

**Art, as a political concept, is easily manipulated, and
therefore does not exist – what there is, is simply ...
creativity**

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§1. If *creativity* involves a way of thinking and doing, that is often ingenious, in the face of events and concerns, *art* may be skill of the same kind, yet with a difference: where the latter satisfies societal motives or maybe seen as a solution to societal events and concerns in the Aristotelian fashion (*Poetics*, 1984), the former is about a drive, or maybe a solution within personal dimensions. If art is public, creativity is personal; yet creativity can become public through art, while art personal – the public and private domains not necessarily being irreducibly different.

§2. And if a difference between creativity and art is highlighted, it is because this differential is the first step towards showing that *⟨art⟩*, as a political concept dependent on social arrangements in the Marxian fashion, does not exist in the sense that, *because* it is easily manipulated, it may mean anything: it is an empty signifier, which is not the case with *creativity* as it signifies, itself, novelty and *a search in the unknown*.

§3. To arrive at making the difference between *⟨art⟩* and creativity explicit, it is necessary to upset the contemporary equalizer *⟨art⟩ means creativity* by disturbing the fixity of the notions *⟨art⟩* and *creativity* as cast and stereotyped in language.

§4. Once the difference between *⟨art⟩* and *creativity* is made explicit, once these two signifiers are set in the need of signifieds, it is necessary to examine the conditions of signification. In showing that these conditions are different, it is demonstrated that *⟨art⟩* as a signifier can never settle for a signified, whereas *creativity* is able to signify that which sustains itself: novelty.

§5. The contemporary equalizer that art means creativity underpins the romanticized construct that an artist expresses through skilled creativity personal feelings and emotions in ways that are unique. What is moreover seen to be unique is the very endowment of such feelings and emotions. And because of such a nature, not commonly encountered, the artist receives social consideration. *The artist is rare and adulated*.

§6. Such recognition is self-sustaining: the artist needs to publicly express a creation, even though it may be another's, so as to maintain the state of adulation; a narcissistic drive to show an accomplishment. The limit between showing and showing off is thin. At times, the show may be destined for a so-called 'good cause': greater exposure, enhanced presence, and ... further adulation. The artist is transformed into a *living myth*. The show must go on!

§7. In a sense, adulation obeys to a dual satisfaction, that of recognition, and that of being a fan. This is what artists call *love*. Mimesis is at work together with adulation in a parallel structure: on the one hand, artists mimic the fans by singing or painting "here I am;

this is who I am – I love you”; on the other, the fans mimic the artists and yell “we want your clothes; this is who we are – we love you”.

§8. *Within* this adulated love, all is permitted. What is *not* tolerable is to have morals as imperatives for action. Thus one can be an artist and adulated for anything mimesis allows ... stardom is what matters. Whether a guitar, the canvass, the stone, or the body, exhibition is what matters. Whether emotions in a song, a note, a color, or a sigh, expression is what matters.

§9. A stage is no place for ethical questions: one comes *to* the stage not to dress and make up but rather to shed off morals. Artists remove morals. This is the very function of wanting to be another, wanting to discover the repressed other as oneself to follow Marcuse (in Wolff, 2000). *One comes on stage naked and emptied.*

§10. In the midst of this, the creator shies away! Creators are designers of judgments. They focus on a quest for answers; they may *not* want to come on stage and so they are clothed!

§11. Artists focus *not* on such a quest, let alone its preservation, but want to achieve it. *The quest must be halted or arrested.*

§12. There are, therefore, two moments: one of creation and another of art; they are not one and the same.

§13. There is the moment when the idea is nascent, the moment of interrogation, of a search: this is creativity. Ideas arise from opportunities and events within no prior structure or design. They cannot presuppose a ‘single essential nature of Form’ as per Plato (*Republic*, 1997). Rather, with Deleuze (1994/1968), ideas are the ‘differentials of thought’, and as far as the self is fractured and incomplete, ideas ‘swarm in the fracture, constantly emerging on its edges, ceaselessly coming out and going back, being composed in a thousand different manners’. *Novelty is in the quest for completeness.*

§14. With the idea comes the *idea of the method* that is, a skill or what Collingwood (1984) calls ‘craft’. *Novelty is in craft.*

§15. Another moment concerns taking the idea further, and giving it form through method: this is art. As form arrests the search, art accepts the finding however partial this may be. Thus art capitalizes on an existing idea and the idea of the method. *Art is dependent on craft.*

§16. Now that the difference between art and creativity is made explicit, it is necessary to examine their conditions of signification.

§17. Further to Vasquez (1984), art is a form of ideology in the sense that it transcribes the socio-historical concerns of a time. Put differently, art mirrors the social concerns of the period of its making. If so, there must be a strong determinism emanating from society and in particular its institutions, in the direction of art. *Art is a discursive event.*

§18. With Barthes (1991/1982) such an event condenses meaning while acting as a system of exclusion: *art excludes*. But at the same time, *art includes*. It seeks the encounter of those summoned, or interpellated to use Althusser (2001/1971), those attracted by its charms and beauty. Art constructs a feeling of familiarity and security. *Art is déjà vu!* Art, in other words, has subtle and docile technologies to command specified forms of thinking and acting.

§19. But even so, art does not always have faithful fans! This is because art cannot control its power since power, to use Foucault (1981), can come from everywhere; it can take any form to become the underlying characteristic of social exchange. *Power is creative*. And if power is the constitutive element of society, it is the marker of differential meaning constructions and interpretive battles *over* art: 'art is this ... art is that *⟨Art⟩* is in the midst of antagonisms over meaning construction and dominance.

§20. Under such conditions of signification, *⟨art⟩*, as a signifier, floats, for it can never settle for one signifier: no sooner than it settles for a signifier, be it creativity, such fixity is disallowed by the antagonisms characterizing the conditions of signification.

§21. In contrast, the condition of signification of *creativity* is the self. It is thus dependent on imagination in addition to its translation in language. Arguably, linguistic translation of that which is non-linguistic, that is imagination, is socially determined; in this case the conditions of signification would *not* be different from those of *⟨art⟩*.

§22. Although this may well be the case the *translatability of imagination* clashes with imagination itself for it is the latter that *allows* the *re-creation* of language and therefore sets the conditions for translation: *creativity* is able to signify that which renders it possible, and this is novelty.

§23. *Creativity*, therefore, is enmeshed in the differential of space and time as it is change itself. It is presentation. *⟨Art⟩* is not, for it cannot, since each time that its signification is attempted, it is ousted from the differential of space and time to arrive onto the differential

of language. It is re-presentation. It is not repetition of a presentation for it lacks reference; it lacks that which is to be presented again, the signified: *⟨art⟩ lacks creativity*.

§24. Thus, as a floating signifier and prone to discursive and interpretative battles, *⟨art⟩* cannot rest: it can never claim a place to be or an origin or simply 'be'. It is forever haunted by creativity as a becoming, as that which is!

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