

# The Creation of Art

*New Essays in Philosophical Aesthetics*

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# Introduction

## *The Creation of Art: Issues and Perspectives*

Berys Gaut and Paisley Livingston

### 1. THE OCCLUSION OF CREATION

Although the creation of art is a topic that should be a central one for aesthetics, it has been comparatively neglected in recent philosophical writings about art. In one basic usage, the creation of art is simply its making, and all artworks, however derivative or uninspired, are created. There is also a richer, evaluative sense of “creation,” in which mere making does not suffice for the creation of something. A manager of a factory who, showing a visitor around, announced proudly, not that “here we make plastic spoons,” but “here we *create* plastic spoons,” would sound risibly pretentious. Creation in this richer, evaluative usage is a special kind of making, a making that involves a significant degree of creativity, and is contrasted with the kind of routinized making that mass production exemplifies.

In respect of the making aspect of creation, there has been, ever since the rise of formalism and then of (post-)structuralism, a powerful current that has dismissed attention to the processes of making as irrelevant to philosophical aesthetics, theories of criticism, and criticism itself. There has also been a counter-current that has argued that this inattention is a deep mistake, and proponents of such theories as intentionalism have argued for the necessity of construing the artwork as the product of the artist’s actions. But even this tradition, as some of the essays in this volume imply, has not always scrutinized artworks with that attention to the details of their

making which adequate answers to these philosophical issues would demand.

Although the subject of the making of art has not achieved the full degree of attention it merits, it is in respect of the creativity aspect of our topic that the neglect is particularly striking. Creativity was, from Plato onwards, a recognised issue for investigation in philosophy, and its investigation has at times played an important role in aesthetics; but it has in recent times been underemphasized. Our point here is not that nothing has been written on the topic in the last few years – indeed, we will review some of this recent work in the next section. Yet compared to the vast amount of work that has been done on such subjects in aesthetics as the definition, interpretation, and evaluation of art; the features specific to different arts; and even on specialized subjects such as fakes, tragedy, the paradox of fiction, gender, genre and so on; creativity has been neglected. And when it has been discussed, it has often been in terms of creativity in general, embracing the sciences as well as the arts, so that its importance for aesthetics has not always been brought out.

This situation is strikingly odd, in respect of both aspects of our topic. Works of art, unlike natural objects, are after all *works*, the products of makings; and art is often supposed to be a paradigm of creative making, the human practice that most clearly exemplifies the creativity that is more obscurely at home in other fields. There is in fact a long tradition of analogising the artist to God the creator: indeed, Milton C. Nahm has argued that it is the “great analogy” that has influenced thinking about art since classical times.<sup>1</sup> Though clearly not all or even the majority of artworks are creative, the view that there is a special connection between art and creativity is independent of this claim, and merits philosophical investigation as to its truth and import. And further impetus for a philosophical investigation is imparted by the observation that a central term in the evaluation of artworks is “creative.” There are, in fact, a host of important and interesting questions that can be, and intermittently have been, asked about the role that creative making should play in our understanding and evaluation of art, as the next section will illustrate in some detail. The neglect or obscuring of these questions can only impoverish aesthetics.

These observations raise the question of why the issues surrounding the creation of art have suffered this relative neglect in philosophical

aesthetics. We suggest that a central reason lies in the influence, to which we have already alluded, of formalist, structuralist, and post-structuralist currents during large parts of the last century.<sup>2</sup> The neglect was not confined to philosophy; indeed, the situation in philosophy was influenced by powerful currents within criticism and literary theory. The turn away from research into the making of art had a variety of motivations and rationales, only some of which involved the real and perceived foibles of the “life and works” biographical approach that many critics were eager to supplant. In the New Criticism’s break with both common-sense biographical criticism and those versions of biographical criticism based on existentialism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology, a leading idea was that an appropriate form of aesthetic appreciation requires the critic to focus entirely on the finished text’s or other artistic structure’s inherent, artistically relevant features. (Typically, no distinction was drawn between the text or structure and the work of art.) Facts about the text’s provenance were to be set aside, especially whenever such facts were a matter of the “private” psychology of the creator, held to be unknowable or irrelevant. A salient example is W. C. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley’s criticism of John Livingston Lowes’ painstaking attempt to reconstruct Samuel Coleridge’s creation of “Kubla Khan,” which attempt had been partly motivated by the poet’s own strikingly mystifying account of the poem’s origins.<sup>3</sup> The anti-intentionalists claim that although Lowes presents us with a “glittering parade” of information about Coleridge’s sources and imagination, this sort of critical discourse leads us away from “the poem itself” and so is critically irrelevant.

Structuralist and post-structuralist theorists and critics were sharply critical of many aspects of New Criticism, beginning with the emphasis on aesthetic appreciation and the so-called autonomy of art, but they reiterated the attack on biographical criticism’s assumption that the artist’s activities and experience were a privileged critical topic. Roland Barthes hyperbolically evokes a liberating mode of reading in which the text “is read without the father’s signature” – where the father in question was thought to be the repressive concept of the author-proprietor of the work, wrongly projected onto the text by non-progressive readers.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, these anti-humanist critical trends, which by the 1980s had become hegemonic, did not in fact

fully free criticism from the notions and values that had been associated with creativity at least since Romanticism. Instead, interest in creativity reappeared, sometimes with a vengeance, in the context of reflections on the critic's own achievements: Geoffrey H. Hartman's Derrida-inspired book, *Criticism in the Wilderness*, is an influential example of a case in which a prominent professor of literature proclaimed that the critic's own artistic ambitions should replace the scholar's more traditional epistemic aims.<sup>5</sup> Within the post-structuralist movement, critics or communities thereof were said to play the active role of endowing texts with meaning and value, thereby constituting those "signifying practices" of which a culture is composed. In some of the bolder speculations, it was the reader and not the author who was thought to do the job of endowing a text with its very status as literature. Thus Barthes wrote that "only the critic *executes* the work."<sup>6</sup> And as Stanley Fish put it, "it is not that the presence of poetic qualities compels a certain kind of attention but that the paying of a certain kind of attention results in the emergence of poetic qualities."<sup>7</sup> Any "piece of language" can become a member of the class of literary texts provided that some sufficiently influential group of readers provides the requisite poetical attention. And anecdotal self-reference became a veritable mannerism in the vein of criticism marketed as the New Historicism. Having rightly castigated biographical critics for seeking to explain what happens in fictions by identifying anecdotal sources in the author's childhood and fantasies, the post-structuralist critic comes full circle by inserting the story of her own private life into "readings" of the work of art.<sup>8</sup>

The influence of these tendencies in criticism helps explain the neglect of the topic of the creation of art within philosophical aesthetics. New Criticism revitalised formalism within philosophy, Beardsley playing a prominent role here. The belief in the autonomy of art and the anti-intentionalist stance inevitably made inquiry into creation and the creative process seem aesthetically irrelevant. Philosophers had previously often discussed the creative process in art as central to the process of understanding art, R. G. Collingwood's theory of art as expression being perhaps the most influential of these twentieth-century theories.<sup>9</sup> In a paper on the creation of art, Beardsley attacked Collingwood's theory, but more importantly, having developed his own thoughts on the process of artistic creation, concluded that such



theories have no bearing at all on understanding or evaluating artworks. Creativity is, rather, a property of the art-object, and the only kind of aesthetically relevant creation occurs in the audience's response to the work: "In the experience of a melody, creation occurs before our very ears."<sup>10</sup> Although formalism concentrated on the nature of the art object, already in Beardsley's invocation of the audience we see an indication of a tendency that Richard Wollheim identified as the "principal target" of his 1968 book, *Art and Its Objects*: "the tendency to conceive of aesthetics as primarily the study of the spectator and his role: that is to say, his responses, his interests, his attitudes, and the characteristic tasks he set himself."<sup>11</sup> Other instances of that tendency are not hard to find: the Institutional Theory of Art, for instance, held that what makes an object an artwork is having conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person acting on behalf of the artworld.<sup>12</sup> Such persons might be artists, but they could also be dealers, curators, journalists, spectators, and so on. As in post-structuralism, creation was divorced from any necessary relation to the artist.

The situation in philosophy has, however, been materially different from that in criticism in one respect, since reflection on the importance of the making of art has never been as neglected as it has been at times in criticism. Indeed, the importance of the idea that artworks are made has received strong support in the recent work of intentionalists of various kinds, as well as from supporters of historical definitions of art, and theorists who hold that works are action-types. But despite this resurgence of interest in artworks as made objects or as intentional actions or performances, the issues surrounding creation, particularly in respect of creativity, have not enjoyed that prominence which they deserve once the importance of the activity of creating artworks is acknowledged.

## 2. ARTISTIC CREATION: THE STATE OF THE DEBATE

To set the scene for the papers in this collection, we now review some of the philosophical work that has previously been done on the issues concerning creation, in the evaluative sense that includes creativity. The following is not, however, intended to be a comprehensive survey either of the topics discussed or of what has been written on

them by philosophers. In the course of it, we also draw on some of the voluminous psychological writings on creativity, where they help to fill out or illuminate the philosophical discussion. As Robert S. Albert and Mark A. Runco observe in a recent survey of the history of psychological research on creativity, nearly every major twentieth-century psychologist has explored the topic, and at present “the field can only be described as explosive.”<sup>13</sup> We examine six topics, and we also briefly indicate where the papers in the volume engage with these issues; the papers will be summarized separately in the next section.

#### (a) The Making of Art

An aspect of the creation of art, in the basic sense of the making of art, has been discussed in the context of a debate about what is involved in correctly interpreting art. Anti-intentionalists, such as formalists, hold that the intentions involved in the making of art are irrelevant or peripheral to correctly interpreting art. So details of the act of creating a work, though possibly of interest in themselves, have no bearing on the correct interpretation of the work. The anti-intentionalist holds that mere scrutiny of the art-object independently of knowledge of its generative conditions suffices to interpret it. This position has been attacked on numerous grounds. It has, for instance, been argued by Kendall Walton that the categories under which we perceive art are in part fixed by the generative conditions, including intentions, of the work. And Guy Sircello has argued that there is a conceptual relation between a work expressing something, and the artistic acts performed in the work.<sup>14</sup> The anti-formalist thesis that in looking at art we are looking at artistic actions is pursued by Patrick Maynard in the present volume.

Intentionalists, unlike formalists, hold that reference to intentions is essential in fixing the correct interpretation of works. Since intentions figure in the process of making the work, to understand a work must for the intentionalist be in part to reconstruct the process of its making. Wollheim holds that “The task of criticism is the reconstruction of the creative process, where the creative process must in turn be thought of as something not stopping short of, but terminating on, the work of art itself.”<sup>15</sup> Within the intentionalist camp, there is an important

distinction. Actual intentionalists, such as Richard Wollheim, Gary Iseminger, Noël Carroll, William Irwin, and E. D. Hirsch, hold that it is the historically real intentions of the actual artist that determine correct interpretation of works.<sup>16</sup> They differ on how wide the notion of an intention is to be drawn (for instance, Wollheim understands it broadly, to include any mental state that causally generates a work of art); but they agree that it is the actual mental states of the artist that matter for the interpretative task.<sup>17</sup> Proponents of different versions of hypothetical and fictionalist intentionalisms, such as Jerrold Levinson, William Tolhurst, and Alexander Nehamas, on the other hand, hold that it is the hypothesized or imagined intentions of the artist as a critical construct (variously called the “implied,” “postulated,” or “constructed” author) that determine correct interpretations. These hypothesized or imagined intentions may differ from what are known to be the real intentions of an author, because certain evidence about real intentions is excluded in principle – for instance, information drawn from private diaries may be ruled out.<sup>18</sup> The two kinds of intentionalists have different views about the creative process: actual intentionalists think of the process as the actual historical events that terminated in the production of the work; hypothetical intentionalists, in contrast, regard the creative process, insofar as it bears on the issue of interpretation, as itself a hypothetical construct. One issue concerning the creation of art, then, concerns how relevant the details of the actual creative process are to determining the correct interpretation of works. Paisley Livingston discusses this issue in the present collection.

A second respect in which issues about the making of art have entered into philosophical discussion concerns ontology, the question of what kind of thing an artwork is. A central debate here surrounds the status of those artistic structures (such as musical compositions and literary texts) which, as kinds or types, may be held to be universals and hence timeless – and therefore not the sort of thing that can be created by someone at a particular time and place. Yet this view stands in apparent contradiction to the common opinion that artworks are, in fact, created in particular socio-historical contexts. Various strategies for attempting to resolve this paradox are explored in the literature. Some writers attempt to defend a nominalist conception of artworks. Others accept Platonist tenets while denying that the commonplace

about works being created expresses any genuine insight. Peter Kivy, for example, doubts that there are widespread, informative intuitions linking great music and creation, and holds that artistic achievement is better explicated in terms of discovery and selection – which may or may not be called “creative” in the sense of worthwhile and innovative. A composer can plausibly be said to discover or select – but not to create – a previously existing musical Form.<sup>19</sup> Another strategy is to accept both premisses of the paradox of artistic creation and conclude that what gets created – a work of art – must be more than an artistic structure, a move which Stefano Predelli usefully labels the “Argument from Creation.”<sup>20</sup> An example is Jerrold Levinson’s contention that musical works are initiated types, that is, they are sound structures (or more precisely sound/performing-means structures) that are indicated by a composer at a time or in a specific cultural context.<sup>21</sup> There is little agreement, however, as to whether such a position genuinely allows for artistic creation in a suitably robust sense: Levinson contends that it does, while Kivy, Predelli, Currie, and others contest the point.

This question about the ontology of art has a close analogue with a question about the ontology of fictional characters, which, if viewed as collections of abstract properties or traits, similarly seem to be universals, and thus to encounter the same problems concerning the possibility of their creation. Peter Lamarque discusses the latter issue in the present volume and defends a view that allows fictional characters to be created in a straightforward sense.<sup>22</sup>

#### (b) Defining “Creativity”

Turning more closely to the evaluative sense of “creation,” the next issue concerns what precisely is meant by the term “creativity.” There is a broad consensus that creative products and acts must exhibit originality and be valuable. Kant captured this dual condition when he defined “genius” as a matter of exemplary originality, a view that Paul Guyer discusses in the present volume. Mere originality does not suffice for genius, since there can be, Kant remarks, original nonsense, which he saw in those *Sturm und Drang* artists who strove after originality while lacking talent to produce something worthwhile (an observation that resonates in the context of some recent art movements). Exemplarity

of artworks is a matter of their serving as a standard or rule for art, and is thus a mark of their value.<sup>23</sup>

The correctness of the dual condition of originality and value has been widely, though not universally, accepted by philosophers. For instance, Carl Hausman, in developing criteria for creativity, bases them on the observation that “creativity occurs on condition that a new and valuable intelligibility comes into being.”<sup>24</sup> Psychologists have also generally agreed that creativity involves at least these two constituent factors.<sup>25</sup> The first condition corresponds to the platitude that no matter how useful an instance of routine problem-solving may be, it cannot be creative. One way in which psychologists have specified this condition is to add that if a novel and valuable idea or “response” is creative, it must be addressed to a task or problem that is “heuristic rather than algorithmic.”<sup>26</sup> The second condition expresses the thought that a wholly new yet useless or destructive invention cannot be creative, since truly creative innovations must be valuable, useful, appropriate, or adaptive.

Within this broad consensus there are, however, disputes. A first source of disagreement concerns what to say about independent discoveries. When a chess master invents an effective chess opening, the likes of which has never been seen by informed experts, it is uncontroversial to deem this a creative contribution to the game. What, however, if a precocious young player independently rediscovers the same opening some years later, without knowing of the earlier invention? Some have held that such an achievement would not be a creative one. As psychologist Colin Martindale expresses this position, “Were someone to rediscover the theory of relativity, we would think the person to be quite clever but not creative because the idea has already been discovered.”<sup>27</sup> Mihály Csikszentmihályi agrees, and goes on to claim that it follows that the creative process takes place outside the person, in the interactive system where ideas and artifacts get made and appreciated.<sup>28</sup> Other psychologists, however, deny that any absolute form of novelty should be deemed necessary to creativity. They prefer to investigate creativity as a species of innovative thinking or problem-solving located within the creative agent (or group of collaborating agents).<sup>29</sup> George Mandler, for example, claims that “from a psychological point of view, the focus of interest is, of course, a creative or novel act by an individual, whether or not

the same novelty has been produced by any or many other individuals before.”<sup>30</sup>

One response to such disagreements is to distinguish between different senses of “creativity.” Margaret Boden distinguishes historical from psychological creativity (H- and P-creativity, as she calls them). An idea is P-creative if it is valuable and “the person in whose mind it arises could not have had it before”; the relation holds whether or not the idea has ever been had before.<sup>31</sup> To be H-creative, the idea must be not only P-creative, but also must never have been had by anyone else in all of human history. This is, we may note in passing, a rather strong condition, and weaker, tradition and context-specific alternatives could be formulated.

Boden’s reference to ideas that could not have been had before brings us to a second source of disagreement about creativity: how to specify the degree of originality that it requires. If originality simply meant that something is new in some respect or other, then almost any idea or product would count as original. Boden’s modal condition attempts to specify the relevant difference. It does not express some form of metaphysical necessity, but rather a relation between the valued idea and the generative rules that structure a person’s productive activities. For example, Boden holds (pace Chomsky) that the generation of previously unheard-of well-formed phrases in English is not an instance of P-creativity, because such utterances are covered by the grammar of the language, and thus in a sense could have been produced before. Genuine P-creativity requires a “change of conceptual space” in which something emerges that would have been impossible had the agent’s activity remained determined by the generative rules which obtained before. It requires dropping one or more of the rules that structure the conceptual space; and the “deeper” the rule that is dropped (i.e., the more fundamental the role which the rule plays in structuring the system), the more radically P-creative is the result.

David Novitz has criticized this criterion. Goodyear invented vulcanisation by dropping various substances into liquid rubber until he came across the correct one by trial and error. He altered the conceptual space for thinking about rubber, but his achievement was not creative; so satisfaction of the modal criterion is insufficient for creativity. Nor is it necessary: Jenner invented vaccination and should be counted as creative, but there existed no conceptual space concerning vaccination

prior to his invention. Instead, Novitz has proposed that creativity is, roughly, a matter of a recombination of ideas that is surprising to those suitably informed about the field, and which is intended to be and is of benefit to some.<sup>32</sup> Novitz refines and elaborates on his proposal in the current volume.

Finally, there is a dispute about the correctness of the value condition for creativity. Does not it make sense to say that creativity is sometimes a bad thing? The cartoon from *The New Yorker* illustrated in Patrick Maynard's piece in this volume suggests just that. It is also sometimes alleged that contemporary art is suffering from too much creativity, leading to vacuity and triviality.<sup>33</sup> And Paul Feyerabend has labelled creativity "a dangerous myth" reflecting a misconception about our degree of independence from nature and of the possibilities of innovation by individuals.<sup>34</sup> Supporters of the value condition seem simply to assume its correctness, but these kinds of attack suggest that there is philosophical work to be done here. (Stein Haugom Olsen queries the central importance that creativity has been given in art in the present collection.) And even if the value condition is correct, there is an issue about its relation to moral value. Novitz, in elaborating the value clause in his account of creativity, contends that there can be no truly creative but immoral acts. A mad scientist who invents a new device for destroying the world would not be creative, but at best "ingeniously destructive." This opens space for a further question about the definition of "creativity" and its cognates – is the value condition subject to moral constraints?

### (c) Creativity and Aesthetic Value

If creativity is a value, there is still a pressing issue to be decided: is the creativity evinced in artworks an *aesthetic* value? Given the originality component in creativity, one can also put the question this way: is originality an aesthetic value? It is common to praise artworks for their originality; and many aestheticians have agreed that originality is indeed an aesthetic value.<sup>35</sup> But this has often been denied; formalists, for instance, usually hold that originality is not an aesthetic value.<sup>36</sup> This rejection fits snugly with their view of art; for if one's conception of an artwork is that it is properly to be understood and evaluated independently of its generative context, then originality should not be

held to be an aesthetic value; for originality depends on the work's relation to prior works (or on whether the artist knew that there were other similar works already made).

There are also arguments against the aesthetic relevance of originality that do not rest on any specifically formalist presuppositions. Bruce Vermazen offers a dilemma: to say that something is original may be simply to hold that it is new with respect to some property, or to say that it is new with respect to some property and that this property is an aesthetically valuable one. In the former case, newness per se is not aesthetic merit, since there can be original nonsense. In the latter case, the original work has aesthetic merit, but only because it trivially follows from the aesthetic merit of the property, and nothing about its merit follows from the newness clause. Vermazen considers the objection that originality supervenes on newness and the aesthetic property, and that it confers a separate value on the work. But he dismisses this: in a series of Frans Hals portraits in his mature style, the first in the series has no additional aesthetic merit, simply by being the first, compared to any later portrait in the series. The originality of works may have historical value, in telling us something about the history of painting, but originality is not an aesthetic value.<sup>37</sup>

Frank Sibley has similarly distinguished between evaluatively neutral and evaluative uses of "originality," and holds that originality in the former sense has no aesthetic merit, both because it is easy to produce original but worthless works and because there can be original movements in art, such as Cubism and twelve-tone music, that include both valuable and worthless works. With regard to the evaluative usage, he notes in the same way as Vermazen that it trivially follows that original works are valuable, but only because of the aesthetic value of the property in respect of which they are original. He also argues that there is such a thing as intrinsic aesthetic value, for otherwise one would have to judge that people with only minimal aesthetic experience, such as knowledge only of the Bible or *Paradise Lost*, would be incapable of genuine aesthetic appreciation. Since this kind of aesthetic value is an intrinsic property, and originality is not, originality cannot be an aesthetic value in this sense. However, he holds that there are also in-context aesthetic judgements, concerning whether a work has value given the audience's context (Bartók's music may speak more



to our times than does Mozart's, for instance), and that, in this usage, originality is sometimes an aesthetic value.<sup>38</sup>

It has sometimes been conceded that originality is not an *aesthetic* value, if aesthetic properties are construed as properties that are directly perceivable and inherent in the artwork. But this is consistent with holding that originality is an *artistic* value, understood as a value that lies in the relation of the work to other works, as do properties such as distinctiveness of vision.<sup>39</sup> It has also been held that works are achievements, not autonomous objects, and that part of their achievement may lie in the originality of the work. Jerrold Levinson in the present volume pursues some of these lines of thought in his response to Jon Elster's discussion of ways in which the effort to be original may detract from the power to create, Elster's thesis being that originality has "no intrinsic relation to aesthetic value."<sup>40</sup>

#### (d) The Possibility of Explaining Creativity

There is a long tradition in philosophy of holding that creativity cannot be explained. The first discussion of creativity in Western philosophy we owe to Plato. Consider the following quotations from him: "a poet is a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside himself, and reason is no longer in him"; "if any man come to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, persuaded that skill alone will make him a good poet, then shall he and his works of sanity with him be brought to nought by the poetry of madness . . ."; and "when a poet takes his seat on the Muse's tripod, his judgment takes leave of him. He is like a fountain which gives free course to the rush of its waters . . .".<sup>41</sup> These remarks express an inspiration view of creativity combined with a derangement view. The inspiration view holds that the god breathes creativity into the poet: it is not the poet who writes the verses, but the god through him. As such, there is no *human* explanation possible for the nature or excellence of the verses; divine forces are at work. And the derangement view (that the poet is mad) entails that there is no explanation of creativity available that appeals to the poet's rational agency, for the poet is deeply irrational. Plato's views on creativity, which had immense influence on the Western tradition, particularly on the Romantics, thus close off the possibility of these sorts of explanations. A contemporary

echo of this kind of position is found in Kivy's declaration that talk of inspiration or "poppings" is preferable to discourse about a "creative process" that remains essentially unknown.<sup>42</sup>

Kant also held that the operations of genius are inexplicable, but on different grounds. This emerges in his argument that fine art is possible only as the product of genius. Any art must proceed according to rules, but in the case of fine arts, arts of beauty, these rules cannot be determinate (other than rules for mere academic correctness): they cannot be "based on a concept of the way in which the product is possible." The reason is that there can be no rules for judging whether something is beautiful, and therefore there can be no determinate rules for the production of beautiful things (otherwise rules of judgement could be derived from rules for production). But then fine art cannot devise such rules, nor can the ability to produce fine art be taught by means of such rules, nor can the artistic genius himself understand how he proceeds by appealing to such rules (and in this he differs from the scientist). How, then, are rules given to art? The answer can only be that it is nature in the artistic genius that gives the rule to art.<sup>43</sup> Kant means by "nature" here supersensible nature,<sup>44</sup> which lies beyond the bounds of possible experience, and therefore of causal laws which govern experience. So it also follows that one cannot give these kinds of causal explanations of the making of creative works. Kant's basic claim, then, is that because there are no determinate rules for creativity in art, there can be no explanations available to us of such creativity in art. So even the artistic genius does not know how he proceeds: "no *Homer* or *Wieland* can show how his ideas, rich in fancy and yet also in thought, arise and meet in his mind; the reason is that he himself does not know, and hence also cannot teach it to anyone else."<sup>45</sup> Kant thus links the absence of (determinate) artistic rules to the inexplicability of creativity. Ted Cohen explores, criticises, and develops some of Kant's claims in the present volume.

Another reason given for holding that creativity is inexplicable is that the explanation of some phenomenon entails that one can predict its occurrence; but if its occurrence is predictable, the phenomenon cannot be truly creative, for what is creative is original and hence unpredictable.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, if one could predict the occurrence of some creative result, such as a particular line in a poem, it would be the predictor, not the poet, who would be its creator.<sup>47</sup> It

has also been held that creativity is a matter of origination, and as such cannot be explained by anything prior to it (this is connected to the idea of creation occurring *ex nihilo*, as in God's creation of the universe). And it is sometimes maintained that the creative event is unique, and that one can only explain repeatable events.<sup>48</sup> To the latter, it has been objected that natural events also are not repeatable, since while similar events may occur again, the very same event does not occur again; so in this sense one can explain non-repeatable events.<sup>49</sup>

Psychologists writing on creativity have, on the other hand, almost invariably assumed that creativity is explicable (we shall examine some of their proffered explanations in the next section). And there is a tradition in philosophy that agrees with them, a tradition that stretches from Aristotle's understanding of creation as the rational imposition of form on matter, continues through Friedrich Nietzsche's explanation of creativity in terms of the expression of the will to power, and descends to the present day in Boden's belief that one can employ computational models to explain the occurrence of creativity. In the current volume, David Novitz takes up the issue, arguing that creativity is susceptible to certain sorts of explanations but not to others.

#### (e) The Creative Process

Even those who believe that creativity cannot be explained can allow that there may be true descriptive generalisations, empirical or a priori, about the creative process. We briefly examine first some of the work by philosophers on the creative process, and then discuss theories developed by psychologists, some of which are fully fledged explanatory theories.

As noted earlier, Plato takes inspiration to be the crucial component of the creative process and holds that the poet is in a passive state, awaiting the divinely sent creative impulse, and not knowing what he is doing in creating a work. This view of the creative process was a key component of the Romantic view of creativity as essentially mysterious, and was given a secular twist in Freudian psychology, where the unconscious came to play much the same role as the gods did for Plato.<sup>50</sup> More recently, Harold Osborne has offered a defence of the inspiration model. He argues that aesthetic properties are emergent, that

is, are dependent on non-aesthetic properties but are not deducible from them by rules. Because they are emergent, it is not possible to plan the aesthetic properties of a work, nor therefore to reason consciously about how to produce them. So the initial intuition that is the source of the work can only be unconscious, and this, he argues, explains the sense the inspired person has of being guided by forces outside his conscious self.<sup>51</sup>

A somewhat different model of the creative process is to be found in Kant. For Kant the appreciation of the beautiful consists in the free play of the imagination and understanding in the viewer's mind. Here "free play" means that the interaction is not rule-governed. The creative genius, as the producer of beautiful art, expresses the free play of imagination and understanding in his art. In particular, he produces aesthetic ideas, presentations of the imagination to which no determinate concept is adequate.<sup>52</sup> Thus Kant's theory makes imagination the central creative faculty. Popular usage sides with him in this, as when we use "imaginative" as a virtual synonym for "creative." This linking of imagination to creativity is investigated by Berys Gaut in the present volume.

Collingwood also links the creative process to imagination, but in a different way from Kant. For Collingwood, creation is a voluntary, conscious, but non-technical making, that is, it is a kind of making which is different from that involved in craft. The creative process is an expressive process, involving having an emotion, initially felt as an obscure disturbance, which the artist then clarifies through artistic expression, until the artist becomes aware at the end what it was he or she was feeling. Thus an artist cannot aim at a predetermined end in creating art; an artist cannot, for instance, set out to produce a tragedy or a comedy, since that would be to have a determinate emotional result in view. And Collingwood takes the product of this creative process in the case of art to be an imaginary object, for this is what he holds the artwork to be.<sup>53</sup>

Vincent Tomas develops an important line of thought by arguing that creative activity "is not a paradigm of purposive activity." The creative artist cannot envisage the final artwork as a goal to which his creative actions are a means, for if he did envisage the final result at the start of his actions, his creative activity would already be complete: "To create is to originate. And it follows from this that prior to creation