (perhaps necessarily) male characteristics in these paintings. If we remove ourselves from religious dogma for a moment while continuing to hold the historical viewpoint that birth is the sole creative act attributable to women, there is space to see that the idea of being

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

inspired or created by the Christian God might provide a contrast to other historical understandings of the woman as muse. And while this point is primarily outside the scope of this chapter, it remains worth noting, as the reversal of gendered characteristics of the creative muse will diminish in later literature. Recall the more contemporary D.H Lawrence's phrase, "Not I. Not I but the wind that blows through me"²¹ used earlier in this dissertation; the wind has no characteristics that would overtly gender it; in fact, the form of inspiration ceases to be a human form at all.²² As the gender of the muse is disrupted, creative inspiration shakes free from traditional, recognizable forms.

Second, returning to ideas that are more specifically gendered, the impregnation of Mary points to the absolute necessity of requiring human female anatomy to create a reality that can be for all people and be observed by all people. With this in mind, let us step outside Steinberg's argument for a moment to firmly establish the role of women in the Church by noting both conventional interpretations of the Bible and a feminist interpretation. In the history of the Old Testament, God often acted through very select masculine figures and often in tangential ways with larger groups of people. This interaction would often come as an intercession into the world to dictate morality and could be exceedingly

²¹ Lawrence, *Complete Poems*. 195.

²² In fairness, if the wind were to be gendered here, it would probably be referred to as an aspect of Mother Nature. This would revert the characterization of the natural world to popularized feminine characteristics.

destructive.²³ Perhaps the most identifiable morality in terms of rules to live by in the Old Testament comes in the form of the Ten Commandments. These commandments were given to—and once violently destroyed by—Moses at the top of a mountain but they are unique in that they provide guidance to the populace on how to live. If we think of these commandments as the result of a creative act where Moses was ‘inspired’ by God to deliver physical objects into the world, we see these tablets as having an identifiable *use*—they dictate a way of being in the world. But as useful as having these rules might appear to a populace, they are not subject to debate or interpretation because any deviance from these rules could lead to damnation.

The conception of a savior in the New Testament in this light is particularly remarkable. God creates another human for only the third time in the scriptures and does so in partnership with the living, female form. This particular human, also God, is the salvation of the world. He regularly associates with a diversity of people, performs miracles, and interacts with the world in a way that two tablets could never interact. He *accepts* questioning from people. It is the sole creative act attributable to women allows a type of agency to enter the world. While biblical morality remains specific, the New Testament focuses less on prohibition and grants more focus on respectful interrelation between people.²⁴ It is through

²³ I have in mind here everything from the great flood to the raining of fire onto Sodom and Gomorrah, to the plagues in Egypt.

²⁴ Something like the “Golden Rule” would be an example of what I am talking about here: “Do to others what you want them to do to you.” This rule has histories outside the scope of Christianity

the creative act of Jesus' birth that Christians, and by extension the societies they would influence, become overtly less focused on the individual.

The Mary/Eve Dichotomy

Before returning to Steinberg's argument, I want to briefly explore this idea of creativity and birth in the earliest Biblical example and the way it shapes, and is shaped, by Christian conceptions of humanity. While Mary's delivery binds morality with societal interactions, it is through Eve's womb that the world as we know it establishes a foundation for these interactions to play out. What characteristics of creativity in birth are inherently wrapped in characterizations of Eve? More recent Christian feminist scholarship provides a complicated look at this narrative. For example, in her book on the nature of patriarchal structures and their relationship between the church and state called *The Serpent and the Goddess*, theologian Mary Condon begins her examination of Eve by noting the dualistic interpretation inherent in her name, writing, "The name Eve, *hawwah* [in Hebrew], means "mother of all the living" but *hawwah* also means "serpent" in

(for a quick summary see: Bill Puka, "The Golden Rule," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2010), <http://www.iep.utm.edu/goldrule/>). And, as Bill Puka writes, "The rule reminds us also that we are peers to others who deserve comparable consideration. It suggests a general orientation toward others, an outlook for seeing our relations with them. At the least, we should not impact others negatively, treating their interests as secondary" (Ibid.). Where something like the Ten Commandments appear directed at the actions of the individual (which, in turn would make for a moral society), this rule places the orientation at *both* the individual *and* the world.

many Semitic languages.²⁵ Condrón positions this dual meaning historically by detailing the writing of Genesis. As Condrón illustrates, while Genesis is presented as the first book in the Bible, most scholars agree it was not written until the reign of Solomon, who was invested in spreading Yahwism. As a point of clarification, one of the many diverse religions under Solomon's monarchy was worship of a serpent.²⁶ Condrón classifies these serpent religions as polytheistic religions and notes the political problem presented to the Israelites by polytheism; namely, it undermined their social structure, making it harder to amass an army in the time of war.²⁷ Therefore, for the Israelites, to recast the serpent was as much of a political tool as a religious tool. As the perceived threat of these serpent religions grew, the writing of Genesis played a specific role in the re-characterization of the serpent:

Whereas in the earlier stories²⁸ death took on a tragic aspect, it was, nevertheless, integrated into the natural cycle of things. Now, not only does death come as a punishment for sin, but it comes at the hands of a woman—the Serpent/Eve. “The Mother of All the Living” becomes the carrier of death. Death had come into the world through sin, and evil was the result of the failure to keep the Covenant with Yahweh.²⁹

²⁵ Mary Condrón, *The Serpent and the Goddess : Women, Religion, and Power in Celtic Ireland* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989). 7.

²⁶ Ibid. 12.

²⁷ Ibid. 12-15.

²⁸ For context, Condrón is referring to stories told about the serpent in these polytheistic religions.

²⁹ Ibid. 15.

In establishing a double meaning in the etymology of Eve, the writers of Genesis are able to undermine the polytheism of their contemporaries and supply a characterization of women that would reverberate for centuries.

With the historical basis for Eve established, we can now return to Steinberg, who aligns with some feminist scholarship here, and see how the Latin Church from the second century on sets up Mary as a counterpoint to Eve to suggest historical symmetry. The Christian feminist scholar Denise Carmody writes of the patriarchal founders in the church—primarily the fifth century Augustine—reinforcing Eve as feminine and, as a result, potentially troublesome to moral living:

For many of the church fathers...Eve is a “type” of female nature. She is characteristically feminine in seducing Adam to sin...Augustine wants to have Eve as villain in two ways. On one hand, humanity only falls, from intimacy with God to disfavor, when Adam disobeys. The disobedience of Eve is not so decisive, because Adam is the head of the race, the one who determines its future. Eve is an instrument, the original womb that procreation required, more than a mother equal to Adam, the first father. On the other hand, Eve is more corrupt than Adam, weaker...She has drawn Adam to her level, where they both disobey God through her wiles. The delight that Adam takes in her...is dangerous. Her sensual attractiveness easily drags him down from the heights of reason where he ought to dwell—where, apart from Eve, he would dwell. So do women distract, even destroy men, generation after generation.³⁰

³⁰ Denise Lardner Carmody, *Christian Feminist Theology : A Constructive Interpretation* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1995). 51. What I want to highlight here that falls outside the narrative thrust of the chapter, but not the dissertation, is that much in the same way that Plato saw danger in the poet, Augustine sees danger in the female form. Both lend themselves to madness in men. For Plato, this madness is productive in that it produces poetry but mostly destructive because it leads men from reason. For Augustine, the downfall caused by this madness is more decisive because, as Carmody highlights, he saw every “act of coition not

Much in the same way that the serpent had been cast as the antithesis of a benevolent god, Eve's characterization called for her own moral compliment. Carmody identifies Mary as Eve's "antitype," possessing the characteristics of the "new, redeemed, regenerated woman who moves in grace rather than sin. Where Eve was disobedient, Mary was obedient."³¹

As readers, we are left with moral poles of feminine characteristics embodied by Mary and Eve. It is through Steinberg's reading of both Quattro Centro art and Christian tradition that sound enters our equation. Both Mary and Eve hear sound and succumb to it; their common experience binds them. Steinberg writes of the early appearance of this duality in the Church to establish a foundation for exploring this topic:

Justin Martyr (mid-2nd century), recalling St. Paul's apposition of Christ to Adam, propounded a comparable polarity of Mary and Eve by contrasting the Annunciation with the Temptation. For just as the virginal Eve had conceived the word of the serpent, thereby engendering disobedience and death, so Mary, a virgin again, conceived faith and joy when the angel brought the glad tidings.³²

undertaken solely in order to procreate" as sinful (51). The church privileges a repression of biological drives, obviously, but if giving birth is the sole creative act assigned to woman, it is clear how limited and challenging this is. We see, through a masculine reading, that *anything* leading to the birth, including the sexual act, is not considered creative in any way; it is only the act of birth itself that is creative. This characterization of creativity gives the *product* the highest consideration and the *production* of the product the lowest.

³¹ Ibid. 52.

³² Steinberg, "'How Shall This Be?' Reflections on Filippo Lippi's 'Annunciation' In London, Part I." 26.

As Steinberg further elaborates on these women's succumbing to sound, "the typological antithesis of Eve and Mary offers this constant: *both lent their ear to persuasion*—the one in credulity to the fiend, the other to the angel of God;" it wasn't until the fourth century, during Augustine's time, that this issue was clarified, making explicit the aural impregnation of Mary.³³ Therefore, through Mary and Eve, we see two ways in which we can understand creativity in giving birth. If, historically, birth is the sole exception of creativity for women, Eve's birth of Cain and Abel set forth the birth of civilization but the context of these births is the result of Eve's own transgression and corruption by the sound of the serpent. Mary's birth of Jesus, only created by the sound of God, brings with it the promise of salvation and reparation for Eve's fall. Throughout the last two thousand years, the two events have been inextricable—Mary's creativity *requires* Eve's. To try and categorize creativity with a distinct moral value in light of this evidence becomes a muddled exercise. Furthermore, the focus of Steinberg's exploration is on the act of conception itself, not its outcome. Or to say it another way, the exploration is how someone might "lend their ear to persuasion;" this only becomes an event in retrospect because of the significance of what follows Eve/Mary when they listen.

³³ Ibid. 27. Emphasis added.

Subjected to Hear Sound

To follow this line of thinking a little further, though, let's return to the example provided by John Cage's experience in the anechoic chamber. If we can hear, we must hear. Since Eve possesses the ability to hear, she will be subjected to the serpent's words in her explorations of Eden. In Genesis, the first words Eve hears are that of Adam and the second words she hears are that of the serpent. It is only once she has committed the fateful act that she hears God's word; and God's condemnation is powerful: "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing: with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."³⁴ Eve's punishment is delivered before Adam's; human suffering finds its beginning in the punishment of Eve's only creative act. Furthermore, she is beholden to her husband. Eve is subjugated twice, once to her husband and once to the sound of the serpent; her creative act is paired with pain and lack of agency. It does not matter that a reader take the Bible literally when examining these stories; the ability for the message to shape culture remains, no matter how dubious one finds the source. And, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the negative conceptions of Eve were influential even in the monasteries in the thirteenth century. These monks, seeking to be angelic, often chose to cordon themselves off from the laity in

³⁴ Gen. 3:16.

attempt to avoid temptation; and by often not choosing to listen to the world. Eve is the manifestation of this temptation.

Of course, the separation of the laity and the monastery is not as neat as it might appear. For one, the previous chapter recounted several ways monasteries interacted with the laity despite the rhetoric of separation leading to a more divine life. But as the feminist spirituality professor Joann Wolski Conn writes, throughout the Middle Ages there is a separation of popular theology, where people promoted “magic in the guise of sacraments” and had “low levels of education,” and professional theology, which would be the pursuit of spiritual thought through continuous study and guidance.³⁵ In short, the spirituality of the laity is often viewed as simply not serious. This did not always remain true, though, and one notable example of that blurs these easy characterizations comes in the form of beguines that sprung up throughout medieval Europe.

Remember, as elaborated in the previous chapter, “Monks concluded that monastic life was *the only place* in which the image of God could truly be restored to humanity in this life.”³⁶ This idea is reinforced time and time again by the monk’s Eve-inspired reading of a world as providing too much temptation and deception to be connected with God’s word. However in this attempt at separation, a rift opens and is temporarily filled with a different type of

³⁵ Joann Wolski Conn, “Toward a Spiritual Maturity,” in *Freeing Theology : The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna ([San Francisco, Calif.]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993). 247.

³⁶ Ibid. Emphasis added.

organization. The Catholic encyclopedia tells us, "As early as the commencement of the twelfth century there were women in the Netherlands who lived alone, and without taking vows devoted themselves to prayer and good works."³⁷ And Conn writes that these women did not see themselves as hermetic or as part of the political structure of the church:

Beguines were another type of lay group. Independent from men's authority, these women lived at home or in small communities in voluntary poverty and celibacy. With no formal church supervisors, they combined work, common prayer, and life "in the world."³⁸

These women were serious, self-sufficient in their labors but fully interactive with their community. They were not subject to patriarchal authority and, as such, the name beguine itself often suggested something heretical to people outside this community of women.³⁹

Since these women fell outside the church structure, they were able to defy the conventional prohibitions that women not preach in public; this flagrant refusal to behave "like women" left them subject to rebuke from the patriarchal church.⁴⁰ This puts the very idea of freedom of expression in women at play in the historical church as evidenced by the condemnation of beguines by Pope

³⁷ Ernest Gilliat-Smith, "Catholic Encyclopedia: Beguines, Beghards," Robert Appleton Company, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02389c.htm>.

³⁸ Conn, "Toward a Spiritual Maturity." 247-248.

³⁹ Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, with Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954). 4-5.

⁴⁰ Abby Stoner, "Sisters Between: Beguines," <http://www2.kenyon.edu/projects/margin/beguine1.htm>.

Clement V's decree characterizing their dress "as insane" and later, in clarification of Clement V's rebuke, by "Pope John XXII in 1318 attempt[ing] to clarify the definition of a "good" Beguine...[as] a woman *who stayed in her house* and did not dispute about the Trinity."⁴¹ The attempt by women to both be-in-the-world *and* vocally spiritual disrupts easy categorizations of women falling into an Eve-Mary dichotomy historically. A lesson remains in the medieval church: Clearly there is power in sound, but women must only hear this sound. With this in mind, are women ever granted any agency to speak?

On the most traditional level, Mary's conception is a positive act. Her womb provides an embodied space to "perform the Creator's greatest deed." The salvation of civilization will be birthed by her effort and pain. And, as mentioned above, this act will square the act of Eve, which caused the mortality of humankind in the first place. However, much as Eve might appear powerless to her fate, it can be argued Mary lacks agency herself. The story of the annunciation takes place in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. The version in Matthew is significantly shorter and its only function appears to be to assuage Joseph's fears of marrying a woman who is already with child; the reader knows nothing of Mary in this story except that she is the recipient of a miracle pregnancy. The more involved version of the annunciation, the one that Steinberg cites, appears in Luke. Recall Mary's first recorded response to the

⁴¹ Ibid.

angel Gabriel's pronouncement is to ask, "How shall this be, since I know not a man?"⁴² The angel's response is two-fold: this will happen through the Holy Spirit overcoming you and, if you are feeling incredulous, go speak with your cousin, Elizabeth and see that she is already with child. Mary's final response to Gabriel is, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."⁴³ If God's punishment to Eve was, in part, to make her beholden to a man and Gabriel is presented, along with God in masculine form, Mary's response is perhaps consent, but more likely acquiescence. Since she can hear, she must hear. Since she must honor her God, she must take on this act. Her obedience and chastity is what makes her what makes her worthy of this honor and, because of this, the hierarchal and patriarchal nature power of sound in the Church is indicated.

But sound provides a second lesson here, unexplored by both Steinberg and the writers I have cited above, which comes in the story of Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, and her husband Zechariah. In Luke, the angel presents Elizabeth to Mary as an example of the miracles that God can work in the area of conception.⁴⁴ This is important for two reasons. First, Mary is sent to Elizabeth by the angel Gabriel to make this otherworldly experience more *real* and, in the process, grants Mary a type of community. In this way, again, Mary is Eve's

⁴² Steinberg, "'How Shall This Be?' Reflections on Filippo Lippi's 'Annunciation' In London, Part I." 25.

⁴³ Luke 1:38.

⁴⁴ Luke 1:35-36

antithesis. Eve is doomed to carry out her sentence without human understanding. She is married to a man and birth's two sons; none would know the experience and pain of childbirth that Eve experiences as the result of her transgression. Mary does not suffer this fate of isolation; her cousin embraces her, and they share their similar experience. There is a palpable joy in their togetherness while Eve knows nothing but isolation.

A second and, perhaps, less obvious point comes from the angel's announcement of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Elizabeth is not pregnant by way of the Immaculate Conception; in fact an angel does not visit her at all. Instead it is her husband, Zechariah, who receives the visit of Gabriel. Upon proclaiming the forthcoming pregnancy of Elizabeth, Gabriel is questioned by Zechariah, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."⁴⁵ Recall that Mary's query, "How might this be?" was met with a response from Gabriel and a push to seek out her cousin who might verify this fantastical deed. The response Zechariah receives is a condemnation for his lack of faith and the silencing of his voice until after his child is born.⁴⁶ This provided another recognition of the power in sound; not being able to exercise that power of speech—to suffer in silence—is Zechariah's punishment.⁴⁷ Why is Zechariah

⁴⁵ Luke 1:18

⁴⁶ Luke 1:19-20

⁴⁷ Luke 1: 59-66. Zechariah only achieves the power to speak again after affirming his wife's choice to name their son "John" by writing the name on a tablet; this strikes the observers with awe. That a person can gain their physical voice through their written voice is a lesson for what follows in the work of Virginia Woolf.

punished for his question while Mary's question is answered? Perhaps it is agency that Mary discovers as an exchange for the bodily pain she must endure to deliver the savior of the world.

My intent for this section has been to demonstrate the power of sound by writing of it as a Biblical process. In its primarily positive case the experience of both Mary and Elizabeth show God's voice is a welcome presence that delivers a creative miracle. With its earlier, Old Testament interaction with Eve, it is sound that leads to the destruction of a world. With Mary, the promise of her creative act grants her at least the *appearance* of agency. For a moment, a morality that is interactive and capable of being questioned comes into existence. However, as this morality is reified in the political structure of the Christian church, it becomes ideologically patriarchal in nature. Deviations from this structure, like beguines, are condemned and marginalized.

Additionally, if we reflect back to the beginning of this chapter where we see Cage finding sound inescapable, pursuing sound as resulting in some sort of good versus evil dichotomy is too simplistic. The sound that we see manifested in this section remains phonological; sound in this form leaves, in the words of Mladen Dolar, "a remainder."⁴⁸ Dolar writes that a reduction of the voice to only its phonological state is limiting. The voice is responsible for indicating a range of emotions and functions that escape reduction to speech but do not escape

⁴⁸ Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006). 84

linguistic analysis, after all what is conveyed by a laugh, or a sob, or a burp, or any other non-speech?⁴⁹ Voice generates a specific type of sound that is distinguishable from the noise of the rest of the world.⁵⁰ Moreover, “The voice is something which points toward meaning,” Dolar writes, “it is as if there is an arrow in it which raises the expectation of meaning, the voice is an opening toward meaning.”⁵¹

In which direction can we find meaning? We have seen in these examples of Mary, Eve, and Elizabeth that the sound of God’s voice is to be responded to in a *particular* way. In turn, these women’s voices are heavily regulated by a particular morality. But this moral force inevitably cannot contain the entirety of their human experience, as Dolar addresses when writing about the problem of trying to contain the voice to *only* the holy word when singing, “[W]hatever the attempted regulations, there was always a crack, a loophole, a remainder that kept recurring, a remnant of a highly ambiguous enjoyment.”⁵² If we pursue sound down this path of the voice conscripted with morality, we forgo the pleasure of the human body. If we hope to understand the full potential creativity in birth, we must pursue another path.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 80.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 39.

⁵¹ Ibid. 40.

⁵² Ibid. 114.

A Room of One's Own

One of the characteristics of hearing voices⁵³ that I have underplayed to this point is the sheer terror of it. Once again, John Cage shows us if we can hear, we must hear; this makes the experience of hearing voices coming from incorporeal sources all the more potentially terrifying. As an example of what this terror can do to a psyche, consider Virginia Woolf. Woolf would hear voices at the end of her life, but perhaps they came earlier. Nevertheless, it is in Woolf's chronicling of her hearing of voices that we can come to understand the terror of that sound, and the seeming powerlessness to control it. Her final letter to her husband, the writer Leonard Woolf, shows us her hopeless state of mind:

Dearest, I feel certain that I am going mad again: I feel we cant [sic] go through another of these terrible times. And I shant [sic] recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do.⁵⁴

The final act of her life was resolute in her desire to escape these voices. Her biographer writes of that fateful day:

The river was running very fast and high—the banks of the Ouse are always bare because of the speed of the flow. She [Woolf] picked up a large stone from the bank, put it in he pocket, let go of her stick and

⁵³ By voices I mean God's, an angel's voice, or any others that are not directly attributable to something that physically manifests itself in corporeal, human form.

⁵⁴ Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (New York: A.A. Knopf ; Distributed by Random House, 1997). 744.

walked or jumped into the river. She could swim, but she allowed herself to be drowned.⁵⁵

To reflect back on the Bible for a moment, the promise of pain from the voice of God that we find in Eve's exile from Eden seems to rear its ugly head here when placed alongside Woolf's desperate act. Being subject to the voice of a seemingly otherworldly presence lends itself to appearances of madness and, previously in chapter 4, I chronicled how Plato associated the creative characteristics of a poet with madness. This madness has often been romanticized but Woolf's hopeless final act shows us that this lack of power in the face of the seemingly uncontrollable voices is nothing to be sought out or lauded.

But this is not all we learn from Woolf, for it is through her work that we are presented what creativity looks like through a particularly feminist lens.⁵⁶ Recall that childbirth is historically the dominant creative act attributed to women and that through the Eve/Mary archetype, the act is both painful and capable of salvation of the world. Both ends of this spectrum are too neat in their characterizations as they are positions that are still rendered powerless in the

⁵⁵ Ibid. 748.

⁵⁶ This label, it should be noted, is something Woolf scholars find complicated since Woolf wrote about gender issues but can seem critical of the movement. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman captures this tension succinctly: "Although Woolf disavows the word "feminist" in her essay *Three Guineas* (albeit in a characteristically ironic way) and argues in *A Room of One's Own* that the vote was of secondary importance to the right to enter the professions, she remained committed to women's equality throughout her life." Ellen Bayuk Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity* (New York; Toronto; New York: Twayne Publishers ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1995). 9.

face of patriarchy. Consider in opposition *A Room of One's Own*, where Woolf chronicles the particularly difficult road a woman must travel if she wants to be creative; in fact, one of the characteristics of being creative that appears, possibly, in a certain reading of the text is the rejection of patriarchy by first rejecting childbirth as *the* creative act of a woman.⁵⁷ It is through this rejection that the reader might come to a resolute criticism of patriarchal structures that limit the ways in which women find both creativity and the full human capacity withheld from them.

I write 'might' here because of a criticism of *A Room of One's Own* outlined by Woolf scholar Ellen Bayuk Rosenman:

One important characteristic of *A Room of One's Own* is that it can accommodate many agendas...We might say that Woolf's essay has proved so durable because it often contradicts itself. The celebration of the feminine style coexists with the valorization of androgyny; the insistence on gender as crucial to women's perspective and experience coexists with a stern admonition to women not to think consciously of their sex...Perhaps one reason that the essay has compelled such interest is that it points to complex issues that are not easily resolved.⁵⁸

At first glance, this statement from Rosenman on the multitude of "complex issues that are not easily resolved" appears in conflict with Woolf's text, which arrives at the "prosaic conclusion" that a woman needs "five hundred a year and

⁵⁷ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989). 22.

⁵⁸ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 13.

a room with a lock on the door if you are to write fiction or poetry.”⁵⁹ But Rosenman is speaking of the journey to this conclusion, not its arrival, when talking about the many agendas accommodated by Woolf’s text. For me, this makes Woolf’s criticism all the more human because it does not always appear resolute and, since I am writing of human beings and creativity, all the more relevant here. The parts of Woolf’s argument I will focus on are the structural differences perceived between women and men in *A Room of One’s Own*, followed by a brief note on Woolf’s characterizations of economic class before ending this section on the primacy Woolf assigns to the corporeal body in the creative act.

The Structure of Patriarchy

Whether or not Woolf can be identified as an overt feminist, she notes structural issues of patriarchy at work. In her foreword to *A Room of One’s Own*, Mary Gordon explicitly notes the encompassing nature of these structures:

[W]omen are poor because, instead of making money, they have had children...[Woolf] reads the lives of women and concludes that if a woman were to have written she would have had to overcome enormous circumstances. Women were betrothed in their cradles; they were married at fifteen; they bore a dozen children, and those children died, and they

⁵⁹ Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*. 105. I will expand this beyond fiction and poetry below. For now, I would like the reader to think of fiction and poetry in Woolf’s lexicon as a stand-in for creativity on an individual basis.

went on bearing children. Moreover, they were uneducated; they had no privacy[.]⁶⁰

Earlier in this chapter I cited the rebuke delivered in the early fourteenth century by Pope John XXII who identified a good beguine as one who stayed in the home. In capturing the life of an early twentieth century woman in the West, Gordon demonstrates that attitudes have not drastically shifted in the ensuing six hundred years. Ellen Bayuk Rosenman points to role of Victorian culture in reifying these early Christian definitions of woman:

According to Victorian thought, society was divided into two worlds: the public world of commerce, in which competition, selfishness, and materialistic values ruled, and the private world of the home, which provided comfort, companionship, and spiritual renewal...A series of sex-linked characteristics grew from this idea: men are active, competitive, productive; women are passive, unselfish, decorative. God and nature, it was argued, ordained such a division of human traits.⁶¹

As I will show below, Woolf does not give much credence to a division of human traits along gendered lines.

One of the ways her writing demonstrates this in its specificity to individuals and the moment. As Woolf writes, she is able to capture the reoccurring distinctions of creative output by men and women in both small ways and across longer historical developments. For example:

⁶⁰ In Ibid. x.

⁶¹ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 4.

[I]t is the masculine values that prevail [in our culture]. Speaking crudely, football and sport are “important”; the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes “trivial.” And these values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction.⁶² This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with women in a drawing-room.⁶³

Woolf is interested in developing an egalitarian space for the reception of creative output and the exercising of creativity; her interest is both personal and universal in investigating how prevailing attitudes create these spaces. By identifying the cultural dominating patriarchal practices, Woolf is, in turn, providing a sense of how these spaces can be created. Again, Rosenman writes clearly to this point:

In addition to presenting patriarchy as a social system, Woolf regards patriarchy as an *ideology*, a system of beliefs and values that naturalizes itself—that is, makes its assumptions look like the result of common sense and some universal human nature rather than of vested political interests. Ideology is a powerful means of sustaining the status quo: it is easier and more effective to persuade people that the current distribution of power is natural and inevitable than to protect it with coercion or force.⁶⁴

This is the reader’s reminder that Woolf’s attack may be read as broad and against an ideology *and* significantly specific on how woman can create more freely.

⁶² The effect the church maintained in reinforcing patriarchal structures could lend an atheist or agnostic or feminist Christian scholar to make the converse argument here, where the fiction of the Bible has translated to life.

⁶³ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. 74.

⁶⁴ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 30.

There is always potential that in addressing a larger structure would leave the reader misses the smaller problems at hand. Part of what makes Woolf's text ingenious is her choice of narrator to combat this tendency. She uses a fictionalized co-narrator—"call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please—it is not a matter of any importance"—to deliver this lecture, and guide the reader's journey.⁶⁵ The names associated with these Marys come from an English ballad:

Last night there were four Marys
Tonight there'll be but three.
There was Mary Breton, and Mary Seton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.⁶⁶

This ballad was told from the point of view of a king's mistress, who was to be executed for bearing the king's illegitimate child—a strong example of being victimized by patriarchal power.⁶⁷ Woolf's choice of this ballad and these three names brings the structural inequality to light quickly here. But, as Rosenman illustrates, this allows Woolf to be both anonymous and multifaceted; the three Marys in Woolf's narrative are an aunt, college head, and novelist and this choice allows for flexibility in address:

⁶⁵ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. 5. The use of Mary as the constant given name is interesting in the context of this chapter. Woolf's role is to present creative salvation in a different physical form than the Mary referenced earlier.

⁶⁶ In Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 81.

⁶⁷ Ibid

In a sense Woolf constructs a distinctly female self—more flexible, more communal, and less individualistic than conventional notions of identity. From their unique social position, Woolf imagines, women have evolved a particular way of being in the world, of addressing others, and of understanding themselves.⁶⁸

And, in this light, the criticism that *A Room of One's Own* can accommodate many agendas appears to be by design.

Overtly Gendered and Embodied

As a way of personalizing the narrative in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf (or her narrator) describes her visit—and meals—at both the all-male university, Oxbridge and, the women's college, Fernham. Rosenman notes that these schools were based on the very real experience of Woolf's visit to Cambridge, where she was invited by the "Arts Society of Newnham College and the Odtas at Girton College" to deliver a talk on women and fiction at the "only women's colleges at Cambridge."⁶⁹ The experiences of the colleges detailed in *A Room of One's Own*, are a condensed version of Woolf's real, weeklong experience at Cambridge where her developing manuscript was delivered in part and where Woolf was able to partake in a meal and coffee with students.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 22.

⁷⁰ Lee, *Virginia Woolf*. 556-7. I am tempted to highlight this, once again, as the power of sound. One of the key feminist works of the twentieth century was delivered as a powerful reading to a group of willing women. Except, as Hermione Lee uncovers, Woolf's lecture was noted by one student as "very boring" and another characterized as possessing a "lullaby effect...I am deeply

From these real experiences, Woolf illustrates two pictures of how she saw patriarchal structures have a real effect on her bodily experience. The first experience comes from her being denied access to the library. In this part of the narrative, Mary is on the campus of the all-male Oxbridge. She is off-put, having been approached and redirected to a gravel path away from the immaculate grass patch she was walking across after being informed that the lawn was only for scholars and fellows of the all-male school.⁷¹ Having arrived early for lunch, she continues to wander the campus until she finds herself at the library door, which she promptly opens and is immediately greeted by an older gentleman, a “guardian angel,” who informs her, the building is only accessible to women “if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction.”⁷² Piqued, Woolf writes:

That a famous library has been cursed by a woman is a matter of complete indifference to a famous library. Venerable and calm, with all its treasures safe locked within its breast, it sleeps complacently and will, so far as I am concerned, so sleep for ever. Never will I wake these echoes, never will I ask for that hospitality again, I vowed as I descended the steps in anger.⁷³

From the appearance of the narrative, Mary has scarcely been on the campus before being denied free pass, twice. The formal structure to withhold women

ashamed to confess that I slept right through it.” The voice retains its power here, but is, obviously, differently deployed.

⁷¹ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. 6.

⁷² Ibid. 7-8.

⁷³ Ibid.

from knowledge is visible to other viewers as women could be seen only walking on a gravel path; but it is also invisible—noted as an *absence* of woman—in the library. The result of these formal structures is withholding knowledge from women. What's more, access to knowledge cannot be of a woman's own volition.⁷⁴

Woolf's second noting of physical embodied difference comes at mealtime. Mary has two meals while at the college; first is a lunchtime experience that takes place with the men. It is *luxurious*. Cleverly, Woolf takes the meal as an opportunity to address not only the differences apparent when dining with different genders, but the traditional, masculine, nature of writing. Mary informs her reader of the literary convention to focus on what is said at a meal, rather than what is eaten before stating that she will forgo this convention to describe, course by course, how the meal proceeds.⁷⁵ The description of the foods is decadent: soles in “the whitest cream” and sprouts “foliated as rosebuds but more succulent.”⁷⁶ But her description goes beyond just the physical characteristics of the food; she describes the feelings elicited by the food and wine's consumption:

Meanwhile the wineglasses had flushed yellow and flushed crimson; had been emptied; had been filled. And thus by degrees was lit, halfway down

⁷⁴ Perhaps this is a relic of a system set in motion by Eve?

⁷⁵ Ibid. 10.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 10-11.

the spine, which is the seat of the soul, not that hard little electric light we call brilliance, as it pops in and out upon our lips, but the more profound, subtle and subterranean glow, which is the rich yellow flame of rational intercourse. No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself...how good life seemed...as, lighting a good cigarette, one sunk among the cushions in the window-seat.⁷⁷

The experience of this meal is full of embodied knowing. The reader feels the weight of the narrator collapsing into those cushions, relaxed and at ease.

Contrast this lunch with her later experience of dining with the women. The experience of dinner is as impoverished as the previous lunch is rich. Once again, Woolf's narrator is flourishing in her descriptions; unfortunately, these descriptions serve to describe an underwhelming meal. She writes of "plain gravy soup" and a "homely trinity" of beef, greens and potatoes "suggesting the rumps of cattle in the muddy market, and sprouts curled and yellowed at the edge, and bargaining and cheapening, and women with string bags on Monday morning."⁷⁸ Here, in the wake of this meal, Woolf's prose becomes despondent at the circumstances:

The human frame being what it is, heart, body and brain all mixed together, and not contained in separate compartments as they will be no doubt in a million years, a good dinner is of great importance to good talk. One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. The lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid. 11.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 17.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 18.

Despite the tone, we see as before the importance that the embodied experience has on the psyche through Woolf. And, in light of the beginning of this chapter, it begins to appear as if it were Woolf who took the bite of that forbidden fruit, she would have relished every morsel and identified God as the manifestation of a patriarchal structure that denies her the pleasure of such an experience.

There is a shift in focus in at the end of the meal with the women at the college; certainly a drab picture has been painted but the scene is rescued in a peculiar way. It is in this moment that we see Woolf's direct claims for women to be creative and self-sufficient: money and isolation. She desires freedom from monetary pressures in the hope that good food and good drink would become the norm to "light the lamp in the spine." And she also desires space, privacy, and isolation within which women could really work. After having both meals and conversation in the luxurious men's facilities and the modest women's facilities she reflects:

I thought...of the admirable smoke and drink and the deep armchairs and the pleasant carpets: of the urbanity, the geniality, the dignity which are the offspring of luxury and privacy and space...I thought of how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse perhaps to be locked in.⁸⁰

Woolf understands this experience for women at college is not sufficient in comparison with the treatment of men. However, at the same time, it is a place

⁸⁰ Ibid. 23-24

where women can have a private conversation. And, as Rosenman notes, this is an autonomous and unique space where women no longer were forced to “perform their domestic role.”⁸¹ That women have both a recognized public roll and a private roll is a historical argument addressed, briefly here, by the political philosopher, Hannah Arendt, who describes privacy historically as necessary to be fully human:

It is...not really accurate to say that private property, prior to the modern age, was thought to be a self-evident condition for admission into the public realm; it is much more than that. Privacy was like the other, the dark hidden side of the public realm, and while to be political meant to attain the highest possibility of human existence, to have no private place of one's own (like a slave) meant to be no longer human.⁸²

This is where the reader begins to get the first inkling of what a room of one's own would actually look like for women. They would not—*could not*—be locked into their social station; instead they needed privacy to cultivate a space of permission. Rosenman quotes Woolf's diary in support of this idea, first highlighting that, “Women should be able to ‘think, invent, imagine, and create as freely as men do, and with little fear of ridicule and condescension.’”⁸³ The point here is that it is not enough to escape the domestic duties including raising

⁸¹ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 25.

⁸² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* ([Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). 64. I will address Arendt's work in greater detail below.

⁸³ Rosenman, *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity*. 33.

children; women need a space where they are free to think without being overtly or covertly demeaned.

What is interesting about Woolf's writing here is that it clamors for both individual agency while recognizing that it is only in the perpetuation of this agency that a patriarchal system of oppression will be overturned. Woolf writes at length in *A Room of One's Own* of the importance of this shift in the perception of what might be considered 'woman's work':

[T]owards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write...[I]t matters far more than I can prove in an hour's discourse that women generally, and not merely the lonely aristocrat shut up in her country house among her folios and her flatterers, took to writing...For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice.⁸⁴

Reflect back on Rosenman's identification of patriarchy as an ideology that makes a system of thought look like common sense. Woolf's writing demonstrates the refusal of this ideology as an act not attributable to a single voice; rather, it is the experience of a mass *in* that single voice that undermines the ideology. In the third chapter of this dissertation I argued that creativity needs a form to make itself visible. Woolf shows us here that form does not appear instantaneously; in this case of women writers, it is the act of individuals, working

⁸⁴ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. 65.

alone, *together*. Eventually the system shifts and perhaps that shift is marked by an individual or a date but those attempts to individually credit a creative work belie the force of the activity that comes before that individual or date to make the change both acceptable and recognizable.

This creativity is marked in each individual by an embodied experience in a space. Woman after woman took time in the common room, sometimes only briefly, to write. Their experience, not completely free from public gaze, would be ripe for ridicule or quick praise because of the historical desire to characterize women in one of two ways. I described these two categories earlier in this chapter as the Eve/Mary dichotomy but Woolf notes the way this dualistic thought has been manifested in history and scholarly works:

Are [women] capable of education or incapable? Napoleon thought them incapable. Dr. Johnson thought the opposite. Have they souls or have they not souls? Some savages say they have none. Others, on the contrary, maintain that women are half divine and worship them on that account. Some sages hold that they are shallower in the brain; others that they are deeper in consciousness.⁸⁵

Woolf desires recognition of the full complexity—the richness—of being human in women. She warns against writing just out of anger that mixes in with other emotions leading to writing “in the red light of emotion and not the white light of

⁸⁵ Ibid. 30.

truth.”⁸⁶ She argues for the fullness of life in the creative experience. And again, like we have seen previously in this chapter, to fall back on an Eve-Mary dichotomy would be a failure.

The Physical Nature of Creativity

Of course, fullness of life dictates fullness of experience. Knowledge of pain is an inescapable fact in the body. The physical debilitation Woolf would feel in her depression is real and her experience with these spells stimulated an examination as detailed in its affect on the body as the food Woolf would eat. Hermoine Lee notes in her review of Woolf’s essay *On Being Ill*:

Far from being an ethereal, chill, disembodied writer, she is always transforming thoughts and feelings and ideas into bodily metaphors. She writes with acute - often extremely troubling - precision about how the body mediates and controls our life stories.⁸⁷

It is in *On Being Ill* that the reader begins to see what a fullness of life might mean in the creative act. If creativity is embodied, it goes beyond any one type of embodiment and Woolf’s essay begins to shine a light on what this might look like by fully embracing illness, not in the hopes of valorizing it, but to see what it provides. Illness provides a particular framework for Woolf to discuss the

⁸⁶ Ibid. 32-33.

⁸⁷ Hermione Lee, "Prone to Fancy," *The Guardian* (2004), <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/dec/18/classics.viriniawoolf>.

debilitating—and creative—trappings of illness. She writes:

The merest schoolgirl, when she falls in love, has Shakespeare or Keats to speak her mind for her; but let a sufferer try to describe a pain in his head to a doctor and language at once runs dry. There is nothing ready made for him. He is forced to coin words himself, and, taking his pain in one hand, and a lump of pure sound in the other (as perhaps the people of Babel did in the beginning), so to crush them together that a brand new word in the end drops out.⁸⁸

Illness, here, is the thief of conventional sound. Often we feel helpless in the face of illness; moaning makes more sense or, at *best*, we muster the strength to utter a plea for the illness to quickly recede. But as Woolf demonstrates, illness is as much a human experience as love and birth. What we do with this pain, how we channel it or give voice to it can be equally creative. Illness serves its purpose to remind us that we are fragile. It also helps us to recognize, in Woolf's words, that great writing, like illness, allows us to *feel* our place in the action. "We have to remind ourselves," Woolf writes, "that there is such a thing as atmosphere; that the masters themselves often keep us waiting intolerably while they prepare our minds for whatever it may be—the surprise, or the lack of surprise."⁸⁹

As Woolf writes of illness and its affects on the relationship between our minds and bodies, the physicality of being creative is apparent:

People write always of the doings of the mind; the thoughts that come to it;

⁸⁸ Virginia Woolf, *On Being Ill* (Ashfield, Mass.: Paris Press, 2002). 6-7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 24.

its noble plans; how the mind has civilised [sic] the universe. They show it ignoring the body in the philosopher's turret; or kicking the body, like an old leather football, across leagues of snow and desert in the pursuit of conquest or discovery.⁹⁰

What the bodily experience does for us here is make us human and in the world. If pain in birth is Eve's punishment and Mary's pain gives birth to the savior of the world, Woolf's creative birth does not deny pain but instead utilizes that pain as one of several tools to understand how to be creative in the world. Early in *On Being Ill*, Woolf writes of the clouds and the particular possibilities provided by lying prone and giving time to be imaginative. Writing about the essay Hermione Lee summarizes the possibility succinctly:

The shifting clouds in the sky are alien to us, ultimately no use to us. They just go on playing to an empty house. But what the imagination can do with them—especially when released by the reckless, anarchic permission that illness seems to provide—is of immense use to us.⁹¹

This is another key point in Woolf's work: creativity does not damn humanity as Eve taking the fruit, or save it as Mary accepting God's word into her womb; creativity attempts to make something of the world as we find it, warts and all.

It is in the warts that I must acknowledge the criticism of Woolf's positionality here, as I do not wish to remove some of the problematic aspects of Woolf's argument. Again, I contend these aspects are what make human

⁹⁰ Ibid. 5

⁹¹ Lee, "Prone to Fancy."

creativity more interesting and resisting of easy characterization. One argument against Woolf's thinking comes to the forefront in her essay on illness. In revisiting the piece, critic Judith Shulevitz notes that Woolf's aggrandizing of illness is not dissimilar from the Romantic's notion of art and madness.⁹² Here, Shulevitz highlights the idea that, on a cursory read, being ill and being interesting are the same thing for Woolf. Where Hermione Lee and Woolf have cast the clouds in the sky as a metaphor for things humans do not grant regular attention to, Shulevitz characterizes Woolf's thought that this act is *only* the province of the ill as "embarrassing."⁹³ In fact, much of the criticism of Woolf's placing of the body squarely in the center of the creative act could stem from ideas like these; too often the old Romantic idea of madness and feverish inspiration seem to rear their head. But, as noted by Shulevitz, this characterization does not hold up as well on a close reading.

More profound when dealing with Woolf's ideas of female creativity are issues of social class. In the introduction to *A Room of One's Own*, Mary Gordon notes that the text "opened Woolf up to the charges—snobbery, aestheticism—by that time habitually laid at the Bloomsbury gate...to an extent, the accusations are just."⁹⁴ Gordon writes that Woolf's choice of Shakespeare's fictional sister to demonstrate the ways women are denied access the full range of the creative act

⁹² Judith Shulevitz, "The Close Reader; the Poetry of Illness," (2002), <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/29/books/the-close-reader-the-poetry-of-illness.html>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ In Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. Viii.

can certainly be read as elitist, especially since she is not choosing an anonymous woman, who might be married to a miner.⁹⁵ And certainly Woolf's argument could be characterized as elitist, especially when she writes:

For genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people...It is not born today among the working classes. How then could it have been born among women whose work began...almost before they were out of the nursery, who were forced to it by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom?⁹⁶

Now charges of elitism are fair but as Woolf is wont to do, made complicated by other sections of Woolf's writing. The preceding quote is followed by another acknowledgment: "Yet genius of a sort must have existed among women as it must have existed among the working classes. Now and again an Emily Bronte or a Robert Burns blazes out and proves its presence."⁹⁷ Woolf sees this occurrence as rare and, while certainly not an argument for equal creative ability for all, the statement fits into her larger, structural argument; recall that "the experience of the mass is behind the single voice." Woolf's desire is to trumpet minds that "consume all their impediments,"⁹⁸ and this includes any financial or physical distress. And while this can be elitist, it can also be read as an acknowledgement that people cannot be separated from their social surroundings. "Fiction is like a spider's web," Woolf writes, "attached ever so

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 48.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 48-49.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 68.

lightly perhaps, but still attached at all four corners. Often the attachment is scarcely perceptible.”⁹⁹

Returning to the theme of childbirth and sound, how is that attachment perceptible in women if childbirth as creativity is their sole attributable act? For Eve, she delivers with physical pain assigned as punishment by the word of God; for Mary, she is the vessel, serving at the word of the Lord; for Woolf, she refuses to acknowledge that God could even speak—he is silenced; in the process, Woolf puts the creative act not in any deity or muse, but directly within herself. And this creativity is no less physical than Eve’s painful birthing and no less potent than God’s voice. Writing in her diary, Woolf writes of her profound realization:

And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer. I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it...From this I reach what I might call a philosophy...that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern; that we—I mean all human beings—are connected with this; that the world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. *Hamlet* or a Beethoven quartet is the truth about this vast mass we call the world. But there is no Shakespeare, there is no Beethoven; certainly and emphatically there is no God; we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself. And I see this when I have a shock.¹⁰⁰

This is what Woolf brings to the table in understanding creativity: creativity through a feminist lens is not limited to giving birth but is every bit as physical as giving birth. The right conditions need to be present to even make it possible.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 41.

¹⁰⁰ Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being* (London: Hogarth, 1985). 72.

Furthermore, this challenging possibility is not limited to one sex, but to all human beings. We cannot forget that this is *real* work, even when it is not always observable.

Laying Fallow

One of the potentials of birth is that it shows directly, with demonstrable results, the physical manifestation of what is going on underneath the surface of our skin. Deep down inside, something miraculous is happening even if not initially obvious. And while this idea is applicable to the inner workings of all her biological systems, it also is useful as an explanation of how creativity can work. An example of how we might understand this idea in conjunction with creativity comes through the work of artist and writer, Mira Schor.¹⁰¹

Writing about her creative practice on her blog *A year of positive thinking*, Schor details the relationship between her artwork and what she refers to as the Chthonic characteristic of making this work.¹⁰² In her research into the history of the word, she references Wikipedia as she writes: “Chthonic, ‘it typically refers to the interior of the soil, rather than the living surface of the land’.” As she reflects

¹⁰¹ I saw Schor speak at the Wexner Center and at HamMer Studio on March 19, 2013. In her lecture at the Wexner she mentioned both the Steinberg article that I wrote about above and the idea below on laying fallow but not in conjunction with each other. I want to give her credit for at least the seedling of the idea that is presented in this chapter, through her *voice*, even if it was planted inadvertently.

¹⁰² Mira Schor, "Day by Day in the Studio 14: August 24," <http://ayearofpositivethinking.com/2013/08/24/day-by-day-in-the-studio-14-august-24/>.

on this idea, she recalls a page from a 1976 catalogue on her painting.¹⁰³ The painted words in the catalogue read:

In grade school we learnt about an idea from Medieval agriculture. The idea of leaving a field to lie fallow captured my imagination: that something could regenerate if left alone, lazy and silent.

I wonder now if the field ever worried if *it* would come back to it the next season...there are some things about being an artist which my parents, although artists themselves, could not prepare me for: there are bad times—when the flow—such as it is—stops. If I’m not an artist I am nothing, I think. If I don’t make art I will die without leaving a mark and so my life means nothing...After a while the anxiety passes. I begin to work. The pain was really gestation, turmoil under the quiet earth...Then I believe in laying fallow.¹⁰⁴

Schor’s writing here leads to reiterate the idea that not all work is visible. It also provides a nice counterpoint to the voices heard by Eve and Mary and, even in the darkest ways, the voices that Virginia Woolf heard. The work comes from within (or perhaps underneath?) for Schor; it is not otherworldly voices that move the artist. Rather, it is the vastly complex unobservable working of our bodies. And while Schor proudly self-identifies as a feminist, this attribute of the constant and frequently unobservable inner workings of the body is not only female; clearly, it is in all of us. To channel these inner workings into something specific, like an artwork, is the challenge of anyone exercising their creativity. But as we have seen time and time again in this dissertation, the reception of the creative

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

act lies with others, who may take that act in completely unanticipated ways.

This leads us to a place where birth, again, helps us to understand the creative act.

The Labor of Hannah Arendt

Virginia Woolf substituted the historical creative act of giving birth to a *child* with the creative act of giving birth to a *novel*. While the term *birth* can be used in both contexts as a reference to a beginning, the reading of Woolf in this chapter has broadened the possibility of what that *beginning* can be. The brief example I provided utilizing the work of Mira Schor that invokes the form of a field laying fallow demonstrates that the *labor* involved in the birth of artworks or other physical, non-human, things retains the ability to be painful and of a significant duration. All of these markers of pain and/or duration are signs that the body is laboring and exerting effort. This shift from identification of the feminine creative capacity as production of human beings to the creative capacity for the production of artworks is notable over the last hundred years in Western civilization. Nevertheless, there is still much work to be done in this arena. My task to this point in this chapter has not been to resolve the vast issues rightly raised by feminist analysis of creative production. Instead I have been focusing on how might the idea of creativity in birth appear less limiting to both women and men. With this in mind, I want to broaden this possibility further, so that creativity

as birth retains even more possibility. Hannah Arendt's conception of natality might provide one key to this possibility.¹⁰⁵

To put Arendt into relation with other feminist thinkers is not without its problems as there has been much feminist debate about Arendt and her work. Frankly, this can be attributed to the fact that, at first blush, Arendt finds the entire feminist movement easily dismissed. For example, she makes statements, even late in her career, that appear *completely* at odds with anything the feminist movement might hope to achieve:

I have always thought that there are certain occupations that are improper for women, that do not become them, if I may put it that way. It just doesn't look good when a woman gives orders. She should try not to get into such a situation if she wants to remain feminine.¹⁰⁶

If we take this statement in association with Arendt's concept of the distinctions between public and private space, some feminist critics dismissively see Arendt's work as that of "a woman who thinks like a man."¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, and reinforcing

¹⁰⁵ I need to stress this point: I am not an expert in Hannah Arendt's philosophy. I am choosing one aspect of her philosophy to highlight a way that we can think about creativity differently in light of the earlier examples I have highlighted here. There is a dissertation to be written by an Arendt scholar on human being's capacity for creativity (Patricia Bowen-Moore's book on Natality, highlighted below, would provide a nice foundation for this work) and, especially, the political manifestations of creativity. As always, there is more research to be done...

¹⁰⁶ Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt : The Last Interview and Other Conversations* (2013). 15.

¹⁰⁷ Mary G. Dietz, "Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). 23. The separation of public and private is a topic often discussed with Arendt's philosophy. Arendt draws from historical Western examples when tracing these conceptual ideas and they are complicated and worth investigating further. The blunt version of this critique takes the characteristics Arendt assigns to public life and demonstrates these characteristics are endowed

this criticism, Bonnie Honig writes that Arendt believed, “feminism’s concerns with gender identity, sexuality, and the body were politically inappropriate.”¹⁰⁸ All of these characterizations of Arendt are historically fair and accurate, and might leave my reader wondering what, exactly, Arendt might offer amongst other feminist thinkers.

However, more recent feminist readings of Arendt’s philosophy reconceptualize her in (at least) two ways. First comes a reconsideration of Arendt’s work that finds the author prisoner of her own historical context. The feminist movement when Arendt was actively writing (1930’s- the early 1970’s) found much of the feminist theorization based around acceptance of identity and essentialist understanding of “woman.”¹⁰⁹ Here, Arendt’s work fractures these older ideas and challenges them by, “theoriz[ing] a democratic politics built not on already existing identities or shared experiences but on contingent sites of principled coalescence and shared practices of citizenship.”¹¹⁰ It is this line of thinking that makes Arendt’s work of particular use in the close of this chapter,

in men, who had the ability to be distinctly political. Private life is then associated with women and, by extension, domesticity. In light of this chapter, the gendered distinction between public and private is similar to one that Woolf notes in *A Room of One’s Own*, although Arendt writes about it in broader terms.

¹⁰⁸ Bonnie Honig, “Introduction: The Arendt Question in Feminism,” Ibid. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 3. Honig writes in her footnotes that, while it is true that Arendt’s philosophy is being reconsidered from a new point of views, it certainly does not make Arendt correct in her dismissal of an early feminist movement and points her reader toward more writing that explores this issue in depth (15). I am not trying to suggest that the more recent reading of Arendt’s feminism is correct. Honig’s edited book is a great jumping off point for those interested in pursuing this topic further: *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

succinctly summarized by Mary G. Dietz, who writes, “Arendt was unsympathetic to a politics that divorced ‘women’s issues’ from a broader range of emancipatory concerns.”¹¹¹ Dietz’s point is that criticisms of Arendt place gender too much in the forefront of her thought and that, ultimately, “Arendt’s action concept of politics displaces the binary of gender.”¹¹² This displacement of the binary is important because it leads to an understanding of what Arendt intends when considering human action. And it is in this idea of human action that I would argue suggests a powerful, and still positive, conception of creativity when we explore it further.

Human Action

To begin to understand Arendt’s conception of action, I should note that action is one of the three things that Arendt sees as necessary and distinct for a complete human life; labor and work are the other two categories she theorizes at length in her work.¹¹³ I want to focus specifically on action because of its two dominant features— plurality and freedom—provide possibilities not easily gendered. It is first in plurality that gender dominance recedes, opening up

¹¹¹ Dietz, "Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt." 19.

¹¹² Ibid 20

¹¹³ Maurizio Passerin d'Entrevies, "Hannah Arendt," <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/arendt/>. I am only focusing on action here but d'Entrevies summarizes work as “its ability to build and maintain a world fit for human use” and labor as “ability to sustain human life, to cater to our biological needs of consumption and reproduction.” All three categories are complex and receive their own chapters in *The Human Condition* and this is another area where a lot of research on human creativity could be done.

creativity in birth beyond its past categorizations. When Arendt writes, “Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live,” she lets her reader know that being not simply male or female but *human* is both a bonding and unique experience.¹¹⁴ John McGowan’s characterization of this concept as, “The proliferation of identities through action is what Arendt calls ‘plurality,’ [which is] the many sided diversity in which we find ourselves” is especially helpful here.¹¹⁵

At first glance, plurality can seem to walk on the fine line of a modernist utopia but this is not Arendt’s intent. One-way to further understand plurality is to consider its counter-point: totalitarianism. The topic of totalitarianism is one Arendt was frequently concerned with as a result of both her philosophical work and autobiographical background as a Jewish German exile in the 1930’s. With this in mind, totalitarianism can be categorized as an “attempt to obliterate plurality and freedom.”¹¹⁶ Plurality is the acknowledgement that action *needs* witnesses as a kind of social consent otherwise the activity isn’t meaningful; and this isn’t one particular type of witness but a “presence of a plurality of actors who from their different perspectives can judge the quality of what is being

¹¹⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*. 8.

¹¹⁵ John McGowan, *Hannah Arendt : An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).16.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

enacted.”¹¹⁷ We quickly feel the human impact of totalitarianism in its identification as the obliteration of witnesses. Therefore, it is a positive reading of plurality that designates a complex individual, full of his or her own specific desires as always inextricably welded to a larger populace with both divergent and convergent viewpoints.

Much in the same way plurality can appear like a simple notion at first glance, so can the other aspect of action: freedom. Freedom, unlike plurality, has become reductive and oversimplified in our current culture. Arendt saw this issue at work in 1963 in *On Revolution*, when she wrote, “[I]n recent years the idea of freedom has intruded itself into the centre of the gravest of all present political debates, the discussion of war and of a justifiable use of violence.”¹¹⁸ Keep in mind this was the height of the Cold War, where nuclear annihilation seemed plausible if not imminent; the word freedom became a way to “justify what on

¹¹⁷ d'Entrevies, "Hannah Arendt." This topic can be incredibly complex with close reading, especially when considering Arendt's extended profile of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Israel in 1961. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem : A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1994). A plurality of actors from *different* points of view as an approval mechanism in human action is important because, as Arendt points out in her book on the Eichmann trial, Eichmann was completely “normal insofar as he was ‘no exception within the Nazi regime’” (27). Normal from one point of view can be repugnant from another point of view. It is also this isolated “normalcy” that leads Arendt, through the philosophy of Karl Jaspers, to write that the Holocaust “was a crime *against humanity*, perpetrated upon the body of the Jewish people” (269, emphasis added). Part of Arendt's concern with any persecution of Nazi war criminals was that the Nazi's acts were portrayed as against the Jewish people where Arendt wanted to remove any distinction of a group and look at a larger picture. That Arendt's philosophy paints genocide as a human tragedy removes any grievance one group of people may have against another and looks at the event as catastrophic loss. It is this thinking that would make Hiroshima and Nagasaki human tragedies as well.

¹¹⁸ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963). 12

rational grounds has become unjustifiable.”¹¹⁹ These are poor and superficial characterizations of freedom for Arendt and, since the word here takes on a distinct Westernized cast in the use of the term, Arendt utilizes most of *On Revolution* to demonstrate how freedom is much richer than these reductive utilizations of the term.

Much as the term plurality was complicated and ruptured by Arendt into a very meaningful concept, she does the same task with the concept of freedom. Writing for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the political philosopher Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, succinctly notes:

By freedom Arendt does not mean the ability to choose among a set of possible alternatives (the freedom of choice so dear to the liberal tradition) or the faculty of *liberum arbitrium* [free will] which, according to Christian doctrine, was given to us by God. Rather, by freedom Arendt means the capacity to begin, to start something new, to do the unexpected, with which all human beings are endowed by virtue of being born.¹²⁰

Here is the true idea of freedom for Arendt: the making of the new and unexpected. But, much as with plurality, this feels too easy, without effort and, at worst, clichéd. For all these reasons—the new, the unexpected, the seemingly ease in action, the cliché—freedom bears considerable resemblance to contemporary popular uses of creativity. But, as we have seen with creativity associated with birth in this chapter, and ascetic focus in the prior chapter, we

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 14.

¹²⁰ d'Entreves, "Hannah Arendt."

now know that there is real effort in being creative, even when the discourse around creativity seems easy. Considering Arendt's idea of freedom with creativity raises the stakes higher, though, in two ways. First, through Arendt, one can only count as fully human if one exercises his or her freedom, meaning that we *must* bring something unique into the world.¹²¹ Furthermore, this exercising of freedom becomes a political act where "one achieves one's identity, one doesn't lose it."¹²² In short, freedom is how we distinguish ourselves. At the same time, this act is confirmed as good by the plurality, allowing us to avoid tragedy. Second, Arendt is specific in her desire to move past a mean's-end relationship, which she sees as a failure in thinking coming from the modern condition. "The complaint," Comparative Studies scholar John McGowan notes, "is not against means/ends relations per se but against the reductionist modern understanding of the range of ends that humans might pursue."¹²³ If I associate creativity with freedom in Arendt's philosophy, we are tasked with bringing something new into the world and for the plurality to recognize its inherent goodness without having aspirations for what this new thing might end, solve, or justify.

Nativity

Now, squaring creativity with freedom seems impossible on its face, but

¹²¹ McGowan, *Hannah Arendt : An Introduction*. 62-63.

¹²² Ibid. 63.

¹²³ Ibid.

Arendt provides a stunningly simple and elegant example for its proof: the birth of a child. And here we find ourselves once again, looking at the one deeply historical creative attribute for women, this time that is not specifically gendered, but is more broadly human. Of course, we must work to understand Arendt's idea of natality in several ways. First, the birth of a child can be seen as the antithesis to the death and end of a human life. Many of the thinkers working around Arendt see her work with natality as inspired by history because so much philosophical thought has been directed at death, not the least of which by one of Arendt's teachers, Martin Heidegger.¹²⁴ If we think of the ways that death finishes a human life and its creative output, natality provides the beginning and all the newness and unexpectedness in that life to come. Arendt scholar Patricia Bowen-Moore eloquently describes this idea of beginning:

[B]eginnings are difficult not only because they contain the element of arbitrary and the unpredictable but also because the moment of beginning often eludes observation and defies close examination. Yet nothing brings home to us so forcefully the novelty inherent in the beginnings as the birth of a child—an expected someone who defies all expectations.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Patricia Bowen-Moore, *Hannah Arendt's Philosophy of Natality* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989). 5. Mavis Louise Biss sets this idea up on background to show the philosophers Arendt was "working with" instead of against in her work. "The most thoroughly explored interpretive angle on Arendt's work is the relationship between Arendt's thought and that of her teacher Martin Heidegger. Viewing Heidegger's influence as primary encourages an interpretation of natality as a reaction against Heidegger's focus on mortality and concern with Being that offers a revised ontology of human existence within a revised critique of modernity" (762). Biss puts Arendt's work in relationship with Walter Benjamin, Augustine (whose treatise on love was the source for Arendt's dissertation), Karl Jaspers, and Søren Kierkegaard. There is a lot potential for further exploration here as well.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 12.

The “expected someone who defies all expectations” defines the birth as potential. So often births are referred to as “miracles of life,” a turn of phrase that can characterize a birth as the very embodiment of a cliché. If the phrase has fallen into cliché, the fault is ours as the receivers of that life. In contrast, the life that is newborn in the world is full of potential and capacity to defy the cliché.

Arendt writes:

The new always happens against overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable.¹²⁶

If we were to try and deliver the child as a “miracle of life” from the cliché we might begin by suggesting something like the idea that *any* birth appears in the face of overwhelming statistical laws and that while we might have aspirations for this child, their future actions are infinitely improbable to us.

However, this is not only about birthing children; a quick glance at the above quote from Arendt shows that she makes no mention of children; it is in this quote that we begin to understand natality’s full capacity. Natality represents

¹²⁶ Arendt, *The Human Condition*. 178. I would argue that the masculine pronoun use here is regrettable, and that, from our viewpoint, in conflating the masculine with the universal, Arendt’s writing undermines establishing her ideas in the most inclusive sense. My aim has been to leave the voices of the thinkers I have chosen to use throughout the dissertation intact. I wrote of the inherent “messiness of artistic thought” in the first chapter as a space that is difficult to constrain but has aspirations for arriving at the truth. Arendt’s conflation of the masculine and the universal in her work is one of these messy areas.

for humankind a second birth: a “potentiality for beginning.”¹²⁷ This beginning is complex because, while it is characterizing an individual, this beginning still requires “a context for its manifestation;”¹²⁸ in other words, although this is the act of an individual, it is inextricable from a larger process. In short, Arendt’s argument is, essentially, we were born once—we were the expected someone who defied all expectations—and we have the capacity to do it again. Bowen-Moore writes: “Together factual birth and the concomitant capacity to make beginnings is designated by the term *primary natality*...[which] before it assumes political content is...the human being’s highest capacity because it is the experience by which action can be exercised at all.”¹²⁹ This process is the ideal for creativity because it remains a process; it has no particular hope to provide a solution to a problem because it is only *action*; the capacity for natality lies in simply *initiating* these actions.¹³⁰ We, as a plurality, judge the action by the way it manifests itself.

Now, one way to see this process manifest itself is by looking at what and how this process overcomes what Arendt refers to as premodern science. Again, Patricia Bowen-Moore illustrates this issue:

From the perspective of natality the consequences of the premodern science had the negative effect of distinctively reducing human actions

¹²⁷ Bowen-Moore, *Hannah Arendt's Philosophy of Natality*. 21.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 25.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 21.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

and speech...to a natural, or more accurately, universally scientific observable status by which human action was measured in terms of its predictable behaviour [sic] according to statistical laws of conduct.¹³¹

Arendt's idea of a full human life in action seeks to offer the ability to escape reductive labels. It does this by still existing within the context of the world but it does not find its rest in an end point or as a product. The *action* lies in only acting. By another name Arendt would call this a *venture*:

One exposes oneself to the light of the public, as a person. Although I am of the opinion that one must not appear and act in public self-consciously, still I know that in every action the person is expressed as in no other human activity. Speaking is also a form of action. That is one venture. The other is: We start something. We weave our strand into a network of relations. What comes of it we never know...Quite simply and concretely true, because one cannot know.¹³²

Through Arendt, creativity is an action, or a venture, which is recognized because of its context, but not defined by its usefulness. Certainly it has the capacity to be useful, but as children show us, the real joy is in the unexpected.

¹³¹ Ibid. 117. In the context of this quote we begin to see how we could use an idea of natality to address and complicate ideas involving uses of "Big Data" where complex statistical models seek to predict and model human behavior. We also see philosophical ways of troubling string theory in physics, in which humans have no apparent agency. As an aside: in reference to the last chapter dealing in part with Galileo, it is interesting to remember that his invention of the telescope was referred to, derisively, as the "devil's eyepiece" because it sought to bring the heavens closer. I note this to be mindful of the potential criticism of science that arises here. To reiterate, I am not interested in supplanting scientific research with a philosophical or theological worldview. My argument is that easy scientific responses to creativity *and* something like easy theological responses to creativity are not sufficiently complex to capture the process.

¹³² Arendt, *Hannah Arendt : The Last Interview and Other Conversations*. 70-71

Silence Is Golden

If creativity is considered as its own birth, as it has been associated with women since ancient history, Hannah Arendt provides an idea of exactly why the beginning of a creative moment has been so hard to pin down. Consider the examples I have used throughout this chapter: when does Eve begin to sin? Is it in the bite of the fruit? Or could it be in the moment she lends her ear to the serpent and desires to know the world? Her punishment, in part, is pain in childbirth. But how could we hope to characterize childbirth as an isolated event? Do we deny pleasure in the sexual intercourse that conceives the child? Do we cast aside the discomforts of morning sickness? Or the joy of feeling a baby move inside the womb? And certainly the pain of childbirth is unimaginably intense but does it break the inevitable bond between a mother and child? And what if we put even the conception of the child into a mystery, as is the case of Mary; do we deny her bodily experience? For a Christian, nothing reinforces Bowen-Moore's summation of natality as "an expected someone who defies all expectations" than the birth of Christ; Mary's bodily experience is inextricable from this event. And while Virginia Woolf denies God, she does not deny the body. When describing her creative ability she writes, eloquently, of "shocks" and a "spark in the spine." Woolf's embodied experience puts no less stress on the social conditions she believes to bring about creativity but the actual creative act is left to physical sensation.

At the beginning of this chapter, I referenced John Cage's experience in the anechoic chamber and the idea that there is no such thing as silence. I used that story initially to show how if we hear, we are subjected to hearing; at the same time, hearing does not imply listening, which is the probing and searching that comes with sound. As this chapter has demonstrated, silence manifests itself in many ways, most obviously here historically, in women's experience of creativity. In writing *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf focuses on a woman writer who is able to capture "those unrecorded gestures, those unsaid or half-said words"¹³³ that male writers have left unstated. Those silences have value too, and they make our understanding of our embodied lives richer and, by extension, our understanding of creativity more full.

In writing about Cage, Lewis Hyde quotes Cage's aphorism that he is making, "Not things, but minds."¹³⁴ I don't believe Cage is talking about the mind with some sort of reference to a Cartesian split but rather the idea that there is an infinite amount of information occurring internally and externally at all times; the full range of this information is impossible to track in real time. Cage's work aims to bring out a type of awareness in the individual that doesn't seek to capture *all* this information, but to simply raise awareness that there are things we cannot grasp in our present circumstances. It is in this awareness that something like a second birth can occur and—this is critically important for understanding

¹³³ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. 84.

¹³⁴ Hyde 149

creativity—there is so much occurring that even being aware of that very fact is a miracle. Like Hannah Arendt would say, these miracles happen all the time and, while they are a regular occurrence, this doesn't make them any less miraculous. And, if in the attempt to grasp that miraculousness with our whole bodies and make a tiny part of it manifest we invoke a muse or a god to do that work for us, it doesn't make it any less profound.

Fragment: Renew/Repeat

"After the revolution is over, who is going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?"¹

In 1969, after the birth of her child, Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote *The Manifesto for Maintenance Art*. To hear her describe the experience of having the child in 2013 is to notice an intense experience undiminished by the passage of time. She says:

When I had a baby, people suddenly got uninterested in me, it was like I got put into this box of mothers with children, as if they automatically knew everything about me. This made me furious. And I became a maintenance worker. Because if I didn't do certain tasks, the baby would die. I take care of the baby, the baby can thrive, if she's lucky and healthy. I loved that baby, but nothing in my educated brain, nothing in my culture, prepared me for this. I got really pissed off. I thought, if I'm an artist, then I get to say anything is art. So I call 'maintenance' 'art.' If art wasn't like that before, then it has to change.²

¹ Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto 1969," http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf.

² M.H. Miller, "Trash Talk: The Department of Sanitation's Artist in Residence Is a Real Survivor," *Gallerist* (2013), <http://galleristny.com/2013/01/trash-talk-the-department-of-sanitations-artist-in-residence-is-a-real-survivor/>.

Her manifesto picks this idea apart further, actually categorizing the experience of being in the world as that of two continuously operating systems: development and maintenance.

Development gets all the attention. She writes of its characteristics as, “pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing.”³ We see the development as the driver of our culture; development becomes recognized not only in the newborn baby who captures the attention of the passerby, but also in the names of the individual artists we see in museums. As a system, maintenance is faceless and tireless. Ukeles writes of its characteristics as “keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight.”⁴ This is the parent and the trash collector; the repetition of their acts defines them.

Anyone who has experienced caring for a child recognizes the intensity of repetition that occurs in that care. It is unrelenting. The baby needs fed; needs changed; needs to be held; needs burped; needs to be loved. It does not stop. The intensity of the experience—sleepless, selfless—can completely overwhelm even the most tireless caregiver.

When Ukeles turns this attention to the maintenance worker in the museum, it is in the spirit of a mother whose identity is only part that. As she

³ Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto 1969."

⁴ Ibid.

writes in her manifesto, "I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother. (Random order)."⁵ The baby is all potential and newness; the identity of the mother becomes responsible for the preservation of this potential. Likewise, the experience of the museum as a hermetically sealed off space exists only because of the infrastructure that supports it remains largely unseen. The cleaning of the museum occurs before the space opens; the goal is to not draw attention to their actions. The focus *must* be on the art. This is not to diminish the art, but to highlight the support that makes the art go.

As part of her 2013 exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Ukeles conducted a live interview a security guard and window washer from the museum.⁶ As part of their conversation she asks them what do they do to survive, to keep going. The responses are deeply personal, moving, and reflect how driven these men and women are to conduct the repetition that defines their employment. Ukeles' work does not condescend to these workers and it does not pretend that they do not exist; it celebrates their necessary actions. In the process of celebrating their actions, it demonstrates maintenance as a deeply caring act that must be unending if culture is going to survive. It is human, over and over again.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Miller, "Trash Talk: The Department of Sanitation's Artist in Residence Is a Real Survivor."

Chapter 6: Creativity As Production

Presentness is the splendor of the fold in the house we have come to inhabit, where the game of creation is played not *ex nihilo* but *ex plicato*.¹

In the three previous chapters I have addressed a variety of issues dealing with creativity. One of the central arguments of chapter 3 was that creativity required rules to make it manifest and, in turn, the creative act reified the rules. As an extension of this argument, the idea of a “refusal” was analyzed, where socio-cultural norms were rejected in favor of a more under-recognized position. The central arguments from chapter 4 demonstrated the overt masculine cast of creativity historically in Western culture as well as the tensions that arise when considering creativity between individuals and groups. This tension masks the true nature of creativity, as it exists in a space *between* the individual and group. Chapter 5 argued that in viewing creativity as birth—the sole capacity for female creativity historically in the West—creativity as embodied experience comes to the fore. It is in this creativity that we begin to see our capacity for agency as well.

¹ John Rajchman, *Constructions* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998). 36.

In chapter 2, where the methodology of this dissertation was outlined, I argued that Deleuze and Guattari's "concept" presented an interesting challenge in pursuing creativity. Recall that the visual arts are where we are supposedly educated to be creative. Recall, as well, that Deleuze and Guattari see a "concept" in three stages: "encyclopedic, pedagogic, and commercial professionalized training." We find concepts in their pedagogic stage, where they tilt our understanding toward the encyclopedic and away from commercial professionalized training. This presents a challenge to try and re-think creativity in a way that defies easy categorization. While this idea of creativity as "concept" has been the guiding principle throughout the chronology of the previous three chapters, Deleuze and Guattari's actual words have been largely absent from that analysis. My intention for this chapter is to be more overt in what the duo's work specifically might offer understandings of creativity, particularly through desire and sensation. In demonstrating these possibilities, I will also interact more specifically with studio art production than I have in previous chapters.

Like Deleuze and Guattari, I see potential for artwork to work in conjunction with philosophy and science to open understanding of even the most difficult ideas. Not unlike most art educators, I see the potential for artworks and studio production to be linked with creativity, although I argue this linkage is not quite as simple as it is sometimes cast. In this chapter I draw from several ideas from Deleuze and Guattari to examine how we might consider creativity

differently as production. The structure of this chapter is not necessarily chronological because production in the studio can operate outside a linear process. This chapter begins by considering a lecture from Marcel Duchamp where it is argued that the viewer and artist are equal participants in the creation of an artwork. Under close examination, what appears to be a binary relationship between artist and viewer will collapse. An artwork from Tino Sehgal is presented as an example of the interdependency between the artist and audience. From here, the chapter investigates four ideas from Deleuze and Guattari. First, the chapter introduces the “desiring machine” which holds the ability to collapse hierarchies and allows connections to be easily made. Second, the chapter examines these connections in greater detail; also, the “social machine” is introduced, which speaks to the ways that our individual drives and behaviors are inextricable from larger socio-cultural forces. Third, Deleuze’s appropriation of the fold from Leibniz is addressed. Particularly important in this section is the idea of “perplication,” which is an unconscious processing of our experiences in the world. Fourth, Deleuze’s concept of sensation is highlighted as an experience that comes from encountering artworks; art both “frames the chaos” in our world and encourages contemplation, which is also creative act.

The force of these four concepts from Deleuze and Guattari are paired with Lewis Hyde’s assertion of art as a gift. Hyde frames a predominant

characteristic of the gift as something that desires to remain in motion instead of being hoarded. The chapter concludes by weaving these concepts with the actions and words of the South African artist William Kentridge. Kentridge is not the personification of philosophical concepts or creativity; rather, he is an artist whose studio production and artist's talks help to keep creativity pedagogic. Deleuze and Guattari write, "We require just a little order to protect us from chaos."² The exploration that follows below is my attempt at giving a "little order" to creativity in the wake of the chapters that have preceded our arrival to this point.

Duchamp's "The Creative Act"

Creativity is often considered self-evident in art production but when we put this idea under a microscope, it immediately becomes complicated. Perhaps one reason for this complication is that it is the artist who is granted individual ownership over the creative act while the audience is left with the resultant product; the audience is asked to take the artwork simply as it is. In this case, the artwork would hold all the artist's intention and meaning in its form. The task that remains for the audience is to be swept up in the form of the artwork and find the meaning that has been hidden there. This idea is a relic from earlier in this dissertation where, in chapter 4, Plato identified the purpose of poets as

² Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 201.

attempting to lead the general populace astray from the common good. But what if the audience that receives poetry are not unquestioning or unthinking individuals? What if the audience, like Deleuze, is in the world looking for encounters? Deleuze writes: "Something in the world forces us to think...It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed."³ Here, the audience takes on a characteristic that possesses a different type of vitality than the audience of poetry identified in Plato's work. The audience is not being led astray by an artwork; rather, the artwork challenges the way they understand the world. As a result, art, artists, and audience are inextricable, but also resist easy classification.

In his 1957 lecture entitled "The Creative Act," Marcel Duchamp efforts an attempt to include both the spectator and the artist in the act of creativity.⁴ Their respective roles are distinguished thusly: the artist "goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions"⁵ and the spectator, who "experiences the phenomenon of transmutation; through the change from inert matter into a work of art."⁶ In the end, Duchamp sees this relationship as interdependent; the artist fluctuates between unconscious and conscious

³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*.

⁴ Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act (1957)," in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art : A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2012).

⁵ Ibid. 972

⁶ Ibid. 973

creation and “the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications” adding “his [or her] contributions to the creative act.”⁷ Following Duchamp’s logic, the artist and audience are inextricably intertwined in the creation of an artwork and, by extension, the act of creativity. In this act of creativity, they both inevitably share characteristics with the other; any member of the audience will, at times, take on the roll of artist and the artist, at times, will take on the roll of audience. Since Duchamp gave his lecture in 1957, casual observers of contemporary art will note that the roles of artist and audience have become at times indistinguishable from each other. Artworks can now resemble a variety of social practices; however, the resultant artwork that has been created often remains attributed to *an* artist, which only further confuses and confounds the duality of artist and audience.

Being held in this moment, not certain if we are artist and audience, finds us in the *midst* of a process rather than at a specific point. This moment registers as sensation and this sensation further complicates the dualistic dynamic Duchamp eloquently presented in 1957. At our present moment, in the process of creativity, the position of both artist and audience has become atomized. What this means is that artists operate as an audience prior to producing what will be called their artwork; additionally they are often the first

⁷ Ibid.

audience to view the artwork, to deem it appropriate to be experienced in the world. Likewise, the audience is also implicated in this creative act. For the audience, this process is an encounter; something in the world—in this case it is an artwork—has forced them to think. The encounter leads to its own kind of creativity, which is not always easily verbalized or compartmentalized. If the audience chooses to operate artistically, a new artwork may be rearticulated in the world, which begins the process over again. In this characterization of audience and artist, the artwork appears reciprocal in nature.

Through this process of encounter, a middle space will be developed; this is a space of production. This space of production abandons the hard parameters of artist and audience and positions the individual or group in a state of constant flux. This shifting is often so subtle that we might not be aware it even exists, but it is there nevertheless. Any artwork considered in this space of production is undeniably, but necessarily, complicated in keeping creativity in a pedagogical space. As Deleuze and Guattari write, it is when the artwork is truly achieved that there is a moment of “genius, [and] there is something that belongs to no school, no period, something that achieves a breakthrough—art as a *process* without goal, but that attains completion as such.”⁸ Sensation links artwork with artist and audience in this process; the old binaries must be disrupted if we might catch a glimpse of this “breakthrough.”

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 1972). 370.

From The Binary

Duchamp does well to distinguish the possibilities in production on a spectrum from artist to spectator since our historical understandings of these respective positions has dictated that they are distinct. This separation of audience and artist is continually reinforced in our contemporary society and can be seen in the division of departments in the University between art and art history. Upon closer examination and under *ideal* circumstances, we begin to see these lines blur. Art history presents deep analysis and illuminates comparisons that other viewers might not be aware of; art history also articulates connections that may go unrealized by the artist. Art presents technical know-how and cultivates a type of so-called artistic thinking that allows the artist to move beyond familiar forms and ideas to uncover something deeper. While the point of emphasis and shaping of the final product can be very different (most obviously with the goal of making physical artworks versus making written observations) both fields begin to converge at the edges. It is no longer enough for an artist to go into the world without being a skilled and discerning viewer; the artist must be articulate about the work they like and that inspires them, and they must be equally articulate about the process and meaning present in their own work. From an outsider's perspective it could seem as if they had become deliberate art historians and theorists. On the other hand, the art historian has

become almost as knowledgeable about the practice of producing art as the artist. The materiality and the media/medium hold meanings and the production of art history enlivens these understandings through close observation. We might keep in mind that art history and art are *not* pursuing the same end product; the process is one of complimentary tasks. However, they *are* both producing; it is the form and the discipline in the production that is different.

But Duchamp is not speaking solely of people who are deeply invested in the art world and the artwork. He uses the word “artist” and “spectator” to distinguish the two groups of people. The inference is that the artist is a professional and while the spectator may be a professional as well, they could just as easily be a casual observer. The genius of Duchamp’s argument gives the spectator equal power in the relationship no matter the level of professional training. In chapter 3 of this dissertation, I invoked the work of several art historians and theorists (Kubler, Greenberg, Fried, Clark, Bürger, Fer) in an attempt to understand how art production shapes our conceptions for what counts as creativity in art. A reader may disagree with any or all of these historians’ conclusions but we cannot help but notice their scholarly diligence. What is unique in Duchamp’s argument is that none of this scholarly diligence counts for much. Someone like Clement Greenberg and the naïve, reluctant art observer is not presented in any sort of hierarchal structure; in fact, they are not distinct. In this way, Duchamp’s argument is incredibly democratic. While the

leveling between spectators' experiences is certainly true in Duchamp's argument, it must also be stated that it is something like Greenberg's taste, scholarship, persuasion, and advocacy that might have put artwork in front of the reluctant spectator in the first place by holding some influence over the field of people who present art work in museums and galleries. If that paradox does not complicate this picture enough, what can be said about artworks from artists whose practices engage the audience directly and fall in the modes of relational aesthetics and social and interventionist art practices?⁹ Certainly the distinction becomes further blurred as these works conscript the spectator into service at a certain time and place to actually produce the physical artwork.¹⁰ If a true spectator is not present, the piece has only a life akin to a professional sports event played in an empty stadium; the game goes on, but the context that in part makes it a meaningful game has disappeared. Already the borders of in the roles of spectator and artist have begun to break down.

And where is the creative act? Does it lie with the artist who conceives of the parameters of the project or the spectator who lives inside these parameters or executes their instructions? Or somewhere in between? Perhaps it is hard to

⁹ I use these terms in the spirit of another art historian not addressed here: Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* ([Dijon]: Les Presses du réel, 2009). Bourriaud defines the term as, "Aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks on the basis of the inter-human relations which they represent, produce and prompt" (112). It has taken on a shorthand meaning to talk about artworks that engage with their audience more directly than simply being observed on a wall. Bourriaud is also responsible for writing, "Art is the state of encounter" (18). This has undoubtedly influenced my thinking throughout the dissertation.

¹⁰ The directional wall drawings of Sol LeWitt are one example.

define the parameters for the creative act in artistic production because the parameters themselves become overrun. When Felix Guattari writes of the “incessant clash of art against its established boundaries,”¹¹ he illustrates that the difficulty of defining parameters for artwork is in the nature of artworks themselves. This idea of a constant redefining and remarking the boundaries of art is potentially difficult for both the artist and spectator because the ground appears to shift subtly under their feet. Clean categorizations make for measurable outcomes and so the creative act exists here in (at least) two ways. In the first type of creative act, the act exists inside the boundaries—the givens—of particular parameters. The creative act generates something new and this newness is almost immediately recognized because of its place inside the parameters. The second type of creative act does exactly what Guattari notes here: it clashes against the established boundaries with a violence that makes it initially unrecognizable. Art in our time period struggles to acknowledge both types of creativity with the obvious caveat that the first categorization is easier to grasp than the second.

A concrete example of this phenomenon where art overruns its boundaries can be found in Tino Sehgal’s *This Progress*, which was staged at the Guggenheim in 2010. The Guggenheim is the famous museum designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and is probably most well known for its interior structure as a

¹¹ Guattari, *Chaosmosis : An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. 106.

rotunda. Sehgal's decision to use the structure of the museum as a part of the artwork is not entirely unique to artists as the building serves both as the architectural foundation for a key scene in Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 3*¹² and as the structural skeleton for Ann Hamilton's *human carriage*.¹³ What makes Sehgal's piece unique is that the building has been completely stripped bare of any artwork or set design. Here's how Sehgal's piece operates: You enter the museum and at the bottom of the ramp you encounter a nine or ten-year old child who informs you, "This is a piece by Tino Sehgal."¹⁴ You are then invited to walk with them. As you walk, the child asks for your definition of progress as well as an example of this definition. After a short duration, the child introduces you to a teenager, and then summarizes your discussion before slipping away. You continue to walk up the rotunda discussing progress with this teenager until you

¹² Matthew Barney, *Cremaster 3* (New York: Palm Pictures, 2003). This film is part of a sequence of five feature length films, all of which can be classified as neo-surrealist. In the sequence at the Guggenheim, Barney's protagonist scales the interior walls of the museum, stopping at each level to complete a task, often under physical duress. On the top level of the museum, the sculptor Richard Serra is throwing liquid Vaseline in a manner reminiscent of his thrown lead pieces from early in his career.

¹³ Scarlet Cheng, "'the Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia: 1860-1989' at the Guggenheim," *Los Angeles Times* (2009), <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-ca-asia1-2009feb01,0,2208632.story>. Where Barney's piece can be said to be a struggle against the gravity of the building, Hamilton's piece embraces it. Her installation/performance involves a pulley system and slender pipe that allows for a small carriage to descend at differing speeds from the top of the museum to the bottom. When the carriage reaches its destination at the bottom, it triggers a stack of books to be dropped. Cheng writes of the piece, "The work is an expression of the often invisible process of cultural transmission and knowledge," which is apropos for this chapter as well.

¹⁴ Holland Cotter, "Art Review - Tino Sehgal - Thinking Encounters in a Naked Guggenheim - Nytimes.Com," *The New York Times* (2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/arts/design/01tino.html?pagewanted=all>. All of the description of the piece comes from Cotter's review. It has been reworded except for areas that are in quotation marks.

are introduced to another person, who is older, perhaps in their thirties. The summary is given and the teenager slips off as a new conversation with the thirty-year old develops. Eventually you are introduced to someone who is in their late fifties or early sixties and the cycle repeats, all the while climbing further and further up the ramp. And then, “as if on cue,”¹⁵ your partner announces, “The piece is called ‘This Progress’,” before walking away, leaving you to head back down the ramp on your own. Unlike most exhibitions, there are no labels on the walls to explain what has just happened, you only can focus on the memory of the event.¹⁶

If we think of a binary of artist and audience, Sehgal’s work seems to blur any easy distinction that might be used to distinguish one from the other. First, since this piece is performative, determining if and where the artist performs in the piece is difficult. The work of the theater is more analogous here, as it appears as if this whole project was orchestrated in much the same way that a director would stage a play. Sehgal casts his participants and then runs them through a series of interactive exercises.¹⁷ In the piece itself, only the progression of participants and the beginning and ending phrases of *This Progress* are scripted; everything else is variable depending upon who is participating and the direction the conversation takes. That the conversations

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Arthur Lubow, "Making Art out of an Encounter - Nytimes.Com," Ibid., <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17seghal-t.html?ref=design>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

feel fluid in this peripatetic exhibition is a testament to the individuals who are cast and to their preparation. Which brings us to the next point. This artwork cannot actually *work* without an audience. Duchamp has shown us that the audience is necessary in the creative act, but Sehgal winds the audience so tightly into the artwork that it ceases to function if they are not there and participating. This makes the piece unique to the participants, since it develops along conversations that you are expressly involved in. At the same time, if you attempt to engage in some sort of passive resistance by not participating in the conversations, or the walk, the piece simply grinds to a halt. Holland Cotter writes of his experience with the piece as, “[A]wkward, rambling, indeterminate, peppered with doubt and ambiguity...I felt stirred up, but light and refreshed...It really does have no answers.”¹⁸ This exhibition creates a form that manifests the “incessant clash of art against its established boundaries.” What was once an obvious line of demarcation between audience and artist has been made permeable.

Except that Sehgal’s art not only works to upset the audience/artist binary, it also plays with broader cultural norms too. Sehgal’s work is noted by not only his refusal of wall text to explain or announce his work, but also a refusal of documentation of any kind. The images of *This Progress* that show up

¹⁸ Holland Cotter, "Art Review - Tino Sehgal - Thinking Encounters in a Naked Guggenheim - Nytimes.Com," Ibid., <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/arts/design/01tino.html?pagewanted=all>.

in reviews like Holland Cotter's are not licensed images from Sehgal's gallery, but images taken from cell phones from museum visitors. Furthermore, Sehgal prohibits catalogs of his work to be sold.¹⁹ He does sell his work, as editioned pieces while he retains an artist's proof, but the conditions of the sale can appear Byzantine:

Since there can be no written contract, the sale of a Sehgal piece must be conducted orally, with a lawyer or a notary public on hand to witness it. The work is described; the right to install it for an unspecified number of times under the supervision of Sehgal or one of his representatives is stipulated; and the price is stated. The buyer agrees to certain restrictions, perhaps the most important being the ban on future documentation, which extends to any subsequent transfers of ownership.²⁰

Sehgal's work does not simply blur the distinction between artist and audience but also blurs distinctions on those who would deal with art as a commodity or collectable.²¹ Sehgal is not against the sale of his work;²² instead, he makes the sale of his work conditional and relational. And while people who purchase his work speak of the great difficulty in negotiating a sale,²³ the difficulty comes from

¹⁹ Arthur Lubow, "Making Art out of an Encounter - Nytimes.Com," Ibid., <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17seghal-t.html?ref=design>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dorothea von Hantelmann has published an interesting examination of Seghal's work in relation to a few other contemporary artists and is helpful for further research. Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art : The Meaning of Art's Performativity* (Zürich; Dijon: JRP Ringier ; Les Presses du Réel, 2010).

²² Arthur Lubow, "Making Art out of an Encounter - Nytimes.Com," *The New York Times* (2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17seghal-t.html?ref=design>.

²³ Ibid. Yasmil Raymond addresses the difficulty in acquiring a Seghal work for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis: "“At the Walker, they have six board meetings a year, and this was the most difficult one I ever was at. It was the only time someone on the acquisitions committee voted

how different this sale is from the established norms. This is to say that even the sale of a Sehgal work has the potential of an encounter.

Recall that this section addresses the dissolution of any easy categorization between audience and artist. Through a brief study of Sehgal's work, we see that the artwork has the potential to address broader social norms as well. What we have witnessed in this work is a change in thinking and cultural perception. In *Constructions*, the philosopher John Rajchman notes this shift as a change from the regime of the "clear and distinct" in Cartesian philosophy to a *regime of light*, where the viewers' understanding of something shifts in relation to their positioning. Rajchman writes:

The 'vision' of modernism meant a *replacement* of what was already there; the 'vision' of contextualism meant an *emplacement* with respect to what was already there...It is just when vision becomes multiple, complicating, and 'perspectival' in this way that Hermes becomes nomadic, inhabiting the intervals and the midst of things rather than carrying messages from one place—or one master—to another.²⁴

It is in understanding creativity as a regime of light, where we witness the complexity of our contextual environment, that we unmake any easy binary in the creative act. We respect that this dualistic logic still remains attractive in

against an acquisition. There was a small insurrection. Three people abstained, and one voted against it. It was a polemical reaction. Then all the other board members had to defend and insist on why they were voting for this. They were really articulate on why the Walker had to acquire the work, about supporting unsafe ideas, on the risk of creativity and artistic practice."

²⁴ Rajchman, *Constructions*. 27.

many aspects of our contemporary society, but this logic appears as only one possibility instead of as a totality.

The Desiring Machine

If the previous section dealt with the dissolution of easy binaries, we might wonder if there is more complex way that we can explain the nature of creativity in the artist. One potential explication of this process comes from looking to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of machines. In the duo's work, the individual is both a machine and a collection of machines. This idea alone takes some explication and an interesting starting point is in the artwork of Andy Warhol. Warhol was famously quoted as saying he wanted to make art like a machine.²⁵ It is a challenging quote coming from Warhol in much the same way it is a challenging idea from Deleuze and Guattari because, at least on its surface, it seems to rob the individual of any autonomy or agency. Furthermore, it is an especially challenging quote for an art world that has been focused on the idea of the great, genius, male painter. When Warhol speaks of being like a machine, he is addressing the idea of producing without judgment and emotion. He wanted literally anyone to be able to make his work and ultimately found satisfaction in this idea of production. A machine's strength, in Warhol's mind, is

²⁵ Gene Swenson and Andy Warhol, "Andy Warhol Interview with Gene Swenson (November 1963)," in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000 : An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003). 748.

to be able to produce the same thing over and over again without bias or restraint. The machine is given the parameters and supplied with the materials and it produces until it breaks.

In the same interview from 1963 on the meaning and purpose of Pop Art, Warhol gives two other quotes worth considering in this context. The first remark is that “liking things” is like being a machine in that “we do it over and over again.”²⁶ This idea places the audience specifically in the role of the consumer and, like we have seen with Sehgal’s work, we see begin to see *our* complexity linked with the complexity of a market economy. Moreover, it fits in with the most readily defined characteristics of Pop Art, which conflates the importance of art objects and popular, consumable objects. A spectator of Pop Art exercises their taste twice in that the liking of a popular object can lead to liking an art object and vice versa. Earlier in this chapter we saw Duchamp assert that the spectator is as important in the creative process as the artist. If Duchamp’s logic were to hold true, Pop Art’s conflation of art objects and popular objects reinforces art as a particular type of market economy. Relentless consumption can be the audience’s creative act. Warhol reinforces this idea as his interview continues:

It's hard to be creative and it's also hard not to think what you do is creative or hard not to be called creative because everybody is always

²⁶ Ibid. 747

talking about that and individuality. Everybody's always being creative.²⁷

One interpretation we might glean from this quote is that “being creative” and “liking things” are ideas that everyone in Western culture does repetitively. If these acts are repeated, they suggest a level of predictability. Furthermore, the actions of a person can be observed—utilizing terminology from Deleuze and Guattari—on a “molecular” level where we can see an individual’s agency and, at the same time, we can observe the “molar” level of many people at once.²⁸

As a quick example of this, keep in mind that if I purchase a book I *really want* to read on the Internet, my purchase is linked to my past purchases and, via an algorithm, immediate suggestions are generated for other books I might want to consume. “Liking things” becomes its own type of production. An uneasy space is generated where I become unsure if I really want this book, or if some larger force has influenced my thinking to the point that my tastes have become

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 183. The terms molar and molecular are introduced in *Anti-Oedipus* but are used elsewhere throughout their works. When the duo uses “molar” they are describing “large aggregates, large social machines [like] the economic, the political...and this entails searching for *what they mean* by applying them to an abstract familial whole that is thought to contain the secret of the libido: in this way, one remains in the framework of representation” (183). When the duo uses “molecular” they are referring to the “elements that form the parts and the wheels of desiring-machines. One searches for the way in which these machines *function*, for how they invest and undermine the social machines that they constitute of a large scale” (Ibid.). It is important to note two things from these definitions: First, they do not work separately from each other; they are always intertwined. Second, creativity in art, music, poetry, and cinema is characterized as beginning on the molecular level. Tom Conley writes, “The molecular sensibility is found in Deleuze’s appreciation of microscopic things, in the tiny perceptions or inclinations that destabilize perception as a whole” in Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary*. (178). Conley’s definition of both the molecular and molar (found in Parr on pages 175-179) are helpful for further understanding without tackling the entirety of Deleuze and Guattari’s writings.

predictable. This is one of the capacities of capitalism: our desires can both feel like agency in a given situation *and*, at the same time, become predictable enough to be captured by marketing.

Warhol doesn't see this flattening of our individuality as problematic. In fact, his desire for a machinic quality to his own work reflects an aspirational ideal for others:

You ought to be able to be an Abstract-Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling you've given up something...If an artist can't do any more, then he should just quit; and an artist ought to be able to change his style without feeling bad.²⁹

Rather than be conscripted to a particular style, any artist should be free to make anything. The audience likes things, exercises taste, and will ultimately find an art-product they can embrace equally with the artist. And since we artists and spectators are all being creative all the time, a flattening occurs destroying hierarchies and allowing a space to emerge where an infinite number of connections could be made.

It is in this repetition of creativity and art making that the potential of art comes forward. Deleuze writes about this in the conclusion to *Difference and Repetition* in a way that seems liberating and stresses the power art has in repetition. Deleuze writes:

²⁹ Swenson and Warhol, "Andy Warhol Interview with Gene Swenson (November 1963)." 748.

Art does not imitate, above all because it repeats; it repeats all the repetitions, by virtue of an internal power (an imitation is a copy, but art is simulation, it reverses copies into simulacra). Even the most mechanical, the most banal, the most habitual and the most stereotyped repetition finds a place in works of art, it is always displaced in relation to other repetitions, and it is subject to the condition that a difference may be extracted from it for these other repetitions. For there is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life. The more our daily life appears standardized, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition, and even in order to make the two extremes resonate - namely, the habitual series of consumption and the instinctual series of destruction and death.³⁰

As can be seen here, art possesses the ability to move more freely between standardized points. Of course, this is not to say that art always achieves this end; without it we wouldn't have the schools of artists and artistic output that are presented when studying art through a historical lens. But the ability of the creative act to extract these "little differences" in repetition remains an inherent value in both art and life. It is remarkable, too, that Deleuze mentions Warhol's serialized pieces as examples of a way of breaking apart heavily routinized activities where "all the repetitions of habit, memory and death are conjugated."³¹ Again, hierarchy has been flattened and an infinite number of connections can be made. Now these "little differences" in even our most banal activities have the capacity for connection.

³⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. 293.

³¹ Ibid. 294.

Through Warhol and Deleuze, the creative act does not need to be some sort of virtuosic flare. It is the subtle interaction with the artwork that is as important as any large movement. This is one of the reasons that Foucault refers to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as a "book of ethics" that "ferret[s] out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior."³² Fascism need not be extreme here either. Foucault writes of the "fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior."³³ This fascism becomes so normalized that it can go unrecognized; it is these varieties of facism that are the "petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives."³⁴ The creative act then becomes not only a capacity for connections for the artist who makes the work and plays with the understanding of his or her own life, it also holds the potential for an encounter for the audience, where an artwork has more possibility than simply as a consumable object. With all this in mind, the creative act has the potential for everyone to create an encounter in a gallery, museum or studio experience. Furthermore, the creative act can be seen in the everyday. The flattening of hierarchies dictates that an encounter no longer needs a specific context like a museum, while still allowing that a specific context may allow more for an encounter more easily. It is in the aspiration of creativity that the spectator begins to see new connections become possible, no matter how quiet they might

³² In Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. xiii.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. xiv.

first appear.

Connections

To simply state the term “connections” as I have in the previous section and assume that we all understand what that means is to be too general. What is being connected? How could these connections be further understood? In the depth of *Anti-Oedipus*, it is Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *desire* that becomes illuminating in illustrating these connections. By placing desire with connections, we might begin to see how creativity works. It might appear that by introducing an idea like desire explicitly into this argument that the machinic understanding of human beings is undermined, but this is not true for Deleuze and Guattari. From the first paragraph the authors want the reader to understand a human can be thought of as a machine or a series of machines. “It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats.”³⁵ By beginning in this way, the reader is allowed to understand there are universal processes at play in human physiology and these processes are not always pleasant or utopian. And while these processes are universal, what changes in each individual is the way these processes *connect*. “The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth is a machine

³⁵ Ibid. 1.

coupled to it.”³⁶ All of these tiny connections between machines form something; “something is produced” and whatever this “something” might be, it is a result of this machinic process.³⁷ As the authors make clear, this is a process but this process “must not be viewed as a goal or an end to itself, nor must it be confused with an infinite perpetuation of itself.”³⁸

As an example here, consider the act of breathing as a machine. Breathing is an involuntary act that occurs naturally without our conscious thought like that of our heartbeat or digestion processes. Like any of these machinic processes when atomized, breathing can be mind-bendingly complex. However breathing is unique among most involuntary acts because we are able to hold our breath, which obviously cannot be said of our beating heart. And what happens when you hold your breath? At first, things appear normal but there is a conscious noticing of the pause in rhythm. Slowly, the rest of your body begins to react to your decision; pain increases in your chest, the heart rate elevates, pressure builds in your mouth and head, and a feeling of panic sets off in the brain. Eventually, you are forced to give in and exhale forcefully and inhale until you resume your normal breathing rate. Breathing as a machine affects the other machines of your body and, at the same time, the experience of the world. If, terrifyingly, oxygen becomes scarce in an enclosed room, your

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid. 2.

³⁸ Ibid. 5.

body as machine responds both physiologically (the heart rate quickens) and psychologically (panic). If, soothingly, you lie flat on your back and focus on each breath in a comfortable, darkened room with little distraction a meditative effect might be generated. Breathing is certainly not an end to itself and while we might wish for its infinite perpetuation, there is at least a small part of our psychological thought that knows this will not be the case. It is this range of multiple possibilities for breathing that is useful. Breathing possesses the ability to power the physical activity of the body *and* becomes a necessary, interdependent part of an environmental cycle *and* reflects and stimulates a variety of emotional responses including terror, calm, or exhaustion. Only now has breathing achieved the idea of process written about by Deleuze and Guattari. When we say, 'we breathe,' the activity might appear as a fixed idea or even a product of human biology. But once attention is granted to the act of breathing, it becomes a process. And like any machinic process, breathing can shift depending upon the other machines connected to it. Additionally, this act is both personal and universal.

With the idea that an act may be both personal and universal, the question returns to how the *desire* for production manifests itself in any machine. Deleuze and Guattari present two machines that function at the same time in any person: a desiring-machine and a social-machine. The desiring-machine is a complex machine. Perhaps the best conception of the desiring-machine and

what it can do comes from Felix Guattari. “What defines desiring-machines,” Guattari writes, “is precisely their capacity for an unlimited number of connections, in every sense and in all directions. It is for this very reason that they are machines, crossing through and commanding several structures at the same time.”³⁹ On its surface, if we were to consider this definition in relationship to creativity, it might appear tempting to just think of this in individualist terms. But the truth is that Guattari’s definition of desiring-machines is not bounded by a limit; the connections are infinite and ceaseless. This infinite capacity of the desiring-machine is due to the fact that the desiring-machine is a process with no point of arrival. If we assume individual creativity and the desiring-machine are one in the same, individual creativity would appear inexhaustible. This simply is not true for at least two reasons. The most obvious and blunt reason is that the individual dies. We will grow old and our machines will sputter and break. The second reason that individual creativity is not inexhaustible is that, as stated earlier in this dissertation, creativity requires a form or structure to make itself visible; desiring-machines know no such limit. A desiring-machine infinitely connects and can command several structures at the same time; the machine remains unnecessarily limited if considered solely in terms of the individual.

Daniel Smith brings us to this very point in a different way when he writes of the mass marketing that occurs in our consumer society nothing that:

³⁹ Félix Guattari, *Chaosophy : Texts and Interviews 1972-1977*, ed. Sylvere Lotringer (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009). 96.

“[Y]our desire – that is, your drives and affects – are not your own, so to speak. They are, if I can put it this way, part of the capitalist infrastructure; they are not simply your own individual mental or psychic reality (Deleuze and Guattari [A/O], p. 30). Nothing makes this more obvious than the effects of marketing, which are directed entirely at the manipulation of the drives and affects.”⁴⁰

It is in the effects of marketing where the social-machine is most obviously at work. Recall Warhol’s proclamation from above that “everyone is being creative” and everyone is always “liking things” with machinic characteristics. Warhol’s work conflated high art with consumable goods and hierarchies were collapsed. In this context, the individual does not appear as an individual at all. Our distinctiveness blurs with our larger socio-cultural context. This is also why programmers work so hard to predict everything from an individual’s grocery shopping inclinations to voting habits with algorithms. The desire of the algorithm in our culture is to be well enough designed that it is able to, in essence, remove any need for choice from an individual. Here is the exact laundry detergent you desired; here are the books you desire; here is the art you desire.

This example paints the social-machine in a too subjectifying and negative light, though. This is not to say that there is a subjectifying power in the social-machine as Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate with Elias Canetti’s *Crowds and Power* and Canetti’s identification of the paranoiac’s ability to organize “masses

⁴⁰ Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards an Immanent Theory of Ethics," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan J. Jun and Daniel W. Smith (2011). 137.

and the pack.”⁴¹ But as Canetti demonstrates as well, there is a power and energy prevalent in a social organization that cannot always be predicted or controlled. Canetti writes:

A crowd always wants to grow. There are no natural boundaries to its growth. When such boundaries have been artificially created...an eruption of the crowd is always possible and will, in fact, happen from time to time.⁴²

In a crowd the individual’s desiring-machines are fed by and feed other people’s desiring machines; the crowd develops a desiring machine of its own that is social. The social-machine will dictate the terms of the desiring-machine until an artificial boundary will appear. This artificial boundary serves to build a type of pressure on the social and desiring machines; what happens next may seem small and insignificant but, “*In the unconscious it is not the lines of pressure that matter, but on the contrary the lines of escape.*”⁴³ These “lines of flight”⁴⁴ have the potential to change the nature of a social-machine and the individual; they

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 279.

⁴² Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (New York: Viking Press, 1962). 29.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 338. (emphasis in the original).

⁴⁴ *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 3. While “flight” appears several times in *Anti-Oedipus*, “lines of flight” becomes a dominant recurring term in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Like any term from Deleuze and Guattari, it is difficult to define but I think this placement of the term in association with their concept of the rhizome provides an understanding useful for this dissertation and for creativity at large: “There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad” (9).

reverberate. The process of this reverberation will not stagnate in a product; it remains a process.

We began this chapter with a separation between artist and audience but several times now we have seen these designations break down. Time and time again, and perhaps despite our best efforts, we desire to understand our place in the world as an *individual*. After all, *I* desire to breath. I am in *control* of my desires. But what does my breath tell me about your breath? Or your desire? It remains a difficult, perhaps impossible, task to define all our desires and how they might be shaped. What we are left trying to understand instead is *how they work*. This is how it might work for the artist and audience: The artist constructs an artwork, the audience takes that artwork and makes something new with it; in return another artist picks up the idea and the process continues. It becomes like breathing. The artist exhales and inhales with the world; the audience inhales and exhales with the world; in both cases each breath is different from the last. Under close, molecular examination it becomes difficult to tell whose breath is whose. As a result of our desire to understand how we might retain our individuality in the face of this, the characteristics of the artist and audience are teased apart. This separation along the lines of artist and audience generates a type of social-machine that privileges some tasks while denying others. And this process continues until the arbitrary nature of the borders become recognized and are reified or broken down. While the audience can certainly be further

theorized, my focus returns to how creativity might work for an individual in this flattened hierarchy, which is what the next section seeks to address.

Le pli

Deleuze ends *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* by writing: “We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments, but we all remain Leibnizian because what matters is folding, unfolding, refolding.”⁴⁵ Through Deleuze, the fold becomes a powerful idea of how we might interact with the world around us. We might also understand the channeling of our behaviors that occur as a result of the created boundaries and forces in our daily lives. It is here that an individual understanding of creativity comes to the forefront. When John Rajchman writes of “folding” he notes: “[T]he aim of the game is not to rediscover the eternal or universal but to find the conditions under which something new can be created.”⁴⁶ This “something new” is a creative act. And it is through Rajchman’s use of the fold that we might further see how the social-machine and the desiring-machine work in conjunction with each other.

To accomplish this task, the lexicon Deleuze chose to use must be taken as seriously as Deleuze took it. Rajchman illuminates Deleuze’s ability to choose words that both honor that term’s philosophical heritage and, at the same time, remain open-ended enough to address complex philosophical ideas

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *The Fold : Leibniz and the Baroque*. 137.

⁴⁶ Rajchman, *Constructions*. 33.

like texture and the fold. As an example, Rajchman writes of Deleuze's linguistic propensity:

[T]he words belonging to the texture and the fold family have a philosophical use and lineage, for the weaving or plex- words (like complexity and perplexity) and the folding or plic- words (like complication and implication) define, in modern European languages, a family whose members include terms like imply and explain with important places in the philosophical lexicon. Indeed the last words of Deleuze's book might be read as saying, "We are still implicating, explicating, replicating."⁴⁷

While Rajchman has put his reader in the linguistic context of the fold, he also alerts them to the fact that some of these ideas have been with Deleuze throughout his philosophical career. Hints of the fold appear twenty years earlier in Deleuze's conclusion to *Difference and Repetition*. In the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, one of the issues Deleuze approaches is the idea of a "problem," which he critiques as an idea that is "completely determined."⁴⁸ To address this "problem," Deleuze introduces a series of *-pli* terms: "perplication," "complication," "implication," "explication," and "replication."⁴⁹ Each term represents a differentiating process when addressing a problem; this is to say that these terms vary our understanding of both a "problem" and a "solution"

⁴⁷ Ibid. 15.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. 280. When reading this from Deleuze, it is hard not think of Duchamp's famous quote that I referenced in the second chapter, "There is no solution because there is no problem."

⁴⁹ Ibid. 280-1.

because they move beyond the idea where a problem only presents one solution.⁵⁰

The *-pli* term that Deleuze defines and is most useful in this particular chapter is “perplication.” The term is based in calculus and utilized by Deleuze to refer to “Ideas, with their multiplicities and coexistent varieties, their determination of elements, their distribution of mobile singularities and their formations of an ideal series around these singularities.”⁵¹ Additionally, Deleuze writes one other clarification of the term by stating that perplication “designates something other than a conscious state;”⁵² this allows perplication to be associated with production. Deleuze and Guattari contend, “The great discovery of psychoanalysis was that of...the productions of the unconscious” where we find the unconscious as a factory that produces.⁵³ Rajchman adds to the understanding of the term by suggesting that perplings “are ‘cross-foldings’ that introduce a creative distantiation into the midst of things” all the while they “unearth ‘within’ a space the complications that take shape ‘outside’ itself, or its frame, and fold it again.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid. Deleuze utilizes mathematics to demonstrate this point. Upper level mathematics appears increasingly paradoxical under examination. My favorite example of this is the Cantor Set, which basically finds that a finite line is unaccountably infinite. This mathematical move beyond the paradox of something that is both finite *and* infinite is where Deleuze sets his focus. See this for a brief explanation on set theory: Thomas Jech, "Set Theory," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2002).

⁵¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. 280.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 24.

⁵⁴ Rajchman, *Constructions*. 18.

It is through perplication that both the complexity inherent in the fold and the privileging Deleuze puts on the multiple comes to be understood. “A defining principle of Deleuze’s own philosophy” Rajchman writes, “is that the Multiple comes first, before the One.”⁵⁵ Dualistic arguments might appear attractive because they appear easier to comprehend, but when we perpicate these arguments we hold space in between the points being made. Perplication makes total comprehension of an argument impossible; it prevents the argument’s distillation and preserves its complexity and, by extension, the multiple. This is a positive task. As part of outlining Deleuze’s linguistic usage, Rajchman identifies the “multiple” as having its deepest roots in Western thinking, tracing its genesis from the “Latin ‘enfolding’ of the Greek and thus to the Greek or dialectical fold.”⁵⁶ The multiple is what we return to time and time again in Western culture; it is also the lens that most influences Deleuze’s concepts; with each return—or repetition—we have made a fold of our own which shifts our point-of-view too; no matter how much shifting we undergo, our new position can never be the same as a previous one. “[I]n the Deleuzean multiplex, complexity is such that things can never be folded back to a first seeing, to a single source or ‘emanation’ of light.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid. 15

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 24.

The term that comes to mind here in the context of this chapter is, once again, process. Reflecting back upon the concept of the desiring and social machine, these machines are never static by their nature. In reality they are constantly folding, enfolding and unfolding, shifting our position in relation to the world. Perplication tells us that we often process these folds unconsciously, which is positive because it helps us not to have a complete break. Constant conscious perplication would be completely shattering to our sense of self: “Nothing is more disturbing than the incessant movements of what seems immobile.”⁵⁸ We traditionally have required our understanding of ourselves to be static and Cartesian because it roots us firmly on the ground and frames the world. But through the fold, the idea shifts from a “being-in the world” to a “being-for the world” and, in this shift, we see process and an “infinite opening of the finite.”⁵⁹ We become free to inhabit “the intervals, where new foldings arise to take our forms of inhabitation in new and uncharted directions.”⁶⁰ In short, we have become creative.

To this point in the chapter, I have argued that the boundary that develops between characterizations of artist and audience while perhaps necessary, dissolves under close investigation. I have also argued that through the work of artists, we find ourselves in an area where we are being creative all the time and

⁵⁸ Deleuze in Ibid. 11.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *The Fold : Leibniz and the Baroque*. 26.

⁶⁰ Rajchman, *Constructions*. 32.

infinite connections can be made. Now, a Deleuzean “perplication” demonstrates that these connections are being made even in an unconscious state; in fact, they may be *necessarily* unconscious to protect us from a psychological break. To continue the example of breathing, most of our lives are spent *not* focusing on the purposefulness of every breath; the activity becomes routinized and recedes to the background of our day-to-day experience. However, even in the background, it remains *vital*; this vitality becomes unconscious. When we return to focus on our breath, the chance for an encounter occurs.

At the beginning of this chapter, when writing of an audience encounter, I quoted Deleuze: “Something in the world forces us to think...It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed.”⁶¹ While perplication accounts for an infinitely broad understanding of creativity, the idea of an encounter that is *sensed* leads us to creativity as a more observable phenomenon. To account for what is creative in the mind of an artist or audience, we might take this “range of affective tones” into consideration. This is the space of sensation, which must be illuminated if we are to understand how studio art production works.

⁶¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*.

Sensation

If we think of creativity as paired with sensation, we see creativity as observable. Even if creativity is observable in this form, it does not mean that we always have the vocabulary to adequately describe the form. Recall the review of Tino Sehgal's *This Progress* from earlier in this chapter. Holland Cotter wrote that his experience of the conversational piece left him feeling “stirred up” and that he found the work “awkward, rambling, [and] indeterminate” without providing easy answers. Cotter's language reads as if he is searching for meaning in what is a normal day-to-day process of having conversations. While we might describe finding meaning in having conversations as a heavily routinized activity, Sehgal's work allows attention to be called to the process. As a result, Cotter experiences this conversation as sensation.

I use *sensation* as a summarizing term for the “range of affective tones” experienced in an encounter. For Deleuze and Guattari, art is one way sensation can be understood. Actually, the authors are more definitive than that: “The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself.”⁶² That art *is* sensation transforms our conception of creativity from a very broad idea of creativity in perplexity to a more specific one. And what does this sensation do? Deleuze and Guattari answer: “Art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to form a composed chaos that becomes sensory, or from which it extracts a chaotic

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 164.

sensation as variety.”⁶³ We might benefit by remaining with this statement for a moment if we hope to understand art, and by extension creativity, as sensation.

In grasping for meaning within this statement, one important idea to reiterate here is that “Art is *not* chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes as Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos—neither foreseen nor preconceived.”⁶⁴ We can see here that the *process* inherent in art is key; a composition of chaos suggests that connections are made leading to an experience of sensation. The idea that this “composed chaos” cannot be “preconceived” suggests that we are going to create something new. Creating something new is no small task either. Deleuze succinctly presents the difficulty of creating something new in his book on Francis Bacon when describing the work of the painter in the studio:

The painter has many things in his head, or around him, or in his studio. Now everything he has in his head or around him is already in the canvas, more or less virtually, more or less actually, before he begins his work. They are all present in the canvas as so many images, actual or virtual, so that the painter does not have to cover a blank surface but rather would have to empty it out, clear it, clean it.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid. 206. Chaoid is a term utilized by Deleuze and Guattari to acknowledge three subsets of a more totalizing chaos. “In short, chaos has three daughters, depending on the plane that cuts through it: these are the *Chaoids*—art, science, and philosophy—as forms of thought or creation. We call *Chaoids* the realities produced on the planes that cut through the chaos in different ways” (208).

⁶⁴ Ibid. 204. Emphasis added.

⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon : The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). 71.

This is what Deleuze refers to when he writes earlier: “The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with.”⁶⁶ And it is this cliché that informs us there are no blank slates for the artist.

Now, not only is this sensation preconceived, it is also pre-linguistic. This is why we so often find the words hard to come by when describing even the simplest sensation and why the simplest words, like love for example, simply fail to express the *depth* of sensation. It is also why a painter or an artist in general may have such a hard time speaking of their work. Material, experiential, and relational artworks present sensation first. If the artist was able to speak about the work in the process of producing it, it would take on a characteristic of being preconceived, suggesting that the artist knows where the work would be finished. But the artwork is sensation and, as such, it “vibrates” resisting any easy categorization.⁶⁷ In its form, sensation is “pure contemplation;” furthermore, this “contemplating *is* creating.”⁶⁸ Or, to describe it another way, the artist is thinking about how to frame chaos so that it produces variety. On its own, this task is truly difficult. To put language to use in the production of this act can only be done in retrospect and, as such, cannot help but fail the artist in any attempt to describe his or her process in total.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 12.

⁶⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 211.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 212. Emphasis added.

To this point, we can see how an artist responds to sensation in their production of artworks. With sensation, an artist disrupts the cliché to create variety. Earlier in this chapter, I argue that Warhol's work atomizes the barrier between artist and audience. If this is true, it is not enough to address sensation in studio production, sensation must also address the audience as well. And the audience, like the artist, brings their own virtual investment to any artwork. The audience must contemplate the work of art if they are to experience the sensation in an artwork. This contemplation gives space to encounter the work, where the force of the audience's past experiences will recede. The work must be sensed before any language can be given to what that sensation might look like. While the work of art can be fixed as a material object, it does not *communicate* its sensation because communicating implies that the artwork has something specific to say. In writing his essay "What is the Creative Act?" Deleuze illuminates this point for the audience of artworks:

A work of art is not an instrument of communication. A work of art has nothing to do with communication. A work of art does not contain the least bit of information. In contrast, there is a fundamental affinity between a work of art and an act of resistance...[A work of art] is the only thing that resists death. Every act of resistance is not a work of art, even though, in a certain way it is. Every work of art is not an act of resistance, and yet, in a certain way it is.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness : Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995*. 327-8.

That a work of art can stimulate sensation in its audience for thousands of years makes the potential for sensation in contemplating art palpable. The work of art holds this possibility in its form for centuries. This is why the work of art holds the potential to be an encounter.

The artist as audience recognizes the fact that the work of art can resist death but this recognition carries its own force into the studio. When Deleuze writes of clichés in the canvas, this is one of the clichés that operates on its surface: this work has the potential to resist the artist's death. What are the implications of this argument in the studio with the artist? How might this work?

The Gift

When an artist comes to the studio, what do they bring with them? The obvious answer would be to make mention of the materials and tools an artist wants to work with because they are pregnant with the possibilities for production. However there are the foldings and multiples of the artist him or herself that must first be accounted for before even considering the tools at hand. Robert Storr relays the famous quote from John Cage to Philip Guston:

“You know when you enter your studio, everyone is there, the people in your life, other artists, the old masters, everyone. And as you work they

leave, one by one. And if it is a really good working day, well, you leave too.⁷⁰

The quote speaks to the artist as both one and a multiple and strongly echoes Deleuze's assertion that the canvas is full of clichés explored above. And given the fact that many artists today collaborate or have an element of social practice, the multiplication becomes even more apparent. Once again, Deleuze and Guattari wrote in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd."⁷¹ In the light of Cage and the foundation laid prior to this section, this quote from Deleuze and Guattari is the recognition of both the vast complexity an artist brings to the studio and the vast complexity that lies within each individual no matter how they are categorized. When Cage says the artist brings "everyone" to the studio, he is acknowledging the array of artistic thought and the thoughts that influence an artist's studio practice. Adding to the complexity of this idea is that these thoughts are constantly changing, folding, and forming new connections between the materials that have been accumulated.

Heraclitus' famous aphorism, "You cannot step in the same river twice"⁷² is frequently cited as a means of pointing out that the things around us

⁷⁰ Robert Storr, "A Room of One's Own, a Mind of One's Own," in *The Studio Reader : On the Space of Artists*, ed. Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2010). 60.

⁷¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 3.

⁷² Daniel W. Graham, "Heraclitus," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2007).

constantly change. Additionally, as can be seen in the fold, we are constantly changing. You cannot step in the same river twice because the river is constantly changing *and* the person who steps in the river is constantly changing. What makes this fateful step even more complex is that once the step is made, the water and individual change interdependently. The individual changes the flow of the water directly by stepping it, but what if the person is, for example, covered in mud? They have added dirt to the water. The water changes the person too. It could be as obvious as a baptism where the submerging of a person signifies many things, or it could be as simple as cooling a heated body. This is the *sensation* of stepping in the water. Ultimately this step into the water becomes incredibly complex as the person folds, unfolds, and enfolds the experience. The artist—at his or her best—recognizes that with every museum or gallery encounter, they are folding and enfolding new encounters.

This process does not stop with only exposure to works of art. Reading the morning news, listening to music, watching tennis, doing the laundry...all of these acts present the possibility of new information for the artist. If we are attuned enough, everything becomes information for potential artworks. As artists, Allan Kaprow writes, “[W]e admit the usefulness of any subject matter or experience whatsoever.”⁷³ Kaprow later writes of his own encounter with

⁷³ Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). 10.

brushing his teeth and its generative ability to create new knowledge within a routine when he writes:

I began to pay attention to how much this act of brushing my teeth had become routinized, nonconscious behavior, compared with my first efforts as a child. I began to suspect that 99 percent of my daily life was just as routinized and unnoticed; that my mind was always somewhere else; and that the thousand signals my body was sending me each instant were ignored.⁷⁴

The artist is capable of forming his or her knowledge through the attention they give anyone and anything; it is in this attention that something comes to the fore as sensation. Now, the banal routine behavior or the great master painter has equal sway in creating knowledge in the artist. In return, the artist unfolds their experience to the world, consciously and unconsciously. “The artist is a seer, a becomer;”⁷⁵ this is a recognition that an artist’s knowledge will grow and change and, at its best, will resist ossification. Though the understanding of this multiple is readily apparent in the artist, it must be reiterated that this is also one example of the possibility that characterizes any individual *and* group. Dualities have been displaced and connections can ceaselessly be made.

With this mind reflect back to Duchamp’s lecture. As the artist works through the creative act and the process from intention to realization, Duchamp notes the messiness of the whole endeavor: “[The artist’s] struggle toward the

⁷⁴ Ibid. 221.

⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* 171.

realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfaction, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and *must not be fully self-conscious*, at least on the esthetic plane.”⁷⁶ As the artist unfolds the artwork in the studio or on site, perplexation takes place; the conscious sense of self momentarily recedes. The artist is in a middle space where traditional, logical sense does not apply; sensation dominates. This is why often the artist will invoke a muse, or God, or intuition, or whoever and whatever will signify a difference from their day-to-day sense of self. The ground that has stabilized the very human experience of any artist has suddenly appeared not quite as firm. The familiar is now strange and a different type of attention is paid to their surroundings.

Lewis Hyde explicates this idea further in *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World*.⁷⁷ In the introduction, Hyde outright positions art as “a gift, not a commodity.”⁷⁸ He goes on to parse the term into an inner life of art and an outer life of art. The inner life of art deals with the gift as something that “is bestowed upon us...although a talent can be perfected through an effort of the will, no effort in the world can cause its initial appearance.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, this idea of the gift encompasses intuition and inspiration, two words often cited by artists when no other words seem to suffice. “Not I, not I,” D.H. Lawrence writes,

⁷⁶ Duchamp, “The Creative Act (1957).” 972. Emphasis added.

⁷⁷ Lewis Hyde, *The Gift : Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007).

⁷⁸ Ibid. xvi.

⁷⁹ Ibid. .

“but the wind that blows through me.”⁸⁰ Positioned this way, the ability to create in an artist or artists becomes a process with a particular responsibility. Anyone can use a gift or not, but a gift “bestowed” calls for a certain type of care where it must be honored and respected.

The outer life of art belongs to the spectators who, paraphrasing Hyde’s words here, receive the gift.⁸¹ (xvii). Undoubtedly art can exist (and has a price) in commerce, but this does not preclude the ability of art to move a person emotionally. Hyde writes: “The spirit of an artist’s gifts can wake our own...a gift revives the soul.”⁸² One aspect of Hyde’s argument is that seeing property as a gift creates a different type of economy that upends more traditional notions of capitalism. The acquisition of capital for the sake of capital or, as Deleuze and Guattari address in a Marxian way in *Anti-Oedipus*, the perverted economy of holding onto to capital to generate more capital, becomes untangled from an economy that keeps the gift *in motion*. Through Hyde’s work, a gift economy feeds and nourishes as it travels; its function as a gift is compromised if it is held and treated as only capital. In taking property or inspiration as a gift, the reception and creation of artwork engenders care in both the spectator and the artist. This notion is cultivated even in Hyde’s introductory dedication in a turn-of-

⁸⁰ Ibid. This quote also appears in the introduction of Hyde’s book. I have used it several times throughout this dissertation, citing it always to Lawrence and Lawrence alone. But it is Hyde’s conceptual framework that puts Lawrence’s quote in context as an *idea in motion*. By citing it this time in relationship to Hyde’s book, I am trying to honor Hyde’s ideal that works as gifts stay in motion and retain their power in their movement.

⁸¹ Ibid. xvii.

⁸² Ibid.

phrase borrowed, but not cited, from the Gospel of Luke, where he simply writes: “What is good is given back.”⁸³ The gift *must not rest*.

Through Hyde it becomes more obvious how the social and desiring machines can be thought of as one in the same. The reader sees a cycle where groups and individuals receive a personal creation; the creation nourishes them and, in turn, keeps the whole process in motion as it repeats the circuit. In writing this idea so positively, the process appears Pollyannaish, belying the inherent messiness and frustration that can come in the making of an artwork. It is important to emphasize frustration is an inherent part of the social machine; Deleuze and Guattari attribute this messiness to the social machine, which “*in order to function...must not function well*.”⁸⁴ They continue, “The social machine’s limit is not attrition, but rather its misfirings; it can operate only by fits and starts, by grinding and breaking down, in spasms of minor explosions.”⁸⁵ It is a messy process, full of ceaseless connections. And while my task to this point has been to speak generally about sensation, perplication, and ceaseless connections that disrupt binaries and hierarchies, it is worth returning to a specific artist to see how this might work and what we might glean from their process.

⁸³ Ibid. vii.

⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 151. Emphasis in the original.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Desiring Studio Thinking

The artwork and studio process of William Kentridge provides an excellent example of perplexation and sensation present in artistic creativity not only because his artwork has been extensively profiled but also because he has eloquently spoken at length about his work, most recently giving the Norton lectures at Harvard University in 2012. While the topics in these lectures were varied, and even circularly argued, each lecture began with an art piece Kentridge himself had made. Time and time again he returned to his studio as a touchstone for the points he was making; his studio, while obviously a place, also functions as a metaphor. As the lectures evolve, one could argue the studio became a stand-in for the type of thinking Kentridge was addressing. While Deleuze and Guattari were never mentioned by name, there is considerable overlap between the work of the duo and the ideas and thinking privileged in Kentridge's lecture. Kentridge spoke of the in-between spaces, the multiplicities of thought in an individual (including the constant shifting from maker to viewer and the space in-between these poles), the shifting of time, and a space free from judgment where a "repression of evaluating, in advance of the action, the value of the thought"⁸⁶ can occur. It is in this studio that Kentridge finds a place where he is free to experiment, where an analogy could be made between the art studio and scientific laboratory. The social and desiring machines are

⁸⁶ William Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Four: Practical Epistemology - Life in the Studio," in *The Norton Lectures* (April 10, 2012).

differently calibrated in this studio space so the artist can function in the midst of creation instead of at a point. It is here the artist can begin to shift perspective. If the artist requires a physical studio space to work within, like Kentridge does, the unfoldings that occur in the studio are often very different from other unfoldings that take place with the world. How could we account for this difference?

When reflecting on John Cage's earlier idea of the artist bringing everyone to the studio, Cage appears to reference a dominant characteristic of the social machine, but as inclusive as he attempts to be, even Cage has stopped too short here. As is apparent from sensation in the previous section of this chapter, the artist brings more than "everyone" to the studio; the artist brings their entire history and all of their scholarship with them; moreover, the entirety of an individual's experience is at play. Kentridge speaks of a fluidity of thought in the studio where ideas that have long been dormant suddenly—and seemingly from nowhere—leap to the surface. This same fluidity of thought is on stage and enfolded in his Norton lectures, which, despite the artist referring to them as lectures, can be read as performance pieces of their own accord. In these lectures Kentridge veers from an analysis of Plato's cave to a variety of meditations on embodied and historical ideas of linear time *and* also to Kentridge's memories of his own childhood art lessons and stories from his parents. The lectures themselves are impeccably assembled so that even the accidents seem purposeful...everything has a sensation of determined

inevitability. The audience has a sense of watching something be created, which is quite different from looking at something that is considered a finished product. In these final sections of this chapter, in order to understand the foldings and functions of the machines in and out of the studio, I must demonstrate that a sensation of determined inevitability remains as a sensation that is not “preconceived” or “foreseen.” How does Kentridge undermine the preconceived in his creative act? How does he clear out his own clichés? What might this show us about Kentridge’s creativity and creativity in general?

We might think of entering into the studio with “everyone” as recognition that an artist’s frontal cortex is making the decision to bring him or her into this space, much in the same way the artist has made other free choices about areas of academic study in his or her past.⁸⁷ The so-called intelligent thought that has accumulated into what might be called *knowledge* is brought into the interior of the studio where these academic ideas can be peripatetic and

⁸⁷ I am assuming agency for the artist and individuals in general. While this is a rather large assumption (that may very well not be true), my argument to this point, and below, contends that agency is difficult but not impossible. Part of our agency is our ability to unpack the vast array of forces that influence us, while at the same time *recognizing* this is an infinite task. One curious idea to ponder: In a recent interview with Krista Tippet, Brian Greene, the theoretical physicist, had this to say: “I do strongly believe, based on what we know today, and that could change when we have deeper understanding tomorrow, that all of consciousness, all of our emotions, is nothing but some physical process playing out inside this messy, gray blob inside of our heads. That, to me, does not diminish consciousness. It does not diminish the experience of love, or happiness, or sadness, or any of those things that make us human, but it does, I think, reveal the true underlying process responsible for those sensations.” Krista and Greene Tippet, Brian, “Transcript: Brian Greene — Reimagining the Cosmos,” *On Being: Reimagining the Cosmos* (2014). Greene does not believe in free will but still believes in the *sensation* associated with these decisions. Through Greene, going into the studio would be a sensation, but not a choice. This is a topic worth pursuing beyond the scope of this dissertation.

experiences can fold. Therefore, the ideal studio can be thought of as a way of being-for the world, rather than a physical location. This is not to say that a physical location is not important, especially if the environment is a comfortable one for the artist. With this in mind, the studio for an artist is, to put it succinctly, where the artist chooses it to be. It may be a warehouse but it may be in a coffee shop or on a walk; *the studio is a call for a particular type of thinking and attention*. This should not be confused with a Cartesian mind/body split; this call for attention is a mental process *and* a physical process, not an either/or proposition. The mental and physical machines ceaselessly connect too, folding, enfolding and unfolding. The way an artist understands his or her body in a space can correlate to how they process creative thought and contemplate sensation, which is why it may be helpful for artists to designate a space removed from other influences to engage in their studio practice. The studio is often thought of as a noun but it appears as a verb through perplication.

Remember, too, that art plays a special role in thought for Deleuze and Guattari. It is how the individual encounters forces. For the most part, the duo consider this encounter from the audience's perspective—which is their perspective—but the artist functions in the studio as both producer and often, but not always, as the first viewer. When force is atomized it also appears as a multiple too. For the artist, force can feel like desire. The idea of invoking a muse who stimulates or makes the artwork was suggested in detail in Chapter 4 where

both Plato and monks referenced an otherworldly power stimulating creativity. This idea reflects the experience of many artists, where the making of the work comes from a seemingly different place, a place that is less *logical*—again, the wind blows *through* D. H. Lawrence. While Kentridge does not reference a specific muse in his Norton lectures, he does address this idea that the desire to make an artwork comes from its own place. He speaks of feeling a desire to make the work coming from a place within or behind his pectoral muscles; the force of the artwork here created a feeling as if the artwork was trying to leap from his body.⁸⁸ This force from within or maybe through the artist's body appears as a recurring idea in artistic practice. To speak of these forces as muses, or clichés, or bringing “everyone” to the studio manifests itself dauntingly in the studio; clearing this out is no easy task. When the artist encounters the force again as the first-viewer, it primes the machine differently, creating other types of pressure.

This idea of force as a multiple in the artist, and by extension the spectator, is an important one to dwell on momentarily because this force takes on several forms. Deleuze and Guattari help us to realize one of the dominant ways these forces manifest themselves is through the Oedipal complex. Deleuze and Guattari see desire generally working as repressed and recoded in two general ways. The first is through the embrace of the Oedipal myth in

⁸⁸ William Kentridge, "Q&a with William Kentridge," in *The Norton Lectures* (April 23, 2012).

psychoanalysis. It is through this myth that the concept of lack is introduced.

Daniel Smith writes:

“Normally, we tend to think of desire in terms of lack: if we desire something, it is because we lack it. But Deleuze [and Guattari] reconfigures the concept of desire: what we desire, what we invest our desire in, is a social formation, and in this sense desire is always *positive*. Lack appears only at the level of interest, because the social formation – the infrastructure – in which we have already invested our *desire* has in turn produced that lack.”⁸⁹

This is a key point from Deleuze and Guattari’s work: we do not desire something because we lack it. Instead we desire constantly and this desire is productive; however, because that desire is invested socially, the social formations have produced that lack.

This brings about the second way desire is repressed and recoded: capitalism. Eugene Holland’s readers guide to *Anti-Oedipus* is helpful here as it clearly outlines Deleuze and Guattari’s task of schizoanalysis as a productive force that destroys the notions of capitalism, which has cloistered desire and labor from each other. Holland writes:

Schizoanalysis therefore insists that while desire and labor are essentially the same productive force, they nonetheless operate under capitalism according to different regimes, which are conventionally mapped by

⁸⁹ Smith, "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards an Immanent Theory of Ethics." 136. Emphasis in the original.

different disciplines: political economy and psychoanalysis.⁹⁰

How are capitalism and psychoanalysis joined together? "Very simply put, the role of psychic repression is to teach us to desire social repression."⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari spend large portions of their work demonstrating how the patriarchal leadership of the family plays directly into the labor dynamics of contemporary capitalism where the "daddy" is replaced by the psychoanalyst or the boss or the state. This is a daunting force. When we take this force through Kentridge's words, where he feels the force of the work of art from within his pectoral muscles, the force becomes insidious. It is both outside in the world *and* internalized.

To this point in the chapter I have argued that we are all constantly being creative and find ourselves in a space where connections are ceaselessly and unconsciously made. I have also argued that our desires are often not our own and that sensation as contemplation is one way to see how artists frame chaos. If I claim the studio is a call for a particular type of thinking and attention, it is through this thinking that the artist must find a way to frame the chaos of these forces. We recognize the difficult and complex work of the studio when we say that we cannot distinguish if these forces come from the outside world or from our inside biology and psychology because these inner and outer forces are

⁹⁰ Eugene W. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus : Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2005). 23.

⁹¹ Ian Buchanan, "Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus a Reader's Guide," <http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptilID=766045>. 71.

hopelessly intertwined. Now we arrive at a place that Kentridge's work and lectures become truly illuminating.

The Repetitious Work of the Studio

Kentridge spends large portions of his Norton lectures speaking about the fluctuations between artist and audience with the resultant image becoming a coupling of these identities of both the artist and the audience. In his first lecture, Kentridge plays a short video of him trying to draw a rhinoceros in the studio.⁹² Standing behind him, looking over his shoulder is a doppelganger speaking with the authority of a teacher, telling him that his drawing is all-wrong. As the video progresses, the teacher-voice becomes more docile and less insistent. Ultimately, the artist just works but it is clear that the coupling of artist and teacher have propelled the work into existence. When, in his fourth lecture, Kentridge mentions the role of the artist in the studio to is to take, "Irrational, ad hoc, constraints" and follow them "rigorously," it could be said that in the shadow of *Anti-Oedipus*, where our desires appear as not our own, his conception of the artist has artistic and philosophical standing.⁹³ Additionally for Kentridge, it is clear that the artists he would list as his influences are of a longer linear trajectory. He makes references to artworks across a variety of centuries with

⁹² William Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson One: In Praise of Shadows," in *The Norton Lectures* (March 20, 2012).

⁹³ Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Four: Practical Epistemology - Life in the Studio."

passing casualness and a gesture that seems to gently flick the historical weight they carry with them away, as if their presence was self-evident for all of us. And it is not just visual artists that are mentioned as he makes a variety of statements on the work of poets and singers as well as conducts a longer exploration of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. While Kentridge does not speak to his art historical education, it is clear that he brings a historian into the studio with him. All of this information helps the lecture audience to understand Kentridge's established context for his artwork; if the audience pays close attention they can see the weight of cultural force in this context. And this force does not relent. When, in his third Norton lecture, Kentridge says that, "The studio becomes the machine for the alteration of time,"⁹⁴ he could very well be speaking of perplication. The studio makes manifest the constant folding and enfolding of "liking things" and sensations and varieties from lifetimes of experience. His task is to find a way to utilize all this in a productive way.

In his fourth lecture, Kentridge speaks of a "Repression of evaluating in advance of the action, the value of the thought."⁹⁵ This is a primary skill that the artist ultimately must learn if they are going to find an escape—a line of flight—from these forces and make that escape productive. The artist *must* learn to hold the audience at bay for as long as possible. But this skill, like the other skills an

⁹⁴ William Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Three: Vertical Thinking - a Johannesburg Biography," in *The Norton Lectures* (April 3, 2012).

⁹⁵ Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Four: Practical Epistemology - Life in the Studio."

artist tries to learn, is never fully internalized. The search for new ways to hold the audience at arms length never ceases for the artist. The search for new information, new critical references, new techniques, and new “ad-hoc constraints” becomes another part of the artistic process that cannot possibly be completed. The success of one piece does not mean the next piece will be successful; it only means the lesson of the earlier piece is *momentarily* complete. The success of one piece does not mean the next piece does not *need* to be made. Slowly, the artist understands that they are folding from everything and that their learning will never cease until death (and the work of art resists death⁹⁶). They realize that an artwork may be complete but that completing a work will not satiate the *desire* to make another artwork. The artist may succumb to the audience and perhaps revisions will be made or new directions will be explored, but the artist knows the work is only truly satisfying when they are in the midst of making; in the process of producing the artwork comes to light.

However the process of creation in this traditional sense cannot be constant. Perhaps it is not strange, then, that the presence of sleep drifts into

⁹⁶ Deleuze’s art historical references are often modernist; artworks that are situational or relational do not appear to fit into this idea that the work of art resists death. I would argue that all works of art do have this capacity for two reasons. First, our means and range of documentation has become good enough that even works of art that are temporary or performative maintain the capacity to generate sensation, This would be a different sensation (reading about Sehgal’s work is different from experiencing Sehgal’s work), but sensation nevertheless. Second, and perhaps more importantly, if we are all “folding, unfolding, and enfolding,” it is impossible to account how this sensation registers in one audience and then is transmitted to the next. In this state, the work of art truly resembles Hyde’s gift. It is set in motion, as a result of prior motions; that we have difficulty tracking it does not mean it does not exist.

Kentridge's fifth Norton lecture, *In praise of mistranslation*.⁹⁷ Kentridge refers to his process of sleeping in the studio as "defensive sleeping." Kentridge enters the studio to begin a drawing and is completely immersed in the process of bringing the drawing into existence. Ideas are swimming in his head and he spends an intense time working on a drawing and pacing around the studio. There is a real energy at work here; as has been noted earlier, he feels as if a force is trying to spring forth from his body. In the lecture Kentridge references Rainer Rilke's poem *The Panther*, where the panther circles his cage again and again "like a ritual dance around the center in which a mighty will stands paralyzed."⁹⁸ This is the artist's process, circling the work, the "mighty will" and *contemplating*. When Kentridge finally sits down to take a look at what he's done. He looks with both eyes, then one eye and, gradually, he finds himself asleep. This is defensive sleeping; "An inability to know what should be made or how to make, or why it should be made, masquerading as tiredness."⁹⁹ When he awakes, his mind is settled and refreshed. There has been a period where the apparent forces seem to go dormant; it is this quiet, fallow period that it becomes clearer what should be done with the piece. Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi has written

⁹⁷ William Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Five: In Praise of Mistranslation," in *The Norton Lectures* (April 16, 2012).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

about this dormancy in creative work, where the “process of creativity goes underground for a while.”¹⁰⁰ Csikszentmihalyi theorizes:

Something similar to parallel processing may be taking place when the elements of a problem are said to be incubating. When we think consciously about an issue, our previous training and the effort to arrive at a solution push our ideas in a linear direction, usually along predictable or familiar lines. But intentionality does not work in the subconscious. Free from rational direction, ideas can combine and pursue each other every way.¹⁰¹

Finally, science, art, and philosophy have intersected with the reference to Csikszentmihalyi’s statement; this is peripetition under a slightly different guise.

If we call it flow, or studio thinking, or peripetition, the end result is the same: no one machine can claim responsibility for the final artwork. Our desires are inextricable from the desires of our culture; they work unconsciously and consciously. In short, the artist in their studio is never a neutral viewer. The artist brings “everyone” to the studio but no one truly walks out; instead, they quiet down and hang around in case you need them; when you look away, or take a break, they help out. Despite this, the artwork is still erroneously attributed to the artist as an individual. Towards the end of his final lecture, Kentridge mentions “[Intellectuals] should be invited into the studio for coffee but while the work is

¹⁰⁰ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity : Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* (New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996). 98.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 102.

being made they are better off on the bench outside the door.”¹⁰² Kentridge is wrestling with whom he brings to the studio with him. This statement is an a recognition that the “intellectual” part of his brain must be engaged but the rest of his brain and body must be free to move past traditional notions of intelligence. In the moment of production, the value of contemplation and perplication becomes apparent as a precursor to the artwork that is being made. This remains difficult because both processes are quiet and do not call attention to the difficulty of the work at hand. But these are the places where hierarchies are not readily apparent and connections are ceaselessly made. What results is a sensation that pushes the artwork externally into existence.

On a molecular level, the coupling of the desiring-machine and the social-machine behave uniquely: the artist is present at one moment, some other machine is present at the next. However, the creation and creativity in an artwork is *not* pure desire but more like a rupture or a line of flight, presenting the potential of a new possibility on a molecular level where the desiring and social machines uncouple and re-couple in fits and starts; this process is never fluid. Until an artwork is finished, perplication, somewhat paradoxically, is noticeably occurring in the studio. The artist is not at the beginning or end of a process in this space but, rather, is in the midst. It is in the midst that perspectives can change, that positions are not predetermined, and even repetition will not guarantee the

¹⁰² William Kentridge, "Drawing Lesson Six: Anti-Entropy," in *The Norton Lectures* (April 24, 2012).

artist the same product. The social machine imposes boundaries; Kentridge desires for the studio to be a “safe space for stupidity”¹⁰³ because he desires to leave these boundaries outside the studio door. It fails, of course, but even the effort to bar the social-machine from the room creates new possibilities.

Rosalind Krauss has elaborated several of these issues in her article entitled “‘The Rock’: William Kentridge’s Drawings for Projection.”¹⁰⁴ The article addresses a range of ideas in the animated films that Kentridge began in the 1990’s, where he used a still camera to create stop-motion animation out of the process of charcoal drawing. The erased image leaves a trace behind where the charcoal has been ground into the paper. Krauss cleverly invokes the term “palimpsest” in referring to the work.¹⁰⁵ Krauss, too, quotes Kentridge at length and it is in one of the early quotes that the reader begins to get a sense of the purposefulness and difficulty of Kentridge’s project. His work is ostensibly about apartheid, but to summarize the work in this way can appear glib. Kentridge calls apartheid “the rock” and informs the reader: “You cannot face the rock head-on; the rock always wins.”¹⁰⁶ This idea of a different direction or approach falls into the way Deleuze speaks about framing the chaos that has been raised throughout this chapter; different connections can be made and perspectives are allowed to change. Kentridge says:

¹⁰³ Kentridge, “Drawing Lesson One: In Praise of Shadows.”

¹⁰⁴ Rosalind Krauss, “‘The Rock’: William Kentridge’s Drawings for Projection,” *October*, no. 92 (2000).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 21-2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 4.

These two elements—our history and the moral imperative arising from that—are the factors for making that personal beacon rise into the immovable rock of apartheid. To escape this rock is the job of the artist. These two constitute the tyranny of our history. And escape is necessary, for as I stated, the rock is possessive, and inimical to good work. I am not saying that apartheid, or indeed, redemption, are not worthy of representation, description or exploration, I am saying the scale and weight with which this rock presents itself is inimical to that task.¹⁰⁷

To recognize the force of this weight is not simply possible in Kentridge's work; it is *necessary*. Moreover, falling into binary thinking simply will not suffice to take the measure of the problem seriously.

For Kentridge, it is *in the midst* of the creative act that all this comes to pass. "It is only when physically engaged on a drawing that ideas start to emerge."¹⁰⁸ As we have seen artists wont to do, Kentridge invokes a muse of sorts to explain the process: this time it's Fortuna. Krauss writes that Kentridge's 1993 lecture, subtitled "Neither Program nor Chance in the Making of Images," is seemingly "motivated by the desire to displace the focus on the general field of his activity from 'the rock' and its ideological imperatives to the work and its routines."¹⁰⁹ The process of creation is especially important here. The camera is positioned at a distance from the drawing so that Kentridge must constantly shift his position between the operation of the camera and the process of drawing.

¹⁰⁷ Kentridge in Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Kentridge in Ibid. 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

The circling back and forth between the camera and paper create a physical manifestation of the Deleuzean perplication where these two points of camera and paper are quite literally held at a distance. There is also a Deleuzean repetition at play in this process: a few marks on the paper, an adjustment to the form, a walk to camera, two pushes of a button to capture and advance the film, and a walk back to the drawing. Each pass is the same and, at the same time, different. The drawing changes and the film advances and Fortuna haphazardly and unknowingly wanders into the picture. An opportunity in the form of chance has arisen that could not have been predicted in advance of the creation. Krauss refers to this idea as “the taking and seizing of chance—which is another way of naming the capacity to improvise.”¹¹⁰ Once again, it is in the midst of the creative act where the very real and very unexpected work happens for the artist. One could imagine a line between the points of the camera and drawing but “the line does not go from one point to another, but runs *between points* in a different direction that renders them indiscernible.”¹¹¹ In invoking Fortuna, Kentridge gives a label to this process, which could also be talked about in the terms John Cage uses when everyone “walks out of the studio.” It could also be discussed as a reformulating and re-firing of your desiring and social machines. That Kentridge folds the experience of this process inward only to be able to unfold it again in lecture format creates a space for the audience to experience sensation.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 11.

¹¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 298.

Ultimately, the audience's experience of viewing artwork by Kentridge is able to suggest at least two things simultaneously. The first is due to the fact that he is using charcoal to make these drawings. Once the charcoal is on the paper it can be erased and moved around, but a history of the process will remain. In one of his animated films, a building collapses into a cloud of dust, but the nature of the charcoal allows the viewer to see both the destruction of the building and the reality of where the building just stood.¹¹² The viewer sees, at the same time, two points; our linear sense of time in film lets us know the order in which these points occurred but the visual image is rendered such that it works more like a memory where the viewer can stand before something and say: "It is this way now and was that way then."

The other idea Kentridge is able to reference in his work that Krauss and others have illuminated is his ability to connect events in the work in unexpected ways through metamorphosis. There is an elegant moment in one of Kentridge's films, *Mine*, where the artist is able to talk the viewer through his process.¹¹³ One of the two protagonists in this film is Soho Eckstein, a capitalist and industrialist in South Africa, who owns a mine and employs hundreds of workers. Kentridge was faced with a problem in creating a particular animation sequence in his film:

¹¹² Alex Gabassi, "Certain Doubts of William Kentridge," ([Brazil]: Associação Cultural Videobrasil, 2000).

¹¹³ Ibid.

he wanted to show Eckstein getting out of bed and carrying out his morning routine before going to the office. Krauss writes of this film:

Kentridge played for time by letting Soho have breakfast. The smoke from his cigar having transformed itself into a bell, the bell was in turn ready to metamorphose into a coffee pot so that the meal could commence. The kind of coffeepot Kentridge put in Soho's hand, however, was simply the accident of what happened to be in his studio that day, namely a *cafetière*: a glass cylinder with a metal plunger that compresses the grains of coffee within the pot.¹¹⁴

As Kentridge re-drew the plunger in Soho's hand again and again, it all came in a flash: "I knew, I realized (I cannot pin an exact word on it) that it would go through the tray, through the bed and become the mine shaft."¹¹⁵ The rest of the film unfolded in front of him; a subtle shift in thinking connected the miners with their seemingly disconnected employer and the harsh, disparate economic reality of these two situations is elegantly transposed in a pot of coffee.

What does the audience fold from this situation? There is a particular uniqueness in animation that allows the audience to understand the metamorphoses. If Kentridge were to only speak to an audience of having his industrialist mine the earth with his morning pot of coffee, it is easy to imagine the audience staring at Kentridge incredulously. When drawn, the sequence becomes both clever and clear; its logic is unquestioned. Krauss cites the

¹¹⁴ Krauss, "'The Rock': William Kentridge's Drawings for Projection." 7.

¹¹⁵ Kentridge in Ibid.

influence of animation in popular culture in her article for its ability to cultivate a space of permission for the spectator. As Krauss notes: “The legs of little Jerry transformed into frantically turning wheels as he tries to escape from Tom are...a picture of the human body endlessly available to mechanization.”¹¹⁶ This scene is both relatable and funny to the viewer. Walter Benjamin notes of animation creating the liberating feeling in the audience of seeing in cartoons “a car [that] does not weigh more than a straw-hat and the fruit on a tree [that] grows round as fast as a hot-air balloon.”¹¹⁷ To the audience’s mind, things can feel light and free and the ridiculous can become possible. Kentridge’s work embraces all this but with gravitas. He is “wary of the threat of arbitrariness and guards against an underground series of chance images in which ‘anything changes into anything else too easily, in which anything is possible without any pressure’.”¹¹⁸ That the residual drawing remains in Kentridge’s films suggests to Krauss the idea the palimpsest only adds to this idea of seriousness and difficulty. The human hand, the repeated drawing and erasing, and the difficulty of metamorphoses are all present in Kentridge’s animation.

As the audience, now the creative act is in *our* midst. It functions not only between the points of audience and artist but in machines that form and shape our desires. It ceaselessly connects and operates without hierarchy. It provokes

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 16.

¹¹⁷ Walter Benjamin in Ibid. (N. 16)

¹¹⁸ Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev quoting Kentridge in Ibid. 17.

contemplation. It is conscious and unconscious. And it does all this without assuming a blank slate; instead, machines are humming along even when we do not know they are there. The audience sees creativity as possible, difficult, and present. The audience is then the artist. To paraphrase John Rajchman, this is the house we have come to inhabit.

Fragment: The Paradise Institute

Janet Cardiff and George Miller's *The Paradise Institute* is unassuming from the outside. It is a nice, well-framed plywood structure, with two sets of steps on either side of the installation, leading to two doors. As I walked up the first set of stairs—only two steps—the structure felt weirdly homemade to me. Maybe it was because there was nothing to really muffle each footfall? Anyway, when you get inside the structure, your sense of the space *completely* changes.

There are 17 theater seats, a row of eight in front of a row of nine. They are plush; the pamphlet that came with the piece when I saw it in Cleveland at the Museum of Contemporary art in 2013 said the whole thing is based on a 1930's era movie theater and that makes sense to me, despite the fact that I don't think I have ever been in a 1930's era movie theater.¹ There are some footlights and soft overhead lights to guide you into the space. As you sit down, a gallery attendant directs you to put on the headphones in front of you with the corded side on your left ear. Then they shut the door. Just before the lights dim, I looked out in front of me and saw that the whole set-up was designed to give the appearance of being in a balcony of a large theater. Looking out at the tiny seats

¹ "Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller: The Paradise Institute | Moca Cleveland," MOCA Cleveland, <http://www.mocacleveland.org/exhibitions/the-paradise-institute>.

below, the screen, and the adornments around, I thought I was trapped in a most precocious diorama.² Then the movie on the screen comes up, and the sound echoes in your ears and I just began to not find my breath.

Do you know what an impending sense of doom feels like? It's not that any doom is really coming, it just *feels* like doom, like something terrible is happening and you can neither prevent it nor look away from it. That's the beginning of *The Paradise Institute*.

I start to hear sounds around me. People behind my left shoulder make a joke about something that happens on screen. Someone creeps down the aisle from right, settling in the seat next to me. She's my date, I guess, and she whispers into my ear to tell me she got some popcorn if I want any. It goes on like that for a few minutes. Sometimes you hear only what's on the screen—it looks like a film noir type of movie—with the sound coming *exactly* from where you think the sound of a screen comes from, and sometimes she talks to you. Her voice feels both somewhat comforting and totally unsettling because she is not there, it just sounds like she is.

And then she tells you she thinks she left the oven on and she has to go back home to check on it. You hear her creep away and just have to look to your right to make sure no one is really there. I settle in for what feels like a few

² I have the pangs of a jealous jerk sometimes when I see something I wish I had made.

minutes, trying to make sense of the story in front of me on the screen; it's mysterious.

There is a house on fire; is it my house?

Then, in the aisle behind me, sneaking in again from my right, comes a heavier walker who eventually collapses into the seat behind my right shoulder. He leans in and begins to speak in a sinister voice. I keep spinning to make sure he is not there; I'm breathing quickly. I think I feel the hot air of his breath on my neck. Is this what the beginning of a heart attack feels like? He knows my house, and my girlfriend, and warns me of the dangerous position I now find myself in.

I think he might strangle me.

The whole audience begins to count, louder and louder—or maybe it's the screen? I don't even know anymore.

And then it ends.

The lights come up and I put the headphones back in their correct location and stumble down the aisle of the empty installation. I make some hollow jokes with the museum workers to ease my tension and to try and fool them into thinking that I just hadn't experienced a completely terrifying event and that I felt like crying.

As I head down the steps of the museum, I began to laugh for real. I kept thinking about how profoundly I'd been screwed with by this piece. Paradise

Institute? *Paradise Institute*? What the hell did that even mean? I had to go to the bathroom.

It was at the urinal that I began to notice it. I was just standing there, going about my biological and necessary business, when everything just sounded a little louder than usual, as if someone turned the volume of the world up. The toilet flush didn't just remain as background noise; it had substance. The hand dryer sounded a little more acute. I heard each step on that stone floor...off in the distant there was the sound of familiar people talking. Thinking that maybe it was just the building, I went outside. Cardiff's *40 Part Motet* was just down the street and I wanted to see that piece again anyways.

It was raining outside. I swear I heard the individual drops hitting the sidewalk; it was rhythmic and lovely. I walked past someone and I heard her breath; I heard my breath.

Everything was just so...what's the word? *Full*? I guess full will work. Everything felt new; I was paying attention in a way that made me almost hyper aware of my surroundings. I thought of those first viewers of Impressionist paintings, who swore that after they saw those works they saw light differently. And I thought how full everything felt.

Or was it rich?

Or multiplied? Like the manyness of things?

I was tempted to stop the next person I saw and say to them, “Isn’t this AMAZING? The world is an awe-inspiring place! Do you feel it? Really feel it? How *profound* this all is?”

Of course, I didn’t do that; it would have been too weird. I saved those feelings for my family when I got home. I spent time talking to my real wife and cooking on my real oven. Those experiences felt full too. They still do, if I let them.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Everything has a story.¹

I begin this concluding chapter with the same quote from the beginning of the dissertation. This is a way of acknowledging my own bit of repetition throughout the dissertation. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 are more or less constructed chronologically and each chapter ends in a similar place where creativity is considered as a productive and disruptive force. My task with this conclusion is two-fold. First, the body of this chapter addresses suggestions for the field of Art Education in light of this dissertation. Also as part of this task, I address some potential areas for further study, both personally and for the field. The second task of this conclusion is to examine one last artwork, the *360 Degree Room For All Colors* by Olafur Eliasson, as a way of explicating the conceptual force I have hoped to create by way of this dissertation. While these tasks are separate, my goal for each is the same: I want to conclude this dissertation without suggesting that the work is *ever* finished.

¹ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness : Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995*. 319.

360 Degree Room for All Colours, Part 1

Many of the arguments I have positioned around creativity in Western culture coalesce around the Danish/Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. Both his massive installation *The Weather Project* situated in Turbine Hall at the TATE Modern in 2004 and his *Take Your Time* midcareer retrospective from 2007-2010 have been written about positively as examples of breath-taking creativity that enriches our perception. They also have been addressed, negatively, as a spectacle that reinforces capitalism in an “experience economy,” which “calls on business to ‘experientialize the goods’ as a way to increase their economic potential.”² These are the two poles where we find Eliasson’s work. Rather than reiterating arguments around *The Weather Project* or the staging of *Take Your Time*, I will address one work that appeared in the *Take Your Time* exhibition, Eliasson’s *360 Degree Room For All Colours* from 2002. It is my hope that by addressing this work specifically, we might come to conclude this dissertation in a space where we do not arrive at a particular point conclusively finding

² Madeleine Grynsztejn, "(Y)Our Entanglements: Olafur Eliasson, the Museum, and Consumer Culture," in *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, ed. Madeleine Grynsztejn (San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007). 21. In addition, Christopher Bedford writes: “As several astute critics have observed, what we today understand as ‘the spectacle’ is an image accumulated, compounded, circulated and branded to the point where it is synonymous with pure capital. The resultant worry among the cognoscenti is that the experience of art will soon become indistinguishable from the images and experiences that are the motor for profit-driven commercial entertainment” (214). Christopher Bedford, "Olafur Eliasson. San Francisco, New York and Dallas," *burlmaga The Burlington Magazine* 150, no. 1260 (2008). There are other references that could be pointed to here, but these two capture the tone of the debate.

ourselves at either the spectacle or in a utopian perceptual experience. We are in between these points, in the midst; new connections can be made here.

Given the grand scale of some of Eliasson's work, the *360 Degree Room* appears somewhat modest. The sculpture is round, a little over ten feet high and nearly twenty-seven feet in diameter. From the outside, the audience sees a structure made of stainless steel supports and a wood backing that has a series of regimented perforated holes along the bottom edge of the sculpture. There is one entrance into the work and, once inside, the only material the audience sees is a continuous scrim. Every thirty seconds the color of the scrim changes via an illuminated light from a source behind the screen. Apparently, what lies between that scrim and the wood backing is a series of more than five hundred fluorescent lights and a "computerized control unit [that] regulates the color combinations."³ This does not mean that the computer programs the visible light spectrum. One issue Eliasson has explored in his work over the years is a quirk of visual perception called an after-image, which stimulates our brain to read a color's compliment if we stare at an intense color for too long.⁴ In working with physicists and theorists of color, Eliasson has found that not only are after images created, but each member of the audience will see the color differently, even if slightly.⁵

³ Ólafur Eliasson, "Projects 2002-2006," in *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, ed. Madeleine Grynsztejn (San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007). 197.

⁴ Anna Ólafur Eliasson Engberg-Pedersen, *Studio Olafur Eliasson : An Encyclopedia* (Köln; London: Taschen, 2008). 93.

⁵ Ibid. 93-4.

With this description of the work and the work's basic intent in mind I want to probe a little deeper. Remember from the very beginning of this dissertation there has remained the idea that art production, while not the same as creativity, provides the training for people to be creative. In chapter six, I argued that one of the lessons made explicit from the twentieth century forward is that the artist and audience are inextricable. By extension of this argument, a considered critical viewpoint of the work should be able to create some new meanings in this seemingly minimal piece. Eliasson has similar expectations for the audience of his work. One example of this can be found in the catalogue for his exhibition at the Neue Galerie in Graz, Austria where he chose to forgo conventional art historical commentaries on his work.⁶ Instead, Eliasson worked with the museum to create "an anthology of scholarly texts, partly already published, partly written for this publication, intended to provide insights" into how Eliasson conceptualizes his work in the *production* of the work, rather than its finished state.⁷

So how is the *360 Degree Room For All Colours* produced? It has at least two states of initial production. The first state is in the production of ideas and the second state is in the physical manifestation of the work both in the studio and the museum. To deal with the production of ideas first, consider Jonathan Crary's

⁶ Ólafur Eliasson and Peter Weibel, *Olafur Eliasson : Surroundings Surrounded : Essays on Space and Science* (Graz, Austria; Cambridge, MA: Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum ; MIT Press, 2001). 15.

⁷ Ibid.

Techniques of the Observer,⁸ a text cited in the catalogs for Eliasson's exhibition in Graz as well as in the *Take Your Time* retrospective. Crary's text examines the historical and metaphysical relationships between perception and the photographic machine, in particular the camera obscura. He writes: "[T]he camera obscura is inseparable from a certain metaphysics of interiority: it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space, cut off from the exterior world."⁹ The camera obscura performs two tasks at once: it separates the figure from the world and it fixes that figure in a particular position. Once this figure is individualized and fixed into place, they are subject to illusion and the old Cartesian mind-body split comes into play once again.

Crary is dealing with the intersection between vision and the camera obscura as a nineteenth century mode of production. There is a related technology that captured the public's attention at this time, which bears closer structural resemblance to Eliasson's *360 Degree Room*: the panorama. The panorama came to prominence at the end of the 18th century. It was a form of entertainment and propaganda, as it provided an immersive, illusory experience for a paying public.¹⁰ The first panoramas were large in scale, analogous to going

⁸ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer : On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

⁹ Ibid. 39.

¹⁰ Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art : From Illusion to Immersion* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003). Grau addresses the political and financial implications of the panorama in several places in his text. For example, when writing about the propensity for panoramas to portray battle scenes:

to a pop-up theater or circus in some respects. The viewer would enter the building, wind their way up some steps and through a tunnel until they would appear in the middle of the space.¹¹ The viewer remains fixed in this context, in the center of the room and the scene, usually a landscape, would be painted on the large curved and enveloping wall. The art historian Oliver Grau writes of the experience: “No objects extraneous to the picture were in the space that might relativize or diminish the illusion. Overhead lighting, also invisible to the viewer, illuminated the painting so that it appeared to be the source of light itself.”¹² The viewer cannot travel too far from the center of the room; if the viewer were able to walk too close to the surface of the painting, the illusion would disintegrate. The most elaborate of these panoramas were constructed on elevated platforms where the viewer’s movement would be blocked by a railing.¹³ The panorama, with its controlled light and circular, immersive form, is the antecedent for Eliasson’s *360 Degree Room*.

While the panorama provides historical basis for the *360 Degree Room*, Eliasson’s studio has its own precedence. The space most identified as a model for Eliasson’s studio is a laboratory. Upon his initial visit to Studio Eliasson, the

“Almost without exception, the nation that exhibited the panorama had also won the battle it showed” (91). As for finances, Grau writes of the twenty plus panorama joint stock companies that were formed in the late 19th century: “As the majority of the panoramas they financed were exhibited abroad, shareholders and investors alike had only one interest in these projects: dividends, fast profits” (103).

¹¹ Ibid. 58.

¹² Ibid. 59.

¹³ Ibid. 58.

art historian Philip Ursprung wrote: "For [Eliasson], the Studio is not the *subject* of his art but the *instrument* with which he produces it. Therefore he strives constantly to expand and improve its precision and efficiency."¹⁴ As part of this search of precision and efficiency, Studio Eliasson has about 30 people on staff but they do not operate as conventional artists assistants.¹⁵ The difference from something like a historical studio is that there is considerable less hierarchy; most are not training to be artists themselves.¹⁶ Instead, Studio Eliasson employs theorists, art historians and architects with whom Eliasson collaborates. One of the key identifying factors in Eliasson's studio is that all these people are constantly researching and experimenting and interacting. The end result, as Ursprung writes, is that the space appears as several machinic components, working efficiently:

It is less important to know *what* the machine is producing than to see *how it works*. The product becomes secondary to the production process. The studio-machine is there not so much to create anything specific as simply to keep moving. Its purpose is to keep changing, to cast new light on its environment, and to push the boundaries of knowledge.

And what is "kept moving?" Ursprung tells us two things that make this studio

¹⁴ Philip Ursprung, "From Observer to Participant: In Olafur Eliasson's Studio," in *Studio Olafur Eliasson: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Anna Engberg-Pedersen (Köln; London: Taschen, 2008). 12.

¹⁵ Ibid. 10.

¹⁶ Ibid. 13. Ursprung distinguishes the environment from Rueben's and Rembrandt's studio for these reasons, But he also addresses Warhol's factory as a means of further distinguishing Eliasson's studio because no one sleeps there and it is not the scene where "public and private life become blurred...Eliasson's Studio is first and foremost a workplace, rather than a showplace" (Ibid).

particularly relevant to the conclusion of this dissertation.

First, Ursprung notes that all projects are out in the open; finished and unfinished works are situated next to failures and successes. The studio is both a museum *and* a studio; “the place where the work is produced is interwoven with the place where it is displayed and admired.”¹⁷ If we characterize Eliasson’s studio as efficient, we are speaking of a different type of efficiency. The most efficient route is not the fastest; every experiment manifested is an important part of the process. Second, in Studio Eliasson, *everyone* becomes a collaborator, even Ursprung himself. Ursprung notes, “It seems that Eliasson never works alone. And no one in his Studio remains a detached observer.”¹⁸ This need not be read without a critical eye. For example, when Ursprung is drafted into working with Eliasson by writing an essay on his studio, Ursprung asks challenging questions about the function of this studio and his role in its function:

I, too, experienced the Studio not as an enclosed entity that I could reflect upon and observe, but as an efficient machine, inviting not only Eliasson and his team but also me to improve or change things—maybe tightening a screw here or adjusting a valve there. I very soon became part of the Studio. Was I using the machine? Or was it exploiting me? Was I beginning to influence it? Or would it absorb and take control of me, changing my attitudes and my way of looking at things?¹⁹

The answer, in the light of this dissertation, is all of these things, and more. Later

¹⁷ Ibid. 12.

¹⁸ Ibid. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

in the essay, Ursprung expands again on the idea of efficiency in this particular studio. When there are no other projects to pursue, Eliasson's studio itself becomes the object of address. Ursprung writes: "I gained the impression that the Studio would function even if there was no actual work to be done."²⁰ The space is itself kept in motion. By not resting and through constant interaction where the hierarchy in both between persons²¹ and objects is not evident, new connections are created. The machine is creative and how the machine works is also creative. As an extension of this environment, the *360 Degree Room* is this machine too.

This becomes most evident when the *360 Degree Room* is installed in the gallery. Studio Eliasson sent seven studio members to install specific works for the *Take Your Time* retrospective.²² Not only did they install the *360 Degree Room*, they trained museum staff how to replace light bulbs if one were to burn out so that the integrity of the work would be maintained.²³ And while this is obvious, it is necessary to state that the artwork needs consistent electrical power to make it come to life. This fact links the installation of the piece to the larger electric infrastructure, in turn highlighting another aspect of the complex and creative machine of our world. Additionally, as its dependence on resources

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ursprung also notes that the several architects who work with Studio Eliasson find Olafur to be almost like "a client" rather than an employer. The architects develop several ideas based around a concept from Eliasson. They have a conversation about each of the ideas before agreeing on which ideas to develop further (Ibid). Ursprung's earlier comments about wondering who is using the machine or being exploited by it are still relevant here; the studio is, afterall, Eliasson's. But it is a collective approach and the attempted egalitarian address of ideas and objects under a slower duration is to be commended.

²² Dallas Museum of Art, *Olafur Eliasson—360 Degree Room for All Colours* (2013).

²³ Ibid.

is derived from an electrical power infrastructure, the work is firmly rooted in Western contemporary culture. The highlighting of the artwork's dependence on electrical power makes evident the expectation that electrical power will always be there.

In returning to the work itself, the *360 Degree Room* usually stands alone in a darkened gallery. There is one door into the interior. The audience could remain outside the piece and perhaps admire it for its extraterrestrial-like appearance. But the door is there, and with the light on, it looks inviting. A host of socio-cultural forces have brought the audience and the sculpture to this point; we might as well head inside.

Suggestions For the Field of Art Education

When I began my doctoral studies in Art Education, I was told, "Art Education can be whatever you want it to be;" this is an academic characteristic that could be viewed positively or negatively. At the end of my experience, of which this dissertation is a part, I have come to understand that both positive *and* negative conceptions of the field are possible. The fact that the field is wide and varied is both a detriment (a lack of academic rigor is possible) and a benefit (it can be not unlike art production where the end result is largely unknown). If I am going to write that this dissertation has something to offer the field, it can be a little unclear which aspect of the field is actually implicated by my suggestions.

With this in mind, rather than make pointed suggestions, I will address a way of being here.

In the methodology I addressed Deleuze and Guattari's "concept." Recall that a concept has three stages: encyclopedic, pedagogic, and commercial professionalized training. My initial argument found that if we considered creativity as a concept it would often be found in the stasis of commercial professionalized training. Deleuze and Guattari tell us that we find true concepts in their pedagogic form and that concepts in this form tilt us towards the encyclopedic and away from the marketable stage of a concept. Keeping creativity pedagogic seems to be a tidy fit for a field such as Art Education. But how can we do this? Any guidance Deleuze and Guattari give their reader in pursuing concepts is primarily implied. Furthermore, reading and attempting to utilize the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari forces us to interact with oblique language and topics, especially when trying to come to terms with treating something like creativity as pedagogic. And while I would argue that this is one thing that helps us to think differently about a topic, I would also acknowledge it can often be a difficult path to travel. Perhaps other language would be helpful in summarizing this idea?

A late interview with Michel Foucault entitled "Power, Morals Values, and the Intellectual" perhaps provides us with a clearer linguistic direction while suggesting a procedure with an outcome that is not dissimilar from Deleuze and

Guattari's "concept." At one time, Noam Chomsky characterized Foucault as the most amoral person he has ever met.²⁴ With this as a backdrop, the interviewer asks Foucault he thinks of himself as truly amoral, to which Foucault replies:

[There are] three elements in my morals. They are (1) the refusal to accept as self-evident the things that are proposed to us; (2) the need to analyze and to know, since we can accomplish nothing without reflection and understanding—thus, the principle of curiosity; and (3) the principle of innovation: to seek out in our reflection those things that have never been thought or imagined. Thus: refusal, curiosity, innovation.²⁵

As a series of steps, this comes closest to what I have attempted to do in this dissertation. My research question was borne out of idea to not accept creativity as self-evident. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 were pursuits of different conceptual understandings of creativity throughout history. Chapter 6 was an attempt to articulate an idea of creativity that grew from the previous chapters while having creativity defying the self-evident way it was identified in the first chapter of this dissertation. While I would not claim my argument presented in Chapter 6 is one that has "never been thought or imagined," I would argue that what is articulated throughout this dissertation represents a minor position that runs counter to dominant socio-cultural and popularized scientific trends on creativity research.

²⁴ Michele Foucault, and Michael Bess, "Read Me: Foucault Interview – 'in a Sense, I Am a Moralist'critical-Theory.Com by Critical-Theory.Com," <http://www.critical-theory.com/read-me-foucault-interview-in-a-sense-i-am-a-moralist/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

While Foucault's language is easy to understand here, putting that language into practice is difficult. Refusing something as self-evident can be dangerous, especially in a socio-cultural context of creativity. As an example, we often see the study of the arts justified as a study that stimulates creativity, which, in turn, will later pay dividends when exercised in a neoliberal economy. To consider creativity outside this context puts the already limited financial support the arts are given in such a socio-cultural context at considerable risk.²⁶ Second, pursuing any genealogy of a term or conceptual idea can be daunting and byzantine. While I made a concerted effort to examine creativity through different conceptual histories, gaps remain in my research. While some of these gaps will be addressed below as suggestions for further research, it would be a quixotic task to pursue creativity in a way that would hope to capture it in its entirety. To pursue the task knowing full well it cannot be completed takes determination and benefits from a community of researchers and thinkers who can collectively

²⁶ In Chapter 6, I mentioned the theoretical physicist Brian Greene when discussing free will. In the same interview, Greene is also critical of pursuing science inside a limited, nationalist framework. He states: "The urgency to fund stem education largely comes from this fear of America falling behind, of America not being prepared. And, sure, I mean, that's a good motivation. But it certainly doesn't tell the full story by any means. Because we who go into science generally don't do it in order that America will be prepared for the future, right? We go into it because we're captivated by the ideas...[Y]ou look at any of the times when a government is willing to spend significantly on some undertaking, it's largely because they're afraid. They're afraid that they're going to be taken over, Sputnik. They're afraid that somehow they're going to fall behind, and it's unfortunate that fear drives so much activity of that sort when the reality of those in the field are not driven by fear, they're driven just by the excitement of discovery. And if a kid can get that aspect, get that perspective on science, it's a very different reason, a much better motivation for pushing forward." By emphasizing the process of discovery in science, I believe Greene positions a conception of science in similar relationship to art and, by extension, creativity. Tippet, "Transcript: Brian Greene — Reimagining the Cosmos."

broaden the term. This effort will also fall short, but the journey is less isolating. Finally, to hope of ending at a place that has never been thought is to be constantly disappointed with the outcome of one's work. It also suggests that the thinker also has the wherewithal to not only invent but to recognize the quality of the invention. An encouraging community to let the innovation appear in the open and be comfortable with it in the public's view is necessary here.

If Foucault's three moral elements provide a clear structure for a methodology, why did I not mention them until now? I cannot say if this was Foucault's intention, but the morals he outlines here appear linear in their approach; first you refuse, then you get curious, then you innovate. While helpful as an outline, it bears little resemblance to how this dissertation was structured;²⁷ furthermore, it appears too clean for discussing something like artistic creativity. The term I would utilize to describe both the creation of the dissertation and creativity itself is one and the same: rhizomatic. Deleuze and Guattari write of the term in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*:

²⁷ If you are curious: The earliest form of Chapter 3 was written first, then 4, then 6. 5 was started but then suspended to write Chapter 1 in order to accommodate a fellowship deadline and the birth of my daughter. Chapters 1 and 2 were initially just one chapter; it was split once the conclusion was drafted. The fragments between the chapters were written concurrently from a running list I kept of brief ideas to address. Whenever I would get stuck in the body of a chapter, I would pick a fragment to work on in the hopes that it might get me moving. The whole dissertation would be edited several times to create a (hopefully) clear through line. There is nothing about this process that I would characterize as straightforward as what Foucault presents in his three morals.

[T]he fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and...and...and’ This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb ‘to be.’...Making a clean slate, starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation—all imply a false conception of a voyage and movement...[There is] another way of traveling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing.²⁸

Creativity as rhizomatic does not assume a foundation or blank slate. It is remarkably more complex. Creativity as rhizomatic allows a person to begin where they need to begin and it acknowledges your “middle” is different from my “middle.” I wrote in chapter 2 that my position as a researcher was in the messiness of the term artist and that I viewed this dissertation as a work of art. By referring to creativity as rhizomatic, I am not claiming that this dissertation is *an* example of creativity, but it *feels* like *my* example of creativity. And, of course, in light of all the evidence preceding our arrival at this point, anything that might be considered my creativity is never wholly mine. The pleasure in treating creativity as rhizomatic is that this dissertation could be written again, from your point of view, full of your own collaborations, and addressing a new approach to the concept.

Creativity as rhizomatic offers another helpful idea that is similar to the example I called upon in Chapter 5 from Mira Schor. In the chapter I highlighted Schor’s working with the term “chthonic” and speaking about creativity lurking underneath the surface. Rhizomatic creativity accommodates this idea too,

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 25.

especially when Deleuze and Guattari liken it to rats and burrows: “Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout.”²⁹ Work goes on under the surface, away from watchful eyes, only to sprout back up in unexpected places. If I refer to this dissertation as an example of my (or our, or your) creativity, I give equal credit to not only my reading and writing, but to my morning runs and time with my family where suddenly, out of nowhere, an idea came to my head that provided a path out of the corner I thought I had painted myself into.

If I have one fear for the picture of creativity that I have highlighted in this dissertation, it is that it appears too positive. The process of writing this dissertation has not been always pleasant. Often, I have wondered about the punishing toll that the creativity can exert on a person, even if it is ultimately judged as positive. One topic I fear I underplayed in Chapter 4 was the price Galileo and Kepler paid for their scientific research. These men lived difficult lives as the result of their research. What was logical to them appeared morally at odds with the larger world around them and I cannot imagine their day-to-day experience of being in the world was a pleasant one. And the same could be said of Virginia Woolf and Hannah Arendt in Chapter 5. There is a section of *A Thousand Plateaus* that offers a methodology capturing creativity as both a

²⁹ Ibid. 6-7.

positive task while suggesting the negative task of creativity may perhaps lead to the most troubling places:

Staying stratified—organized, signified, subjected—is not the worst thing that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse, which brings them back down on us heavier than ever. This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times.³⁰

I wrote in Chapter 2 of the linguistic shift in this dissertation that occurs when I switch from “I” to “we.” Because creativity is determined by social recognition, it appeals to a sense of belonging. Creativity that places an individual outside a place of belonging makes for a lonely place and perhaps the force feels heavier it is because we feel as if we are bearing weight individually. One of the opportunities a “stratum” offers is a chance to find others who are experimenting on similar stratums. As we experience possible lines of flight, we look for others who have traveled on similar trajectories. We ward off the possibility of a harsh collapse when we feel like we belong. The desire to belong is so powerful, though, that it can overwhelm ethics. This is what is demonstrated in the Holocaust and made visible by the work of Ori Gersht in Chapter 1 and Hannah

³⁰ Ibid. 161.

Arnedt in Chapter 5. This suggests that an ethics of creativity and belonging need to be an on-going issue of address.

If I am to offer a way of being for art education, it is to embrace the complexity of these tasks as productive. We fail an encyclopedic reading of creativity when we treat it as self-evident or over-determined. Things that are self-evident assume easy categorization for efficiency's sake. While efficiency is certainly helpful at times, an efficient notion of creativity is unnecessarily limited. If creativity as a concept is to remain pedagogic it will embrace this complexity over simplicity; furthermore, it will embrace paradox. It will allow for a space where hierarchies collapse and connections can be made. Now, an expert in the field of Art Education might wonder, "How could I implement something like this in my classroom? How could creativity be assessed?" These ideas lead us directly into the next section of this conclusion.

Areas For Further Research

Throughout the dissertation I have tried to note areas that could be developed for further research, primarily in the footnotes. To reiterate perhaps the most difficult of those suggestions here, I should note that agency and free provide particularly tricky difficulty in thinking about creativity. If creativity is considered through something like quantum physics, our choices are not free. Instead, our choices are mathematical possibilities played out across a variety of

universes. Creativity in this context takes on a form that would resemble predestination much more than personal agency. What is particularly strange is that although we would be denied free will in this circumstance, any creative act would retain its sensation; we would *feel* as if we had been creative. Creativity in this context becomes so counter-intuitive that there is significant space for philosophy, science, and the arts to all work together shaping what this creative environment might look like. The science of this field is still in its relative infancy, so this topic could be revisited again and again as the science, philosophy and artworks develop around this idea.

If we let the issue of free will and agency recede to the background, I believe the two most obvious questions that could be researched further in the field of Art Education would be a pragmatic approach to addressing creativity in the pedagogic art studio. Linked with this is the constant need to assess and chart measurable outcomes. If I advocate for an understanding of creativity as rhizomatic this presents particular issues. What counts for creative work if the work can happen out of sight? Additionally, creativity as artwork interpreted through Deleuze and Guattari does not rest in a finished state, as it is a *process*. A trope of art studio pedagogy is to privilege process over product, but this takes for granted that a product will be produced. The assessment of art production remains with a judgment of the product. Furthermore, the moment that art is

invoked to suggest a solution to a problem, art is seen as a product. This is a significant challenge to those interested in assessment.

As for my own research, I see several areas that hold my interest. First and foremost, I see the experience of this dissertation as folding itself into my own artwork where it forces me to challenge my own assumptions about my artistic practice. For my writing and reading research, two topics particularly appeal to me: sound and belonging. In terms of sound, I am increasingly interested in how sound influences perception. I see it as holding a tremendous power over me and, because of that power, I am drawn to try and understand it. Second, belonging speaks to a way of being together in a community. I am curious about the sensation generated by belonging, and the function that artistic production plays in this process. This is an avenue where an ethical exploration of creativity could hold promise as it might speak to the way we treat creativity with care. Above all, I want to honor the experience of writing this dissertation in all aspects of my life. This is to say that writing this dissertation was a rich experience and, though I found it terrifying and daunting at many times, I found my way through it and feel a deep appreciation for the time to experience this process.

360 Degree Room for All Colours, Part 2

While Eliasson's *360 Degree Room for All Collours* has an art historical lineage that can be directly traced the panorama, a viewer of the piece can participate with Eliasson's room much in the same way that an audience might encounter the panorama. Remember, panoramas confined the audience to a particular location in the center of the room by railing. If the audience of a panorama were to get too close to the painting, the illusion would cease to function. Eliasson's room is similar to the panorama in that it does function if you remain in the center in its intended way; your eye, compensating by way of after-images, creates the full spectrum of visible color. Recall that each individual's sense of color is culturally and biologically conditioned. If the audience remains together in the center of the room they are, in one sense, all having the same experience. The lights behind the scrim switch color in thirty-second intervals and a computer keeps this changing light regimented. But also, each member of the audience is also having their own particular experience of the artwork. In this way the artwork is both for everyone and for the specific individual. You can make an argument that *all* artworks can be viewed in this way; the difference in the *360 Degree Room* is that this intention is conceptually factored into the production of

the artwork. Mieke Bal reads Eliasson's work as "preposterously Baroque"³¹

because of:

Eliasson's insistent interrogation of the indexical relationship between image and viewer solicits such a bodily interaction from within subjectivity and the outside culture. At the same time he enforces the mutuality of that relationship: the "you" and "I" as interchanging, in time, all the time.³²

The constant interchanging Bal speaks of here suggests movement, even when the audience is fixed in location.

However, the audience is *not* fixed in Eliasson's *360 Degree Room for All Colours*; you are free to move around wherever you might wander. You can stay in the center if you want to, or you can walk right out of the museum. Or, you can do the one thing you would never be able to do with a panorama: you could walk right up to the surface. Recall from above that the panorama's the nineteenth century fixed the viewer in space in a dark room; there was a skylight or some manner of directed light that would illuminate the painting on the wall. The light

³¹ Mieke Bal, "Light Politics," in *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, ed. Madeleine Grynsztejn (San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007). 174. While Bal does not define exactly what she means by this phrase, she does speak of Eliasson's work as constituting a "political force" (Ibid.) And while I am unsure of her intention, my mind went to the first chapter of Foucault's *The Order of Things* where the author addresses Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. Foucault ends the chapter writing: "[R]epresentation undertakes to represent itself here [in *Las Meninas*] in all its elements, with its images, the eyes to which it is offered, the faces it makes visible, the gestures that call it into being. But there...is an essential void: the necessary disappearance of that which is its foundation—of the person it resembles and the person in whose eyes it is only a resemblance" (16). Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things : An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). This "essential void" is the space between "you" and "I" that is constantly traversed.

³² Bal, "Light Politics." 174.

made the panorama visible and the light's direction indicated where to look. No one would consider trying to see the light; what would be the point? The light directed attention while not commanding attention to itself as a material.

But Eliasson's *360 Degree Room* makes the light the focal point of piece. It has a magnetic type quality; the audience is pulled toward the light. The audience cannot reach the actual light source because the scrim withholds it, but the scrim also diffuses the light so it appears more uniform and less intense. In other words, it is the scrim that allows you to stare into the light; the light without the scrim would flood your senses and you would not see its possibilities; it would push you out of the room instead of drawing you closer.

As you come to the scrim, your peripheral vision is swallowed up by the roundness of the room. The room that suggested immersion in visual perception is now truly visually immersive. Much like the panorama, there are no objects to orient your vision in space and your sense of the horizon disappears. The sensation walks the tightrope between exhilaration and terror before it becomes peaceful. In this work, the light actually appears to have a substance to it, meaning that the immateriality of light feels as if it is now material.³³ You can step in and out of this field as much as you want. You can look around and see others encountering the work in their own ways. You can have a conversation with the

³³ Pamela M. Lee, "Your Light and Space," Ibid. 41. Lee references the Ganzfeld here and the Light and Space artists like James Turrell and Robert Irwin who worked with NASA and the Garrett Corporation with a scientist named Edward Wortz who was interested in perceptual psychology (ibid).

person next to you; while your visual perception feels swallowed up in an infinite space, the sounds of the museum and others let you know that you are more than your visual perception.

Light: tangible *and* ethereal, present *and* fleeting. Once we have experienced this paradox and not found ourselves at rest at one point or another, the artwork has done its work. We have engaged with the work and our engagement has consequences in ways that remain outside our grasp.³⁴ In this engagement we become aware that our experience of the artwork is not *the* universal experience. By experiencing light, we have found *lightness*, “a certain ease or freedom in movement.”³⁵ It is in this lightness we have found a creativity that is itself restless. That this restlessness in creativity is honored as a productive characteristic is the space we now enter.

³⁴ Mieke Bal, "Light Politics," *Ibid.* 178.

³⁵ Rajchman, *Constructions.* 42.

References

- Al Miner, Ori Gersht, Ronni Baer. *Ori Gersht : History Repeating* [in English]. Boston; New York, N.Y.: MFA Publications : Museum of Fine Arts, Boston ; Distributed by ARTBOOK/D.A.P., 2012.
- Albert, Robert S., and Mark A. Runco. "A History of Research on Creativity." In *Handbook of Creativity*, edited by Robert J. Sternberg. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- "Archive Journeys: Tate History | the Buildings, Tate Modern, Architecture | Tate." TATE Archives,
http://www2.tate.org.uk/archivejourneys/historyhtml/bld_mod_architecture.htm.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem : A Report on the Banality of Evil* [in English]. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 1994.
- — —. *Hannah Arendt : The Last Interview and Other Conversations* [in English]. 2013.
- — —. *On Revolution* [in English]. New York: Viking Press, 1963.
- — —. *The Human Condition* [in English]. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Ariely, Dan. *The Upside of Irrationality : The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home* [in English]. New York: Harper, 2010.
- Art, Dallas Museum of. *Olafur Eliasson—360 Degree Room for All Colours*. 2013.
- Bal, Mieke. "Light Politics." In *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, edited by Madeleine Grynsztejn, 153-81. San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- — —. *Of What One Cannot Speak : Doris Salcedo's Political Art* [in English]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

- Barney, Matthew. *Cremaster 3*. New York: Palm Pictures, 2003.
- Bedford, Christopher. "Olafur Eliasson. San Francisco, New York and Dallas." [In English]. *burlmaga The Burlington Magazine* 150, no. 1260 (2008): 214-15.
- Beyer, Christian. "Edmund Husserl." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2013.
- Blackburn, Simon. *Being Good : An Introduction to Ethics* [in English]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics* [in Translated from French.]. [Dijon]: Les Presses du réel, 2009.
- Bowen-Moore, Patricia. *Hannah Arendt's Philosophy of Natality* [in English]. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989.
- Brooke, Christopher Nugent Lawrence. *The Age of the Cloister : The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages* [in English]. Mahwah, N.J.: HiddenSpring, 2003.
- Bryant, Levi R. "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Απρχή." In *Deleuze and Ethics*, edited by Nathan J. Smith Daniel W. Jun, 21-42. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Buchanan, Ian. "Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus a Reader's Guide." <http://public.eblib.com/EBLPublic/PublicView.do?ptilD=766045>.
- Bunn, Ted. "This American Life Is Narrowcasting at Me « Ted Bunn's Blog." <http://blog.richmond.edu/physicsbunn/2012/10/04/this-american-life-is-narrowcasting-at-me/>.
- Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde* [in Translation of: Theorie der Avantgarde.]. Translated by Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power* [in English]. New York: Viking Press, 1962.
- Carmody, Denise Lardner. *Christian Feminist Theology : A Constructive Interpretation* [in English]. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1995.
- Cheng, Scarlet. "'the Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia: 1860-1989' at the Guggenheim." *Los Angeles Times* (2009).

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-ca-asia1-2009feb01,0,2208632.story>.

Clark, James G. "Introduction: The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism." In *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, edited by James G. Clark, 1-20. Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2007.

Clark, T. J. "Arguments About Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried." In *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, edited by Francis Frascina, 102-09. London; New York: Routledge, 1983.

— — —. "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art." In *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, edited by Francis Frascina, 71-86. London; New York: Routledge, 1982.

Condren, Mary. *The Serpent and the Goddess : Women, Religion, and Power in Celtic Ireland* [in English]. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.

Conn, Joann Wolski. "Toward a Spiritual Maturity." In *Freeing Theology : The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, edited by Catherine Mowry LaCugna. [San Francisco, Calif.]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Cotter, Holland. "Art Review - Tino Sehgal - Thinking Encounters in a Naked Guggenheim - Nytimes.Com." *The New York Times* (2010). Published electronically January 31, 2010.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/01/arts/design/01tino.html?pagewanted=all>.

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer : On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* [in English]. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Creativity : Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention* [in English]. New York: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1996.

d'Entreves, Maurizio Passerin. "Hannah Arendt."
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/arendt/>.

Dacey, John S. *Understanding Creativity : The Interplay of Biological, Psychological, and Social Factors* [in English]. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Daichendt, G. James. *Artist Scholar Reflections on Writing and Research* [in English]. Chicago: Intellect Ltd., 2012.

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition* [in English]. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
- — —. *Francis Bacon : The Logic of Sensation* [in English]. Translated by Daniel W. Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- — —. *The Fold : Leibniz and the Baroque* [in English]. edited by Tom Conley Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
- — —. *Two Regimes of Madness : Texts and Interviews, 1975-1995* [in Translated from the French.]. New York; Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(E) ; Distributed by MIT Press, 2007.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [in English]. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980.
- — —. *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [in English]. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. New York: Penguin, 1972.
- — —. *What Is Philosophy?* [in English]. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- DeLillo, Don. "Pafko at the Wall. (Fiction)." [In No Linguistic Content]. *Harper's Magazine* 285, no. 1709 (1992).
- — —. *Underworld* [in English]. New York, NY: Scribner, 1997.
- Descartes, René. *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings* [in English]. London; New York: Penguin, 1998.
- Di Liscia, Daniel A. "Johannes Kepler." (2011-05-02 2011, Edward N. Zalta (ed.)).
- Dietz, Mary G. "Feminist Receptions of Hannah Arendt." In *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, edited by Bonnie Honig, 17-50. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.
- Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More* [in English]. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
- Duchamp, Marcel. *Salt Seller; the Writings of Marcel Duchamp* [in Translated from the French.]. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

— — —. "The Creative Act (1957)." In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art : A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, edited by Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, 972-73. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2012.

Dwyre, Bill. "Serena Williams Enters 2014 Indian Wells Tennis Tournament." (2014). <http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-serena-williams-20140123,0,2907722.column>.

Elíasson, Ólafur. "Projects 2002-2006." In *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, edited by Madeleine Grynsztejn. San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.

Elíasson, Ólafur, and Robert Irwin. "Take Your Time: A Conversation between Olafur Eliasson and Robert Irwin." In *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, edited by Madeleine Grynsztejn Ólafur Elíasson, and Mieke Bal, 51-61. San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.

Elíasson, Ólafur, and Peter Weibel. *Olafur Eliasson : Surroundings Surrounded : Essays on Space and Science* [in English]. Graz, Austria; Cambridge, MA: Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum ; MIT Press, 2001.

Engberg-Pedersen, Anna Ólafur Elíasson. *Studio Olafur Eliasson : An Encyclopedia* [in English, French and German.]. Köln; London: Taschen, 2008.

Evans, G. R. "The Meaning of Monastic Culture: Anselm and His Contemporaries." In *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, edited by James G. Clark, 75-85. Woodbridge, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2007.

Fer, Briony. *The Infinite Line : Re-Making Art after Modernism* [in English]. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Florida, Richard. "Cities Are the Fonts of Creativity - Room for Debate." <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/cities-are-the-fonts-of-creativity> files/11/cities-are-the-fonts-of-creativity.html.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things : An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [in English]. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Foucault, Michele, and Michael Bess. "Read Me: Foucault Interview – ‘in a Sense, I Am a Moralist’critical-Theory.Com by Critical-Theory.Com."

<http://www.critical-theory.com/read-me-foucault-interview-in-a-sense-i-am-a-moralist/>.

"Founder." <http://www.kcdc.co.il/en/founder.html> files/25/founder.html.

Fried, Michael. "How Modernism Works: A Response to T.J. Clark." In *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, edited by Francis Frascina, 87-101. London; New York: Routledge, 1982.

Gabassi, Alex. "Certain Doubts of William Kentridge." [Brazil]: Associação Cultural Videobrasil, 2000.

Gilliat-Smith, Ernest. "Catholic Encyclopedia: Beguines, Beghards." Robert Appleton Company, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02389c.htm>.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers : The Story of Success* [in English]. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2008.

Glanz, James. "Google Details Electricity Usage of Its Data Centers." *The New York Times*, 2011/09/08/ 2011.

Glass, Ira. "Send a Message! This American Life." <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/475/transcript>.

Gleiser, Marcelo. "Science, Belief, and the Search for Meaning - 13.7: Cosmos and Culture Blog : Npr." http://www.npr.org/blogs/13.7/2010/03/science_belief_and_the_search.html files/38/science_belief_and_the_search.html.

Graham, Daniel W. "Heraclitus." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2007.

Grau, Oliver. *Virtual Art : From Illusion to Immersion* [in English]. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." In *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, edited by Francis Frascina, 48-59. London; New York: Routledge, 1939.

— — —. "Towards a Newer Laocoon." In *Pollock and After : The Critical Debate*, edited by Francis Frascina, 60-70. London; New York: Routledge, 1940.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine. "(Y)Our Entanglements: Olafur Eliasson, the Museum, and Consumer Culture." In *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, edited by

- Madeleine Grynsztejn, 11-31. San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- Guattari, Félix. *Chaosmosis : An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* [in English]. Translated by Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- — —. *Chaosophy : Texts and Interviews 1972-1977* [in Translated from the French.]. edited by Sylvere Lotringer Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009.
- Hantelmann, Dorothea von. *How to Do Things with Art : The Meaning of Art's Performativity* [in Translated from the German.]. Zürich; Dijon: JRP Ringier ; Les Presses du Réel, 2010.
- Heilbron, J. L. *Galileo* [in English]. Oxford [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Helden, Al Van. "The Galileo Project I Science I Johannes Kepler." Rice University, <http://galileo.rice.edu/sci/kepler.html>.
- Hempel, Amy. *The Collected Stories of Amy Hempel* [in English]. New York; Toronto: Scribner, 2007.
- Henning, Brian G. *The Ethics of Creativity : Beauty, Morality, and Nature in a Processive Cosmos* [in English]. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005.
- Hickey, Dave. "The Heresy of Zone Defense." In *Air Guitar : Essays on Art & Democracy*, 155-62. Los Angeles; New York: Art issues. Press ; Distributed by D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers), 1997.
- Hoagland, Tony. "The Change." In *What Narcissism Means to Me*, 11-13. Saint Paul, Minn.: Graywolf Press, 2003.
- Holland, Eugene W. *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus : Introduction to Schizoanalysis* [in English]. London [u.a.]: Routledge, 2005.
- Honig, Bonnie. *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* [in English]. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.
- — —. "Introduction: The Arendt Question in Feminism." In *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, edited by Bonnie Honig, 1-17. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

- Hustwit, Gary. "Helvetica." [London]; Brooklyn, NY: Swiss Dots Ltd.; Plexifilm: Distributed by Newvideo, 2007.
- Hyde, Lewis. *The Gift : Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World* [in English]. New York: Vintage Books, 2007.
- — —. *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* [in English]. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.
- Ihde, Don. *Listening and Voice : Phenomenologies of Sound* [in English]. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007.
- Irvine, Andrew David, ed. *Alfred North Whitehead*. edited by Edward N. Zalta. Winter 2013 ed, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1996.
- "Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller: The Paradise Institute | Moca Cleveland." MOCA Cleveland, <http://www.mocacleveland.org/exhibitions/the-paradise-institute>.
- Jech, Thomas. "Set Theory." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2002.
- Jones, Jonathan. "Ori Gersht, David Shrigley and Jmw Turner – the Week in Art." <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/jan/27/ori-gersht-david-shrigley-jmw-turner> files/23/ori-gersht-david-shrigley-jmw-turner.html.
- Jun, Nathan J. "Introduction." In *Deleuze and Ethics*, edited by Nathan J. Smith Daniel W. Jun, 1-4. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Kaprow, Allan. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life* [in English]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels. *Collected Works, Vol. 3* [in English]. New York: International Publishers, 1975.
- Kaufman, James C. Baer John. *Creativity and Reason in Cognitive Development* [in English]. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Kent, William. "Catholic Encyclopedia: Indulgences." Robert Appleton Company, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm>.
- Kentridge, William. "Drawing Lesson Five: In Praise of Mistranslation." In *The Norton Lectures*, April 16, 2012.

- — —. "Drawing Lesson Four: Practical Epistemology - Life in the Studio." In *The Norton Lectures*, April 10, 2012.
- — —. "Drawing Lesson One: In Praise of Shadows." In *The Norton Lectures*, March 20, 2012.
- — —. "Drawing Lesson Six: Anti-Entropy." In *The Norton Lectures*, April 24, 2012.
- — —. "Drawing Lesson Three: Vertical Thinking - a Johannesburg Biography." In *The Norton Lectures*, April 3, 2012.
- — —. "Q&a with William Kentridge." In *The Norton Lectures*, April 23, 2012.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "'The Rock': William Kentridge's Drawings for Projection." [In English]. *October*, no. 92 (2000 2000): 3-36.
- Kubler, George. *The Shape of Time : Remarks on the History of Things* [in English]. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1962.
- Lawrence, C. H. *Medieval Monasticism : Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* [in English]. London; New York: Longman, 1989.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Complete Poems* [in English]. New York: Viking Press, 1964.
- Leclercq, Jean. *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God : A Study of Monastic Culture* [in English]. New York: Fordham University Press, 1961.
- Lee, Hermione. "Prone to Fancy." *The Guardian* (2004). Published electronically 17 December 2004.
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/dec/18/classics.virginiawoolf>.
- — —. *Virginia Woolf* [in English]. New York: A.A. Knopf ; Distributed by Random House, 1997.
- Lee, Pamela M. "Your Light and Space." In *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*, edited by Madeleine Grynsztejn. San Francisco; New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- Lerner, Michel-Pierre. "'Copernicus Is Not Susceptible to Compromise': New Light on Galileo, Kepler and Ingoli." [In English]. *Studies in History & Philosophy of Science Part A* 29A, no. 4 (1998 1998).

Linn, Susan. "Marketing to Children Drowns out Innovation - Room for Debate."
<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/marketing-to-children-drowns-out-innovation>
files/13/marketing-to-children-drowns-out-innovation.html.

Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema, Kimberly M. Sheridan. *Studio Thinking : The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education* [in English]. New York: Teachers College Press, 2007.

Louv, Richard. "Environmental Challenges Invite Creativity - Room for Debate."
<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/environmental-challenges-invite-creativity>
files/17/environmental-challenges-invite-creativity.html.

Love, David. "Who Was Johannes Kepler?" [In English]. *Astronomy & Geophysics* 50, no. 6 (2009 2009): 6.15-6.17.

Lowe, Zach. "Lights, Cameras, Revolution."
http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/9068903/the-toronto-raptors-sportvu-cameras-nba-analytical-revolution.

Lubow, Arthur. "Making Art out of an Encounter - Nytimes.Com." *The New York Times* (2010). Published electronically January 15, 2010.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17seghalt.html?ref=design>.

Luper, Steven. "The Epistemic Closure Principle." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2012.

Machamer, Peter. "Galileo Galilei." (2005-03-04 2005, Edward N. Zalta (ed.)).

McDonnell, Ernest W. *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, with Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* [in English]. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954.

McGowan, John. *Hannah Arendt : An Introduction* [in English]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Milis, Ludovicus. *Angelic Monks and Earthly Men : Monasticism and Its Meaning to Medieval Society* [in English]. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell Press, 1992.

Miller, M.H. "Trash Talk: The Department of Sanitation's Artist in Residence Is a Real Survivor." *Gallerist* (2013). Published electronically January 15,

2103. <http://galleristny.com/2013/01/trash-talk-the-department-of-sanitations-artist-in-residence-is-a-real-survivor/>.

"Moma I There Will Never Be Silence: Scoring John Cage's 4'33".
<http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1421>.

Mootee, Idris. "Managers Can Nurture Creativity - Room for Debate."
<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/09/15/is-creativity-endangered/managers-can-nurture-creativity> files/15/managers-can-nurture-creativity.html.

Musch, Jochen, and Simon Grondin. "Unequal Competition as an Impediment to Personal Development: A Review of the Relative Age Effect in Sport." [In English]. *Developmental Review* 21, no. 2 (2001 2001): 147-67.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening* [in Translated from the French.]. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

Pappas, Nickolas. "Plato's Aesthetics." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2013.

Parr, Adrian. *The Deleuze Dictionary* [in English]. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Partee, Morriss Henry. "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato." [In English]. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 30, no. 1 (1971 1971): 87-95.

Phillips, Brian. "The Favorite: Learning to Appreciate Serena the Conqueror." *Grantland* (September 6, 2013).
http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/8343811/serena-williams-conqueror.

Phillips, Lisa. "Top 10 Skills Children Learn from the Arts."
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/01/22/top-10-skills-children-learn-from-the-arts/> files/9/top-10-skills-children-learn-from-the-arts.html.

Plato. *Republic* [in English]. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004.

— — —. *Selected Dialogues of Plato : The Benjamin Jowett Translation* [in English]. New York: Modern Library, 2000.

Plato, Scharffenberger Elizabeth Watson. *Republic* [in English]. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004.

- Puka, Bill. "The Golden Rule." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2010).
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/goldrule/>.
- Rabin, Sheila. "Nicolaus Copernicus." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2010.
- Rajchman, John. *Constructions* [in English]. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.
- — —. *The Deleuze Connections* [in English]. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.
- Robinson, Ken. *Out of Our Minds : Learning to Be Creative* [in English]. Oxford: Capstone, 2011.
- Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk. *A Room of One's Own : Women Writers and the Politics of Creativity* [in English]. New York; Toronto; New York: Twayne Publishers ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1995.
- Rothman, Aviva. "Forms of Persuasion: Kepler, Galileo, and the Dissemination of Copernicanism." [In English]. *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 40, no. 4 (2009 2009): 403-19.
- Runciman, Steven. *A History of the Crusades Vol. 2* [in English]. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1997.
- Runco, Mark A. "Creativity Has No Dark Side." In *The Dark Side of Creativity*, edited by Arthur J. Cropley David H. Cropley, James C. Kaufman, Mark A. Runco. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Sawyer, R. Keith. *Explaining Creativity the Science of Human Innovation* [in English]. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Schor, Mira. "Day by Day in the Studio 14: August 24."
<http://ayearofpositivethinking.com/2013/08/24/day-by-day-in-the-studio-14-august-24/>.
- Sheets, Hilarie M. "Ori Gersht: 'History Repeating' at Museum of Fine Arts in Boston." *The New York Times*, 2012/08/23/ 2012.
- Shulevitz, Judith. "The Close Reader; the Poetry of Illness." (2002).
<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/29/books/the-close-reader-the-poetry-of-illness.html>.

- Smith, Daniel B. "What Is Art For? - Lewis Hyde - Profile." *The New York Times* (2008). Published electronically November 14, 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/16/magazine/16hyde-t.html?pagewanted=all>.
- Smith, Daniel W. "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards an Immanent Theory of Ethics." In *Deleuze and Ethics*, edited by Nathan J. Jun and Daniel W. Smith, 123-41, 2011.
- Smith, Red. "Miracle of Coogan's Bluff." In *The Best American Sports Writing of the Century*, edited by David Halberstam, 151-53. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999.
- Sobel, Dave. "Searching Heaven and Earth for the Real Johannes Kepler I Discovermagazine.Com." *Discover*, Sunday, October 5, 2008 2008.
- Stagoll, Cliff. "Concepts." In *The Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr, 53-54. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Steinberg, Leo. "'How Shall This Be?' Reflections on Filippo Lippi's 'Annunciation' In London, Part I." [In English]. *Artibus et Historiae* 8, no. 16 (1987): 25-44.
- Stoner, Abby. "Sisters Between: Beguines."
<http://www2.kenyon.edu/projects/margin/beguine1.htm>.
- Storr, Robert. "A Room of One's Own, a Mind of One's Own." In *The Studio Reader : On the Space of Artists*, edited by Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner, 49-62. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Sullivan, Graeme. *Art Practice as Research : Inquiry in the Visual Arts* [in English]. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Sullivan, John Jeremiah. "Venus and Serena against the World." (August 23, 2012 2012).
- Swenson, Gene, and Andy Warhol. "Andy Warhol Interview with Gene Swenson (November 1963)." In *Art in Theory, 1900-2000 : An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, 747-49. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003.
- Television. *Marquee Moon*. Burbank, CA: Elektra/Rhino, 2003.

- "The Unilever Series: Doris Salcedo: Shibboleth." (2008).
<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-doris-salcedo-shibboleth>.
- Tippett, Krista and Greene, Brian. "Transcript: Brian Greene — Reimagining the Cosmos." *On Being: Reimagining the Cosmos* (January 30, 2014 2014).
- "Treblinka – Shtetl." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shtetl/treblinka/files/21/treblinka.html>.
- Tyerman, Christopher. *The Crusades : A Very Short Introduction* [in English]. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Ukeles, Mierle Laderman. "Maintenance Art Manifesto 1969."
[http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles MANIFESTO.pdf](http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf).
- Ursprung, Philip. "From Observer to Participant: In Olafur Eliasson's Studio." In *Studio Olafur Eliasson: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Anna Engberg-Pedersen. Köln; London: Taschen, 2008.
- Wallace, David Foster. "Deciderization 2007—a Special Report." In *Both Flesh and Not : Essays*, 299-317. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2012.
- — —. "Federer Both Flesh and Not." In *Both Flesh and Not : Essays*, 5-33. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2012.
- — —. "Greatly Exaggerated." In *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again: Essays and Arguments*, 138-45, 1998.
- Weschler, Lawrence. *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees : Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin* [in English]. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Wolff, Jonathan. "Karl Marx." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2011.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* [in English]. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989.
- — —. *Moments of Being* [in English]. London: Hogarth, 1985.
- — —. *On Being III* [in English]. Ashfield, Mass.: Paris Press, 2002.

Zeki, Semir. *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain : Love, Creativity, and the Quest for Human Happiness* [in English]. Chichester, UK; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Zimmerman, Enid. "Reconceptualizing the Role of Creativity in Art Education Theory and Practice." [In English]. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education* 50, no. 4 (2009): 382-99.