

Transgressive or Instrumental? A Paradigm for the Arts as Learning and Development

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Practices of Transgression or Instrumentalisation?

Contemporary practices that connect the arts with learning are widespread at all level of educational systems (Chemi 2016) and in organisations (Taylor and Ladkin 2009). This phenomenon includes very diverse conceptualisations defined by multiple approaches, methods and background values and concrete practices span from arts-based facilitation of change processes to systematic integration of the arts in education. Examples of the former can be visualisation tools applied to organisational processes (visual facilitation) or theatre used to mirror relational issues in workplaces (forum theatre). Examples of the latter can be cross-disciplinary partnerships between schools and artists (arts-integration, teaching artists) or the extensive use of the arts in scientific

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knowledge-development projects (art-science partnerships, STEAM). In both cases, the arts contribute to the trigger and facilitation of knowledge, learning, development and creativity. However, this happens with different magnitudes and ontological impacts depending on the background perspectives implicit in these connections. Some of these approaches encompass the potential of transforming the very concept of knowledge and of aesthetics; some others merely consist of facilitation or educational tools for a better organising of everyday working or learning routines. What this amelioration of existing routines is about is differently formulated (new, different, optimal, more effective and more engaging) and sustained by evidence (Fiske 1999).

Even though findings on the educational benefits of art experiences are often misunderstood or contradictory, showing either large cognitive outputs, or little- and short-lived benefits if not none at all (Winner et al. 2013; Journal of Aesthetic Education 2000), the fundamental role of the arts in human development cannot be denied. If scientific evidence fails in bringing coherent finding to this field, the reason might reside in the complexity of the phenomenon and not on its lack of impact or resonance. In other words, the problem might reside in the *effect* discourse as output that can be quantified and measured, rather than resonance that can be qualified by meaningful experiences. However, regardless of magnitude or explicit learning benefits, the arts/learning partnerships bring about a specific approach to learning, which is embodied, sensory, aesthetic and makes use of metaphors, mediation, meaning-making and sense-making. I will make the point that the arts establish a learning environment, which is different from and alternative to the formal schooling system (still today) based on logical-rational reasoning, right-question answer and accountability tests. Moreover, arts-based learning environments offer the platform for multiple approaches to learning to unfold in a place that is characterised by pluralism, diversity and hybridity.

The presence of the arts in learning experiences has the consequence of leading to the need for novel conceptualisations on the arts and their role for and in society. Are the arts in these contexts ancillary to societal needs or should they enjoy a limitless autonomy? Should the arts be attended to *because of* their learning outputs or should they be

cultivated “for the arts’ sake”? Shouldn’t the arts be free of all social functions or should they serve a purpose? In this chapter, I will focus on the deceptive opposition between the arts’ dispositional transgression and their instrumental use in educational and organisational settings, arguing that the two poles are nothing but two sides of the same phenomenon. I will discuss how aesthetics and artistic practices can describe and explain the very background for the interconnection between the arts and learning. My hope is that this might bring about useful insights for future artistic or arts-based practices in education and in organisations.

Methodological Note

This reflection will be mostly conceptual, leaning on creativity studies with sociocultural system perspectives (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 1999). As an empirical support, I will bring examples from two sets of research studies: one on artistic creativity (Chemi et al. 2015) and the other on practices of arts-integration (Chemi 2014a). The methodological approach of the former study is qualitative and based on retrospective narratives, collected by means of semi-structured interviews with 22 interviewed artists from a wide variety of art forms and genres: literature, poetry and scripts; dance and choreography; acting and theatre directing; music; film-making; visual arts; digital arts; design; and architecture. These empirical findings bring evidence to and against assumptions on the artist’s creative mindset: What does it really mean to think and create like an artist? How do artists tell the story of their own creative processes? What can educators and learners learn from artists?

The latter empirical context draws from related but different qualitative studies focusing on artist–school partnerships. Culture Lab (*Kulturens Laboratorium* 2015–2017) involved nine partnerships between artists and schools in the Fyn region in Denmark (Chemi 2017). Its research is an ongoing study that leans on a previously carried research in several Danish Public Schools in 2009–2011 in the Vejle Municipality (Denmark), the Artfulness project (Chemi 2014b).

In both studies, I looked at how the arts can be integrated with other school subjects throughout the curriculum (Chemi 2014a). Findings from the Artfulness project are consistent with international findings (Deasy 2002) and show that this integration is able to generate both emotional and cognitive benefits. Against the background of the Artfulness study's original empirical data, I designed the research on the Culture Lab project, specifically looking at artist-school partnerships in a novel political initiative, actualised in the Danish school reform in 2014 and called the "Open School", which attempts to implement stronger relationships and collaborations between schools and cultural institutions or initiatives. This context is hosting a number of school-artist partnerships but also a warm debate whether the arts should be instrumental to learning.

The methodological approaches of these studies are qualitative and based on field observations or retrospective narratives, collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The artists, students and educators interviewed allowed me to look behind the scenes of their artistic creativity and to collect narratives on multiple aspects of the making of art or art appreciation. Here, I will gather the findings that discuss art-making and art-perception as at the same time transgressive and developmental. As a conclusion, I will propose a conceptual interpretation of the arts as a third space where participants are free to negotiate transgression as well as an instrumentality for learning purposes.

The Arts Transgressing Borders

That the arts can make use of transgression and subversion is considered typical of art practices (Strati and de Monthoux 2002; Barry and Meisiek 2010). The core of both arts as transgression and as instrumental is in modernity: from one side the Avant-Garde claimed freedom and autonomous responsibility on art-making, but on the other side, tendencies towards collectivism and socialism are clearly emerging during the Modernist era. Let us look at the first one.

During the twentieth century, Avant-Garde artists formulated statements of dissent and disorder, aiming at questioning formal ideas of

art but also the very critique of Avant-Gardes. For instance, the Dada movement expressed its disagreement with manifestos in a manifesto that Tristan Tzara published in 1918 (now in Motherwell 1951), where he emphasised the uselessness of labels (“Dada means nothing”) and of ideals of beauty:

A work of art should not be beauty in itself, for beauty is dead; it should be neither gay nor sad, neither light nor dark to rejoice or torture the individual by serving him the cakes of sacred aureoles or the sweets of a vaulted race through the atmospheres. A work of art is never beautiful by decree, objectively for all. Hence criticism is useless, it exists only subjectively, for each man separately, without the slightest character of universality. [...] How can one expect to put order into the chaos that constitutes that infinite and shapeless variation: man? (in Harrison and Wood 2003, p. 253)

This was a break with the bourgeois ideology of beauty, with art as a closed system or as the privilege of the few and with a passive meeting with art. Tzara was suggesting the complete autonomy of art, which Avant-Gardes practiced as transgression from ethics and aesthetics and proposed as an alternative and extreme form of subjectivism. Common to several Avant-Gardes was the giving into chaos, but not in a passive, mourning way, on the contrary, this writing off of rules was playful, loud and bombastic. The Futurists enjoyed to provoke their audiences and knew no limits to their cultural aggression, for instance, when covering with glue the audience sits in a theatre room or when staging nonsensical plays filled with shouting and bold statements. Even though their ideal of autonomy of the arts emerged within the social class of bourgeoisie, its aim was to attack the very core of the bourgeois values. According to Heinrich (2016), on the background of the Avant-Garde negation of art’s presentational format, the very distinction reality/fiction was challenged, including “the defiance of the role of the passive (bourgeois) recipient in favour of a critical, active participant in art and thus society, simply because avant-garde art wants to be seen as non-art” (p. 1). In this sense, the autonomy of art was to be seen as the liberation

from representation and the opening towards possibilities of application to life-contexts and instrumentalisation.

However, the autonomy of art could also express itself in elitist and anti-democratic practices. The bourgeois ideology was able to nest at the same time conservative tendencies as the arts for art's sake but also the dissent against this view. The elitist ideology hidden behind the art for art's sake practices made art education accessible only to the few privileged ones and defined the educational role of the arts as an elitist *Bildung*. I already emphasised (Chemi 2014b, p. 375) how education can instrumentally use the arts in order to perpetrate cultural exclusion and anti-democratic ideologies by bending the concept of *Bildung* towards formalist cultural uplifting arguments, where the arts can provide elevation of the spirit and cultural refinement (for the few). Wakeford (2004) draws a short history of the meeting between schools and the arts by highlighting the dialectic between the role of the arts and the schools' core mission. Besides the uplifting model, he founds several responses in defending the arts in education, each one of which is based on very different grounds, such as the pure entertainment argument (the arts provide recreation and fun); or the more recent cognitive arguments based on the belief that the arts can provide learning transfer to other knowledge areas (crossover benefits). Varkøy (2015) applies the concept of *Bildung* to artistic practices and draws the concept's historical developments, according to fluctuating cultural approaches. According to Varkøy (2015), the very core of *Bildung* "is a critical attitude towards tendencies of *instrumentalism* in educational politics and thinking" (p. 19). But what happens when the arts achieve the role of an agent of/for learning in schools or organisations?

Creative Transgressions

The application of the arts in education adds one more layer of complexity to the theme of transgression in the arts: in which ways do the educational role change, modify or wipes off the core element of transgression implicit in artistic practices? Is transgression an inherent ontological element of art-making and art-appreciation? In other words, are

art practices inherently dissident or provocative? In order to further reflect on these questions, the field of creativity studies can suggest useful perspectives.

Creativity experts have in various ways suggested that different forms of subversion could be the drive of creativity, or that some transgressive elements might constitute the intrinsic and socially accepted “dark side” of creativity (Cropley et al. 2010). The transgressive element of creation is vibrant in the diehard myths of the lonely individual who creates by means of extraordinary sufferings and exceptional achievements. Creativity studies have shown how misleading these views on creative processes are, and how these processes are actually always collective, shared, relational and distributed (Chemi 2016). However, a certain level of transgression is always included in creative processes: the very need of creating something new is based on the action of breaking with the old and proposing novel solutions or ideas. In artistic practices, this disruption is not only accepted but also fundamentally expected. Regardless the view on the artist, either as lonely and desperate creator or as an ordinary craftsman, the exceeding of limits is implicit in the renewal of artistic forms. The arts seem to embrace the values of transgression as no other human form of expression. Empirical evidence for this claim resides in the history of the arts: no genealogy of artistic idea lacks processes going beyond limits and the challenge to preceding values and rules. The very core of artistic creativity is to find novel and appropriate solutions to novel and appropriate problems. By doing so, the arts might stretch their tasks and methods so far as to end up redefining itself, its purpose, its domain and its field. What is accepted in the arts can be independent of canons commonly shared in a given society (e.g. ethical rules) and even field-agreed criteria in a specific domain (e.g. the rules of staging theatre plays)? In the case of cultural practices that expect artists to transgress, expectations may also comprise the rethinking of and within artistic practices. Because one of the functions of artistic creativity is to challenge the established rules within a field and reinvent new rules, breaking or bending the rules is not only accepted as part of artistic creativity but also expected and nurtured. This is clear in improvisational practices in theatre or in jazz.

Breaking or Making the Rules

According to Dewey “every great initiator in art breaks down some barrier that had previously been supposed to be inherent” (2005, p. 235). This does not mean that artistic creation rejects rules, on the contrary: artists rely on rules and limitations in order to work with and against chaos and unpredictability. Danish visual artist Michael Kvium explicitly describes the paradox of operating between disorder and structure:

But there are always limitations! We are struggling with them all the time because there are constantly some things you'd like to do and that you cannot. There are always some things you want to achieve that you cannot reach far enough into. It is also the driving force because it goes on and goes on and nothing succeeds sometimes. The limit is one's own life, one's intelligence, one's own energy. You encounter limitations all the time: the size of your workshop is a limitation, the choice of colour is a limitation, the choice of brushes, in my case, the possibilities of the hand, the possibilities of thoughts. Otherwise we would suddenly hit into a divine state if we were without restrictions. We are defined by constraints both as humans, but also as artists and most likely it is the reason we can recognise each other. (Chemi et al. 2015, p. 110)

Other artists in Chemi et al. (2015) express the fundamental role of rules and rules-setting in their creative work. They explain it as a necessary step towards the creation of appropriate novelty. In order to break the rules, you need rules to deal with. The mentioned study emphasises the dialectic rules/transgression as fundamental to the artists' apprenticeship and identity-building in the journey towards artistic professionalism. Navigating between the two poles will indeed become central to their artistic practice as professional artists. How this can be learned in formal settings is less clear.

Learning Transgression

Theatre director Eugenio Barba challenges the educational role of formal and informal learning environments when creativity is the desired output:

What is the enemy of creativity? It's what we learn in school and in our family. We teach our children to be mediocre, to avoid excess. For parents, the worst thing is a child [who is] too lively, who reads too much, who doesn't speak too much, too shy. Or anything which is in excess and then we try to make him normal. Normality is what we wish for our child. (Chemi et al. 2015, p. 65)

He rejects conformism, compliance of thoughts and shallow ordinariness. According to Barba, standardised conformity to norms can kill creativity. In contrast to this, he mentions the creative environment where his own creativity flourishes and thrives, a place where he creates together with others, in a team, his ensemble through 50 years the Odin Teatret. He says: "As an individual I don't feel very creative, while with my actors, and my collaborators from other specialisations in the theatre, I feel very, not creative, but I feel strong in this feeling of security" (Chemi et al. 2015, p. 66). Odin Teatret gives him the feeling (and practice) of being creative, which he does not believe, he possess when he is alone as a single individual. The educational environment that is stimulating for him is the ensemble, the learning that happens together with colleagues and from each other. Only in this environment, he is able to get the feeling, if not of creativity, of trust in the process and in each other, which is fundamental for his own creation.

If the transgression is almost ontologically related to the arts and if historical examples of Avant-Garde, Modernist and Postmodernist artistic practices show that transgression is fundamental to the making of (novel and meaningful) art, how can this be taught or learned? How can educational institutions embrace this potentially disruptive ideology?

The Arts Applied to Learning

An instrumentality that in pragmatic educational theories is not a problem at all (Dewey 2005) is strongly opposed in discourses that look at the purpose of the arts as secluded in themselves: the longstanding refrain of the arts for arts' sake. The relevance of a deeper reflection on the role of the arts in education has recently had an impressive comeback in Denmark because recent changes in the public school system (K16)

have brought about an interesting debate on the role of the arts in education. The discourses opposing to each other in this debate might offer an opportunity for reflection to be applied also in higher educational or organisational fields. One of the changes actualised in the Danish school reform in 2014 is the “Open School”, which aims at implementing stronger relationships and collaborations between schools and cultural institutions or initiatives. This context is hosting a number of school–artist partnerships but also a warm debate whether the arts should be instrumental to learning or not. Some scholars (Hjortshøj 2015) strongly contribute to this debate by claiming that the arts should *not* teach students any topics, for instance, math or physics, but should only teach them something about themselves. I believe that opposite claims can coexist in a system view of artistic purposiveness that embraces complexity or, alternatively, in postcolonial understandings of third spaces.

The link between aesthetics and learning is at the core of the transgressive quality of creativity but also at the core of instrumental use of the arts for purposes that are not aesthetic. The gap art/learning can be bridged by looking at the intrinsic intentionality of artistic processes as one of the many different functions, roles and elements of the arts. Making and appreciating art are different but related activities of a common participation in artistic experiences. Both activities are intentional: recipients and art-makers expose themselves to artworks in often ritualised, institutionalised and agreed-upon forms. Postmodern art-forms challenge this intentionality in practices that are emergent, such as street art, happenings and street performance. However, also in these art-forms, art-making is intentional from the artist’s side and recipients can always turn away from art reception, even in these unexpected or serendipitous experiences.

Intentionality

Making art contains intentionality: artists—not even amateurs—cannot make art by chance... “ups, I made some art!” The activation of artistic processes is always intentional to a project, which can be fuzzy, blurred

and complex but always defined by artistic choices and visions. In its extreme application to a given context, intentionality can turn into instrumentality. In this case, art can be instrumental to learning, leadership, management, communication, propaganda, expression of power, self-expression, therapy, pleasure, arousal and so forth. This long list only mentions some of the infinite functions that the arts can regard. What is missing in the debate that is opposing the arts to learning or to any other instrumental end is thinking about the arts in their plurality. The arts are and have a multiplicity of different, complex, sometimes contradictory or simultaneously occurring elements, roles and functions. Reducing the arts to only one of them would risk trivialising the beauty and meaningfulness of the arts that consists in this intrinsic complexity and diversity. Learning and development is one of the possible trajectories in which the arts can unfold, as well as transgressive purposes can be a mode of artistic expression. The two phenomena might seem opposed because in the former, the arts are used instrumentally to learning outputs and in the latter, the transgression paradigm might seem as being part of *the arts' sake*. The former model implies transmission of (often old) knowledge and traditions, the latter instead implies the breaking of established rules and old traditions. These paradigms are only apparently opposed, as several artistic practices show: Brecht's epic theatre is politically transgressive but contains the instrumental purpose of developing critical consciousness in its recipients, Banksy's street art transgresses aesthetic rules but at the same time seeks to challenge perspectives and opinions, pop stars challenge ethics and moral but at the same time might be coherent with developmental outputs (e.g. they might teach us something about ourselves). Danish visual artist Michael Kvium claims that artists are often "willing to venture into places that do not necessarily make life easier" (in Chemi et al. 2015, p. 130) and protests that making life easier is not the purpose of arts: "art doesn't do that". The function of art is not necessarily to generate or express positive feelings (or learning), because art is essentially research, is an inquiry, is an open—and open-ended—venture in the unknown. Art resists to all sort of instrumental reduction to a *single* purpose, but not to instrumentality in itself.

Utilitarianism

Summing up the conceptual points so far, I can point at the diversity of purposes and roles of artistic experiences that are often qualified by the opposition paradigms: transgression versus conformism, autonomy versus instrumentalisation and arts versus learning. However, it is possible to look beyond the antagonism paradigm by drawing from educational and artistic theories that are pragmatic and constructivist. According to constructivism, meaning depends on the subject's understanding, and learning occurs in complex interactions between subjects. Pragmatism stretches the construction of knowledge to the understanding of learning as directly applicable to practical needs and as fundamentally experiential.

Historically, Modernity is the cradle of utilitarian reflections on art. Initiated as an opposition to idealism and as the dissemination of Bolshevik or postrevolutionary aesthetics, Avant-Garde practices built on utilitarianism and constructivism aimed from one side “at the dissolution of art into life”, on the other side at “the aestheticization of life itself” (Harrison and Wood 2003, p. 225). In this cultural project, true art is the one that educates and that educates all, not just a privileged elite. The utilitarian approach to art is initiated against the background of the ideals of openness, inclusion, democracy and participation. Even though this socially aware approach presented itself as an alternative to idealism, it is possible to draw similarities between the utilitarian aesthetics and Platonism. Plato's undermining of the arts as an imperfect copy of (true) reality had the consequence of relegating the arts to mimetic activities that could be potentially disturbing to human beings: believing in false representations of reality was deceiving for the wise man. Plato understood aesthetics as an epistemological project that had its source in philosophy. Even though he distinguishes and opposes art and philosophy, according to Grey (1952), he comes to “assert that art is philosophy; but on the other hand, the political and educative function of art will not belong to the philosopher qua philosopher, but to the philosopher qua pilot or guide” (p. 295). However imperfect, art in Platonism is called upon a fundamental role: the morally uplifting function and the educational one. Grey (1952) emphasises

Plato's approach to art in *Republic* (passage 401B seq.), where he formulates the core concept that "true art must be like a 'health-giving breeze from happy places' [...]. True art will imitate only what is morally uplifting" (p. 295). In other words, the arts should be useful and emotionally pleasing at the same time. This particular interpretation of utilitarianism as at the same time aesthetic and moral, tightly binding beauty and goodness, has been a recurrent attitude throughout antiquity and in Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Classicism. An example is Horace's *Ars Poetica*, *Epistula ad Pisones* (written ca. 19 BC), where the purpose of art is clearly pedagogical by means of pleasurable experiences: art mixes the useful to the sweet (*miscuit utile dulci*) by entertaining and teaching (*delectando pariterque monendo*) (Horace, 343-4).

This utilitarian view on the arts, instrumental to educational purposes is common to both platonic idealism and to Bolshevik Avant-Gardes. The moral values and the political undertaking might radically change, but the acknowledgement of the application of the arts to non-artistic contexts or to explicitly educational purposes does not change. In different ways, also the disruptive Futurist-Dada Avant-Gardes, contributed to the instrumental application of the arts to real-life contexts, even trying to wipe off the very divide art/life. Considering how diverse artistic practices and ideologies end up advocating for the educational application of art, it might be possible to suggest that utilitarianism and instrumentalism might be some of the likely functions that the arts can hold in society. Utilitarianism might be one of the elements of the very ontology of art.

The Construction of Learning

Similarly to utilitarianism in the arts, constructivist and pragmatist theories of learning embrace practices that are experiential across boundaries, constructed, situated and applied to given contexts. Against the background of this ideological commonality, constructivist educational theories have explicitly valued the arts as an environment rich with learning opportunities and experiences. Here, I wish to bring the example of John Dewey and his reflections on the arts

(2005) as an example of how the instrumental application of the arts in education does not necessarily obliterate the transgressive potential of the arts.

In Dewey's version of pragmatism, to which constructivism owes much, the instrumentalism of education and learning is not only acceptable, but a fact implicit in any learning process. Dewey's reflection, as the Modernist Avant-Gardes reaction against bourgeois elitism, takes a clear stand against the public school tradition of his time and the ideal of the making of the gentleman. According to Hyland (1993, p. 90), "owing something to the Confucian conception which associated a particular style and etiquette with a hierarchical social system, the 'gentleman ideal' emerged as the approved form of education for the public schools which fed the civil service and government".

The standard form of classical formal education nurtured the most powerful political and economic groups in British society with accordingly shaped minds. In this case, the non-instrumental conception of knowledge extended its influence on the very design of educational formal environments, by valuing academic generalists against the shaping of vocational specialisation. Dewey, whose epistemology relied on anti-Cartesianism, similarly to C. S. Peirce and William James, could not ascribe neither to this pedagogical philosophy nor to its didactic solutions. He envisaged an educational system where organisms interacted actively with their environment and were at the same time they were shaped by these interactions. Going beyond the limits of Cartesian oppositions, Dewey proposes to teach for and to a whole human being who actively constructs knowledge and understanding, together with other organisms and artefacts, by means of experiences. However, experiences do not stand alone as blind practice, but are one element of Dewey's broader conception of enquiry: the pursuit of knowledge is to be conducted as personal discovery based on the learner's interest and on a direct relevance to the learner's life. No wonder Dewey found in artistic experiences the complex and diverse environment that could

stimulate human enquiry and offer, accordingly to the organism's specific needs, either resistance and obstacles or favouring agencies in order to harvest learning.

As qualitative findings on school–artists partnerships show (Chemi 2014a), the arts can design environments where challenges and competences can dialogically interact. As an example, I can mention the community project described in Chemi (2014a), where a whole school engagement with a professional visual artist brought school kids to paint collaboratively on street installations. The challenges in this project seemed to be low: the students had to “just” paint on the wood panels that the artist had prepared with drawings. The artist had also decided which colours to use and the students had “just” to find the right colours accordingly coded to numbers on the wood panels. Even though the task-related challenges seemed to be too simple, students reported in interviews and showed in field observation a big deal of engagement, understanding of medium and painting techniques, collaborative competences, understanding of aesthetic criteria, fascination for artistic processes, pride in looking at and showing of the final product. In other words, the participating students reported a positive influence on a wide range of developmental areas that stretch far beyond the limits of subject-related learning or memorisation. Their learning processes were based on the individual (cognitive and emotional) capacity to put up with challenges and were facilitated by means of peer interaction, adult modelling and scaffolding, the offer of a variety of tasks with different levels of involvement and of difficulty, the meaningfulness of the public display in community spaces. Even though the painting activities gently pushed learners out of their comfort zone, the designed learning environment allowed the artistic encounter to initiate a safe enquiry, and as such was reported in interviews (feeling of safeness, joy, well-being, Chemi 2014a). A conceptual hypothesis for this might be that transgression and instrumentality in artistic experiences are not opposite but rather strictly related to each other. The hybrid interaction between the challenging transgression of limits and the organism's strategies of coping is individually constructed, and this construction (of

meaning, of knowledge, of understanding) is in itself the core of any learning process.

Two Sides of the Same Paradigm

The ongoing relationship of the transgression/instrumentality paradigms can be explained as two concurring sides of the same phenomenon by looking at systemic perspectives on artistic creativity.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) explains creative transgressions as cyclical, contextual and negotiable amongst individuals, fields and domains. With the purpose of approaching creativity not only as a psychological but also as a sociocultural phenomenon, Csikszentmihalyi conceived the domain-field-individual theory.

In this perspective, creativity occurs in the interaction between individuals, field (a group of individuals in a specific domain who are in charge of accepting or rejecting a creative feature) and domain (the values, explicit and implicit rules, shared practices, procedures). Creativity can be triggered at the individual level, in a case of talented persons or geniuses, but happens in a dialogue between individual and field (role models, critics, mentors, peers). In the case of an extraordinarily creative individual able to create a groundbreaking product, the field's gatekeepers (exceptionally influential individuals within a field) might open up the doors of a domain, securing accessibility to domain transformation. This means that any talented individual needs a network of relationships and influences to flourish and thrive as a creator. According to Csikszentmihalyi, any creative process is conceived and developed within a community: "creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals' products" (1999, p. 314).

Implicit in this perspective is the chronological dimension and the cultural complexity of the relationship to creativity through time, the recurring of the same patterns of acceptance and rejection of transgressions that can become game-changing rules. "Creativity occurs when a person makes a change in a domain, a change that will be transmitted

through time” (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p. 315) and the understanding of change or originality is highly variable, given specific sociocultural conditions. Taking the arts as an example, the artistic domains might grow ready to accept or embrace a given change (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2003, pp. 188–189) but as well reject the changes. Artistic creativity never happens in a void and Csikszentmihalyi’s three areas of interest—personal background (individual), culture (domain) and society (field)—are themselves included in and influenced by society at large. Moreover, the relationships in between are most likely to occur in chaotic, complex and reciprocal trajectories. For instance, an artistic product can be perceived as groundbreaking, on the verge of being provocative or offensive, in a specific period of time (Impressionist painting at its debut), until a gatekeeper (an art critic) or a group of gatekeepers (the organisers of the first Impressionist exhibition) finds it interesting and valuable. The provocative nature of Impressionism is today lost and the function of provocation has been variously reinvented within other painting styles. As theatre director Eugenio Barba pointed out: “You were hanged, you were burned 300 years ago if you said that you could fly or that human beings could fly, because it was an offence against the angels and God. The Inquisition came and told us that it was a Satanic way of thinking [...], it took a little time” (Chemi et al. 2015, p. 48).

The interactions between individuals and groups tend to be dynamic and recurrent; for instance, individuals can be part of one or more fields, and at the same time, they are part of society at large, which also influences the dynamics within fields and domains. In this sense, gatekeepers can be both individuals within a domain-specific field but also the general public in a given sociocultural context or a combination of those. In the arts, this would mean that a jazz musician who is part of the domain of jazz music and whose colleagues and recipients participate to the field of jazz music is at the same time involved in relationships with other fields, for instance, the field of rock music or the field of the general public. A jazz musician might choose to transgress the rules of his domain proper and engage in a conversation with other music genres and practices or with other artistic modalities.

The Transgression and Value of Novelty

Novelty often emerges from excursions in other domains, in mixing and blending and in stealing and borrowing. But how is this coherent with an educational purpose? How can this resistance against the borders of domains be integrated into education and organisations without being disruptive?

First of all, looking at Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) system perspective, would it be possible to acknowledge that transgression is nothing but a negotiable label. Whether the arts are transgressive or not depends on the negotiation occurring amongst members of or participants in a given field (classical musicians and recipients) within a given context (today's society) and domain (classical music). This might not even occur in a single domain closed in itself, but across different fields and domains in a multiplicity of influences and negotiations.

Second, the negotiation of labels (transgressive, creative and acknowledged) is recursive. In other words, something labelled transgressive in a given historical period is not necessarily what is understood as transgressive in other historical periods. This is extremely plain to explain by looking at how the arts challenge moral values or sexual orientations: just looking at nudity in the visual or performing arts and how this has developed accordingly to ideologies and religious beliefs, it would be enough to understand the recurrent and cyclical occurrence of specific negotiations.

Third, specific for transgression is the need of overcoming frames. According to Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) model, boundaries move all the time and this challenges the transgression strategy in the arts.

When former transgressive forms of art, for instance, the Impressionist painting, become a tradition and establish new rules in the domain, then a whole new form of transgression is needed. This form of transgression will stay transgressive as long as the field understands its function as such.

Last but not least, what are educational institutions and organisations to do in order to make room for transgression? How can they use the arts for learning and development without annihilating the transgressive part? Why should education and organisations be concerned about transgression at all?

Conclusion

Finding an answer to these last questions will constitute my conclusion and my proposed perspective. I will start from the bottom. The ability to go beyond borders is basically a creative process. Breaking with the known, as transgression does, brings new angles that can lead to the definition of the novel and useful outcomes. So, transgression is fundamental to creativity and new-thinking. In some creativity traditions, the definition of creativity brings together the novelty, originality, transgressive with the applicable, useful and adaptive (Feist 2010).

The arts practice this unity of novelty and usefulness in a plurality of coexisting functions, which all have a purpose: even the arts for art's sake, has the function ("for") of unfolding the aesthetic purpose of the arts. All the artistic functions coexist in a complex and safe network. So, my proposed paradigm consists of looking at artistic transgression in formal institutions, such as organisations or education, as one of the functions in the arts, acknowledging the arts' plurality. If the transgression is seen as one of the many functions in the arts, organisations and educational systems might reflect on the contexts in which transgression is needed, accepted or required and design spaces and situations where borders can be broken safely. This initial acknowledgment of plurality and reflection on the context of the application is fundamental to the educational consequences of arts-based interventions: lacking this, the arts can be seen as belonging to only one paradigm as opposed to all the others. This attitude brings a conflict mindset where the arts are seen as transgressive *or* educational, expressive *or* instrumental, where in reality, the arts contain all of this: *both* transgression and learning, *both* expression and instrumental use. So, what educational systems and organisations should do in order to embrace the transgressivity of the arts is to engage in reflections on the plurality of arts functions and purposes, to reflect on the contexts of work where the arts are required, to design educational and developmental situations where individuals can safely transgress, that is spaces where making mistakes is allowed and does not bring life-threatening consequences. Last but not least, the partnership between the arts and organisations or education requires a paradigm shift by looking at the arts as networks of

a plurality of functions and not mono-functional activities. This paradigm shift would entail going beyond set ideologies about the arts, or, in other words, transgressing the boundaries of ideological arenas where views on the arts fight against each other destructively.

One possible framework applicable to this perspective is the postcolonial theories (Wolf 2000) concept of third spaces, which can be defined as the alternative to either/or perspectives in cultural domains. The space of art might be a third space: the space of possibilities that go beyond borderlines, the third alternative, which is not a synthesis of two opposing poles but the coexistence of oppositions. The third space is the *locus* of a “dialogic process that attempts to track displacements and realignments that are the effects of cultural antagonisms and articulations – subverting the rationale of the hegemonic moment and relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation” (Bhabha 1994, p. 178). According to Varkøy (2015), postcolonial perspectives might contribute to extending the very concept of *usefulness* by giving space to generative paradoxes, such as the *usefulness of uselessness* (p. 26).

Utilitarianism might be an element of the ontology of art as well as (and side by side) transgression. The ontology of art might not reside in the one or the other, but rather in the pulsating diversity and on the coexistence of multiple, often contradictory and paradoxical, functions and constituting elements. In this way, the arts resist definite, conclusive, one-directional interpretations and practices, but the plurality of artistic functions might allow us to look at artistic experiences as the possible playground of the creative construction of knowledge. This is how the arts might constantly renew themselves and how they might systematically cultivate (and educate to) the generation of meaningful novelty, that is to creativity.

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