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SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: THE ECONOMIC CORE OF THE GLOBAL ART MARKET  
AND ITS ORIGIN IN CHURCH FINANCIAL STRUCTURES

Jennifer Ford

Submitted to the faculty of  
The Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

April 2018

Accepted by the faculty of the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts in partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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April 2018

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“The importance of the culture industry in the spiritual constitution of the masses is no dispensation for reflection on its objective legitimization, its essential being, least of all by science which thinks itself pragmatic. On the contrary, such reflection becomes necessary precisely for this reason. To take the culture industry as seriously as its unquestioned role demands, means to take it seriously critically, and not to cower in the face of its monopolistic character” – Theodor Adorno

Dedicated to JR, Elijah, Carma, and Tony

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supportive husband and son for loving me through this process. They inherently understood that this was an important path for me to take, both personally and professionally. They loved going on this journey with me and we were all able to learn grace, patience, and kindness from each other at different moments through this process. I would like to also thank my mother and father for making multiple concessions on my behalf. Allowing me to take the time that I need to work on my degree, encouraging me when I was unsure of myself, and working through my discouragement. Dr. Don Wehrs was instrumental in molding and shaping my ideas in the beginning of my dissertation, and I appreciate his honest feedback. He challenged me to think critically about my own work and the work of others. I would also like to thank the amazing Dr. Sigrid Hackenberg. Her tireless enthusiasm, positivity, and encouragement came at a critical moment in my writing and helped me turn the corner to finish my dissertation with renewed enjoyment. In addition, I want to thank Dr. George Smith and Dr. Simonetta Moro for creating an inspired program. My dedicated and insightful colleagues MaryAnne Davis, Kathe Hicks, and Maria LaBarge were instrumental in helping me develop the ideas in this dissertation and I am immensely grateful for their support and feedback. I have learned so much over the past few years and I discovered an aspect of fine art that will motivate me to remain curious and to keep exploring the world of aesthetic philosophy. From the bottom of my heart, Thank you all.

## ABSTRACT

Jennifer Ford

### SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: THE ECONOMIC CORE OF THE GLOBAL ART MARKET AND ITS ORIGIN IN CHURCH FINANCIAL STRUCTURES

Organized religion in the Western Hemisphere and the art world share more than just a shared history of collaboration. Their most significant bond is an economic narrative powered by spiritual capital which produces aura. I contend that religion, specifically Christianity, and the art world share an economy of spiritual capital delivered through aura. Aura in a work of art is not an inherent property of the work itself, but it is manufactured by the art economy which draws its influence from the early formation of the Christian Church. This system involves a number of qualifying factors which I will isolate and investigate through this dissertation. Specifically, both religious and art economies: acquire physical space; establish a structure of cooperative agents; use an exclusive language which produces a discourse of disavowal that denies active participation in a consumer driven economy; and deploy ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events. Additionally, the placement of money within this assembly of practices and practitioners will be presented as a historical element inside the art world. The entwinement of the art market and the church's growth as an international business will finally merge to create a construction of both physical and metaphysical value actualized through aura in spiritual capital. Our desires are "capitalized" in the social arrangements of the art world and the Church which makes spiritual capital through aura possible. This dissertation offers a new reading of Benjamin's theory of "auratic perception" as identified in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". In

coordination with such theorists as Deleuze and Guattari, Bourdieu, Marx, Weber, Agamben, Baudrillard, Massumi, Bourriaud, and others, we can understand the historical trajectory and formation of spiritual capital as a part of the economy of art as we are liberated from the taboo of discussing money and its relationship to art and religion.



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## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary art market exists to provide financial gain to select parties through a physical product with intangible, metaphysical rewards. The popular notion that art must be placed outside the consideration of economic theory has been perpetuated by critics, writers, the news media, and also by influential players in the art market. Why do so many theorists, including Pierre Bourdieu, believe the contemporary art market represents an “economic world in reverse” (Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 316)? Robert Rosenblum, a former curator at the Guggenheim Museum, told the *Wall Street Journal* in 1998, “I immediately distrust anybody trying to detect patterns ... in art, especially in terms of economics” (Galenson, 87). Even *Time Magazine*’s well-known and popular critic Robert Hughes claims, “The price of a work of art is an index of pure, irrational desire” (ibid). While the art market’s facade appears distinctive and mysterious, we have in fact seen a model of economic distribution before. Art and religious marketplaces function through the same economic principles of operation: namely, both trade upon spiritual capital. The rhetoric of aesthetic theory during modernity may have disguised other rich and diverse relationships that exist within the art market, but by situating this conversation within the realm of the spiritual, we may be able to lift the veil on the mystique of the marketplace and expose its more mechanical operations to a deeper analysis and scrutiny.

Spiritual capital is the combination of extra-economical tangible conditions coupled with intangible behaviors and beliefs. The combination of these conditions, behaviors, and beliefs add value to objects. Specifically, both religious and art economies: acquire physical space; establish a structure of cooperative agents; use an exclusive language which produces a discourse of disavowal that denies active participation in a consumer driven economy; and

deploy ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events. The exclusive language of art systems which produce value has a culture of disavowal, that is, the claim that most goals and commitments of art and religion remain outside of the realm of the marketplace. The necessity of negating the profitable elements of business, and a perceived disinterest in the accumulation of symbolic value, allows spiritual enterprise an unprecedented autonomy from governing agencies. Distinctive conjunctions of use of space, networks of cooperative agents, use of exclusive language, and deployment of ceremonial symbols engender and enhance spiritual capital.

First, I must elucidate my references to “the church”. In general, this term will not suggest a specific church, congregation, or denomination from one-time period. Rather, I am referring generically to a Western model of Christians and their institutions or faith traditions, unless otherwise indicated at the beginning of a chapter. When there are case studies of a church body with a historical reference, it will be shown clearly. I understand that such broad generalizations obscure the categorical similarities and differences in the structural operations of church functions across historical, geographical, and theological boundaries. However, I will argue that spiritual capital can be found in the center of financial transactions within most churches.

Spiritual capital affects the economic behavior of consumers through a circular development of worth. When a work of art begins its journey in the global art system, it typically originates and moves within a physical space. Where any individual or institution in the art world has acquired a significant amount of physical space containing fine art, they typically also have a well-established structure of cooperative agents and colleagues in the art world. These agents fluently converse in the exclusive language of art and provide

ceremonial symbols for that work during a ritual event. For example, the highly coded art auction system opens with attractive, but mid-priced work meant to develop interest and boost confidence for other art buyers in the room. Thus, a work of art is discussed prior to, and during, the event in a specialized way within a setting imbued with status and enveloped in an atmosphere connoting high seriousness and sublime values. This entire process illuminates how spiritual value is added to the work of art itself and will be discussed at great length through the course of this dissertation.

Spiritual value surrounding a work of art is more commonly called “aura”, and it increases the perceived worth of both the object and its creator to the public. This goes beyond the principle that expert opinions and peer pressure have a strong influence on our judgement and valuation of fine art. As Pierre Bourdieu argues in “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste”, social position is the strongest influence on judgement of taste, but I will show how social positioning, in combination with very particular ceremonial cues and language codes, increase the perceived value of a work of art through the creation of aura as spiritual capital.

Generally, a work of art travels from an artist’s studio where it was created to a physical gallery location. The gallerist writes a press release, introduction, catalog descriptions, and other marketing material in coded “art speak” for art world insiders to decipher. Next, the work of art acquires ceremonial symbols of power through ritual events such as gallery openings attended by a well-established network of critics, collectors, and museum personnel. The combination of these processes produces an aura, or spiritual value, around the piece, which will vary depending on the intensity and level of symbolic capital already acquired by the aforementioned players involved in the process. Unlike a film

premiere, or other forms of cultural gatherings, Walter Benjamin would argue that art is uniquely positioned outside of work which is mechanically reproduced. Originality and authenticity are significant factors contributing to the production of aura and perceived value which provide the variant to the relative level of success for artists and their work.

Financing of religious institutions, like the financing of art institutions, hinges on economic relations predicated upon systems of communal engagement that allow social interactions to be the catalyst for growth and prosperity. Interactions that foster shared trust and develop an exclusive, specialized language associated with high socio-economic standing are grounded on tacit assumptions that all relevant parties are committed to certain shared or established values. The art market, like monetary transactions in the Church, operates on a level of knowledge restricted to the few. “In fact, if rationality, creativity, method, intuition and informality are common ingredients to economics and art, the difference lies only in the varying priorities given to these ingredients. The artist and the economist perceive something more than what everyone else sees” (Zorloni, 1).

Organized religion, like the art market, produces an atmosphere of networking, entrepreneurship, and regulation, which allowed its acceptance into the capitalist marketplace with little scrutiny. Art market participants stay one step removed from measurable economic studies because there is an illusion of irrationality through opaque reporting practices and a vernacular difficult for outsiders to access. In 2005, Richard Benson, Dean of the Yale School of Art, denied that the market's pricing of an artist's work was in any way related to the artist's importance. He told the New York Times, "We don't consider success in the marketplace has anything to do with being a successful artist"(Galenson, 87). Per Zorloni's study on the economics of art, there are multiple reasons why a work of art is

considered valuable in the marketplace. “Art could satisfy a functional need when purchased with decorative intentions (to furnish the house in a pleasant way), or with speculative ones. Art fulfils a cultural need when it offers educational benefits. A large number of studies, for instance, have shown that the acquisition of knowledge is one of the major reasons why people visit museums and art galleries (D’Harnoncourt et al. 1991; McLean 1995). The symbolic benefits, unlike those that are strictly functional, refer to the meaning that the product acquires at a psychological and social level, but are also related to the semiotic aspects: the consumption of artistic products reveals, in fact, on one hand the personality (Mastandrea et al. 2007) and the cultural level of the individual, on the other hand a desire to attain a certain social status. Finally, the emotional benefits are tied to the desire for a stimulating and entertaining experience and come down to the sensations and fantasies offered by the experience of consumption (Codignola 2006). It seems clear then that the consumption of artistic goods satisfies needs of various kinds, some extrinsic (utilitarian ones) and other intrinsic (emotional ones). Specifically, it is possible to identify at least four motivations for consumption in the contemporary art market, linked to the objectives and needs of families, companies, associations and cultural institutions” (Zorloni, 23-24).

My claim differs from Zorloni because her emphasis on production at the beginning of the process, and consumption by the end user, obscures the role of the intermediaries and collectors in producing spiritual capital. Her explanation, which originates with artistic production, marginalizes the reception and consumption influence of art’s price in the market. The totality of unidentified characteristics of value enhancing qualities in art and the art market will contribute to my theory of spiritual capital.

My definition of spiritual capital will adhere to an interpretation closely linked to Bourdieu's forms of symbolic capital. It will not include religious capital as outlined by Iannaccone (1990) and Stark and Finke (2000), which indicates a level of attachment to one's religious organization. Broadly speaking, spiritual capital is the power, influence, and value created by the knowledge and practice of one's belief system. Samuel Rima has established a theoretical ideal of spiritual capital that outlines five components of spiritual capital theory; "metaphysical resources, spiritual capital formation, transformation, spiritual capital investment, and return on investment" (Rima, 32). I will be relating these aspects of the traditional form of spiritual capital to the spiritual capital in the art marketplace. My qualifications of spiritual capital necessitate that the institution or organizations must: acquire physical space; establish a structure of cooperative agents; use an exclusive language which produces a discourse of disavowal that denies active participation in a consumer driven economy; and deploy ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events. I will be more specific in my description of spiritual capital in terms of both the Church and the art world. Samuel Rima uses this definition of spiritual capital to advocate for moral and ethical reform in economic policy and practice. Rima explains spiritual capital theory through a more formal financial lens than this dissertation will discuss.

Another source, the Spiritual Capital Research Program, goes further in providing a link to Bourdieu. "The specific term 'spiritual capital' has been used variously over the past decade by scholars such as Robert Fogel, an economist from the University of Chicago and 1993 Nobel Laureate in Economics, and University of Pennsylvania political scientist John DiIulio. Broadly, spiritual capital may be construed to refer to that aspect of social capital linked with religion and spirituality. In one sense, then, spiritual capital might be a subset of

social capital” (<http://www.metanexus.net/essay/what-spiritual-capital-economics-religion-and-conference-2006>). I will position spiritual capital as a separate class of capital with a strong connection to other forms outlined by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu’s definitions of capital include dynamic socio-economic relationships, and he expands the definition to encompass more than money and property. In this dissertation, I differ with Fogel and DiIuio who look at spiritual capital through a strict religious lens, by connecting spiritual capital to an organization outside of the religious realm. I argue the same standards of spiritual capital apply to the art world, because its economic principles are so closely aligned.

Sociologists and theologians such as Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Marcel Mauss heavily influenced Bourdieu, but he rarely made the direct link between art and its spiritual value. However, the benefit of spiritual capital in the greater economy are at the very core of the debate between Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx’s language alludes to a deep connection, but one must assume that he either sees art and religion as a self-evident construction or that it is a largely irrelevant aspect of economic concerns. Utopian Marxism strove for an avant-garde of socially redemptive works that could lead the masses out of an ideological false consciousness. The cultural industry has been vilified as a supplier of collective illusions. In opposition to those beliefs, this dissertation will focus on exactly how high spiritual attributions connected to a work of art enhance the financial value of that work of art and produce an aura which leads to spiritual and financial capital.

Expert Bradford Verter leads studies on the influence of spiritual capital through the lens of Bourdieu with a small nod to the contributions of Marx. “Education, social networks, artistic abilities and cultural knowledge are all obtained at the expense of labor, and these forms of symbolic capital are all subject to the same laws of accumulation, inheritance, and



exchange that govern material forms of exchange” (Verter, 152). I will go further than this definition of spiritual capital by examining it both financially and socially, as it relates to the influence of the church and the art world on today’s culture. The specific financial gains of utilizing the principles of spiritual capital will be discussed at length in my broadened definition.

Bourdieu addresses some of overlap of these forms of capital in his sociological study of cultural production with a diagram of symbolic power, cultural capital, and symbolic value which I will quickly define in regard to my use in this dissertation. Symbolic power refers to the amount of accumulated prestige, honor, or recognition one has. Cultural capital is the knowledge of an inherited disposition towards specific works of art. Interestingly, Bourdieu shows how cultural and symbolic capital do not necessarily relate to economic capital, while it is my position that they do connect and have a profound influence on the financial value of their products. In addition, Bourdieu leaves one far-reaching gap in the explanation of how an art economy functions. Theological patterns of acquisition provide critical insight into the longevity and success of artistic enterprises through spiritual capital. Many of the same significant characteristics of the globalized art economy go beyond cultural, social, and symbolic capital and are fully developed in the theological realm. For Bourdieu, “the specific economy of the cultural field is based on a particular form of belief concerning what constitutes a cultural (e.g. literary, artistic) work and its aesthetic or social value” (Bourdieu, 49). I agree that prosperity in the art market depends largely upon a system of belief, and the socioeconomic agents of exchange present in the globalized art market are similar to key roles in the Christian Church. The specialized language developed by the Christian Church and the art market serves to obscure the underlying operations of an earthly organization

seeking to run an effective global entity. For example, auction houses provide a glossary of terms for new and prospective clients in order to educate and indoctrinate them as insiders before entering the upper echelons of art events. Much like prayers and liturgical orders must be learned to fully join the communal chants of a traditional mass in the Catholic Church.

While I contend that the creation and distribution of art operates within the confines of a free market economy, three economic factors motivate the appearance of non-economic categories of value in the art market. First, the nature of its success requires faith in the “metatangible”. Traditional theories point to the intangible and intrinsic values of art, such as its ability to connect to the spiritual realm of Truth and Beauty, its therapeutic and enjoyable additions to the atmosphere of our daily life, and its representation of mankind’s accomplishments and our desire for connections through self-expression. The Holy Spirit, or aura of the work of art, is an “unproductive investment used for speculative activities” (Zorloni, 1065). I contend that this “unproductive investment” masks the economic gains of the art market by playing off of the unpredictability of speculative investments. An investment in art has been deemed speculative because of its comparative lack reports and data to support its viability. The past 10 years has seen an increase in comprehensive financial reporting of the art market, and if this trend continues, an investment in art could be changed from a “speculative” investment to a more solid classification.

The second element of the art and religious markets that contribute to a belief in its economic exceptionality is that the validation of this system “requires a cooperative team of agents” who communicate through exclusionary language and customs, unfamiliar to traditional economists (Zorloni, 1103). Ceremonial symbols of power are consistently used

during ritualistic events to produce a unique sense of time and place and this works as a benefit for cooperative agents. The art market and the system of economics by which it operates utilizes an “availability of information and knowledge which are creatively processed and organized” (Zorloni, 1116). Traditionally, the study of economics is a scientific field with little room for creativity. Attempts to merge the two fields, requires a shared vocabulary which has proven inaccessible to both parties. This is enhanced by the obscurity of numbers from private entities, and gallery sales which include privacy clauses and nondisclosure forms, making it impossible to get a true and accurate reading of the private sector. An abundance of secrecy perpetuates conjecture, alternative facts, and storytelling which has contributed to the historical narrative of the art making process as divinely inspired.

Finally, spiritual capital has an intangible value, but the cooperative agency of the art market and religious markets require an acquisition of physical space for communal gathering and worship. This makes the investment in spiritual capital tangible, and the security of the art market assured. The physical location and concentration of art centers create market strength through visibility and fixed assets. These individual actions, conditions, or beliefs combine in both religious and art economies to create a sense that particular rituals transact spiritual interactions within a space dedicated to sustaining and sheltering such interactions which once applied to a work of art produces aura, or spiritual capital.

The authority of cultural power players works best when they are seen to be disinterested in the social and economic conditions of a work of art. As objective observers who possess the fictional “pure gaze,” they remain removed from financial matters.

“Bourdieu talks about three forms of cultural capital: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. As a kind of capital, spiritual capital also exists in these three forms. In the embodied state, spiritual capital is a measure of not only position; it is the knowledge, abilities, tastes and credentials an individual has amassed in the field of religion and is the outcome of explicit education or unconscious processes of socialization. Its efficacy resides in the fact that it is not recognized as capital – that is, as the product of a primitive accumulation within a struggle to impose an arbitrary symbolic hierarchy – but rather it's mistaken for competence within a naturalized social order” (Bradford Verter, 154). The key here is that social capital and spiritual capital are not seen as producers of financial wealth, even though they are. Whether this is a concealment or an ignorance of its value, we can see that referring to elements of the spiritual can disguise monetary qualifications of products seen as containing spiritual value.

While the partnership between artistic practice and economic aspiration is a familiar one in today's contemporary art market, Bourdieu deconstructed these relationships by placing the participants, or players, in a particular field of interest that would represent a market. This field is a structured social space with rules, systems of power, and terms of engagement. People connect and force their way through webs of social interaction, but these connections are primarily contained to a set field. Players in the arena compete for money, prestige, and power to achieve their spot on the hierarchical scale of success. This is why I contend that, despite the illusion that the art market does not perform within a traditional economic model, it has all of the identifiable traits and qualities of traditional financial exchange.

Bourdieu trusted that one could reside within a multidimensional social field. While occupying a particular position, one creates an inherent propensity towards an aesthetic taste. Additionally, players fight for the control of more resources within their fields to obtain the objects of their desires. By reproducing and dominating the main aspects of this field through the capital of prestige (which functions as a form of social capital) power relations and inequality result. These behaviors and dispositions are often created at an early age and inherited from family, so that class fractions become the natural consequence. He says, “Connoisseurship is an ‘art’ which, like the art of thinking or the art of living, cannot be imparted entirely in the form of precepts or instruction, and apprenticeship to it presupposes the equivalent of prolonged contact between disciple and initiate in traditional education, i.e. repeated contact with the work (or with works of the same class)” (Bourdieu, 228). By focusing on this internal structure of social relations, I believe Bourdieu ignores other complex frameworks that develop from the transition, or exchange, of cultural goods such as a work of art; namely the role of spiritual capital.

Bourdieu believes participants in the artistic field engaging in the form of social hierarchy and cultural consumption can legitimize social differences by putting forth the myth that aesthetic taste is a natural predisposition available to all. He says, “The ideology of creation, which makes the author the first and last source of the value of his work, conceals the fact that the cultural businessman (art dealer, publisher, etc.) is at one and the same time the person who exploits the labor of the ‘creator’ by trading in the ‘sacred’ and the person who, by putting it on the market, by exhibiting, publishing or staging it, consecrates a product he has discovered and which would otherwise remain a natural resource” (Bourdieu, 76). I believe this dependency on the field of available cultural, symbolic, and economic

power can be transcended by framing his theories about the art market with a comparative history of similar structures in organized religion. Bourdieu's theories show how the structure of work can reflect the worldview or social group that created it, but the creation of work is more than the labor of an artist. In fact, the artwork arrives as the product of a collective effort within a given cultural field as with any other human product created for a market place. Bourdieu believes symbolic aspects of social life intertwine with materiality, but ultimately, he does not consider the economic indicators essential to the functioning of the field of cultural production.

Pierre Bourdieu's theories of art consumption demonstrate an arboreal model of social hierarchy that obscures the significant dialogical and rhizomatic aspects of the art market. For example, he believes the work of art is a language engaged only when the viewers have the social position or access to higher levels of education. They can enter into a relationship with a work of art only after acquiring the necessary tools of translation. Bourdieu considers language to be not merely a method of communication, but also a mechanism of power. The language one uses is designated by one's relational position in a field or social space. Bourdieu believes that different uses of language tend to reiterate the respective positions of each participant. I argue the specialized language of the art market has borrowed significant attributes of the specialized language of the Christian Church and this has positively contributed to its financial value. Bourdieu's theory of cultural production as a model of social hierarchy is inseparable from the material condition of existence and its financial result in the marketplace. He supposes that "access to works of art cannot be defined solely regarding physical accessibility since works of art exist only for those who have the means of understanding them" (Bourdieu, 22). Bourdieu does not designate art as a

purely aesthetic experience. Instead, he concentrates on the social and ideological aspects of a work of art.

This study will begin by diving deeper into the characteristics of spiritual capital and its specific meaning in the Christian Church in chapter one. In chapter two, I will define aura and its connection to Walter Benjamin's essay on the topic. Benjamin opened the door for a theoretical, theological, and economic analysis of the study of art. He accomplished this through a fundamental ontological development of assimilation of spiritual capital in the art market, and that process will be unpacked throughout the third chapter.

The fourth chapter will pinpoint the development of spiritual capital in organized religion through a case study. Medieval London's financial structures emerged simultaneously in the Church and the fine arts, launching a long history of growth and affluence. Applying the model established in previous chapters, I will survey and map the art market's appropriation of church financial structures from the Renaissance to the present using an archeological approach influenced by Michel Foucault in chapter five. Chapter six breaks down my four pinnacles of spiritual capital beginning with ritual events in the art industry which uphold ceremonial symbols of power. Discussions of the structure of cooperative agents in contemporary art markets follows in chapter seven, and the language and discourse of disavowal in chapter eight. The accumulation of physical space in the economy of art finalizes my examination of the characteristics of spiritual capital. The contemporary equivalent of a convergent art and church economy with a reliance on spiritual capital takes place in Miami, Florida as my last case study on chapter nine. Chapter ten will provide a deeper understanding of how aura works in the art market as opposed to how it

functions in a work of art. Finally, I will conclude with speculations for aura and spiritual capital in the realm of psychology and desire.

Modern art critic Clive Bell echoed the sentiment of many artists working during his time by saying, “Art and religion are ... two roads by which men escape from circumstances to ecstasy. Between aesthetic and religious rapture there is a family alliance. Art and Religion are means to similar states of mind” (Bell, Part 2, Chapter 1). Though I will argue they share more than just a state of mind or feeling. I contend that religion, specifically Christianity, and the art world share an economy of spiritual capital delivered through aura. I will explain how aura in the doctrine of art is the same as the aura of a social network affiliated with the church and the art world.

The sociological explanations of art’s astronomical rise in price intersect in the realm of the spirit through aura, giving credibility and structure to an otherwise unexplainable phenomenon. The myth of an illogical art market based upon unpredictable factors has been perpetuated by promoting art in relation to aura. Recent scholarship implies the art market has stable and measurable indexes of value despite the claim of Sotheby's chief auctioneer, Tobias Meyer, that the market's valuation of art could only be described as "magical" (Galenson, 87). I contend that its rational nature has been overshadowed by an emphasis on the spiritual dialectic of art production. This shroud of mystery has covered the art business through its history and many today grasp this certainty.

Art systems have adopted an aura of tradition and ritual that insulate their underlying operations from scrutiny. When we assign the value of aura to a work of art, it immediately enters a sacred space, both culturally and economically. A work of art created by an artistic



genius whose natural disposition is a gift from the divine creator begets an uncontested appreciation. Attempts to explore the basic impulses of the art market are typically met with cries of sacrilege. By instilling untouchable elements of mysticism into the art making process, the monetary exchange of art has become a job for the priestly class of gallery owners, auction houses, and museum curators, as though the operation of exchange in art can only be guided by those deemed holy enough to understand its forces.

## CHAPTER 1

### **Characteristics of Spiritual Capital and Meaning in the Christian Church**

In this chapter, I will clarify the definition and characteristics of spiritual capital as it relates to the Christian Church. The acquisition of physical space, a structure of cooperative agents, an exclusive language producing a discourse of disavowal, and the use ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events combine to form the primary characteristics of spiritual capital. Additionally, the placement of money within this assembly of practices and practitioners will be presented as an original element inside the art world. The entwinement of the art market and the church's growth as an international business will finally merge to create a construction of both physical and metaphysical value actualized through aura in spiritual capital. I connect spiritual capital as a religious term to the use of aura in the philosophical tradition of art. I also aim to show that even as early as the Middle Ages, the conceptual separation of economy and religion worked to the advantage of the Church as a growing enterprise, as it did with the spiritual enterprise of the arts. Economy and spirituality are practically ever-present and together, but monetary matters faded into the background of public perception. The tradition of privacy and secrecy in financial matters was originated by, and justified through, the spiritual nature of Church operations, but this was not always the case. The Church's economic actions were challenged, but they were never held fully accountable for their discretions because of the protection of the divine justifications that afforded them.

Understanding the historical trajectory and formation of spiritual capital as a part of the economy of art can liberate us from the taboo of discussing money and its relationship with art and religion. Just as a priest must head the Church's delicate financial affairs while keeping a façade of disinterest in such matters, the art dealer assumed the role as liaison in the economy for spiritual capital. The myth of the starving artist also gave rise to the gallery owners as intermediaries. They were entrusted with the dirty job of negotiating and setting prices, marketing, buying, and selling works of art. The currency of their practice is relational, but they ensure that artists never put a value to their spiritual enterprises. This is because spiritual capital itself is not a commodity to be bought and sold, but a product to be stored, exchanged, and distributed by worthy partners such as religious institutions and the art world alike.

In this chapter, I will use the term church to refer to an organized body of worshippers and religion to indicate an organized system of beliefs. My definition of economy will suit both a study of monetary value in the church and the art world. The science of economics attempts to understand how both individuals and groups utilize resources, manage good and services, and create a supply and demand in a saturated marketplace. In addition to these terms, I will go into more detail defining both aura and spiritual capital as they relate to the economic functions of the church and the art world. The desire for capital's timelessness, its association with an unobtainable surplus value, and its community enhancing capabilities are only a few of the characteristic of spiritual capital transferable to the art world. Spiritual capital gives us a motivation beyond our base desires for God, for the common good, for community. It develops identities, traditions, and value systems, which can hide or overlook our economic motivations. Our psychological desire to

believe in our personal altruism is greater than the reality of selfish gain. This is how a desire to consume art as a commodity can make us feel connected to something beyond ourselves. There is also a motivational element when all of these assets are combined. Action on the personal, social, or cultural level can leverage all of the other forms of capital for the common interest. These spiritual assets are used to create material goods. This materialization created by someone who has passed through the trials of all other forms of capital causes observable power, influence, and advantages. Spiritual capital is not just a transcendent, unconditional value. It has moral and ethical weight, which is an internal and external gage on our connections to both the material world and the spiritual one.

The leveraging of spiritual resources in economic systems is not a practice originating in today's capitalist societies. Bourdieu's contribution to the understanding of symbolic and relational capital leaves room for elaboration on its relationship to spiritual capital throughout the religious and art world. First, we must discover its origins and trace its hermeneutical variations. Spiritual capital was developed as an ethos of good living from the Greek concept of *oikonomia* developed in the Nicomachian Ethics (Oslington, loc 20). *Oikonomia* was a term encompassing stewardship and the economic management of a household. Between the first and sixth centuries, the term *oikonomia* underwent a transformation from Aristotle's definition of practical decision-making about home governance. It is now a mysterious and divine force in theological discourse which represents a system of divine economy. The Christian Church thought this term beneficial in describing its philosophy of care, which incorporated both monetary relationships as well as domestic affairs. The art market adopted a structure of spiritual capital from this model.

To lead them to salvation, God's management of humanity after the fall became the model of *oikonomia* that founding Church fathers based their earthly practice of running the Church. Aristotle explained economic relations by dividing them into three sectors: despotic, paternal, and administrative. He configured economy as an activity not bound by a set of rules as a science might be. Instead, economy evolved with time and was based on circumstance. In the *Philosophy of the Revolution*, Schelling sees the connection. He writes, “The ancient theologians distinguished between *akratos*, *theologia*, and *oikonomia*. The two belong together. It is toward this process of domestic economy (*oikonomia*) that we have wished to point” (Schelling, 35). Likewise, Cicero defined economics not as a set entity, but as a mixture of choice, analysis, and an ordering of themes. I argue that the cross section of spiritual discourse and economic practice has a long-standing tradition. God’s management of his people, their time and resources, becomes the model for the early Christian church’s management of their congregation. They are, in essence, a reflection of a heavenly economy.

It is not until Christianity that *oikonomia* takes on a decidedly theological implication based on belief and salvation. The economy of God was a part of biblical teachings both in the Old and New Testaments. There are a multitude of passages in the Bible that deal directly with the good management of household affairs which include monetary concerns, and even more which address the moral implications of an unhealthy spiritual and monetary entanglement. The most famous quote on this subject comes from Jesus when he explains to his disciples, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:25). A warning against the singular pursuit of financial gain is repeated in the warning that “money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim 6:9).

Paul incorporates *oikonomia* in many of his important theological arguments and even speaks of the mystery of its inner workings. “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what the *oikonomia* of the mystery hidden for ages in God” (Ephesians 3:9). The Greek understanding of *oikonomia* transitions to a metaphysical term by linking God to his followers. The relationship to God is one of imitation and communication. Just as God manages the perfect household in the metaphysical realm, his followers through the Church, have an aspirational model. “Let a man so account of us, as servants of Christ, and treasurers of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in *oikonomia* that a man is found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1). God’s economic structure at its most basic level revolves around the cycle of creation and destruction through sin and redemption. “God has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his benevolence, which he outlined in Christ for the *oikonomia* of the fullness of time to unite all things in him” (Ephesians 1:9-10). Economy in the theological realm evolved from an underlying and unspoken principle to a sanctified and unchallenged necessity.

*Oikonomia* was secularized in time from its ecclesiastical, economic roots to refer to a style of housekeeping or management, which favors the spirit of the law and good charity. The church economy is the organization through which God’s economy and the earthly management of resources must pass. Each of these verses provide an application of economy to both metaphysics and eschatology, as Julia Kristeva explains:

Saint Paul already draws upon the spiritual sense of the word by speaking of the ‘economy’ of the Father, which was translated as ‘redemptive plan,’ ‘benevolent

design.’<sup>13</sup> The Latin texts of the first church fathers elaborate on this notion with a whole battery of more subtle terms: *dispositio*, *dispensatio*.<sup>14</sup> For Nicephorus, in contrast to the discontinuity between Creator and creature, which separates us from divine transcendence, “economy” provides the conditions for the possibility of discourse on God through a certain knowledge of God, and similarly for his infinitely repeated visibility. The term economy, in fact, ensures the role of an operator between two similitudes: one natural and absolute, between Son and Father, and one relative, or definite resemblance, between God and his images. This double articulation allows him simultaneously to maintain the enigma of the divine and to authorize the specular without reducing it to a *techne*. By distinguishing the Aristotelian term *pros ti* from the term *skesis*, which he prefers for expressing the imaged relation between Son and Father, Nicephorus recaptures the sense of intimacy, of love, even of dissimilarity implied by this term (Kindle Locations 1058-1071).

Giorgio Agamben also rationalizes the connection early Christians made between the earthly running of a household and a Divine structure of management. He writes, “but, as often happens, the fracture that the theologians had sought to avoid by removing it from the plane of God’s being, reappeared in the form of a caesura that separated in Him being and action, ontology, and praxis. Action (economy, but also politics) has no foundation in being: this is the schizophrenia that the theological doctrine of *oikonomia* left as its legacy on Western culture” (Agamben, 10). Western civilization experienced a philosophical disconnect trying to understand economy and the Spirit together. Agamben reveals, “the thesis according to which the economy could be a secularized theological paradigm acts

retroactively on theology itself, since it implies that from the beginning theology conceives divine life and the history of humanity as an *oikonomia*, that is, that theology is itself economic and did not only become so at a later time through secularization” (Agamben, 3). Here we can see the beginnings of spiritual capital as a spiritual practice known only to God. Agamben explains, “If we do not understand the very close connection that links *oikonomia* with Providence, it is not possible to measure the novelty of Christian theology concerning pagan mythology and theology. Christian faith is not a story about the gods; it is immediately economy and providence, that is an activity of self-revelation, government and care of the world” (Agamben, 47).

The church became the dominant supplier of public goods and services after the proliferation of Christianity, driven by the entrepreneurship of Paul and the disciples who overcame geographical boundaries to deliver their message to marginalized groups in the Roman Empire. Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, launching, and organizing a new business. This fact is particularly important in our understanding of the church as an economic entity because as Oslington argues, “development requires economic growth; growth requires the catalytic drive of the entrepreneur, and entrepreneurship exists only where freedom of action is combined with personal responsibility” (Oslington, loc 480).

While the proliferation of Christianity followed an entrepreneurial structure, the doctrine of the Church needed to expand its definition of *oikonomia* beyond the management of one earthly or heavenly household. Diverse groups of Christians needed a product to consume beyond a doctrine of responsible living. When Constantine consolidated the factional groups of Christians to implement one official doctrine for the entire Roman Empire, a singular and desirable product was established. “The principal capital stock of the



church, its body of basic theological precepts, was protected against dissipation by certain rules that were the rough equivalents of constitutional guarantees” (Ekelund, 355).

Constantine not only decriminalized Christianity but accomplished a peaceful transition of power through his patronage and fiscal management of the Church. Constantine built basilicas, allowed tax exemptions for members of the clergy, and bestowed large amounts of land to the Church, thereby setting the tone for the future of its management.

While the governing body ensured the mass acceptance of the new doctrine, the ambiguities inherent in this new cultural system allowed for a standardized set of beliefs at the Council of Nicaea. God’s economic role concerning his worshipers is established as primary in the opening lines of the Nicene Creed: “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made” (Marshall, 329). Here we see the beginning of God’s economy was an administrative plan to carry out his eternal purpose. As all things were made by Him, all things must work together to accomplish this purpose. As previously indicated, this foundation of beliefs and commitments which spread through generations became the very definition of “spiritual capital”. Ekelund explains the importance of this centralized dogma by showing how the Church was the monopoly provider of a pure credence good. The credibility of Church courts, validity of canon law, acceptance of the Church as divinely sanctioned arbiter of earthly disputes, and the ultimate trust in the Church's various commercial commitments, all derived from the credibility of the religious doctrines promulgated by the Church of Rome” (Ekelund, loc 363). The economy, or

*oikonomia*, of the Church originates with God as its administrator. Accordingly, the Church became a producer of spiritual capital before it was consumed and redistributed by the faithful.

Secular leaders such as Charlemagne understood the foundational economic power that a monopolized theology could control. Matthew Guest describes the benefits of using spiritual capital as a cultural resource of symbolic capital. “The spiritual is associated with the personal, the intimate, the interior and the experiential, contrasted with ‘religion,’ which is associated with the official, the external and the institutional, often picking up negative connotations of the hierarchical and patriarchal along the way” (Guest, 1). Under this definition, spiritual capital resides in the internal life of individuals but can be converted as an agent of exchange in social relationships. Ekelund explains the key benefits of spiritual capital in the early Christian church was having four primary advantages: “It produced and sold a product in the form of a service valued by a large segment of the world's population. It established effective spans of control by organizing along divisional lines. It adopted an internal structure that created incentives for efficient behavior on the part of the clergy and maintained control through legal and financial means” (Ekelund, loc 524). These characteristics relate to my qualifications for producing spiritual capital: The acquisition of physical space, a structure of cooperative agents, an exclusive language producing a discourse of disavowal, and the use ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events.

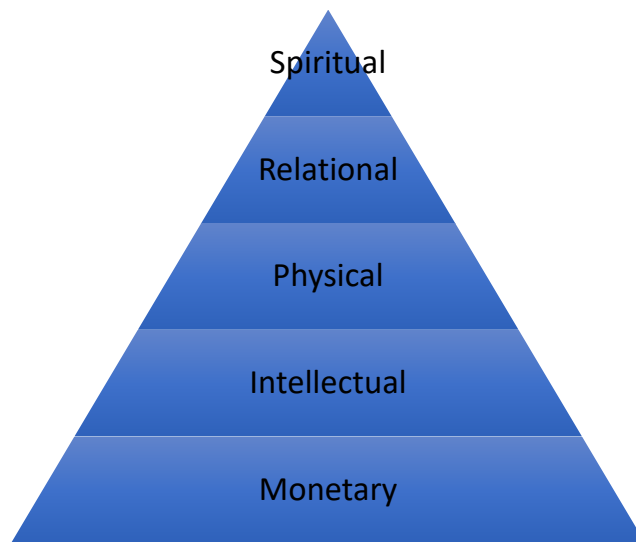
As the economic base of the Christian Church grew from the reign of Constantin, the economic management structure the Church expanded its conversion of spiritual resources to physical resources. As property ownership became more important, monetary based exchanges had to be assimilated into Medieval Church practices. In 1100 BCE, the network

of religious centers of authority expanded, and while barter was commonly used among the lay people, currency began circulating in the Church. Because of the grand scale of its needs and expenditures, the Church utilized both physical coins and began using an “accounts” system where large sums were recorded as debt but never converted into currency. Monetary issues in religious teachings were not always superseded by concerns of the spirit. At this juncture, the structural apparatus of the church merges with its financial pursuits. “The extension and entrenchment of the vertical organization of the Roman Church with the Roman papacy and Curia at the upstream level providing doctrine and interpretations, regulating the “downstream” level (geographically local parishes, monasteries, and so on) to ensure “uniformity” of teaching and product to the laity; ultimate triumph of the Roman Church was a religious monopoly in the High Middle Ages, the competitive breakdown in the sixteenth century, and briefly, the implications of these and earlier developments for contemporary Christianity” (Ekelund, loc 324). The Middle Ages represent the historical juncture where we see spiritual capital move beyond an internal value qualification to monetary and physical goods by way of social and symbolic capital.

This multi-directional flow created subsidiaries along the chain of command. “The Church produced services that were all ostensibly aimed at the same religious goal - namely, spiritual salvation. Despite the lack of overt physical differentiation, however, the products generated by separate divisions of the Church were distinguishable. Monasteries catered to the spiritual needs of the more intellectually inclined and to higher-income individuals. At the same time, some monks also ministered to the poor, and some served as evangelists on the pagan frontiers of Europe. The cathedral chapters helped inhabitants of larger urban areas and attracted pilgrims and other travelers who made monetary contributions to the cathedral”

(Ekelund, loc 228). This institutional backing widened spheres of influence and brought with it transformational stream of income.

Mike Breen, a writer in Christian Biblical Theory, researches this multi-dimensional flow of capital in the Christian church through a model of socially conditioned hierarchy of capital in modern life. He argues that the church has been able to operate as an economic entity without structural challenges because of its separation of monetary categories. These classes are situated as a stair-stepped approach to accessing classes of capital, with increasing levels of disengagement and taboo associated with the comingling of different forms of capital. I will use this model to explain in further detail how spiritual capital can transfer to other forms of capital inside the Christian economic structure of management.



**Hierarchy of Available Capital in the Christian Church and Art Market**

One of Christianity's fundamental tenants is based on transcendence, which demands a separation from matter. Biblical principles are based on the teaching that spiritual salvation from God cannot be earned through good works but is given at great sacrifice by God. Jesus urges his followers to invest all other available capital for the hope of spiritual capital in return. By concentrating on spiritual capital alone, the assumption is that it is superior to other forms of capital available on earth.

This arrangement of capital is an apparatus, or representation, by which we can understand a cultural concept that expresses many systems of differences. Before 1100 BCE, money was the most temporary and fluid of all resources. We recognize it as capital and work with it on a daily basis. Money has investment potential, and it begets tangible actions that can be quantified. The next category is a bit harder to access. Intellectual capital "is the creativity and knowledge we have available to invest, measured in concepts and ideas. This is of higher value than financial capital, because you can't create ideas and creativity simply by spending a lot of money" (Mike Breen). Contemporary scholars are just beginning to study the effects of spiritual and intellectual capital and its relationship to entrepreneurship. Muhammad Khaliq explains in the *International Journal of Current Research*, "Spiritual capital is a critical component of intellectual capital. Spiritual capital is a combination of power, influence, spirit, and knowledge that can be gained through religion" (Berger and Hefner, 2003). Fry (2003) stated that, "due to spiritual capital, a leader can deploy spiritual resources in a social context and these leaders can follow God's will by obeying His divine laws in their daily lives" (345).

Historically, physical capital is a bit more complicated. It covers energy, health, sex, and DNA. Social taboos become stronger the further away you get from the base system of

money. The value we place on physical capital is greater, and the decisions we make in regard to our physicality become more important. A sense of belonging strongly increases the chance of robust economic activities and exchanges.

Subsequently, relational capital includes connections, bonds, and associations with friends and family which can be invested and leveraged for gain, in several areas of our life. Here we enter the more intangible and subjective realm of our understanding of capital. Its relationship to spiritual capital entails the amount of cooperation others willingly give to an individual and organization.

An exchange of capital beyond this hierarchical order creates an uncomfortable social tension. For example, leveraging monetary funds for an education is simply an exchange of two closely related forms of capital. The higher up you climb the ladder of capital, the more taboo the transfer becomes. Products of manufacturing straddle the line between an outlay of physical and intellectual capital. We will happily pay for a fashion garment within the context of innovation and creative thought, but a garment sewn in a sweatshop, which takes advantage of human physical labor, is an outrage. Paying for sex is common but condemned in many cultures, as is paying for companionship, friendships, or relationships would seem an affront on ethical and moral values. Spiritual capital for monetary value is the most unthinkable exchange within the classified investment system. This goes beyond a moral destruction of social order. While the conventional narrative of art production includes an element of intellectual, physical, and relational capital, the art business began early from its conception to distinguish itself above these considerations and enter the invaluable market of the spiritual by adapting the rituals of the Catholic Church in its everyday practice.

We see the same discussion in religious traditions. Leveraging your future, which lies in the spiritual realm for the temporary conditions of monetary gain is taboo and subject to severe judgment. Jesus turned the tables of the moneychangers in front of the tabernacle, but Paul continues this message with a doctrine of disavowal of earthly goods. In fact, money must be separate from the Creator, who presumably does not need it due to His abundant resources of spiritual capital. If a priest asked for money to fix the leaky pipes, pay the staff salary, and maintain church property, offerings would be very slim. However, asking for money to support the Church, or to do God's work, alludes to an invaluable and immeasurable need. "There is nothing random or casual about the substitution of a money payment for a payment in kind or for a personal relationship of trust. Money is a medium of exchange with very particular characteristics: it is concentrated mobile wealth" (Little, 33). Spiritual capital has the appearance of being outside monetary concerns in the Christian Church. However, this model shows that while the narrative may disavow material wealth, the Church depends on market exchanges and transactions. The levels of alternative capital explained above serve as insulation for the church by creating barriers of entry or degrees of separation.

This hierarchical scale is not based on an arbitrary value system. Instead, when an object imbued with spiritual capital, its value is everlasting. Its ranking is appraised by its quantitative consumption of time. By understanding this crucial unit of measurement, we can unlock the mystery of value within the art world. This is not a simple time measurement relating to the number of hours an artist works on a piece. Monetary capital, on the other hand, is the most temporary. It can be squandered, lost, given away, abused, used, and passed on to others. Intellectual capital is earned during our lifetime, but usually dies before

our physical being. Relational capital can last beyond our death in the mind and action of others, but spiritual capital never dies. The difference here is that spiritual capital retains a value free from human impingement. It has both unconditional and transcendent values. Art and money are so uncomfortable together because the spiritual capital of art is temporally more valuable than money. For example, the Mona Lisa will not lose its auratic or spiritual quality because of its “timeless” placement in a museum setting. Great works of art have the ability to outlive and outlast their creators, communicating “universal truths” across generations.

By explaining the characteristics of spiritual capital, a connection has been made between the conceptual separation of economy and religion which benefited as the Church grew an economic structure of management. While economy and spirituality work together in the practical functioning inside the apparatus of the Church, monetary matters have been buffered by layers of separation. The tradition of privacy and secrecy in financial matters was originated by and justified through the spiritual nature of Church operations as a narrative of disavowal obstructed between layers of symbolic and relational exchanges.



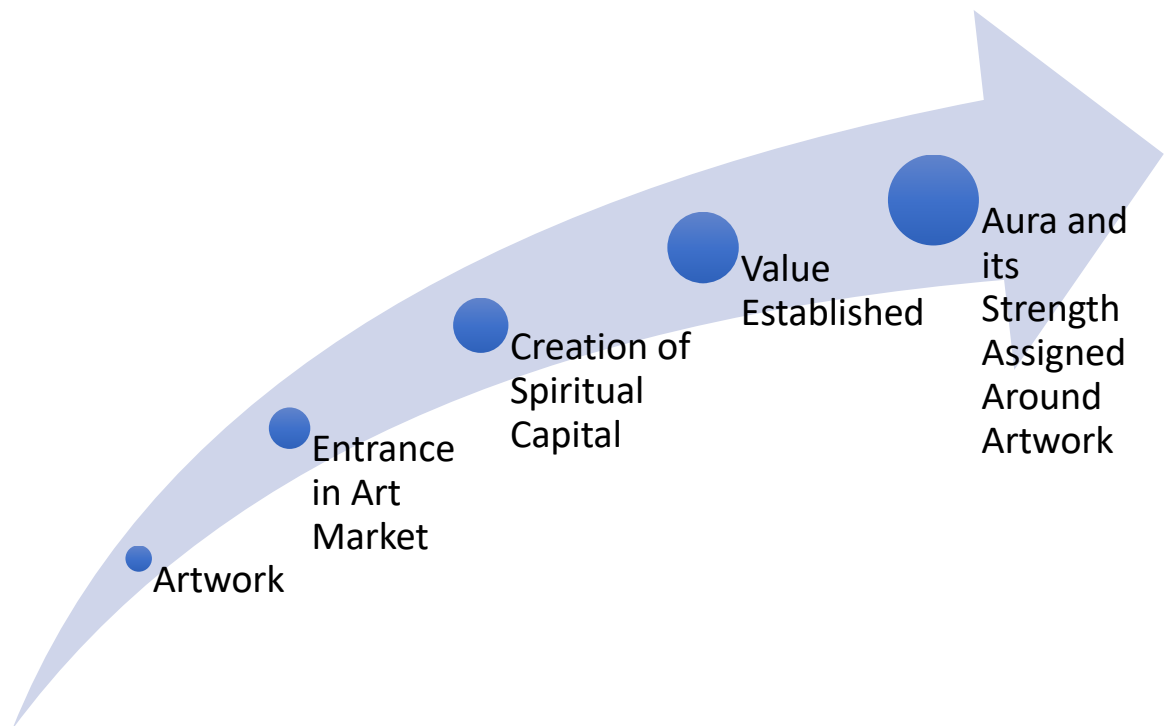
## CHAPTER 2

### **Aura as Spiritual Capital in the Art World**

Modern economists are beginning to explore the art market's functions through well-established economic principles. However, the least examined facet of the art economy is how its capital is formed, valued, and exchanged. Pierre Bourdieu's theory identified one aspect of artistic production influencing the value of art, which he recognized as cultural capital (1993). His philosophy of cultural capital recognizes particular attitudes and dispositions towards art, but it does not explain why some works of art are considered more valuable than others. I argue that we can identify an asset within the art market which produces and packages value and desirability. This asset is aura produced through the art market's manufactured spiritual capital. First, a structure of cooperative agents is established. The network of artists, galleries, auction houses, critics, museums, and collectors work together to manufacture aura. Next, these art world players perform exclusionary customs and utilize ceremonial symbols of power adopted from organized religion. For example, the theater of Catholic Mass was copied verbatim in the early development of the auction houses because of its effectiveness in harnessing the power of herd mentality and crowd psychology. Art fairs have become the carnival of the modern age. Art Basel is now a pilgrimage that infers wealth, power, and privilege on its participants. Spiritual capital is the quality of art situated between quantifiable values and qualitative values. Ultimately, the belief in a work of art's aura determines its position of symbolic power, its cultural capital, and its monetary

value. The power of enchantment and charisma imparts value and elevates a belief to the status of myth. Spiritual value is supravalueable because it goes beyond the monetary.

Art world players and observers alike believe that certain works of art have aura which is imparted into a work of art during the creation process by an artist. Many believe that the strength of aura is recognized in the first stages of a work's entrance into the art market and a value is assigned to the work accordingly. Each work of art has an origin in the hands of an artist, and once it is sold as a commodity it's life in the art market begins. My model contends that art enters the marketplace first, after which, monetary value is established, and only then aura is assigned.



For example, the work of art *Salvator Mundi* by Leonardo da Vinci found in an attic which was bought for \$30 and is now worth more than \$450.3 million. The work itself, and potentially its aura was in question for years and it was almost discarded. Instead, after ten

years of authentication, a top auction house sale, and the press in all of the major international news outlets, determined the work has an unmistakable auratic presence due to its record-breaking price. I call this process of valuation and appreciation the accumulation of spiritual capital.

Spiritual capital produces assets, which many believe to be an unexplainable magic that incites desire for a work of art. “Money” and “spirit” have been understood as binary pairs or as ideological and cultural opposites. My project is to expose the relationship, and even dependence, that these two forms of capital have on each other. As indicated in the discussion of religion and spiritual capital, value is not a property of the work itself. Instead, it is a byproduct of the art market, which attaches itself to the material forms of art. It is the intangible factor that makes a work of art tangible. Rancière describes it through a Hegelian dialectic, claiming that his concept of the “end of art...clings to the plot of the life of art as the ‘spirit of forms.’ That spirit is the ‘heterogeneous sensible,’ the identity of art and non-art” (Rancière and Corcoran, 124).<sup>1</sup> There is an illusion of mystery in the art market, which has resisted deconstruction. Our assumed understanding and acceptance of a metaphysical discourse for art’s spiritual nature overrides the art market’s tactical economic functions. Umberto Eco explains, “There is a geometrically rational schema of what beauty ought to be, and on the other [hand] the unmediated life of art with its dialectic of forms and intentions” (Umberto Eco, 118). Similarly, the financial functions of the art market are overshadowed by the divinely inspired nature of the art-making process.

Walter Benjamin called the intangible value of art aura and believed that it was a quality inherent to pure art that resulted from artistic production. By studying aura as an analytical term for a cultural concept, in addition to examining how the spiritual nature of art

has changed through time, we may discover how it became a useful resource in economic structures. Aura, or spiritual capital, is a result of the economic structure in which it was placed and the inherited cultural attitude which developed around it. This financial edifice came directly from the business model of the Early Medieval Church and was slowly implemented to become the accepted business model of the art world. For spiritual capital to be useful, its operational structure must work with the prevailing market economy in which it resides. Spiritual capital causes an anesthetization of economic decision-making. Its ambiguous character is a resource of a work of art that may not satisfy demand yet manages to create a stronger desire for possession and understanding.

What we appreciate as aura is actually the accumulation of circumstances that brought that piece to where it is and the value that it has. It has more to do with history and provenance, NOT the length of time that has gone by. Again, I refer to this concept as spiritual capital. Spiritual capital is the determining factor in valuing a work of art. It is a unique, extra-economic factor I define as the combination of tangible conditions coupled with intangible behaviors and beliefs. Most importantly, it is also the driving force behind operations in the art economy.

The etymological foundation of the word spirit is “life-giving” or “breath.” It is a ubiquitous term which can be used in a metaphysical sense or a metaphorical one. Capital is a term that historically indicated “the head” or “the most important.” It did not assume a financial connotation until 1610 in England where its more technical meaning is the “principle sum of a loan”. Putting these two terms together about a work of art is primarily symbolic. Art has a value which we assume cannot be measured understood, or valued, but if we think of art as a loan from the market which instills a life-giving breath, we can demystify

the process of monetary appraisals of individual works of art. Spiritual capital, or the life-giving breath, is a gift from God in the Christian Church. It has been traditionally assumed that artists had a connection with the divine because they possessed an ability to create something from nothing<sup>ii</sup>. Artists are producers and creators of the material good. They contribute to the mystery of art's transformation from physical commodity object to Greenberg's notion of "kitsch". Greenberg exposed the irony of the avant-garde's reliance on the bourgeoisie by an "umbilical cord of gold," thus implying that true art could not be connected to monetary concerns (Greenberg, 1). Kitsch was similarly discredited for its reliance on tricks to represent the accumulation of a shared history. Assimilating and distributing culture to the uncultured masses for a profit was also a debasement of the real nature of art.

It has been a historically perpetuated myth that artists transfer the power of the spirit into a form of physicality. Marcel Duchamp comes very close to recognizing the transmutable symbiosis between artist and viewer when he says, "The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act" (Marcel Duchamp, *The Creative Act*, 1). However, I contend that an artist does not produce spiritual capital in the 21st century. Instead, the well-organized art world machine has created and perpetuated aura since its very early guild formations in the Middle Ages and it is leveraged for other forms of capital: monetary, intellectual, relational, and physical. So, how can aura, spiritual capital, or magic in an artwork be manufactured, and how has this process developed over time? Many collectors of art would like to believe

that aura in art comes from the authenticity of the artist and his talent or intentions, but in a capitalist society, the artist is not as important as the art machine.

Galleries who promote works of fine art perpetuate the myth of the artist genius. Genius is a concept rooted in the Arabic concept of *genie*, or a spirit with mystical characteristics who inspire humans to achieve great things. Roman pagans believed that the genius was a spirit protecting the great heroes of Rome, enabling them to accomplish extraordinary feats. During the rise of Christianity, this concept receded into the background, until the revival of Greek and Roman philosophy during the Renaissance. This soon became strongly attached to the artists creating extraordinary works for their patrons. Today, galleries protect the artist as genius myth. Contemporary art dealers are the arbiters of good taste, the bridge to collectors, and the spinners of stories. They allow artists to remain removed from money, which might taint or spoil their work, as if all art is created in a vacuum separate from an economic system. The story surrounding each work of art must remain genuine for collectors. A gallery produces a narrative for each artist and work of art. While the art may be machine created, or reproduced from a copy, its story is creatively and uniquely produced for its entry into the art market. We are familiar with this phenomenon because we openly criticize the fact that many artists have talent but are not recognized for their efforts. The difference between a talented artist without noteworthy recognition and an untalented artist featured in a museum show is the spiritual capital manufactured by a network of agents within ritualistic traditions and their dialectic for disavowal of financial objectives.

Religion and money have had a spiritual connection in philosophical thought before the seventeenth century, but some notable theorists have openly criticized their too-close

relationship. Weber envisioned a liberation from institutional religious control; Benjamin conflated capitalism as religion; and Giorgio Agamben posited in an interview with Peppe Sava, “God did not die; he was transformed into money” (<https://philosophyinatimeoferror.com/2014/02/12/god-didnt-die-he-was-transformed-into-money-an-interview-with-giorgio-agamben-peppe-sava-libcom-org/>). Simmel urges us to excavate the similarities between spiritual capital in the economy and in religion. Bradford Verner sees this view of the religious enterprise as helpful in today’s society, because being familiar with multiple religions, or in this case artistic styles, increases your social reach while minimalizing your emotional investment. “Polymorphous spiritual consumption may also reflect a process of ‘aesthetic distancing,’ a performative strategy of emotional detachment that is another defining element of an elite disposition” (Verter, 152). It is at this junction of aesthetic distancing that we see the strongest connections between aura and the art market.<sup>iii</sup>

Much of Benjamin’s writing connects aura and the economy, but in his essay “The Work of Art” this point is mentioned then quickly obscured. It will be my task to link aura and the economy again by locating it in the place and time of particular works of art. This project will determine the spatial existence of aura as it has been determined through various market systems. My first undertaking is to examine aura’s mobility. Location, or space, has an imperative role in the element of authenticity, which Benjamin believes determines aura. He says aura is, “a strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of distance, however near it may be” (Benjamin, 23). Boris Groys’ book *Art Power* is a focused collection of essays tied to the idea of aura in the Modern Age. The original essay titled in German underscores this link. “Die Topologie der Aura” references the fact that aura has a

distinct location. He says, “Aura is, for Benjamin, the relationship of the artwork to the site in which it is found – the relationship to the external context. The soul of the artwork is not in its body; rather the body of the artwork is always found in its aura, its soul” (Groys, 62). I will later argue that this external context in which aura is found directly relates to the economy in which it was created.

Heidegger also addresses the presentness of a painting. When referring to Van Gogh’s “Peasant’s Shoes”, he says, “The painting has spoken. In the proximity of the work we were suddenly somewhere other than where we habitually tend to be” (Heidegger, 161). Thus, aura not only can move, but it has the power to move us. Proximity or the distance between the subjective and objective is the space in which aura survives. Rather than being a fixed point, aura traverses that distance and has the ability to inhabit either point. Heidegger believed that in the continued revealing and concealing motion of Being, we would be able to catch glimpses of auratic appearance more clearly through a work of art.

Benjamin styles aura as the tension of experience in the temporal and spatial dimension. The art market is not only shown to be a social system but a social place. Sociologist Lefebvre would suggest that a market is both an ideological practice of social life and activity and a physical location inhabited by interacting individuals. As he writes, “(social) space is a (social) product.” And, “social space ... remains the space of society, of social life ... All ‘subjects’ are situated in a space in which they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, space which they may both enjoy and modify” (Lefebvre and Nicholson-Smith, 35). The vitalism attitude towards the market is carried through in Lefebvre’s work as he suggests that social/market spaces have a life and generate their own life and death. “Social space ‘incorporates’ social actions ...from the point of view of [the]



subjects, the behavior of their space is at once vital and mortal: within it they develop, give expression to themselves, and encounter prohibitions; then they perish, and that same space contains their graves” (ibid, 24).

According to Lefebvre, consumption and commercial spatiality are linked in more than the philosophical dimension. “The space of consumption,” he asserts, “coincides with the historical locations of capital accumulation, with the area of production, and with the space that is produced; this is the space of the market” (ibid, 73). The growth of capitalism shaped and occupied a particular institutional space, one that is both global and disjointed. It is global in that “it abolishes distinctions and differences” and “its circulatory systems and networks may occupy space worldwide” (ibid, 341). It is fragmented and fractured because it “locates specificities, places or localities, both in order to control them and in order to make them negotiable” (ibid, 325). This dichotomy may seem counterintuitive, but as Lefebvre explains, “it is not ... as though one had global (or conceived) space to one side and fragmented (or directly experienced) space to the other—rather as one might have an intact glass here and a broken glass or mirror over there. For [capitalist] space ‘is’ whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time” (ibid, 336). This description of space, the global marketplace, and capitalism calls to mind the ubiquitous nature of aura. Significantly, Andy Warhol points to aura as a commodity in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* when he says, “Some company recently was interested in buying my 'aura,' they didn't want my product” even suggesting that aura can be bought and sold (75).

Lefebvre places a somber warning in his work. Capitalism’s appetite for space will not stop. When it has occupied all forms of existing space, it will reach into the virtual and eventually forcefully create its own by commodifying the space of the internet as well.

Already, the public and private sectors of life have been transformed by the economic sphere. How soon will the spiritual be consumed? This question may be key to why the art world vehemently denies market forces inside its realm. How can one place an exchange value on a spiritual object? It is true that art is part of its economic system, subject to a mobilization of space. I will develop the direct connection between the physical space, virtual space, and imagined space of a market and how each one affects the work of art in a later chapter.

We have determined aura's spatial fluidity, but Benjamin also allows for temporal mobility. For Benjamin, aura refers primarily to the aesthetic presence of art, much like the spiritual awakening one feels inside churches and cathedrals. As Benjamin writes, "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin, 220). This condition of time plus space may be another clue to understanding how the art market is seen as having an "otherworldly" quality, combining ethics and aesthetics. He implies time's role in his discussion of aura because he uses the language of "decay" and "loss" (23). These words are not static, but open. Andrew Benjamin's article "The Decline of Art: Benjamin's Aura" goes into further detail by saying, "The object of analysis has a material existence whose materiality is purely contextual and thus whose temporality is inscribed within its contextual existence. Time and being are in this instance reducible to the place (the location and context of meaning) and hence involve a temporality and ontology of the instant, i.e. temporality and ontology of delimited and finite existence" (30). It is the unique presence of aura that connects art with the power of authority to those who encounter it. Also, it imbues the idea of the author with an auratic quality as well as an authority on the interpretation of a work of art. Christoph Zeller explains, "Reproducible art, in Benjamin's opinion, unfolds its

medial foundations, while auratic art displays its immediacy” (80). According to Benjamin, immediacy is a concept that has an adverse effect on reproducible art, while a lasting presence proves the existence of aura in an original work of art.

This discussion also hints at the link between time and Being. In this instance, Benjamin’s concept of time has a theological link to the transcendental element of the split between the actual and that beyond nature. In Benjamin’s description of aura, he defines it not as a thing in itself, but as a name given to the experience of viewing a work of art. It is the relationship between the subject and object. The shifting nature of time is also addressed in Benjamin’s “The Work of Art”: “Uniqueness and presence are as closely linked (in images accessible to the naked eye) as are fleetingness and reproducibility (in technically reproducible images). The prying of the object from out of its shell, the ruination of its aura, the signature of a perception in which the sense of the equality of things in the world is so developed that it obtains it even from a unique object using reproduction” (223).

Benjamin’s notion of aura has become a commonplace term in the world of critical theory and aesthetics. We have determined aura’s temporal and spatial qualities as being fluid and moveable, but what are other characteristics that define aura? According to Benjamin, two elements contribute to the aura of a work of art: authority and authenticity. Benjamin says, “The whole sphere of authenticity eludes technological – and of course not only technological – reproduction. But whereas the authentic work retains its full authority in the face of a reproduction made by hand, which it generally brands a forgery, this is not the case with technological reproduction” (21). Authenticity and authority are taken together to create a desire for the object, which is commonly manifested through economic systems. Hence, the business of determining the provenance of a work of art by ‘authorities,’ can

significantly affect the monetary value of a work of art. The unique character of each form of economy will influence the spatial and temporal elements that determine aura.

Quite simply, the class for which art is created supplies the traditional values of art and aesthetics, which up until the twentieth century was strictly the governing class. At one time this was the church and monarchy. Aesthetic control had traditionally been enforced through art's immersion in a ritual context, thus giving to the church and the monarchy policing powers in the realm of culture as well as in religion and economics. The authority eventually shifted away from the church to the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, even as the bourgeoisie created its legitimating cultural power. This class of people controls art's production and reproduction, utilizing the aura as a tool of legitimation—by legitimizing the art object, and thus a particular aesthetic style, the bourgeoisie can also legitimize the ruling class's authority on culture. Likewise, Geertz notes the reliance of the religion's 'aura of factuality' on hierarchical power structures. Nonetheless, with the rise of technological reproduction in the twentieth century, the masses gained the ability to control their interactions with artworks as they were given the potential to destroy the hierarchy of tradition and culture (Plate, loc 2109).

Despite the serialization of art and modern commercial disfigurements, we can see that aura exists, even if its placement remains obscured. It may have in fact even become exacerbated by the proliferation of mechanical reproducibility.

The emergence of existential philosophy during Benjamin's time contributed to his views on authenticity. Existentialists believed an individual should strive to overcome one's physiological nature to be more self-aware and fully involved in life. Sartre's ideas, in particular, were a continuation of Heidegger's examination of the authentic as a discovery of Being itself and likewise informed Benjamin's thinking. Authenticity is a concept with strong connections to the avant-garde movements, which value the relationship between art and life (Zeller, 71). At a time when film, photography, and the telephone were changing the face of communication and representation, Benjamin sought an unmediated experience (Zeller, 75). Religion, tradition, and nature were embedded in the idea of aura as a way to understand the past against the advancing unknown future. Aura, for Benjamin, was the essentially unreproducible features of a work of art untouched by modernity.

In this context, aura is also historically contingent. Groys describes this concept further by again linking authenticity to space and time. "The copy lacks genuineness, therefore, not because it differs from the original, but because it has no location and consequently is not inscribed in history" (Groys, 62). In this description, we see that art is both original yet unobtainable and beyond our reach. This concept underscores the mystical, or religious, state of aura. Divinity is similarly just beyond our grasp, or as Lacan calls it *objet petit a* (Lacan, 34). It is a perfect whole despite its parts and encompasses all manners of binaries, such as light and dark, present and absent, or formed and formless. In some ways, he is also describing a utopia or a place of purity and originality. Rosalind Krauss reminds us of Benjamin's intentions when she explains in "The Originality of the Avant-Garde", "Authenticity empties out as a notion as one approaches those mediums which are inherently multiple" (Krauss, 152). Aura is no less than the truth in the search for the perfect

marriage between art and life. The authenticity of a brush with aura in a work of art also implies individual experience, as opposed to a more collective sensibility. “The Benjamin at play here is one who is wary of the claims of, and desire for, universality and universal history” (Andrew Benjamin, 34).<sup>iv</sup>

Martin Heidegger reveals an absorbing perspective of the notion of aura in his essay, “The Origin of the Work of Art” written one month after Benjamin’s article. There is a definite political agenda, despite Benjamin’s protestations. Benjamin hints at an emancipatory element in the decay of aura. Benjamin believes that the destruction of aura is put into motion by new technologies, which enable works of art to be mass-produced. Writing this essay on the verge of WWII contributed to Benjamin’s idea that technological reproduction could lead to the destruction of all values held before. As he watched the Nazi Party harness technology as killing machines, he could only link the two concepts as a warning of not only what could happen within the realm of art, but in society as a whole. Ultimately, Benjamin believed that, while it is regrettable, technology can free us from the power that authority in art holds over our experience of the work of art, our judgment of it, and our exercise of personal taste. Heidegger, on the other hand, was trying to revive the loss of aura as a revitalization of spirit and power for the German people. Heidegger viewed art as the “authentic site for the originary happening of the truth of the historical existence of a people” (Long, 97).

Benjamin ties the concept of authority and authenticity together when he says, “The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is capable of being handed down from its origin, ranging from material persistence to historical testimony. Because the latter is founded on the former, in reproduction, where the material presence has withdrawn itself

from the human, so too does the historical testimony of the thing begin to waver. What is represented as wavering is clearly this: the authority of the thing” (Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 221). Authority, authorship, and authenticity are concepts used in conjunction with each other in “The Work of Art” and share a common etymological foundation (Benjamin, 43). In “Death of an Author,” Roland Barthes believes the author, or the one with authority, points to common notions of the creative genius (Barthes, 4)<sup>v</sup>. Authority as a concept related to critical theory began with Max Weber’s interest in how individuals derive power. Objects then receive authority from tradition, which originates from practice, law, and culture. Weber also delineates a second source of authority, which he calls charismatic. This is power, which is granted by Divine Right, or destiny. Benjamin certainly understands the authority that aura possesses. It is the potential danger of aura, coupled with authority, which is particularly disturbing to Benjamin.

Aura also appears as autonomous component of a work of art, which prompted Adorno’s disagreement with Benjamin. Adorno says, “You underestimate the technical character of autonomous art and overestimate that of dependent art; put simply, this would be my principle objection” (Adorno, 131). Zeller explains, “To Adorno, autonomous and authentic art are equal. In opposition to empirical reality, authentic art unfolds its aesthetic appearance merely as an artistic truth. In this way, Adorno establishes authenticity as an aesthetic quality, limiting the utopian qualities of authenticity to the artwork” (82). According to Adorno, “artistic truth” is independent of aura. Authority in art, at this time, derived from its independence and unique existence. I will show later that as the source of authority changes in a work of art, so then does the placement of aura.

Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art" can be divided into two overlapping themes. His superstructure relates to artistic production, but the underlying substructure traces economic production. Over the course of Benjamin's career, his concern with Marx and capitalism took different forms. He begins his critique of capitalism in 1921 with his essay entitled "Capitalism as Religion" by linking the two in the same mystical terms that he describes aura. He says, "The Christianity of the Reformation period did not favor the development of capitalism but transformed itself into capitalism" (290). Howard Caygill says, "Benjamin had already entertained the idea of capitalism as religion in the early 1920s, but now he takes the apparently equal exchange of commodities to be the sacred, animating principle of modernity" (56). This ability to morph and change and the connection between a belief system and cultic value, along with the transcendental and spiritual implications, show that Benjamin described aura much in the same way as economy. Technological reproduction and its effect on aura were only a lightly veiled attempt to continue his condemnation of the impact of capitalism on art. Caygill points out, "Benjamin holds that capitalism is a nihilistic religion and that what is historically unprecedented about capitalism is that religion is no longer the reform of being, but its destruction" (Caygill, 56). In his words, the removal of Being is related to the destruction of aura in "The Work of Art". Mechanical reproducibility and its driving force of capitalism are responsible for the collapse of authority and authenticity.

In 1923 in a letter to Florens Christian Rang, Benjamin made his understanding of the relationship between art and critique clear. A work of art, he said, is "a complete expression of the religious, metaphysical, political, and economic tendencies of an epoch" (Caygill, 90). As I have mentioned, the economic forces of an epoch determine the



placement of auratic presence. Benjamin's interest in art history translated into a deep admiration for art historians Alois Riegl and Eduard Fuchs because of their focus on Marxist materialism and a profound distaste for Wolfflin's formalism (Caygill, 91). His esteem of these two figures inevitably led him to concentrate on the cultural conditions under which art was created. This new focus directed his attention to technological reproduction. As early as 1930 he would claim that "bourgeois society cannot help but insulate everything technological as much as possible from the so-called spiritual, and it cannot help but resolutely exclude technologies right of co-determination in the social order" (Benjamin, 120). Again, the link drawn between economic class structures and their tools will have a significant impact on his "spiritual" or auratic discussion of art in his later writings.

Benjamin's work in the *Arcades Project* is similarly telling as to his theories involving the economy and aura. The Arcades of Paris were technological and artistic feats of modern ingenuity. He says, "I am pursuing the origin of the construction and transformation of the Paris arcades from their rise and fall and laying hold of their origin through economic facts" (Smith, 50). To Benjamin, origins have historical and material truths. The Arcades Project was another attempt to document the change in spatial and temporal experience during an era of economic development (Caygill, 143). Benjamin's chronicle of the "Palaces of Commodity Fetishism" allows readers to become *flaneurs* in their own right. Again, his language in this essay is very reminiscent of "The Work of Art" as he discusses a destruction of societal values in commodification. He uses terms such as "the decay of experience" and "the degeneration of things" (23). This time, "money stands ruinously at the center of every vital interest," instead of technological reproduction (Caygill, 130). I argue that he is using the two terms interchangeably. Technological reproduction, as

driven by money, is at the center of aura's destruction. The destruction of capital could theoretically entail the decline of aura and the tool for creating capital par excellence, which is technology. The opposite side of this scenario, which Benjamin advocated, is that technology has the possibility of destroying aura and capital, which might manifest itself as communal property without its mystical properties. "Once ritual, repetition, and reproduction were matters of religion; they were practiced in isolated, sacred places. In the modern age ritual, repetition, and reproduction have become the fate of the entire world, the entire culture. Everything reproduces itself— capital, commodities, technology, art. Even progress is ultimately reproductive; it consists in a continuously repeated destruction of everything that cannot be reproduced quickly and efficiently enough. People like to talk about innovation and change, but in fact, they are referring almost exclusively to technological innovations" (Taylor and Francis, 89).

My argument is that neither of these scenarios would eliminate aura because Benjamin describes destruction as separate from the common understanding of destruction as a definitive act. Instead, aura would find alternative forms of expression, as it cannot by nature be destroyed, as he illuminates in his essay "The Destructive Character." Benjamin hints at this idea because while he points to the absence of aura in technologically reproduced objects, he sees its reappearance elsewhere in mass culture. For example, an original object at the Metropolitan Museum of Art may be seen as having aura, the reproduction of the object into a scarf could have a certain feeling of aura because it was purchased from the licensed and branded Met gift shop. "All creation entails destruction, or as Benjamin says overtly, "'Construction' presupposes 'Destruction'" (Benjamin, Arcades Project 470). The theme of destruction is a bedrock of Benjamin's philosophical-theological-aesthetic impulse. He

shares the theme of creative destruction with Freud—seen in the “death drive” and its movement toward homeostasis—and the Dadaists and surrealists—with their destruction of limits between art and life, public and private. For Benjamin, destruction lies at the heart of creation, and to get to truth, the boundaries imposed at creation must be taken apart” (Plate, 762). Benjamin himself describes this more as passing through a third space. He says, “Destruction occurs ‘for that of the way leading through it’, and where we wind up is always the present” (Plate, loc 780). Caygill also brings this relationship to the forefront of his discussions: “His subsequent work on the experience of the city criticizes the relationship between commodification and technology, showing how the commodity form reduces the possibility of a new experience of space and time opened by technology. The contents of the *Arcades Project* are organized around the tension between technology and the order of the market and private property, which was a heritage of the French Revolution. The commodity form provides the transcendental surface for inscription, which is exceeded by the speculative configurations offered by technology” (131).

This is an easy correlation to make as Benjamin begins “The Work of Art” with a declaration of Marxist intentions. Caygill notes that he establishes, “An analogy between Marx’s focus on the immanent critique of the developmental tendencies in the sphere of the economy and his own in the sphere of culture” (Caygill, 98-99). Benjamin reiterates in 1939 that his intention was to examine, “The developmental tendencies of art under present conditions of production” thereby announcing the basis of his theories upon his understanding of the economy (Caygill, 98). In the most revealing admission of Benjamin’s intentions, he says that the decay of aura is, “A symptomatic process whose significance

points beyond the realm of art” (Benjamin, 22). Again, I argue that the symptom he is referring to is economy as driven by the consumptive impulses of a market economy.

Benjamin also laments aura’s decline as, “The desire of the present-day masses to get closer to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing’s uniqueness by assimilating it as reproduction” (Benjamin, 26). His concentration on “the masses” becomes an important aspect of his theory of the decay in aura. The rupture with history has brought about a social change that is influencing a lot of people at one time. He says, “The free market increases these masses rapidly in that every commodity collects around itself the mass of its customers” (The Arcades Project, 370-71). Film is a mere vehicle, a tool, in the coming wave of authoritarian control, which manifests itself in the form of commodification. In Benjamin’s mind, technological reproduction emancipated art from its ritualistic traditions tied to feudal authority, but the vacuum was filled by something more devious: the unseen forces of mass consumption via capitalist enterprise. When referencing the effects of film on large audiences, he refers to collective psychosis and drives which are managed and discharged. The catharsis of collective laughter or sadness in the theater experience takes place in the auratic experience enjoyed by a solitary individual in front of a work of art.

We see Benjamin translating these ideas in his essay when he states, “In light of these descriptions, we can readily grasp the social basis of aura’s present decay. It rests on two circumstances, both linked increasingly to the emergence of the masses and the growing intensity of their movement” (Benjamin, 23). Benjamin’s search for the authentic in art leads him on the path towards the pure, genuine, and true elements of individual aesthetic experience and away from the corruptible influences of technology and its economic

undercurrents. He reveals his hope for a more egalitarian art form with, “The moment, however, when the measure of authenticity breaks down in artistic reproduction, the entire social function of art also is revolutionized. Its foundation of ritual is replaced by its foundation on another praxis: namely, politics” (Benjamin, 25).

Benjamin speaks of aura as a dominating force or authoritative function that can capture our attention and control our thoughts. We can liken this to the effect of economics. Benjamin warns that, with the advent of technology, aura is in decay. I would suggest it has morphed forms. It is still pervasive in culture, but it has spread itself thin, leaving only a trace on all art objects and practices. Its dominating force is not immediately noticeable, but has now infiltrated everything, just as the economy touches every aspect of life. We know from the biomedical field that aura is an electromagnetic field that extends four or five feet from our body and can change depending on our physical and psychological well-being<sup>vi</sup>. When we talk about aura as it relates to objects or processes, this visceral quality takes on a mystical and dream-like form as aura manifest through economic conditions - with dangerous implications. Benjamin explains that, “Once it has escaped from the hands of its producers, it has ceased to be a product controlled by human beings. It has taken on a phantom-like objectivity, and leads its own life” (Benjamin, AP, 181-2). The “phantasmagoria” he so often references are interchangeable with the dream-like qualities of aura as well as intertwined with the notion of commodity. Benjamin believed that “the last line of resistance is art,” but that it surrendered to the very force that threatened to consume it: commodity (AP, 381). This once again shows that mechanical reproduction itself is not the problem or even the solution; it is the economic conditions of mechanical reproduction.

How then is aura related to financial systems? Again, this connection is as much symbolic as it is semiotic. From the days of early Pagan and Christian art, saintly or divine images have been surrounded by halos, auras, or aureoles. Mary Shell explains, “Just as aureole or corona means, “Halo,” so Aurum or corona indicates, “coin,” generally a coin of Byzantium or Spain” (38). Slowly, the golden mosaics of Byzantium transferred to the golden frames, just as aura’s migration out of the paintings themselves followed a similar path. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin underscores society’s relationship with the mystical properties of commodity in the same way he talks about aura’s mysterious properties before the age of mechanical reproduction. He writes, “A commodity appears at first glance as a self-sufficient, trivial thing. Its analysis shows that it is a bewildering thing, full of metaphysical subtleties and theological capers” (AP, 181-2).

Spiritual capital is unique in that it must maintain the illusion of being separate from economic, cultural, and social capital. Spiritual capital is different from cultural capital in that the latter is a result of social relations and influences, while spiritual capital can be influenced by perceived ethical, moral, or societal value systems. Take the cases of Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons. We dismiss the auratic value of their work because they “sold out” to major marketing and PR firms. Making some of the biggest profits in the industry also has them condemned by critics for producing work without enriching their audiences’ sensibilities. It may also be the reason we remove the most important works that do have spiritual qualities and sequester them in museums to be shared but never possessed by one individual. Spiritual value is now supravalueable. It goes beyond the monetary.

Georg Simmel perpetuated this idea in both language and practice. He was one of Walter Benjamin’s major influences and Benjamin attended many of his lectures in Berlin.

“He (Simmel) connected Schopenhauer’s focus on the libidinous drives of life with Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’ and used their philosophies, along with Dilthey’s and Bergson’s, for his own examinations on culture, society, and art” (Zeller, 76). Including the principles of intensification and augmentation, Simmel’s concept of life designates a mode of experience based on an imagined state of immediacy. Beyond the distortions and ideological deformations of culture, he insinuates, lies an untouched area of purity and directness in which individuals are connected with their inner selves, with nature, and with “truth.” Thus, to Simmel, as well as to avant-garde artists, life is the utopian equivalent of authenticity because an unmediated life free of the contaminations of civilization (along with its culturally imposed system of signs) may not exist (77).

Simmel will also play a major role in Benjamin’s political and economic views, but Benjamin and Simmel’s description of aura and religion are nearly identical. Simmel says, “In credit transactions the immediacy of value exchange is replaced by a distance whose poles are held together by trust in the same way as religiosity is more intense the greater the distance – in contrast to anthropomorphism and all sensual conception – between God and the individual soul in order to call forth the most considerable degree of belief so as to bridge the distance between them” (p. 480).

In Simmel’s discussion of the market, he also evokes the similarities between money and art. The ownership of money suggests infinite possibilities. We can will it into an innumerable amount of forms, as its potential does not limit us. Art’s interpretive qualities allow for the same freedom as a vehicle for expression in the world.

Money offers the potential, even if never quite realized, of an absolute means with utterly unrestricted uses. ‘Money grants to the self the most complete freedom to express itself in an object’ (Simmel). Any direction one wishes to take it; it could go; if allowed to operate unfettered, it would bend to one’s will, without friction. ‘All that money is and has to offer is given without reservation to the human will and is completely absorbed by it’ (Simmel). Money promises itself as the ultimate vehicle for personal development. It does not direct itself toward any particular range of uses but demands that each of us determine how to do so (Silver and O’Neill, 391).

Money, for Simmel, allows people to act with divine authority. “Money ... repeats the form of the greatest and deepest potentialities of life ... in the same way religion is a force in life, one interest among others and often opposed to them” (Simmel). Money can change relationships with others and with ourselves.

Simmel’s metaphysical treatment of money in *The Philosophy of Money* implies its ethical connection to Being and eliminates it as a fetishistic object.<sup>vii</sup> Its fundamental purpose relies on faith for its functionality because exchange makes the satisfaction of our wants and needs reliant on the desires of others. There is an interconnectedness of God and money, which is dependent on a belief system requiring faith. Money is not something that adds to our abilities. Instead, it points to the latent functions already at our disposal, features that can only be described in religious language. Money and art are signs of our ability to go beyond ourselves. Simmel says, “Innumerable times (competition) achieves what usually only love can do: the divination of the innermost wishes of the other even before he becomes



aware of them. Antagonistic tension with his competitor sharpens the business person's sensitivity to the tendencies of the public, even to the point of clairvoyance" (Simmel, 62).

Durkheim considered religion to be a major factor in the economy as well as law, morality, art, science, and politics. As a contrast to Simmel, Durkheim thought it was much more likely that the economy was dependent on religion. Durkheim asks, "Is it not probable that the economy depends on religion and not vice versa?" (Durkheim). In contrast, he focuses on the social facts as opposed to any ideas about what should be: "What is given is not the idea that men conceive of value because that is unattainable; rather is it the values actually exchanged in economic transactions" (Steiner, 58).

Again, I argue that religion and art are connected through shared economic characteristics, which include a discourse of disavowal, acquisition of physical space, a structure of cooperative agents, and the use of ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events. Plate and Clifford Geertz string this characteristic together to form an activated system recognized by Benjamin. Clifford Geertz brings the relation even closer in his now classic definition of religion from his essay "Religion as a Cultural System," where he argues that religion is "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (13). The "aura of factuality" that Geertz goes on to discuss is evidently in place owing to a "prior acceptance of authority," and the symbols must be imbued "with a persuasive authority" (14). This authority can fascinate, induce fear and laughter, and mold people's behavior, notably through the enactment of religious rituals. Fundamentally, Geertz is clear that the aura relies on a hierarchical authority

structure. Technological reproduction, however, changes the dynamic tensions between the mysterious authority of the aura and the desire to be possessed by it. While pretechnological reproduction (the handmade copy) serves to build up aura and retain the sense of distance, technological reproduction breaks it down and brings things closer” (Plate, loc 20161).

Art is prevalent in today’s society as a pseudo-replacement for religion because of our disillusionment with religious leaders and their authority. Art has not disappointed us because it continues to capture our attention through the preservation of original artworks which seemingly contain aura. Several contemporary authors have also made the connection between aura and economics, but it was Adorno and Horkheimer in, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”, who first expressed the issue in a complete critique. “The culture industry can pride itself on having energetically executed the previously clumsy transposition of art into the sphere of consumption” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 135). In the world of museum fundraisers, exclusive art galleries, and celebrity artists, the world began its slow metamorphosis from the use value of the art object as ritual and has been replaced by an “exchange value” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 158). The work of art and the market have created its version of aura, and its placement seems to occur in the public sphere, in the media, and as a production of the “production” of art. For Adorno and Horkheimer, contemporary aura comes about when art “admits it is [a commodity] ...” and “renounces its own autonomy and proudly takes its place among consumption goods ...” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 157). Specifically, “The moment the economic enters as a factor in a particular art’s aura is when art reveals that it is bound up with economic value. With the economic value of a work of art present, the other factors -- transitoriness, privilege, and limited availability -- become possible” (Weideman, 1).

In this way, the connections between spiritual capital, aura, and its economic value in the market become more about the Christian conception of transcendence. Aura is the energy between the work of art and the gaze of the viewer. Intuition and beingness play a role in the animation of the object, but also signify the biological and ideological connections through desire. Benjamin himself swiveled between two different relationships between aura and objects. On the one hand, in “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility”, he concentrates on a work of art’s presence connected to its authenticity, suggesting that art contains aura. On the other hand, in his Baudelaire writings he switches aura’s placement to be a quality of perception. He sees aura happening in the interaction between a human and an object. Most importantly, in the ability of an object to respond to our gaze, he gives art an anthropomorphic quality. In Benjamin’s opinion an object is able to respond to us when it has a history of being, and that history responds to the presence of now. This tension creates the desire for more understanding and translates into the value of spiritual capital in the art market.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **The Continued Development of Spiritual Capital in The Art Market**

Previously, the discussion of money in the context of art history was seen as distasteful, useless, and inexplicable. This is because art and religion share both an economics of disavowal, that is, a claim of intentions outside of the realm of the marketplace. The necessity of negating the profitable elements of business and a perceived disinterest in the accumulation of symbolic value allow spiritual enterprise an unprecedented autonomy from governing agencies. Other than religion, there is no other sector of the economy worth more than \$6 billion worldwide with less regulation and transparency. In this chapter, I will merge aesthetic economy and aesthetic experience with both religion and the art world. As Plate explains, “Aesthetic experience cannot be bracketed out as an autonomous realm of human spiritual existence because it always exists in a dialogical relation with language, cognitive capacities, religious practices, political ideologies, technological developments, and economic conditions” (loc 265). Spiritual capital is not a new concept in religious theory, and it has even been used to explain certain economic principles, but its entrance into the art world will be the focus of this analysis.

The “market” is a broad term, but when contextualized with an understanding of spiritual capital we can narrow my meaning of the market to focus on its social characteristics. Any market, as we understand it today, is a social institution that facilitates exchange. Economic theory can be explained through scientific data reports, but there is a persistent belief in capitalism’s many uncontrollable and “mysterious” forces. The art market exists to turn intangibles into concrete value though there is a disconnect on its journey from conceptual to commodity. I have already explored the art market’s roots in a religious enterprise, but how has it been able to retain its distinction from other, more transparent commodities? The answer may be in the art market’s affinity for defining itself with very

specific characteristics of the general definition of the market; namely its idiosyncratic social quality that enables it to operate under key vitalism descriptions of money that perpetuate its auratic distinction.

Marketplaces have existed since antiquity. However, the word “market” developed in the English language in the early twelfth century, at the same time as the rise of the Catholic Church. Price and quality control of workshops were under the jurisdiction of the King, and a medieval town could flourish based on its reputation for an honest and thriving marketplace. The term market “acquired three distinct meanings 1. A physical marketplace; 2. The gathering at such a place; 3. The legal right to hold a meeting at a marketplace” (Richard Swedberg, 255). Its physical location within a geographical area gave way to an ideological concept soon after the establishment of the stock exchange. Karl Marx stripped all religious and spiritual connotations from the word “market” to develop a definition focusing on the sphere of circulation. In *Kapital*, he explains, “It is clear that commodities cannot go to the market and make exchanges on their account” (Marx, 47). Marx further believes that the market relies more on each individual as a consumer and that relationships between two people are expressed by a connection to objects.

Between a hierarchical program of human controls, as proposed by Marx, and the unregulated market theories of Weber, stands the Austrian school of economics. This school was started by Carl Menger and popularized by Friedrich von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. “According to the Neo-Austrians, the market emerges spontaneously; it is the result of human action as opposed to human design” (Swedberg, 259). In this theory, the market is a process held together by a network of players and circumstances. The belief that the art market exists in a quantifiable, albeit different way than normative economic studies is based

on the presupposition from Viviana A. Zelizer. Zelizer is a sociologist from Stanford who studies how cultures shape and influence various forms of economic structures. She believes, like the Neo-Austrians, in an action based sociological viewpoint of market relationships. Storr also stresses the communicable, relationship-based model of understanding economic structures. “Market participants use the price system to communicate with each other. In functioning markets, price changes are meaningful utterances that communicate to individuals that the world has changed in some way and signals to them that they should adjust their activities accordingly” (Storr, 4).

An art market is a place of exceedingly strong “extra-economic” social factors. Not only do social spaces cause social action, but social meaning is derived from these interactions. Both money and language enter into a relationship in the market which mediates a social process through exchange and experience. Value speaks to us as an extension of the social discourse. The art market adopted the social language of market definitions, but it also associates itself with some of its more conceptual ideas by combining elements of both Neo-Austrian concepts and Keynesian economics.

John Maynard Keynes argued that based on the potential for error in an unregulated economy, the state needed to regulate supply and demand to keep it healthy. By studying primitive cultures, Keynes realized that money did not need to be tied to the physical representation utilized by the gold standard. Instead, three things only need to establish its premise. “The first is an abstract unit of value in which money is denominated. The second is a system of accounts, which keeps track of the individuals’ or the institutions’ credit or debt balances as they engage in trade with one another. The third is the possibility that the

original creditor in a relationship can transfer their debtor's obligation to a third party in settlement of some unrelated debt" (Felix Martin, 27).

Today's perception is that the object, or the very nebulous entity called "the market" has created its value. We are blind to the fact that market value is still assigned by human beings. The human element has been removed from the way we acquire commodities between a person and a thing. Banks, computers, and ATMs process transactions so we receive objects with little to no human interaction. Judgment and responsibility have been eliminated, and this may be why we accept the notion of "market value" as a phenomenon beyond our comprehension. I would also argue that the art market's proximity to religious ideology insulates it from scrutiny.

In Karl Marx's perception, capitalists, or the bourgeoisie, control production means, with capital being the surplus value that occurs is created during the exchange of commodities and monies between output and consumption process. In this construct articulated by Karl Marx, a surplus value is created in the gap between the exchange/commodity value and the user/consumption value. Significantly, the use value is always greater than the commodity value of any product or service for surplus value/capital to be produced. From this definition, we realize that financial gain is possible from spiritual capital. If there is a user value for intangible assets, and the user's value for a spiritual connection or reflection is more than the commodity value, there is a surplus value which is typically traded (or social, intellectual, and financial value). Spiritual capital is the surplus asset in artistic production, that constructs value and contribute to the intangible characteristics of art to make it a unique commodity.

In the art market, the public focuses on surplus values and not the originating asset of spiritual capital. To recap: when spiritual capital materializes itself through a vision or concept we label the creative output art. Art possesses qualities which have the power to generate an immense surplus value beyond its cost as a commodity. Consequently, art is transformed through exchange into the tangible asset of financial capital. This class of raw-material "intangibles" can be invested in and harvested for gain. Time has a social order because it is the measure by which all other capital is valued. The conventions of this system are so engrained into the culture of today's society, jumping levels in the hierarchy fascinate us. Artwork traded or created solely for monetary gain creates headlines and invites condemnation from critics and scholars. This criticism is why, as previously explained, the property of disavowal is crucial to the model of spiritual capital. The displacement of money into higher levels of capital exchange results in an evolution from acceptance to condemnation to ignorance and finally to complete disavowal of the relationship.

Marx asserted that the religious world is the reflex of the real world, and he famously viewed religion as the ideological tool of the state (Marx and O'Malley). How does spiritual ontology obscure select facets of artistic production? More specifically, why does the combination of "spirit" and "art" exclude economy? In part, this blend of ideologies falls under Althusser's discussion of "interpellation" (Althusser, 11). The art market's divorce from monetary concerns is an ideology that legitimizes its practice. For example, we hear the dominant philosophy that millionaire artists strike a chord in the heart of society. Many believe that monetary success in the art world cannot be explained, predicted, or repeated. In art there is no formula, but only the lucky few are blessed with inspiration. While Althusser



asserted that art was indeed political (a fact obscured by its religious undertones), I contend that economy has similarly been concealed by an ontology of art.

The arts have comingled with religion since their inception, in part because their economic operations and core principles rely on identical ideologies. Alain de Botton, a Swiss writer/philosopher, shares ten points as to why “Art is our new religion and museums are the cathedrals” (ludesignblog). His first point is that art is a tool for memory as a vessel to hold our experiences and emotions. It draws our attention to those things that are most significant and opens us to facets of the world otherwise invisible. Art also gives us hope by reminding us that we are not alone in our suffering. Art questions us and gives us a chance for introspection along with a mirror with which to evaluate our motives. While it gives us cause for internal reflection, the use of image-based propaganda in society can placate us into a blind acceptance of dominant ideas. Icons are quickly elevated to role models, and emulation is often the result. Art can show us, unlike any other medium, the virtues and values of life; it can reveal essential truths in the realm of neurology, psychology, and sociology. If art can share its core economic functions and philosophies with religion, it makes sense that art and religion share more than economic theories and structures as well.

Max Weber was the first to draw attention to this concept in a broader economic discussion by upsetting Marx’ economic determinism and proposing that religious ideology can impact the social economic structure. According to Weber’s theory, religion is at the heart of the economy the superstructure. Consequently, economic influences are best understood through the sociology of religion. Weber takes up this question in “Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism”. He believed that capitalism eliminated religion from the commodity, thereby leaving it empty or void of meaning. Weber saw the Protestant work

ethic as a tradition in which one is given a job to please God, keeping one from the temptations of the idle. The better one is at one's job, the more God blesses, and the more money one has. If one has wealth and can avoid luxury and laziness, one is ascetic, which is even more pleasing to God. In this way, one does not become attached to the material goods that one has produced and has the capability of consuming without the fear of God's judgment.

Capitalism evolved from the Protestant work ethic. However, with God eliminated from the equation, one can accumulate wealth and enjoy the fruits of one's labor. Paradoxically, man rejects spiritual significance from his modern materialist lifestyle. Weber's project was to remedy the spiritual disparagement expressed by materialistic capitalists in his detailed analysis of Protestant asceticism. As the interpretation of Weber's work has been canonized, it is ironic to see the justification for materialism stem from a tenant of asceticism. I would argue, that this incongruity is most evident in the current art market.

It is important to understand that spiritual capital does not stand alone as a qualifier of "relevant" art. It borrows its strength from social, cultural, and monetary capital. Social capital refers to "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of a more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group" (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992:119). This concept necessarily reduces the importance of the artist as a sole influencer of value. "In other words, social capital refers to the power, influence, knowledge, and dispositions an individual acquires by virtue of membership in a network or group. Spiritual capital might be thought of as a subspecies of social capital, referring to the power,

influence, knowledge, and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition” (Peter Berger and Robert Hefner, 4). Spiritual capital is the effect of faith-based practices and beliefs in the art world which have an impact on individuals, institutions, and societies. The model of spiritual capital, common to both organized religion and the contemporary art market, functions through a very particular set of procedures.

An exchange assumes equivalencies, but when purchasing a work of art with spiritual capital, money falls drastically short of the mark and debt is the result. Maurizio Lazzarato is the author of *The Making of the Indebted Man: An Essay on the Neoliberal Condition and Signs and Machines*. According to him, capitalism and the production of subjectivity demonstrate debt as primarily a political creation. He believes that the creditor/debtor relationship is the essential social relation of Western societies. Debt is not only an economic mechanism; it is a security for governing agencies to control individuals and groups. Its goal is to reduce the uncertainty of the time and behavior of the controlled people who are subjugated. He believes that society is always accumulating debts to the State and corporations. “To ensure that we honor our debts, we are at once encouraged and compelled to become the ‘entrepreneurs’ of our lives, of our ‘human capital’. In this way, our entire material, psychological, and an affective horizon is upended and reconfigured” (Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 14). Debt is a controlling mechanism used in governance. Just as Jesus death on the cross is a debt we will never be able to pay, money is ideologically seen as a poor equivalent for a spiritual ideal. Regarding the art market, a work of art goes beyond its physicality of paint and canvas and adopts an aura of spirituality bestowed by the artist’s genius. No amount of money will ever be sufficient as an

equivalency of exchange for a collector who acquires a work of art. This ideological construct ensures the subjectivity of price making and valuation in the art market.

After recognizing the characteristics of spiritual capital and its manifestation in the art world as aura, we must also understand how this generates value. The core principle underlying a capitalist economy is also the driving factor in the art market. The enchantment of an art object through the process of myth-making increases desire for the limited product. “Works of art often serve as the scaffolding on which viewers hang their penchants or desires, a loose framework for free association or intuitive flights of fancy” (Elkins and Morgan, 14).

Just as debt is an important characteristic in the understanding of spiritual capital, desire also must be explained as a motivating factor behind its codification into the art market. Spiritual capital is a resource in the art world based on a belief system about art, its market, and the process of creation which influences value. It operates through coordinated agents who utilize rituals and traditions to develop a philosophical shroud over monetary operations. “Colonization arises conterminously with the creation of modern museums of art and anthropology, both which arise alongside scientific observation and the scientific study of religion. The desire to collect, and therefore possess, is parallel to the desire to gaze and behold the other, and the impulse behind modern art and aesthetics is barely different from the masculinist, colonialist, scientific worldview: Modern science and modern aesthetics both view the other as distinct and autonomous, and only in this way can it be collected, possessed, and gazed upon by a self-reliant subject in a position of power” (Plate, loc 513).

The hierarchical structure of capital determines spiritual capital to be the highest, most valuable asset acquired. Spiritual capital has definable characteristics and modes of operation which materialize into valuable assets. The desire for spiritual capital develops into a surplus value in a work of art, so that a system of irreconcilable debt results. Deleuze and Guattari focus on describing the relationship between desire and capitalism. Their work attempts to decode the flows initiated by the capitalist economy. They believe capitalism tries to fight off the adverse effects of desire that could destroy the status quo of social hierarchies. Desire is placed within a social-economic construct rather than a psychoanalytic one. Capitalism is born as the result of an encounter, a contingent reaction between flows, which occurs only one time. “That is why capitalism and its break are defined not solely by decoded flows, but by the generalized decoding of flows, the new massive deterritorialization, the conjunction of deterritorialized flows. It is the singular nature of this conjunction that ensured the universality of capitalism” (224). Deleuze and Guattari believe the problem isn’t necessarily “capitalism” or “psychoanalysis.” Instead, the problem is that these ideas have become the given boundaries that society assumes are impenetrable. Even revolutionaries or socialists still work within the given framework of capitalism, making their efforts of subversion futile. These discourses proliferated by the ruling class, or the State, have resulted in the domination and normalization of society.

Deleuze’s work on capitalism and desire translates well into a theory of desire, as does aura. First, there is a school of economics that sees humans as sensible beings who try to capitalize on their interests. Deleuze clearly distinguishes between desire and interests. “Interests exist as a possibility only within the context of a particular social formation, specifically, our capitalist formation” (Deleuze, 56). Our desires are “capitalized” in the

social arrangement that makes our interests possible. “Your drives have been constructed, assembled, and arranged in such a manner that your desire is positively invested in the system that allows you to have this particular interest” (Deleuze, 136). Accordingly, Deleuze can say that desire, as such, is always positive, which is the antithesis of the prior belief that desire existed within a system of lack. Deleuze believes that what we desire, what we invest our desire in, is a social formation, and in this sense, desire is always positive. “Lack appears only at the level of interest because the social formation—the infrastructure—in which we have already invested our desire has in turn produced that lack” (Deleuze, 186). Thus, Deleuze can address Hegel’s questions as to why we invest in a social system that consistently represses us and introduces lack into our lives. It is because our desires are part of the capitalist infrastructure. They do not belong to our own individual mental or psychic reality. Art is how human beings participate in the divine life at work in nature. “Art is the visualization of the invisible inwardness of all things. This idea of a material expression of a spiritual force was taken up by Hegel and formed the basis of his reflections on aesthetics. The idea of a *Zeitgeist* informing a work of art appealed very much to the Romantic imagination as well as the subsequent historicism that Hegel did so much to inspire. In the later eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth, art and religion came to be seen as powerful and historically distinctive activities of souls and cultures. An organic theory of art emerged among Romantic thinkers, which stated that works of art were expressions of the soul; they drew their unity from the genius of the artist and generated their structure from within rather than drawing it from without” (Elkins, p. 33).

How could Deleuze’s characterization of desire relate to Benjamin’s aura and spiritual capital? Desire, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, with its ruptures and

regenerations, its flow of energy, and its elusive identifying marks, fit Benjamin's description of aura. Deleuze explains, "Your drives have been constructed, assembled, and arranged in such a manner that your desire is positively invested in the system that allows you to have this particular interest" (136). Benjamin believes that the destruction of aura is put into motion by new technologies which enable works of art to be mass produced. His definition of aura contains a very particular space and time conjunction which is very similar to Deleuze's notion of desire. If an aura is a space in the focal part of the work that the viewer enters into, desire is a rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari see these desiring machines as flowing, connecting, social relationships capable of multiplicity. Therefore, they are not independent or autonomous. "The truth of the matter is that social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate conditions. We maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is the historically determined product of desire, and that libido has no need of any mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, any transformation, in order to invade and invest the productive forces and the relations of production. There is only desire and the social, and nothing else" (Deleuze, 38). For Benjamin, the aura of a work of art is always tied to tradition, ritual, and authenticity. "The unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value." (Benjamin, 224).

The core products of both art and religion are not singular. They are informational, credence, public, private, and club goods. The amalgamation of these factors equals spiritual capital. The similarity between the art economy and the Church economy is that they were both able to commoditize all of the elements of spiritual capital. Development of these goods and services in both the Church and the arts requires economic growth. "Growth requires the

catalytic drive of the entrepreneur, and entrepreneurship exists only where freedom of action is combined with personal responsibility” (Oslington Malloch, 463). From an ontological perspective, monetary values were censured, but the practice still took place. However, the canon of separation of money and art remains in the theories of both Bourdieu and Baudrillard.

As a sociological study, Bourdieu’s theory prescribes a model, or a field, with little choice. It is a description of players and their predetermined actions, based off cultural cues and the historical inheritance of an art world with few entry points for the uninitiated. By contrast, the model of an economic art world based on spiritual capital alters our understanding of art history as a series of choices based off cost/benefit analysis. If the economy of art were understood through a hermeneutical model – as a text which could be read – money would be the subtext. Monetary exchange is the underlying and distinct theme that is never vocalized or recorded. In many ways it mirrors Yahweh, or the unspeakable name of God used by only the high priests in the back rooms of the temple. Its name was so Holy that no one could use it for fear of death.

Baudrillard assumed that in the postmodern economy, sign values take on meaning according to their places in a differential system of prestige and status, just as poststructuralists understand that words take on meanings according to their position in a differential system of language. This was true for an economy of religion and art from its inception, and I argue that it is not a symptom of late capitalism. There is a sign value attached to the social capital of the church, but the sign of monetary value in exchange for goods and services lies dormant in spiritual capital.



Baudrillard's understanding of reification perfectly describes the economic system of spiritual goods and services. "For Lukàcs, the Frankfurt School, and Baudrillard, reification — the process whereby human beings become dominated by things and become more thing-like themselves — comes to govern social life. Conditions of labor-imposed submission and standardization on human life, as well as exploiting workers and alienating them from a life of freedom and self-determination. In a media and consumer society, culture and consumption also became homogenized, depriving individuals of the possibility of cultivating individuality and self-determination" (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/>). The homogenization and domination of a commoditized belief system which eliminates freedom and self-expression could describe the Catholic Church and its doctrine. For spiritual capital, it has an even more important function: a discourse of disavowal. Repudiating its business model has been an important aspect of the Church's identity since the Reformation.

Both art and access to the spiritual benefits provided by the Church could be considered Veblen goods. Positional goods are desirable because of their high cost of entry and the status they afford. However, this does not account for why the discourse surrounding these products dismisses monetary value altogether. As a spiritual good, the assumption is that its merits are bestowed onto the worthy. Worthiness is attained by the consumer who has an appreciation for the good, a basic understanding of its history and tenants, and finally, faith in the promises of its purchase. Buying artwork and becoming a member of a Church, which has a singular view of the afterlife, indicates some degree of risk. You are making a gamble that your lifetime of devotion will lead you to heaven, or that your art purchase will reflect your belief systems and aesthetic character for its duration.

The term “symbolic exchange” was conceptualized from Georges Bataille's notion of a “general economy,” where expenditure, waste, sacrifice, and destruction were more fundamental to human life than economics of production and utility (Bataille, 1988). Baudrillard claims that we are in a new era of simulation where social reproduction supplants production as the principal shaping agent of society. Baudrillard may be correctly identifying an organizing principle of today’s economy, but it is an extension of the spiritual economy that has been in play since the formation of the Catholic Church.

Baudrillard contends modern societies are organized around the production and consumption of commodities, while Postmodern societies are structured around simulation and the exchange of images and signs, indicating a situation in which signs and codes are the organizing forms of a new social order where simulation governs behaviors (Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 3). In a Postmodern world, identities are constructed by the arrogation of images, and codes influence how people perceive themselves and relate to others. All aspects of life - including economics, politics, social life, and culture are determined by this manner of simulation.

Baudrillard’s primary influence for his simulation theories stems from Nietzsche's aristocratic “master morality” where “superior” individuals create their values, and their life articulates an excess, overflow, and intensification of creative and sexual impulses. However, this has been the case inside of the spiritual economies since the Reformation. The art world has been operating as a spiritual economy for centuries as well. It is only now that the general economy is assimilating their model. The notion of aura in a work of art is one of the main contributing factors to this societal investment into the speculative activities of the art economy. The claims of a simulation society speak most directly to the discourse of

disavowal. Baudrillard argues that in today's media and consumer society, individuals are mesmerized by images, spectacles, and simulacra which do not correspond to reality. Even concepts empty of meaning and differences in the political and ideological realms begin to dissolve.

Much as the Church economy and the art economy do not have a language for their business structures, Baudrillard's simulation society loses its way amongst a dialectic of empty words and speeches. In this scenario, the image becomes the replacement for the real, and this hunger for actuality is processed by an unquenchable thirst for spectacle that will jolt us back into these grizzly actualities of life. Image and spectacle embody a concept of meaning as other fixed structures of the past dissolve. "In this alarming and novel postmodern situation, the referent, the behind, and the outside, along with depth, essence, and reality all disappear, and with their disappearance, the possibility of all potential opposition vanishes as well. As simulations proliferate, they come to refer only to themselves: a carnival of mirrors reflecting images projected from other mirrors onto the omnipresent television and computer screen and the screen of consciousness, which in turn refers the image to its former storehouse of images also produced by stimulatory mirrors" (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ baudrillard/>). The discourse of disavowal is the looking glass of economic pretenses. It is the disguise or mask of a concrete system of economic exchange which must rely on a well-designed system to survive.

Jacque Rancière's approach delineates this concept through his understanding of an image. As opposed to the bulk of Postmodern theory on the work of art Rancière's definition straddles the middle of reception theory. He believes the image is not only something you see, and artistic images are not simply a thing that refers you to something

else. Creative images are “operations: relations between a whole and parts; between a visibility and a power of signification and affect associated with it; between expectations and what happens to meet them” (Rancière, 18). By locating the place of images not in the retina, but in the brain, the linguistic and discursive processes involved in making sense of perceptions can leave room for a sense of spiritual capital, because we encapsulate what is in our mind. “The discourses that present and comment on it, the institutions that display it, and the forms of knowledge that historicize it” (Rancière, 23). Gadamer’s theories show how value merges separate horizons to be historical in nature. Rancière breaks down our understanding of art and its value making system: The aesthetic regime is a reinterpretation of postmodernism (Rancière and Rockhill, 24) while the representative regime compares to the Aristotelian poetics of mimesis (22), and the Ethical regime can be identified in the Platonic ethos of the community (21). Each new regime defines a “specific type of connection between ways of producing works of art or developing practices, forms of visibility that disclose them, and ways of conceptualizing the former and the latter” (20). This concept is of particular importance in understanding why some works of art inherently have more spiritual capital than others.

The rhetoric of adversity is a major factor in strengthening the group identity. It mirrors Rancière's definition of dissensus very carefully. He says, “The essential work of politics is the configuration of its space. It is to disclose the world of its subjects and its operations. The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus as the presence of two worlds in one” (Rancière and Corcoran, 37). Other resources can and will be spent on its protection. Fighting against an unseen opponent is a greater qualifier of strength than belief,

so faith is quickly overcome by action. Spiritual capital taps belief, knowledge, and practice simultaneously making it a quantifiable entity.

The result is that art, or organized religion, becomes a valuable commodity. The property of disavowal allows an unprecedented amount of financial growth. It lies outside of the scope of examination because it publicly states that it will not resort to manipulative measures to gain more capital. Looking at the model of spiritual capital at the top which is given to an individual, the result is unregulated governances, opaque reporting, a belief in an inherent magic or aura with vitalistic qualities, and a rejection of traditional, measurable indexes. Ranciere says, “Art lives so long as it expresses a thought unclear to itself in a matter that resists it. It lives since it is something else than art, namely a belief and a way of life” (Rancière and Corcoran, 123).

One interesting link between spiritual capital and cultural capital is its simultaneous shift between highbrow popularity and “omnivorous” consumption. It used to be that there was one art movement or one Church that spoke the ultimate truth. Currently, universalism, the belief that all religions share a core with an equally valid path to God, can be reconciled with Postmodernism in art.<sup>viii</sup> There is a simultaneous micro- macro- approach to culture, which stresses both our interconnectedness and our similarities, our corresponding core truths with multitudinous methods.

After establishing a network of select individuals and ritualistic traditions, the art market adopted a rhetoric. This rhetoric became a creed, and eventually, it developed into an inherent quality in the art economy. The art market’s dialectic remains altruistic and has a complete disavowal of monetary gain. However, a system of value was created around its

products. In 2014, the global art economy contributed \$6 Billion worth of revenue (Clare McAndrew, 13). Nonetheless, the art world retains its image as being above the base considerations of economic value. Ironically, spiritual capital gives the illusion of purity from capitalistic concerns, but it is this very contention which makes the work more valuable in the art world. Its methods for preserving that impression will be examined later, but for now, we look at one of the first examples of spiritual capital developing in relationship to city growth.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Early Case Study: The Development of Medieval London's Financial Structures in the Church and the Arts**

Much of our current reluctance to analyze the business practices of enterprises built on spiritual capital stems from the traditional view that profits made from religious institutions or art markets are merely a byproduct blessed through divine intervention. “In this older intellectual tradition, the internal workings of religious organizations are treated as ‘epiphenomena,’ or outside the domain of self-interested maximization, primarily because religious belief is defined as a fundamental, faith driven commitment to a system of ideas, norms, and values that lie beyond the calculus of rational choice” (Ekelund, loc80). In fact, the Church operates within the realm of economic methodology as a complex institution with rational decision-making used to promote collective gains. In this chapter, I will explore the origins of church economy and its linear growth with the art market. The term “church” will typically refer to the Roman Catholic Churches of London, England.

First, I will establish the core set of principles that position art and religion in a space that is advantageous for business and trade. The success of the Roman Catholic Church in London was a result of many factors. Its structure was both rational and collaborative. The Church's economic arrangement as a whole was much greater than the sum of its parts because its self-contained operating divisions were mostly independent. Their success was based on a template of economic growth that used space planning to form a creative economy. Here, we see an extension of Bourdieu's thesis on the value of power relations in

cultural capital. The investment of symbolic value yields material rewards that allow the Church to capitalize on its client-patronage networks. An association with the Church reaps both social and material benefits. The dynamics of religious experience thus owed a great deal to secular variables.

How then did the Church function as a corporate entity able to identify with the lives of its consumers? First, the Church in London actively acquired space. Through gifts, purchases, and the claim of Divine Right, religious institutions made significant land acquisitions and protected their property from partition and possession in a variety of ways. Cultural authority through the organization of space played into the valorization of art and religion. Next, the church controlled the land under its influence with little interference from secular authorities. One crucial factor in the pursuit of economic stability was independence from external ruling institutions. With full control and little oversight, they were able to create borders, boroughs, and districts to both manage their citizens and perpetuate cultural identification. The medieval churches of London benefited by bundling spiritual and occupational endeavors because they were able to encompass all of their parishioner's beliefs, habits, lifestyle choices, and social relationships.

After acquiring and managing land in and around the city of London, the Church invested in property. These newly acquired assets naturally led to the marriage of visual and ideological culture. The Church had the space, the wealth, and the audience to project their message with the use of art. The fruition of this partnership is evidenced by the skyline of every major medieval city, and the lasting legacy of this collaboration lives on not only in cathedrals around the world, but the economic system as well. The art market grew up in conjunction with market operations in the medieval time and has followed the same



trajectory of both continuity and change. However, the model of mixed use - which was a combination of work, home, and play - is a remainder of the successful attempt to integrate culture into daily life. Seeing the strengths they shared at key points in the formation of the Catholic Church's business model, significant numbers attributed to the rise of the art market in the early 17th century. Accordingly, the art market and the Catholic Church shaped their marketing strategies in much the same way, and at roughly the same time.

Belief in the strength and legitimacy of the medieval English church owed itself to the visibility of its spatial footprint. The question then becomes how perception and belief tied themselves to physical space in cultural capital in London between 1000 and 1550 AD. In the socioeconomic arena, medieval churches and parishes exerted the most powerful influence on the lives of their inhabitants. The church in London was such an integral part of the physical, social, and built environment, many methodological archeologists view the church not as a static establishment but a progressive, active, and living entity. Memory, perception, identity, and authority are all aspects of studying the physical space of the Church of England and the lived environment surrounding it. Spiritual concepts and their material manifestation began blurring the boundaries within the architecture of the church. By studying both major building projects in London and small parish churches, we can gain clues to population growth, land development, urban expansion, and new settlements.

The lack of a physically manufactured article to sell was not an obstacle for the early medieval church. After 1100AD, spiritual products were packaged and marketed as services in a sensible, cost-conscious, revenue-expanding manner. Neither the Church nor the art market existed outside of economic functionality. Rather, financial procedures became an organizational indicator of an intricate arrangement of doctrinal philosophies. The mystique

surrounding its practices and operations may be due, in part, to a direct engagement in commercial exchange without publically posted prices or revenue reports. However, this is hardly a justification for excluding the very nature of its practices outside the realm of analytical discourse. The Church's business model and the art market both reside at the intersection of material history and symbolic capital by leveraging ideological investments. Similarly, the art market sanctifies its works of art as outside the normal realm of care to operate with freedom and autonomy. It does not act in a different way from fundamental economic structures, despite its claim to a unique spiritual product. By profiting from its symbolic value, the Church accrues capital and is a powerful patron of artists, organizations, and individuals. By studying the rise of the Catholic Church in Medieval London and its effect on city financial systems, I will show how the art market appropriated some of its economic growth strategies.

How did the Church in London use land and property to leverage investment opportunities and speculative financing? The Church's formation of London's city structure in the early Middle Ages was the site of an art and real estate boomtown. The benefits of urbanization and gentrification have a long and established history of economic advantages. Roman territories were gifted to the Papal States for a variety of reasons starting as early as 330 AD. At first, the Church owned only burial sites and places of worship, but by the fourth century, many Church officials were also landowners. In fact, the Church directly owned one-third of all cultivated land in western Europe by 900AD (Ekelund, 138). With property came wealth, power, legislation, and new Church doctrines protecting valuable investments. Beginning with Augustine, the Church's position was that they should be the only rightful owner of the property because the Christian faith was the only entity capable of altruism

(Oslington, 27). Justinian even concerned himself with property rights of particular ecclesiastic territories but did not promote a centralized structure to govern the use of land, which left individual bishops with unchecked power.

Vast landholdings unchallenged by secular authority actually contributed positively to the nature and development of London. Citizens depended on the stability of the system of property rights, and the Church's extensive assets and proven infrastructure provided a form of insurance against the many threats that loomed in Medieval Europe. As a corporate entity, the Church's revenue stream included land rent, tithes, offerings, bequests, and the monastic production of goods and services. More importantly, theological precepts prevented the primary capital stock, essentially protecting it from liquidation for personal gain. Ownership, in Christian theology, was a gift or blessing, sanctioned to be used in meeting human needs or creating a community. Having an authority over possessions required a serious responsibility for the use value of those goods.

The Gregorian reform of simony in the 11th century was an organizing principle adopted for the efficient management of these lands. This practice was the act of buying bishoprics by nobility as a way of avoiding tricky legal heredity cases. In other words, nobles needed to secure the wealth of their children, and the solution was granting land to the church in return for a leadership position within its hierarchical ranks. "From the twelfth century on, all matters pertaining to the ownership, use, and disposal of Church properties came under the pope's authority. All testamentary cases were adjudicable in Rome, meaning that in the long run, the pope determined the allocation of most property rights in Europe" (Ekelund, 240). Land ownership and property laws became important because of the extraordinary population boom between 1086 and 1348, which tripled in that amount of time (Little, 22). "Urban

society is a society so large as to include total or at least partial strangers. The reason that these strangers can deal with one another is that they are willing to receive money in exchange for goods they give others or services they render others” (Little, 33). When society grew at such an explosive rate, the economy necessarily had to evolve from gift giving to money.

In the later Middle Ages, the Catholic Church turned from defending property as a regrettable but unavoidable reality to defending it on principle. The shift occurred in reaction to assaults on the church's wealth by the secular authorities. The issue arose in an acute form at the beginning of the fourteenth century when Philip IV (Philip the Fair) of France, in need of money to finance his war with England, imposed a tax on the clergy and forbade the export of precious metals, including papal revenues. To protect clerical holdings from seizures by the crown, theologians now referred to the property as an inalienable right. This referred primarily church property, but by inference implicated property in general. In the course of this polemic, clerical theorists formulated the doctrine, later adopted by such prominent secular writers as Bodin and Grotius, that the authority of the state, however absolute in other respects, did not extend to the property of its subjects. The argument was buttressed with references to Roman law, which was rediscovered and taught in Italian universities beginning in the early twelfth century (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton).

In addition, various other legal insurances had to be adopted in order to secure the real estate value of their holdings. “Depending on the charters, which were variable, the grants might include a number of toll roads and bridges, tax collections, direct revenue generation, or other forms of income. Quite frequently, the charter would also include feudal fidelis or homage arrangements. These charters established relationships for generations that would

allow the affected noble to control who became bishop, and therefore wield policy control in the jurisdiction” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 178). Often, the actual economic motivation behind spiritual enterprise was obscured, and a tradition of private negotiations in the secular realm became a natural part of such sacred dealings. Adaptability was one important aspect of the Church’s ability to create a sustainable profitable enterprise. While individual agents such as monks or priests were relatively autonomous, certain effect incentives for asset management secured the revenues of Church property. “The Church attempted to structure property rights to residual streams of income within the organization in a manner that would provide incentives to its agents to behave efficiently in conformance with the organizational goals” (Ekelund, 425). Church theological and strategic policies were relatively decentralized compared to its economic mechanisms.

The Church in early medieval London was the dominant feature of the landscape, the biggest and most inescapable aspect of daily life. An active program of the Church building began in earnest after the Norman conquest, and by the time of the great fire in London, there were 109 cathedrals or parish churches within the city itself (Ekelund). As early as the 12th-century, parliaments gathered at Westminster Abbey and later St. Stephens. The construction of local churches told a very public story of the control of materials, local culture and beliefs, and human and technological resources.

Gifts were also part of the economic success of the Catholic Church’s holdings. “The church of St Nicholas at Aberdeen was typical of a large class in the support it received, not only from the town authorities, local gentry, and nobility, but also from the ordinary townspeople. Gifts were made both in cash and kind, including chalices and other ornaments, and in the labor of local people who helped to maintain the church, for example by repainting

the image of St Nicholas” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 180). In London, support from parish churches, guilds, and fraternities was enhanced by the accelerated foundation of collegiate churches. “At St. Michael’s Spurriergate in York, to adduce yet another case study, the Henrician wardens’ accounts read more like an estate agent’s notebook than a reckoning of ecclesiastical officials. The lion’s share of the income consisted of lists of revenues from real estate; churchwardens routinely turned to property deeds and professional counsel to fight legal proceedings, and they made sure to be proactive when it came to the parish’s livelihood” (Harlaxton, 105).

In 1123, St. Bartholomew’s Priory was founded, and many more monastic houses quickly followed. At one point, there were 13 friars within the city of London, and their influence can be seen today in the naming of locations in the city such as Whitefriars or Blackfriars. Their economic impact on major landowners cannot be understated. At the height of monastic landholding, Cistercians had 80 vast agricultural based manors, while the Augustinians had over 150 agricultural estates. The Cistercians were also crucial to the wool trade, establishing the grange system and being a crucial middleman for the merchant class.

One of the most influential changes to the city landscape of London came with the arrival of the Dominican Friars in 1221CE who took care of the poor and destitute within city walls. Their entry heralded a new era of ecclesiastic power and authority. The Dominicans were so influential that when they outgrew their space within the city limits, they were moved to Blackfriars outside of the Thames. Edward I removed and rebuilt the city wall so that they would be within his precinct. Episcopal Palaces rivaling Westminster were both inside and outside the city. These great estates were the residences of Bishops, which were on great estates and employed as many servants as many of the royal manor homes.

Owning the majority of the city center and much of its outlying area meant the Church was both a consumer and a landlord. “Land values and the price of primary agricultural products rose three times and more, so the landowners were among those who benefited the most from the new economy” (Little, 32). It demanded its team of specialized workers, thus creating their independent economic communities. As a result, the Church was instrumental in establishing boundaries through the diocese, and on a more practical level, with walls of protection. “While the wall and its attendant imagery proclaimed the ambition of a centralizing power to impose within its space a homogeneous culture of civic order, the cultural world inhabited by the townspeople remained obstinately diverse” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 7). The Church was an apparatus of order, combining the vocations and cultural makeup of its inhabitants under one unifying message. Therefore, we can see how the story of London’s urban geography is a study based on Church business operations, exemplifying a perfect marriage of spiritual capital with material accumulation which would serve as a template for art market merchants of future generations.

While dedicated to the pursuit of property ownership and city organization, the Catholic Church rarely pioneered entirely new cities. Instead, it slowly appropriated ancient pagan centers of belief where structures and inhabitants had already settled. The struggle of gentrification and fluctuating cultural heritages in London was a real issue then, as it is now in urban arts districts. Land ownership and microcosms of individualized economic structures were commonplace in both aristocratic economic models as well as in the Catholic Church. However, the pivotal characteristic that both the Church and the art market share is an untouchable status afforded by spiritual capital. A widely held belief that the divine resided on earth within physical objects encouraged the construction of civic architecture

(Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 15). The Church accomplished this through building a community around spirituality and giving a residence for aura, mirroring what the pagan groups before them had done. Sanctifying ground has a long tradition of making an offering to the gods for worship or placation. Consecration of items or objects also withdraws those possessions from ordinary laws of stewardship, placing them in an entirely separate category.

What are the benefits of sanctifying ground and financial enterprises? First, one is always able to evoke a higher power than an official rule. The ancient Church was built on the ideological principle of being an outwardly visible society that would execute public duties by making use of material resources. The Church, however, cannot perform these functions if the resources available to them are built on an insecure or volatile structure, or if it is subject to interference from civil authority. Absolute ownership and free license over land holdings became as necessary to the Church's survival as the doctrine it promoted. The credibility and ultimate trust in the Church's various commercial commitments were derived from literature and traditions it generated.

Deities were often conceived as owners of their temples and the fruits of the land over which they had jurisdiction. The same principles were then applied when a martyr was appointed the heir of a church or land. Its namesake approved, and a physical manifestation of the saint's authority came in the form of relics. These relics created a unique identity, which set each diocese apart from other towns and cities. In many cases, cities would undergo the costly task of trying to canonize local hero's as saints. This practice afforded the urban area with a guaranteed form of cultural tourism, and often the festivals, plays, and ceremonies of the city would take on a very original flavor due to its assumption of the saint or heroes identity. As a result, pilgrims from other countries brought revenue. The promise



of specific miracles transported them in droves. The Church was a space in which local patrons could display their wealth without permitting access to their personal lives. The artistic endeavors and symbolism within each parish were to serve wealthy patrons throughout time. As a result, the spiritual was always a consideration of the material. Choosing a patron saint guaranteed an audience during particular feast days and granted authority over certain problems. For example, Old St. Paul's was an important medieval meeting place, and the church itself was a center for the pilgrimage in order to the shrine of Eorcenwald. There were many famous shrines in the city, which even London locals would travel within the city to pay homage in important urban centers like the location of shrine St. Thomas.

The Church in London was composed of individual priorities in the sacred and secular realms as well as a variety of occupations, social titles, and personal backgrounds. The Church's role naturally took on the responsibility of becoming a community center and place of business. As a gathering place, it became a political microcosm of greater England. It was able to balance secular and religious concerns. As well as provide cultural stimuli. In a feudal society, noble and clerical privileges were tempered in the centralizing institution of the Church. For both late medieval and early modern English society, the parish was identified as "the locale in which community was constructed and reproduced, perhaps even consecrated" (Harlaxton, 181).

Ritual, religion, and money have many of the same characteristics, making the boundaries between each practice blurred. Anthropologist Mary Douglas explains, "Money provides a fixed, eternal, recognizable sign for what should be confused, contradictable operations; ritual makes visible signs of internal states. Money mediates transactions; ritual

mediates experience, including social experience. Money provides a standard for measuring worth; ritual standardizes situations and so helps to evaluate them. Money makes a link between the present and the future; so does ritual” (Godchild, 13). Even mundane administrative records shaped parish identities. Churchwardens’ accounts, deeds, inventories and other documents commanded authority as reminders of a shared past, repositories of legal right and statements of corporate aspirations. Throughout the country, parish chests served as archives and safes preserving the most cherished objects of common heritage. Commissioned for substantial sums and protected by multiple locks to be opened only by the highest dignitaries, financial statement, and accounting logs were among the most important secular objects market towns or villages possessed.

Tension always existed in the balance of power between the Church and the government. The Church had as much influence over legal matters as the royal house had over the social make-up of the Church. As a gathering place for a heterogeneous blend of ages, genders, and incomes, parish churches acted as a physical entity as much as a metaphysical one. London’s church life was particularly unique in its very dramatic power struggles, compared to the more gradual changes in power in Italy or France. The Church in London’s operational scheme differed only slightly from the aristocracy. They could raise an army, negotiate land contracts, collect money, and impart justice, with one small exception. They were exempt from the watchful eye of government institutions because they were bestowed with religious authority.

The medieval Church had independence over its affairs but was successful in being able to influence politics. As thousands of new towns emerged in the medieval period, governments found themselves with inefficient bureaucracies, a lack of sufficient resources,

and a lack of authority in the growing commercial sector. This development allowed the Church to step in as a well-organized entity capable of handling more sophisticated economic concerns in a centralized manner. This system was, of course, challenged by parishioners who tried to take back the revenues bequeathed by their fathers to the Church, or when kings began to assert a patronage over ancient cathedrals.

This led to a renewed interest in the regulation of activities in the secular realm. As the Church was involved in the most important facets of daily life, it was able to control them to some degree. For example;

Canon law texts connected with the diocese of York in the eleventh century further illustrate the extent to which bishops might regulate the activities of townsmen: the Northumbrian Priests' Law prescribed travel and trade on Sundays but specified that traveling on the eves of feasts was permissible within a certain radius of York in times of hostility. The treatise known as *Episcopus* tells bishops to take responsibility for checking measures and weigh-beams in boroughs, and even though its prescriptions are drawn from much older continental canon law collections, its language suggests that it had contemporary and local validity (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton 9).

This sort of unbridled control of local and national affairs did not go unchecked for long in England, which was unique in its relationship between the secular and the sacred.

Beginning with Edward the Confessor - a King dedicated to Rome who built his palace and an Abbey at Westminster - and ending with Henry VIII, grew a shocking separation of Church influence from affairs of the state. "The legal and fiscal immunities enjoyed by town

clergy – who represented perhaps 3% of the civil population – and the islands of jurisdictional privilege which the greater urban churches represented, were intermittently the focus of active resentment on the part of the burghal elite” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 10). In addition, the independence of this arrangement was always under threat by the emperor who wanted to use the Catholic Church as a fief and private possession of his own. While the English government was able to attain autonomy from the Church, each entity went on to secure very stable economic structures, making this period (running roughly from 1275 to 1550) the strongest commercial era of English society. As modern research suggests, this was not because the Church’s resources were allocated for the good of the Commonwealth, but because the Church was able to retain its ecclesiastical, social, and political importance.

As an institution with a highly valued product, namely, the salvation of one’s soul, the services rendered by the Church were highly appreciated by the European population. As a principal proprietor of their region, they were able to gain significant returns on their investments. Their success was due in large part to their campaign of community outreach, which funded organizations such as charities, hospitals, and orphanages.

“Popes Simplicius in 475, Gelasius in 494 and Gregory the Great in his answer to Augustine quotes as traditional the rule that all emoluments that accrue are to be divided into four portions—one for the bishop and his household because of hospitality and entertainments, another for the clergy, a third for the poor, and a fourth for the repair of churches” (Herbert Thurston, 636).

The key to the Church’s economic theory was that it utilized money for the common interest. Many modern theorists refer to this as social capital, or “the fabric of faith and civil virtues that allow human and economic development to get into motion and preserve itself

over time” (Oslington, 59). Montesquieu was a key figure in driving forward the civilizing feature of virtuous economics. In this theory, trust is the center of economic vitality and confidence, and mutual assistance drives forward productive and healthy societies.

As the ownership of sacrosanct properties and individuals grew, the Church took on a measure of communal responsibility for their wards. As a result, it demanded a certain amount of control over their inhabitants. The implicit motivation for charity was an adherence to the teachings of Christ. The Church became the protector of the poor. It took alms to take care of its downtrodden citizens, its wayward or orphaned youths, and set up hospitals to take care of their health. This, of course, required tithes and offerings, which were a natural altruistic justification for the return to the Church, the fruits of its citizen’s labor. The medieval heritage, furthermore, literally enriched urban corporations and rural settlements through the creative reinterpretation and reallocation of penitential bequests in support of the wider community. Revenues from lands and other assets no longer increased divine service, but local infrastructure, credit, poor relief, and primary education. Community outreach not only secured the loyalty of local parishioners, but it also successfully subverted government attempts to control assets. For example, “At Cratfield in Suffolk, the parish notables skillfully obscured the extent to which the lands had been used to fund traditional religious activities and prevented their confiscation by the Crown. As a result of this lack of conformity, Cratfield was able to redirect its landed income to the support of a school and an almshouse” (ibid).

Forming a community of interdependent inhabitants went beyond its topographical repercussions. The Church framework had a symbolic sense of pride and identity. “Social identities were necessarily constructed within that framework and as a result ... the church

building must be seen to represent a domain of secular action within the field defined by Christian liturgy” (ibid). By the end of the 14th century, the Church dominated all aspects of familial life. It provided justice, education, celebrations, rites of passage, marriage, and even death. “The power of court and Church effectively privatized professional performance, art, and architecture and controlled popular entertainment through a licensing and designation of venues, their organization and programming content” (Evans, 952). It controlled the life of its subjects not only with lifetime milestones but also with annual cyclical culture. Blessings were necessary for the planting of crops, and harvest was an annual time of Thanksgiving. It allowed for periods of mourning and times for celebration and rejoicing, all with marketable and packaged products and services available for sale. One benefit that the Church had during the medieval period was their monopoly of personal and social milestones from birth to death. They coopted birth through baptism, communion for entry into adulthood, marriage, and even death. Places of burial, and thus ancestral ties, were a highly significant concern to individuals within each community, and because the church owned all of the burial sites, it almost guaranteed fidelity. “Once money was no longer buried with the dead or hoarded as treasure it became an instrument of exchange that worked its way up into every type of human activity and transaction” (Little, 29).

The cult of the Virgin Mary gave women specifically a point of reference and entry into the hierarchy of Church structures. Female saints were venerated, and women had permission to attend services and serve the Church’s needs. As church houses in London grew, so did their range of activities. Many served as alehouses, others as performance spaces and musical entertainment areas. Thus, some of the smaller parish churches in England were supported by communal activities, rather than clerical or noble. By allowing

nonreligious pursuits, the church was able to adapt from strict ecclesiastical supervision to a relaxation of religious rules.

The most important effect of the church's altruistic efforts to help its citizens was its involvement in education. They taught the Latin vernacular as an exclusive language, which was the key to unlocking eternal salvation. The medieval Church in London qualified and controlled all knowledge, history, and language, which enabled it to dominate all aspects of daily life completely. If one was educated in the word and language of the Church, one had access to law, justice, and the government. "The cultural medium of the late medieval town derived its real and perceived force from its users' ability to play with a creative ambiguity; to express in the dignity of a rich and common language, the passion of a particular view" (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 36). Through the Middle Ages, the study of biblical text and canon law through scholarly discipline became a complex body of work, which translated into an indoctrination of the most powerful families in Europe.

Written and oral communications were valuable gifts from the Church, not only regarding social positioning but also "to preserve and defend their textual history, parishioners fought rival claims to their ownership – such as those by priests or patrons – by recourse to the courts. The creation of churchwardens' accounts, in particular, can be interpreted as 'a community-defining exercise that acknowledged the importance and uniqueness of a parish's space, history and ritual', e.g. through the interactions between written reckonings and their public rehearsal" (Harlaxton,32).

Education in the language of the Church as essential through the Latin vernacular, but even more important in the visual language it offered to all citizens of London.

“Architectural Patronage in the towns of the later middle ages as characterized by a now familiar coexistence of elite determination of the available language with a personal sense of creative involvement spread throughout a wide spectrum of urban society” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 31). Stained glass windows, towering steeples, and formidable exteriors imparted a sense of inescapable watchfulness and power. Even the smallest elements of Church construction were planned for specific community building reasons. “In parishes like Cirencester, meanwhile, there was clearly a need for more working space to cope with the sheer volume of socio-economic preoccupations. In 1490, the local Abbey added a south porch to the parish church of St John’s ‘to appease or at least accommodate’ the townspeople. Such porches ‘were of great local importance, for here the conduct of both church and secular business took place.’ As if to reflect the dynamic of parish society, ‘the exterior is in the most elaborate Perpendicular Gothic; restless tracery pushes up through panels and oriel windows towards the parapet. Nothing is still.’ It continues to be used for parish meetings today” (ibid). Therefore, the language of the Church is not only semiotic but also representational as well as material. We can see again how the art market and the Church utilized the dialectic of images in conjunction with the history of ideas. This strategy has been successfully adopted with a significant amount of investment, physical transformation, and speculation in the art world today. Multi-million-dollar museums and art districts are being built all over the world, and in particular developing nations, in an effort to attract wealthy international “art pilgrims”. The Louvre in the Middle East, PAMM in Miami, and the originating project The Guggenheim Bilbao in Spain will all be discussed at length in the following chapters.



A possible marriage between art and architecture lead to an inevitable exchange of ideas and structures. One very particular result of the Church's influence in medieval city development as the guild. Guilds were religious and fraternal associations, which regulated craft, provided charitable contributions to members, and embodied the patron saints of their societies. The result was a combination of religious and occupational endeavors. Guilds were able to gather collective resources to afford some of the costliest services of the church such as veneration, special ceremonies, offerings, funeral services, and masses. "The guilds also served an important social function, for apart from their protection of the collective economic interests of the member, guilds provided a sense of identity and a full range of social security measures for their members. Conviviality and fraternity, overlaid with some form of religious affiliation, appear to have motivated the early formation of the guilds" (Little, 25).

Craftsmen were encouraged to live within the city walls, clustered together in close proximity to the Church. In Old London, one might find oneself on Woodstreet or Ironmonger Lane. The Guild Hall, considered the only architecturally significant civic building, as surrounded by a vast array of beautiful cathedrals like Old St. Paul. "The incremental addition and adaption of the artistic manifestations of former cultures and societies in residence is, therefore, a long-standing feature of cities, ancient and modern" (Evans, 24). This makes the case that artists in the employ of the Catholic Church may have learned to operate with the same sense of market regulations.

Also, the participation of the urban laity in fraternities of their creation follows a similar path of secular/sacred hybridity. Although the guilds were an ancient phenomenon, they proliferated in the British towns of the fourteenth century. They offered citizens of London

the opportunity to determine the particular focus of their devotion, to generate funds for religious images or books, and to hire clergy of their choice for blessings, celebrations, and sacraments. “Spreading secular education evidently fed rising lay expectations of clerical provision; it was normal for such a guild to demand a decent level of learning and sobriety from the priests whom it employed. These enterprises typically complemented, rather than competed with, the parochial establishment. But the extent to which the church, and in particular the urban church, of the late medieval period, was becoming controlled by groups of lay parishioners is remarkable” (Clark, Palliser, and Daunton, 37).

Connecting their small organization to ones with unlimited resources and developing technologies also enhanced business operations. In the pay-for-salvation society of medieval Europe, poor citizens would be able to go to heaven by pooling collective resources. Studying these groups gives us insight into the economic benefits of bundling business and religious services. First, the threat of banishment from either of the two organizations that dominate life, namely the occupational and spiritual communities, ensures strict adherence to its rules and guidelines. Law breaking extended far past immediate consequences and extended into the eternal.

One last characteristic which shaped the art and the church economy in the early Middle Ages in London was the discourse of disavowal, which I argue has its roots in the very beginnings of the church formation. As discussed, medieval England saw the simultaneous rise of money, churches, and artistic craft, but how to discuss the convergence of these disparate sets of social growth became problematic. Hence, the moralizing of money emerged and disappeared in our hermeneutical understanding of church financial operations.

At the end of the tenth-century, theologians and writers shifted significantly in their condemnation of prominent sins from pride to avarice (Little, 36). Avarice is greed resulting in extreme wealth or financial gain. It is no coincidence that this topic was adopted by the Church to dissuade their parishioners from pursuing a life of affluence unless it directly benefited God (i.e., the Church). In addition to the prevalence of avarice as a topic in written manuscripts, the personification of avarice became a standard pictorial representation inside and outside of the churches, such as the Three Torments of Hell sculpted into the Lincoln Cathedral. Avarice as shown in many forms, but most importantly it as depicted as a small beast or demon with an open mouth and insatiable appetite. Desire, or the uncontrollable desire to consume, dominated Church literature and doctrine for this crucial period before the Black Death. The voluntary renunciation of wealth became the backbone of many mendicant orders, and suspicions surrounding the condemnation of usury accelerated. “So uncompromising as the morality that virtually any participation in the upper levels of the commercial economy involved the dangers of sin and conjured up visions of appalling punishments” (Little, 41). By controlling the discussion of financial issues and setting its terms for the good and evil usage of money, the Church was able to simultaneously call attention to its seemly characteristics while diverting attention from its economic policies.

Today, there are many parallels between the religious and economic life. It is most evident in the sacrifice of life’s pleasures in pursuit of particular goals. In a religious life, you may give up property and time to achieve spiritual reward, and so too in the search of money you sacrifice time and labor. While the transcendent was shrouded in mystery in the past, the capitalist system of credit and debt has assumed the same aura of incomprehensibility. Currently, money itself is part of the spirituality of *ex nihilo*. The

economist John Keith Galbraith explains, “The process by which banks create money is so simple that the mind is repelled. Where something so important is involved, a deeper mystery seems only decent” (Godchild, 8). And just as Judas sold his salvation in the form of Jesus for a bag of money, the artist as creator is a betrayer once adequately compensated for selling his creation. Godchild explains in his book *The Theology of Money*, “Money exercises a spectral power that exceeds all merely human powers. Adapting itself to any desire, it also shapes desire. First, the value of money is transcendent. It is a promise, taken on faith, and is only realized to the extent that faith is acted out in exchange” (Godchild, 12).

By studying the combined impact of ecclesiastical and secular concerns in Medieval London’s urban development, we have come to three overriding themes. Socially, parishes entrenched individuals in a new horizontal structure appearing alongside kinship ties, with entrance to offices and public responsibilities proving instrumental in the rise of the middle class. Also, spiritual capital translated into cultural capital. Parishioners formed the ritual and ceremonial life of London while contributing to a gradual process of sacred and secular exchange. Church life also contributed to political life in medieval England. It served as a gathering place for alternative ideals and in different situations provided alternatively a respite from high politics. Alternatively, it could be a platform by which governments launched their ambitions. Churches had the benefit of being independent. Custom regulated everyday dealings and the distribution of earnings on their physical investment of property. Furthermore, in areas such as education, public works, and poor relief, the parish set the agenda for centuries to come.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Mapping the Art Market's Appropriation of Church Financial Structures**

As the last chapter looked at the origins and development of spiritual capital in organized religion (specifically the source of the Catholic Church's economic structure in Medieval London), this chapter will examine the particular qualities of the Church's business structure which has been appropriated by the art market. The economic root of today's art market began centuries before the Renaissance; however, we can trace key identifying factors recognizable in the contemporary monetized system back to the early sixteenth century. As the picture trade in Europe developed, distinctive processes and characteristics emerged which can now be identified in the contemporary art market. I argue that the developing art markets of Europe follow patterns closely resembling those that governed the economic structures of Church financing, wealth accumulation, and institutional expansion. Shared commercial patterns have reflected similar notion of value, which in turn prompted similar behaviors that in the art market were translated into a particular, explicit network of measurable goods and services. The understanding of what art is and how it must be valued resulted in a set of behaviors that translated into a fixed value system. The shared structures of commerce marking Church and art market economic activity shows how human beliefs enter into practices of commodification and regulation, which then yield systems of marketable goods and services.

In this chapter, I will be focusing on the development of the Church and art market's simultaneous development of spiritual capital. It is helpful to note that the notion of genius

and spirit developed at the same time as aura but did not merge into interchangeable concepts until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in mystic circles<sup>x</sup>. First, we must determine the evolution of artistry and spirituality, leading up to the Renaissance when art became commodified. In ancient Greece, creativity did not originate in the human body. Instead, one could be inspired by “daemons”, or spirits, of creativity.<sup>x</sup> The Romans continuing this philosophy, called these deities *genius* (Gilbert, *Your Elusive Creative Genius*, TED Talk). The largest change in perception came during the rational humanism of the Renaissance. When humans became the center of the universe, spirits no longer spoke to artists. Humans *became* the genius “spirit”. During the Renaissance, the art trade progressed based on talented individual artists, thus solidifying the divine nature of creative abilities. This new designation of genius was even attributed to spiritual leaders such as Meister Eckhart, Saint Theresa, and Hildegard of Bingen. While spiritual leaders and mystics inside the Catholic Church still characterized their special talents as being a gift from God, we can begin to see how artistic representations of these figures morphed from portraits with heavenly rays of light originating from the sky, to the saints emanating divine light from within themselves<sup>xi</sup>.

The spiritual became rarefied, privileged, cultural terrain as merchants in growing commercial towns expanded through secular wealth-creating, value-creating activities. From the Reformation on, a discourse of disavowal became a necessity. Despite the irrefutable reality of monetary exchange as integral to the survival of the Church and art market alike, both entities deny involvement with their own base operations. A spiritual enterprise, as previously explained, must retain an aura of self-sufficiency based on its privileged status as a system with access to transcendental and metaphysical gifts. “As Raymond Williams points out, it is no coincidence that the meaning of the term ‘genius’ changed from

characteristic disposition to exalted special ability precisely at the time that artists were becoming small businessmen. In purely economic terms, defining paintings as manually executed intellectual commodities constitutes a form of product differentiation that facilitates the application of other systems of valuation to those products” (Bayer and Page, 33). The pursuit of financial gain for the Church and the arts became so structurally embedded and psychologically repressed into the operational structure of the economy so that it became almost unmentionable. Money could not be discussed, except under certain conditions, a quality that defines both the art market and the Church today.

It is useful to mention Kant’s definition of genius. He believed that an artist is naturally endowed with the qualities of genius and then must utilize these in order to produce a great work of art. However, Kant did leave room for an element of mystery in the genius/artist production equation. He makes the ethereal claim that, “the artist’s skill cannot be communicated but must be conferred directly on each person by the hand of nature” (Kant, 47.1). Kant explains only that an artist may be endowed with genius, but never explains how he inherits those traits, making the concept of genius very similar to that of spirit. He says, that the most necessary condition for an artist as genius is that he has the “Geist”, or spirit that enlivens the mental capacities in order to produce fine art. He says that spirit, “is the ability to present aesthetic ideas” (313).

In fact, Kant does mention the idea of spirit as though it appears in many forms animating forces of the mind enabling the expression and presentation of aesthetic ideas, and thus functioning as an enlivening aspect of art. “Genius is the exemplary originality of a subject’s natural endowment in the *free* use of his cognitive powers. Accordingly, the product of a genius (as regards what is attributable to genius in it rather than to possible

learning or academic instruction) is an example not meant to be imitated, but to be followed by another genius. (For in mere imitation the element of genius in the work – which constitutes its spirit – would be lost.) The other genius, who follows the example, is aroused by it to a feeling of his own originality, which allows him to exercise in art his freedom from the constraint of rules, and to do so in such a way that art itself acquires a new rule by this, thus showing that the talent is exemplary” (Kant, 49.12). Kant describes the genius artist as someone who is free, original, progressive, a model of new ideas, and someone who cannot be imitated, but learned from but who can inspire future artists to pursue their own genius. Interestingly, Kant describes God in much the same way<sup>xii</sup>. The same set of characteristic qualities placed a value on the artists and his production which became desirable, highly sought after, and ultimately, consumable.

Following the art market’s rootedness in the business structure of the medieval church and a simultaneous development of the spirit of genius, it is essential to understanding how and why they share many of the same characteristics. While monetized wealth became a defining aspect of the Church’s “market” activity, it merely preoccupied itself with the indirect product of dealing with non or pre-monetized assets (land, men, goods, and power). These diverse forms of capital became objects of acquisition because of the entanglement of material and symbolic value and power, which in turn became the elements of spiritual capital. The feudal economy of the Middle Ages embodied an amalgamation of legal, military, and social rituals. Its core operations revolved around an exchange of relationships between land owners and those who provided labor on those properties for protection and various other civil services. It must also be noted that, as part of a feudal system, the Church represented not only religious but secular authority in much of Europe. As a secular entity, it



could levy taxes, collect fees, coin money, and play a part in all the duties and functions of secular government. Feudalism was not completely a gift economy, but a complex structure comprising coinage, debt, and trade. In fact, theological instruction focused on the responsible management of wealth. Similarly, churches collected tithes and offerings in labor, perishable goods, textiles, and also in money. The Church did not recirculate coins into the economy but stored them in Church treasuries. If the Church had a need for gold in trade, it would melt down various pieces from store rooms and trade in gold plates (de Goff, 9).

Church wealth resulted in prosperous endeavors for craftsmen and artisans in the building of churches, universities, and cathedrals. Investment in land and physical structures such as cathedrals gives a concrete symbol to the abstract concept of everlasting strength. As literacy was uncommon outside clerical circles, artists and craftsman had the power and responsibility to convey messages to the general public. As such, they became the interpreters and presenters of spiritual faith, turning the conceptual into the material. Art guilds were responsible for the demonstration of that wealth, and thus had an intimate knowledge of the Church's raw material holdings, focus on adornment of physical structures, hierarchical management structure, and use of land development.

Cathedrals signified an investment in the local landscape and lives of the towns they inhabited, resulting in the form of consumer confidence. For the congregation, expensive structures provided a comfort level and a guarantee that the Church will physically remain in an area. The combined history of land usage between the Church and the art market points to an understanding of the value of a physical presence, as explained in earlier chapters. "In his work on the county of Vendome, Dominique Bartholemy showed how transactions involving

land combined a gift economy and a market economy” (de Goff, 125). The primary difference between a gift economy and a market economy, is that the former is based on a system where goods or services are given without an expectation of exchange or repayment. A market economy is based on an exchange of with the perception of an equal trade of like valued items. So, in this case, land acquisitions were based on social and familial solidarities. Property holdings signified and contributed to wealth and prominence, with an exchange of physical goods with the expectation of favors in the future.

Philosophically, this point of departure demonstrated the rise of Aristotle’s more liberal teachings as opposed to Plato’s asceticism. Both in *Politics* and *Nichomachean Ethics* he made a distinction between commodities essential for life and other types of wealth, including money. The accumulation of the necessities, which is morally good, is considered part of *Oikonomia*, “the household art” as I have described earlier. However, he does consider money, trade, interest, and the pursuit of wealth as morally bad, unless given away for the greater public good.

Religious and philosophical leaders pointed to Aristotle’s passages such as, "give with a fine end in view, and in the right way; because he will give to the right people, and the right amounts, and at the right time" (Aristotle [1976] p. 143:1120a25) to advocate for charitable public giving. Thomas Aquinas cited the philosopher in saying that the virtuous use of money involved the private spending of wealth for the public good by saying “Man ought to possess external things, not as his own, but as common, so that, to wit, he is ready to communicate them to others in their need”(1:1 QQ.I – XLVIII). Religious, government, and even homes were now permissible expenses on a lavish scale as they contributed to the perceived strength of the city – states. This attitude of charity, generosity and industriousness

pervaded Church teaching through the era of Max Weber and John Locke, to whom we owe the current system of finances in the Western world<sup>xiii</sup>.

As the Church became more involved in everyday aspects of life, both religious and secular, its operating structures became more organized and sophisticated. As early as the fourteenth century, Church documents and contracts give us the first indication of the confluence of both Church and art business formations. By studying these contracts, we can see the homology between the two economic systems became codified. Pietro Lorenzetti's contract of 1320 for the Pieve altarpiece illustrates how the Church shaped cultural productions (O'Malley, 9). Both parties, the painter and his client 'make a pact', or equally agree to the terms of the agreement. It is worth noting that neither party had hierarchical rights. Absent as well was spiritual and religious language. Each contract specified the type of work to be completed, the responsibilities of both entities, and the expenses of the materials. Material considerations were explicitly spelled out as they were a vital factor in the final price of the piece. Gold, aquamarine, and other precious pigments signified prestige and prominence for both Churches and painters who could acquire them. The exhibition of wealth, not the skill of the individual, remained a priority.

The subject matter of the work was broad and general, only indicating that there would be "images and figures" (O'Malley, 9). The contract stated that the quality of work would also be evaluated by arbitrators to ensure excellence. Also, monetary payments make up the bulk of the contractual agreement. During this time, painters could be paid into an account or in silver currency. An exchange rate was also noted for those artists from other cities. This payment agreement included guarantors and was signed by witnesses and a notary as denoted by the terms of the contract. "The earliest surviving contracts show that soon after 1300

painters in Siena and Florence were negotiating their fees in Florins; their professional income was tied to the money of prestige” (O’Malley, 15). Modern historians such as O’Malley assume that contracts between the church and artists are predicated on early Medieval practices of commissioning works of art from 600-1000 CE. Artists, or their guilds, were given the creative freedom of interpretation, but the practical details of the work were based on standard operating procedures similar throughout Europe. Finally, practical considerations such as placement, delivery, and installation completed the document.

While the analysis above references a singular document, it does represent the standard for the majority of contracts between the Church and art guilds. “Another exciting historical aspect of this masterpiece stems from the survival of the contract between Bishop Tarlati and Pietro Lorenzetti, signed on 17 April 1320. It stipulates that Pietro must paint beautiful figures with high-quality colors on gilded backgrounds, while the patron was responsible for having the framework prepared by local Aretine craftsmen. The contract also stipulates iconography and payment schedules” (Oonagh Stransky, <http://www.theflorentine.net/art-culture/2016/05/pietro-lorenzetti-altarpiece-restoration-arezzo/>). Presumably, most specialized labor consisted of similar contracts, but that it did so remains to be established. The shared history of the Church and art guilds reflect a partnership, not only of contractual labor and the importance of a robust and impressive physical presence, but also of language, philosophy, and purpose which translated into spiritual capital.

The Church’s wealth-acquisition prowess makes it the High Medieval patron of the arts and crafts generally, as well as a prime consumer of both urban and rural products. In return for patronage via payment, the artist is to convey and glorify the Church’s mission and message. As that mission is conceived of as spiritual, the artist becomes known for the skill

of translating the spiritual into the material, and the rate of payment or degree of patronage reflects an assessment of the artists' services. This valuation is used to determine the just price of the work produced or the quality of the labor involved, even before the end product is delivered. The assumption of skill and value in artists to decode the language of the spiritual primes them for a market. This is not only from institutional buyers such as the Church, but individuals and families seeking the translation of power into transferable images in the Renaissance.

Churches and the art market relied on signals of information to guide the marketplace. For example, the selection of a saint statue for one's home signified both a level and type of commitment to one's religious affiliation. Hanging a work of art today in one's home indicates a subscription to the mechanizations of the art world. The particular work of art suggests the brand of one's involvement. The price of your artwork, your collection as a whole, how you curate your art, and from whom the artwork was bought are all indicators of your personality, along with your status in the hierarchy of art world insiders. While this may be the case today, the transcendent conception of a focus on spiritual goods during the Middle Ages became a stockpile of worldly goods in the Renaissance. The largest change occurring in the Church's financial structure came with Humanism in the late Middle Ages and its gradual acceptance of the merchant class. The world became more literate, and it was more important than ever to elevate and maintain the structure of the Church as unique and sanctified.

Spiritual capital at the intersection of art and religion crystalized in the Italian city states of the Renaissance. In the *Culture of Consumption*, Goldthwaite outlines this turning point in tie between secular and religious spiritual capital, "The material conditions and the demand

for painting were different in Italy: painting having already taken on a conscious aesthetic identity in its religious and civic forms, now took yet another identity that was no less complex than the entire range of secular culture that it represented. This happened in Italy partly because the religious tradition in art had both aroused demand by conditioning people to a richer visual culture and stimulated productive forces ready to meet the new demand that arose in the secular world” (Goldthwaite, 244).

As a system of separate individuals ruling small fiefdoms, a central unifying organizational structure was critical to the health and strength of Medieval economic structures. The Catholic Church had a vast reach and enough centralized power and authority to keep the aristocracy secure. The Church served as the most reliable investment source for infrastructure and other social goods, thus increasing their ability to accumulate spiritual capital. It also had the ability to motivate and energize human energy for constructive industries or privilege onto an individual or group. The Church adopted patron saints from the spiritual realm for protection and direction, but also turned to human figures for patrons during the great cathedral building programs of medieval Europe. Patrons for the arts are most commonly known during the Renaissance, when families such as the Medici’s cleansed their money from the condemned practice of usury by employing artists and adorning public and private buildings with patriotic arts<sup>xiv</sup>.

Before the fourteenth century, merchants necessarily were also usurers, but with the decline of feudalism and the rise of trade, attitudes relaxed. Treatises from Thomas Aquinas, Francesco Barbaro, and Leonardo Bruni praised wealth as “the spirit behind all crafts” (de Goff, 136). A courtly honor system arose, with a commercial trade for goods delegated to the merchant classes. For artwork, and also for the saving grace of Church services, the

physical product was less important than the social value. “This is a system in which artworks are not commodities but rather are reifications of social relationships (Titia Hulst, 83). The symbolic value was a transcendent salvation through artists who could convey messages of the spirit for wealthy individuals. This transfer of power through monetary exchange was also cultural. Ownership, and the commissioning of artists as spiritual interlocutors, reflected a unification with the divine. Precious materials no longer signified power as the rise of the merchant class and their wealth rose. Riches could no longer indicate divine grace as they once did, and a need for differentiation of the courtly class resulted in a new discourse of God ordained talent. As this section will delineate, the conceptualization of art changed to accommodate the market, and as a result, the market solidified its packaging of art as a spiritual commodity.

In the Middle Ages, art did not exist as an identifiable category. Art was part of the structure and function of the Church’s physical expansion, but it did serve as the vehicle for aura and spiritual capital. During the Renaissance, art emerged as a distinct group, inexorably tied to the Church as a patron, but separate in its class as a material good for wider consumption. “Many of the developments in the history of religious art can, in fact, be explained on the demand side by greater wealth and the supply side producers’ efforts to get a larger share of the market. As the wealth of Italy grew in the later Middle Ages and through the Renaissance, the rich could more easily afford the ever more elaborate and more luxurious decorations of chapels and churches, culminating in the extravagance of the Baroque; and the greater social diffusion of wealth can explain the success of painters, such as Neri Bicci, in finding customers far down the social scale” (Goldthwaite, 82). The proliferating demand for the communicative skills of an artist from centralized networks of

power like the Church generated an increase in production so that non-commissioned works could be marketed to churches and individuals. More centers of artistic production came into play. “Within the world of religious goods, this model was defined by liturgical functions. The material culture of religion throughout this period underwent change not so much in its essential nature as in the sheer quantity and extent, and therefore the rise in the production of religious art is attributed to the increase in the number of consumers and the rise in the level of their consumption” (Goldthwaite, 6).

As populations increased and concentrated, there was a practical need for structural building. Adornment was commissioned by specialists and a sustainable business for the guilds allowed for specializations. Also, as more churches dotted the landscape of Italian cities, their liturgical practices necessitated a multitude of physical objects to channel the functions of the spiritual realm. Christian burials called for tombs and mausoleums, baptisms required fontanelles, relics necessitated reliquaries, and the clergy required the particular physical markings of dress and jewelry. The product innovations were a direct result of a vast and competitive market for spiritual objects. Paintings were not alone in their ability to convey the messages of the ruling elite. Chalice, furnishings, scepters, and other objects acted as receptacles of spiritual power utilized by only the most knowledgeable intercessors, thus creating a form of spiritual capital that transcended life into the afterlife.

This process was done by giving spiritual properties physical form through the language of imagery by artists skilled enough to breathe imaginative life into nothing to create something. To do this, they had to be intimately aware of the biblical themes and stories as relayed by the clergy. This close working relationship and mutual reliance on each other for the dissemination of ideas spoke to the core tenant of Christianity. The Bible’s intensely



narrative content made stories relatable and easy to repeat, and the images artists created for Churches made them tangible. The didactic nature of painting made it a widely accepted addition to the physical nature of Renaissance architecture, not only in Churches and wealthy homes, but also in monasteries, which had denounced grandiose adornments in the past. Painting then became the common denominator of all structural buildings of the Catholic religion. Iconographic messaging in ritual and visual art would seem to highlight the emergence of distinct but entwined and analogically kindred discourses, commodities, and performances.

One such example of a religious iconography which translated into secular iconography is the painted representation of the Virgin Mary and her counterpart Danae. The examples I will provide also have one other important commonality in that aura is displayed around them as gold. The topological movement of aura will begin with the Danae myth as represented in Greek art, and I will move on to my examination of Jan Gossaert's "Danae" (1527) where personal wealth transformed the look, purpose, and display of art. Marc Shell explains the connection between the Greek myth and the Christian Annunciation. "The early fourteenth century Ovid Moralized similarly emphasizes the ideas that the substance of God's semen is gold (which the French author calls both or and aure), that it enters Mary by the ear (orielle) and that Christ is an aurigena like Perseus" (Shell, 24). The name Perseus in Latin is identified as an aurigena which means "generated by gold." Aura, economics, myth, and theology are connected, not only in a literal sense but as a semiotic construct as well. Saint Augustine was particularly interested in the myth, making Danae and the Virgin Mary an interchangeable entity. The story of a woman who is perfect and untouchable but for the corrupting power of money has lived through the great masters

Titian, Gossaert, and Klimt, changing its form, representation, and authenticity. In the image by Gossaert, we see Danae as the Mary, the Queen of Heaven. Her robe is blue; she has one bare breast, as does many *Maria lactans* (the mother of all), she wears a diadem, and she is seated in a palace setting accepting the golden presence innocently.

Titian's "Danae" (1554) was painted in three different versions that all have connections to both Aristotle's *Poetics* and Neo-Platonic ideals. In this instance I stress the placement of aura in these works as the beginning of the separation of aura from its Divine origins. Titian created these works for the Spanish King, and we can herein begin to trace the evolution of desire in the three forms that Deleuze delineates. The first of these is the "Imperial State," from when the aristocracy sought to control desire and subject desire to the state in the transition from agricultural communities to imperial rule. We can see a similar pattern as the role of art transitioned from religious relic to sovereign symbols of wealth. Titian's work fits this description, and its aura came from its commission by the king. The aura's placement was still attached to the work of art, but here we can see how the market determined its exact status, tradition, mystique, and authority.

Deleuze explains that just as the Imperial State form of exchange was solidified, desire was morphing into a different arrangement. The "Diverse Form" sought to free desire from its transcendent imperial shape and bring it to a broader social system where property was not in the hands of the king but the hands of the individual. Rembrandt's Danae exemplifies this individualism and even exhibits empowerment. Madilyn Millner Kahr, in her essay "Danae: Virtuous Voluptuous, Venal Woman", explains the changing viewpoint of both women and money. "On mature consideration, Rembrandt returns to the myth of Danae to communicate a new conception: a sexual woman is neither saint, not sinner, victim nor

seductress, but a participant in full humanity”(55). The implications of the new viewpoint on women which happens in conjunction with the new Christian philosophy of money’s redeeming qualities is an important point, but one not covered in this dissertation. Instead, I will focus on the philosophical and representational connection between aura, power, and the marketplace of spiritual capital.

The relationship between Renaissance humanism and Roman Catholicism was far more complex than has often been supposed. This system of thought which placed prime importance on the value of the human being did not negate the need for God, but instead justified the actions of clerical and secular leaders in creating social programming patronized by powerful/talented individuals. Many of the popes during the 15th and 16th centuries were themselves devotees and patrons of Renaissance thought and art. For example, Nicholas of Cusa (1401 – 1464), a metaphysician and curious theologian, was looking for points of contact, not only with other Christians, but even with Islam<sup>xv</sup>.

Italians initiated the widespread demand for material culture. The individuality of Humanism allowed an infinite variety of artistic styles and forms. Fashion, the continual renewal of demand, was the result. Consumption brought about the social diffusion of taste and the overwhelming sense of a spiritual identity. Social emulation was one of the main contributing factors to the Renaissance demand for art, but this consumption required a deeper purpose. Whether it was piety or pride, Greek and Roman values, provided justification for the accumulation of creative output ordained with not only symbolic significance, but now also beauty, Renaissance art was able to go beyond the terms of its existence as a physical entity. Michael Baxandall indicates that the largest change in the business practices of both the Church and the art market was a value shift from materials to

skill (16). Even contractual agreements reflect this change as the description of each work became more involved. Artists were instructed to include more figurative details, and the artist's and assistant's time was included in the price calculations. During this period, spiritual endowment of talent was transferred directly from the artist into the work of art itself, as demonstrated in forthcoming chapters. This philosophical understanding of the nature of the commodity would save it during the iconoclasm of the Reformation.

During the Renaissance, talent was appreciated, and the ability to produce overwhelming objects of beauty was the primary signifier of this talent. Talent also revealed a spiritual and mysterious blessing from God. During the Reformation, ostentatious exhibitionism and the reflection of wealth went out of fashion. At this point in the Church and the art market, money and its reflection as spiritual endowment became divorced in language, if not actuality. The most important aspect of the blended narrative between the art market and the Church's accumulation of wealth and its resulting market structure is its ontological history. "Discussions of value occurred only in certain circumstances and seemed, on the whole, to be deliberately unconnected to the art market" (Hutter and Throsby, 90). This statement amounts to what Elizabeth Honing identifies as an "antimarket discourse of valuation" (Ibid). As a leftover of feudalism coupled with a reliance on both the philosophical underpinnings and the core structure of religious economies, the art market developed a language to present an alternative mode of value making. I will further explain the concept of a discourse of disavowal and its effect on the marketplace of art and religion at great length in future chapters.

The practical application of the discourse of disavowal we see today originated during the Reformation. In previous chapters, I have outlined how the formation of the Church

structure provided a basic map for the establishment of an art market, but the Reformation gives us the most accurate and striking example of their shared historical and ontological trajectory. The early years of the art trade were an extension of the economic recovery of the later 15th century. Recovery from effects of Black Death depopulation resulted in less demand for art, but also a scarcity of labor hikes wages. The new Dutch Republic drew Protestant intellectuals, merchants, brewers, and artists from the regions of the Low Countries that remained under Spanish Catholic rule. This influx of a skilled population led to a strong economy, a market for art, and a large workforce to create art. However, 1550 to 1660 was a period of extreme dislocation and significant change, within various regions across Europe which saw periods of boom and bust. After the iconoclasm of the Calvinists in the 1560s, the church had all but ceased to provide commissions for painters. This was followed by a much quieter period in the later 17th century and on into the 18th that most economic historians would call recessionary. During this time increased production decreased prices, which reduced incentives for production and wages.

After decades of simmering discontent, new forms of media and art - namely woodcuts, printing presses, and pamphlets - gave the opponents of the authoritarian regime of the Church a way to express their views, register their solidarity, and co-ordinate their actions. “This crude commercialization of the doctrine of indulgences, encapsulated in Tetzels slogan— 'As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, so the soul from purgatory springs'—was, to Luther, 'the pious defrauding of the faithful' and a glaring symptom of the need for broad reform” (The Economist, Dec. 17th, 2011).

The protesters' message spread through the very social networks created by the Church, making it impossible to quell. Martin Luther's print medium was important, but more

significant was his use of German instead of Latin. He wrote the music of traditional pub songs into hymns and taught in poetic ballads to increase his audience. The boom of the Northern art market coincides directly with this period, as its intense period of commercialization happened from 1480-1520. The combination of improved publishing technology, literacy, and social networks caused social change where previous efforts had failed. It is during this era, that we see spiritual capital take on its commodity form.

The fact that art was used in a religious revolution is not an innovative discovery, but what the art world learned through its association with the revolution is very significant. Martin Luther's condemnation of the Catholic's financial practices in 1517 split the Church and changed dogma so theological discussions superseded economic and commercial ones. Doctrine changed as a result of the conspicuous inclusion of money in Church operations, and the lessons learned shaped not only the Church but also the business of art. At this critical moment in time, the art market learned that it would not stop commercializing its business practices. Instead, the way it discussed its sales and acquisitions would differ dramatically.

Bourdieu refers to this phenomena in *The Production of Belief* as disavowal. He explains that art and religion were able to mass produce spiritual capital through faith by hiding monetary facts. "The art business, a trade in things that have no price, belongs to the class of practices in which the logic of the precapitalist economy lives on... These practices functioning as practical *negations*, can only work by pretending not to be doing what they are doing. Defying ordinary logic, they lend themselves to two opposed readings, both equally false, which each undo their essential duality and duplicity by reducing them either to the disavowal or to that which is disavowed – to disinterestedness or self-interest" (Bourdieu,

74). For example, iconoclasts during the Reformation destroyed the physical manifestations of Catholic corruptions such as stained glass, sculptures, altars, illuminated manuscripts, and panels. In short, art connected with conspicuous wealth and power was eliminated. However, what did remain was a belief that art was still a communicative vehicle between the material world and the heavenly realm as evidenced by the boom in art sales in Northern Europe. Art, religion, and wealth went private, and its narrative retreated into the background. Bourdieu says, “The challenge which economies based on disavowal of the ‘economic’ present to all forms of economism lies precisely in the fact that they function, and can function, in practice – and not merely in the agents’ representations – only by virtue of a constant collective repression of narrowly ‘economic’ interest and the real nature of the practices revealed by ‘economic’ analysis” (Ibid). In other words, a discourse of disavowal could deny the link between ostentatious and hierarchical wealth, but the democratization of wealth and religion paradoxically strengthened the connection by multiplying the number of consumers.

The Protestant art of the North diverged from the traditional standards of primarily Catholic art in the South. Paintings reflected a more personal and subdued form of Christianity as prescribed by the Protestant ethical structure. Large scale works fell out of fashion in churches and homes, but this did not destroy the market entirely. Instead, the market was strengthened by multiple private commissions for paintings of a subtler moralizing nature. Even genre scenes of the times promoted piety and a devout lifestyle. The direct and individualized nature of artist/patron relationships deregulated the art trade and made the exchange of money and capital untraceable and covert<sup>xvi</sup>.

Paintings were not the only artistic medium to assimilate the paradoxical elements of wealth and quiet industriousness. As demonstrated previously, the market for art and the Church relied heavily on land acquisition and its domination through symbolic building programs. Its adoption by political leaders was swift in part because it allowed them to take over areas previously controlled by the Catholic Church. Remarkably, most Catholic churches themselves survived. It was enough to strip the structures of their interior and exterior ornaments of Catholic identity. The altar, the center of activity in the Catholic Church, was usurped by the pulpit. The word “altar” is Hebrew. It was a word that signified the place of sacrifice. After Jesus had offered the perfect sacrifice on the cross, the ancient Jewish custom of offering animals was fulfilled by the sacrifice of the Mass. When the priest says Mass at the altar, Christ becomes present. He is food for our souls, food served from a table. The early Christians used simple home tables. The symbolism for them was strong. Jesus came to them as the Bread of Life; they were invited to a heavenly banquet. The altar, symbol of sacrifice and Christ, holds such a high value for the Church that it is consecrated by the bishop, separate from the consecration of the church building. It is also why the priest venerates the altar at the beginning of every Mass and again at the end. It was a space of communal understanding and recognition.

In contrast, the pulpit made all members of the church focus on the message and the homily of grace through the personal acceptance and pursuit of Biblical teachings. It is a private space which acknowledges the importance of internal reflection. As contradictory as it may be, the Protestant’s focus on hearing God’s Word as an individual as opposed to the Catholic tradition of emotionally understanding the importance of God through ceremony



had to be backed up by a visual change. The altar receded into the backdrop as pulpits demanded the focus of attention.

As the Protestants removed public art from their churches and public spaces for personal virtues and devotion, the Catholic Church also made conciliations to their art programs which blurred the direct relationship between art and money. To rebuild confidence in the Church, the Council of Trent determined that the educational and inspirational power of art would be the most useful tool for their rebranding campaign. Guidelines for the production of religious art were strictly enforced. Art created for the Counter-Reformation had to focus on the distinctive aspects of the Catholic dogma, biblical narratives had to be clear and without creative embellishments, paintings should encourage piety, and all art had to be understandable and straightforward for all audiences. Stripping the creative freedom of artists in both subject matter and message broke the complimentary relationship between the arts and the Church. Once the Council of Trent placed rules on the free market of creative expression, the art market's power flowed to the less restrictive atmosphere of Northern Europe. The mistake was not in the subject matter itself, but in the open acknowledgment of enculturation by programmatic and intentional prescriptions. The same type of characteristics could also be found in Northern European art, but it was more successful there because the changes were left to the individual.<sup>xvii</sup> The market denied any direct responsibility for its products because individuality was its front-runner, not an authoritarian rule. As success was measured in wealth, it became increasingly apparent that the art market was stronger when it denied its control over production and its resulting monetary gains.

However, understanding the shared economic structures of the church and the art market necessitates a study of their methodology of capital accumulation. As stated above, the art

market only stopped discussing its wealth, which did not mean that it stopped regulating it. Relational, personal, social, financial, and physical capital naturally result from a rational attempt by individuals and groups to maximize their benefits through group membership. In short, profitability through these channels produced both perceived and actual power in the Church and the art market in the form of spiritual capital. Bourdieu acknowledges, “The particular difficulty in sociology comes from the fact that it teaches things that everybody knows in a way, but they don’t want to know or cannot know because the law of the system is to hide those things from them” (Sociology in Question, 133). The most important factor for the health and strength of the art market is its denial of a market, or merely the absence of words for it. Without an ontological structure, an entity can exist with complete freedom. Art actively travels towards the most accommodating environment for this requirement.

One such helpful environment is the market structure of the auction house. While it looks like the auction houses directly acknowledge the system of monetary exchange whereby artwork is substituted for money, the visual, social and psychological cues performed during the auction trump all concerns with the transparency of buying and selling art as a spiritual object. In fact, this seeming directness lulls the consumer away from the auction’s actual operating structure. The drama and “aura” of the art auction, taking its lead from the Anglican Church service, began filling gaps of spiritual identity that the Reformation broke down. The success of the auction structure in filling this need resulted in immense wealth and power. An “aura” of excitement and speculation rounded out the ceremony and symbolism of an art world on the rise.

The primary function of art auctions, along with Church liturgical ceremonies, is solidifying the worth and value of a spiritual good through the firm influence of “collective

witnessing” (Jarvenpas, 2004). The study of sales of art and antiques explains ways in which auction communities contribute to, and solidify, transactions of money and art. “These and other studies, primarily ethnographic, stand in marked contrast to the forms of analysis that we find within economics and econometrics. They demonstrate how the operation and trustworthiness of auctions are inextricably embedded within a complex of social relationships and communities, including communities of practice and participation” (Heath, loc 612-618). As the discourse of art retreated from directly addressing its fiscal interests in the public sphere, consumer confidence was still required to facilitate the desirability of art as a spiritual good.

Theology set up individual intellectual and philosophical spaces during the Renaissance which the Reformation broke down. As it became harder to fill those spaces with theological material, social spaces were occupied with other symbols of power, such as tradition and ceremony. Because the discourse and language of money in the art world and the Church purposefully denied its role in the daily operations of its business during the Reformation, appropriate terminology for its functions waned. However, financial transactions continued to exist inside of the art world and the Church, so symbols to signify its place in the spiritual realm emerged. Heath explains in *The Dynamics of Auction (Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives)* that “embeddedness directs analytic attention towards the ways in which ‘economic actions are embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations’ primarily to maximize profit (see also Swedberg and Granovetter, 1992). The concept of embeddedness serves to powerfully promote the interconnectedness and interrelational intentions that underpin market activities. This treats coordinated, collaborative action as embodied in, and deriving from, common

understandings and shared cognitions that can become, as Abolafia (1996) suggests, institutionalized. Callon (1998) suggests that the ‘notion of social network or more broadly embeddedness’ provides a vehicle with which to address the question of coordination in market activity, social interaction, the ‘primitive reality’ that underpins market activity and lies ‘beneath the contracts and the rules’” (Heath, 487).

“Embeddedness” is the natural consequence of the discourse of disavowal. Deleuze and Guattari point to many of the powerful and adaptable nature of finance in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by coining terms helpful in understanding how the art market can exist and thrive by avoiding the discussion of its financial reality which began during the 18th century. Deleuze and Guattari are proponents of a dualist theory criticizing the binary reductions which separate the irrational desires on one side vs. the social realities on the other. This theory is an especially valuable perspective to understand as the art market develops further away from analyzing its business structure, while at the same time growing capital. While they are primarily describing capitalism, I argue that the Church and the art market were always utilized some major components of the free enterprise. The term coined by Deleuze which explains the significant changes in the art market from the Reformation to the 1700s is “deterritorialization” which refers to a monetary system with fluid borders, multiplicities, and codes with various meanings. The focus is on decomposing the established hierarchy for a more rhizomatic model. The auction house and later manifestations of trade in the art world operate through “desiring-production” which is a productive force more like a machine made of interlocking connections which continually reproduces desire. This section will show how the language of art and money was deterritorialized to regenerate into the desiring production

machine of the art world today through social, operational structures such as the auction house.

The art market in England inherited the auction system from the Dutch in the 17th century. The Dutch art market as described above was an exception to other markets for art and Europe, and the English gentry took note of these developments on their Grand Tours. “From the sixteenth century on, these tourists formed an essential group of buyers on the continental art market, at least until the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, arose in England. The Puritan law forbade the importation of art from abroad” (Boll, 16). However, the floodgates opened as the laws were repealed in 1680. The first record of a painting selling at auction in England dates to 1674 (Bayer and Page, 74)<sup>xviii</sup>. The auction house during this time helped create a market value for a commodity that had yet to distinguish itself outside of the context of religious adornment fully. “The value of the most important works of art is established at public auction, either directly, by an actual sale, or indirectly, by referencing other sales. How the auction system works is the critical determinant of how the public’s preferences are translated into the evaluation of artistic work. The auction system is central to the determination of the incentives for artistic work, and the efficiency of the system is a key determinant of the cost of creating and distributing works of art (Ashenfelter and Graddy, 763). The benefits of the auction house resided in its physical space which allowed a “social context, for intellectual connoisseurship, erudite writing about art, and the discriminating consumption of it” (Bayer and Page, 74). Dealers became the safest way for the uninitiated to buy art at auction, which is a topic I will discuss later.

Art auctions were not attended solely by the elite. The largess and sport of the auction process drew an audience of spectators from the lower and middle classes. “It was the

aesthetic language of the virtuosi and the social cachet they brought to use that language that made the art auction appear as a legitimate new sales mechanism and made art collecting a respectable interest for the post-Restoration metropolitan leisure class beyond the ranks of the virtuosi” (Cowan, 263). As the popularity of auctions grew, contractual rules of the auction process were passed into law for the protection of both the buyers and the sellers<sup>xix</sup>. The establishment of art museums and commercial art galleries were still years away, making the auction one of the only spaces for a democratized exhibition of culture. It was not until the late 1700’s that art auctions became a way of selling off entire estates for a financially unstable nobility. Auctions became the most efficient way to exchange property rights from one hand to the other.

Christies Auction House was formed in 1766, and the rather competitive nature of art auctions was eradicated as it dominated the majority of art sales between 1840-1900 (Bayer and Page, 143). This monopoly of the art market in England increased efficiencies, but also created tastes for particular forms of art favored by the bourgeois. One prominent theory for the success of Christie’s was his function as a lender during the cash-strapped era of the late 1700’s. James Christie frequently doled out cash advances of up to 50% of the estimate of a painting to secure the commissions and loyalty of the English nobility. Christie’s political connections became a central aspect of his success, and the most notable transactions included names such as George Walpole, Catherine the Great of Russia, and Pope Paul IV. The business of art and its relationship to money was never stronger than during this period. Importantly, the discourse of disavowal remained intact, thus establishing a pattern of large market movements with either secrecy or denial. Bourdieu explains, “it is the field of production, understood as the system of objective relations between these agents or

institutions as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated” (Bourdieu, 76).

More important than the keen and knowledgeable understanding of finances for the new art world players was the psychological structure of the auction itself. Starting with the pre-sale catalog, James Christie quickly realized that lengthy descriptions of both the work and the artist outsold lots described just as “seascapes” or “fruit.” The development of the action sales followed one particular model of group dynamics. The Anglican church service was embedded in the life of James Christie. After moving to London from Scotland, Christie quickly entered the life of elite social circles through the only reliable means of interaction. James Christie’s son was significantly destined for the Church but was forced to take over the auction house when his father died. Described in Christie’s historical accounts as a charming and persuasive speaker, the auction house was substantially shaped by both social prowess and religious institutionalism.

In addition to the religious influences of the founders of Christies, there are significant historical trajectories which also point to a shared ideological understanding of “collective witnessing”<sup>xx</sup>. The auction houses of England adopted many ceremonial and symbolic conventions from the dominant Anglican Church Services. There is, in fact, an unyielding historical relationship between the Anglican Church and the art auction business. “Although the number of auctions advertised in London had been steadily increasing in the 1680s, it is remarkable that the years in which the rise in numbers is most dramatic coincide with the aftermath of the “Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689”. A direct correlation between the dramatic regime change in 1689 and the rise in auction sales is hard to justify, but the supply of pictures on the market during these years may indeed have received a brief fillip as a result

of the seizure and resale of the collections of the Jacobite exiles who fled abroad and left their estates to the new Williamite regime” (Marchi, 278). During this important time period, politics and religion had a significant effect on commerce and the perception of art. With so many pictures coming to market, the ability to acquire prized and personal possessions from the old regime, became an important marker for status, wealth, and influence in the new Middle classes.

Church services at the time were well attended and required for all social circles but provided a unique opportunity for close contact and observation of the majority the upper and middle classes. While much of the philosophies and beliefs surrounding Christianity remained in a state of flux, the liturgical structure of the church service remained firmly in place across the European continent with only a few denominational variations. As the stylistic and philosophical influences of the Renaissance in Italy waned, England began asserting itself as a dominant force in theory, religion, politics, and art. Many describe the Church of England as being both Catholic and reformed, changed in its philosophy, yet Catholic in its structure. Anglicanism's main book of rites and ceremonies is the Book of Common Prayer. This liturgical guidebook by Cranmer followed the Catholic Order of Mass very carefully and did so to ease the transition of Catholicism to the Anglican Church. The service opens with the same liturgy and retains much of the high drama and liturgical devices as traditional Catholic services. According to the United States Conference of Bishops, the service follows a set order:

The first portion of the weekly service is the service of the word. It contains set prayers, invocations, and proclamations of praise; some said by a clergy person and some by all worshippers. There are also songs, perhaps of contemporary composition or from a book



of classic hymns. The Protestant current of the service of the word involves reading from passages of scripture and a sermon or homily, with a proclamation of faith (usually the Nicene or Apostles' Creed serving as a corporate response to the word read and preached). More prayers and the confession of sins follow.

The second portion is the service supports a more Catholic current of the sacrament, referring to the Eucharist. This part of the service includes brief recitations of salvation history (creation, fall, redemption) and the Last Supper. There is also an invocation of the Holy Spirit to consecrate the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine. The Lord's Prayer is recited before the components are distributed to the worshippers. After more prayers and singing, the service ends. There are, of course, variations on this pattern, but this is a representative summary (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal/girm-chapter-2.cfm>).

Visual and audible clues set the scene for a sacred space energized by the “spirit” of art. Auction theory is an accepted component of economic studies and has strong similarities to the operational structure of the Church. It is largely a social vehicle of monetary exchange which relies on group dynamics at its core and a strong sense of spiritual capital. Its structure is a “socially organized practice and reasoning in and through which participants legitimately accomplish, in concert and collaboration with others, the valuation and exchange of goods” (Heath, loc 585). The atmosphere of an auction contributes most significantly to its success. The auctioneer, as with successful heads of the Church, must be skilled and knowledgeable in their profession. Just as significant is their ability to entertain, weave stories, read the

psychological nature of their crowd, emotionally sway a group, and sell an informational good. “The auctioneer’s most important mood-related task is to generate the urge to buy, even coax forth the buyer’s sense of possessiveness, to trigger competitive bidding” (Boll, 163). Competitive bidding is a way to engender the audience with power for the winner and awe for the public. In a traditional Church service, this style of psychological play may not be overtly present, but it certainly underlies the cadence of every sermon as evidenced by the great care of every syllabic utterance of the pastor during a sermon.

Similarities between the dramatic performance of the auctioneer and the clergy are easily detected. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind* writes: "The Anglican sermon is constructed on a symphonic scheme of progressively widening vision; it moves from point to point by linguistic analysis, weaving larger and larger embroideries about the words of the text. The Puritan sermon quotes the text and "opens" it as briefly as possible, expounding circumstances and context, explaining its grammatical meanings, reducing its tropes and schemata to prose, and setting forth its logical implications; the sermon then proclaims in a flat, indicative sentence the "doctrine" contained in the text or logically deduced from it, and proceeds to the first reason or proof. Reason follows reason, with no other transition than a period and a number; after the last proof is stated there follow the uses or applications, also in numbered sequence, and the sermon ends when there is nothing more to be said. The Anglican sermon opens with a pianissimo exordium, gathers momentum through a rising and quickening tempo, comes generally to a rolling, organ-toned peroration; the Puritan begins with a reading of the text, states the reason in an order determined by logic, and the uses in an enumeration determined by the kinds of person in the throng who need to be exhorted or reproved, and it stops without flourish or resounding climax”(332-3). Swaying

congregations and audiences by vocal inflections can emotionally secure and impress even the most passive crowd.

The relationship between the Church service and the auction process will be clearly delineated later, but for now, the importance lies in Heath's explanation in the relationship between the art auction system and its social and financial implications. "The volatility of price at auction draws attention to the operation of the event, the transaction and the contingencies that arise during its accomplishment. This is not to suggest that social relationships are not important to the operation of auctions like any other market activities, but rather to point to the ways in which those relations coalesce in and are sustained through the social interaction that enables the legitimate and ordered accomplishment of actual transactions and the valuation and sale of works of art and antiques" (Heath loc. 650). Spiritual capital then becomes more than just a feeling, it is now a physical response shared by a group. Bourdieu explains, "So it is both true and untrue to say that the commercial value of a work of art is incommensurate with its cost of production. It is true only if one only takes account of the manufacture of the material object; it is untrue if one is referring to the production of the work of art as sacred, consecrated object, the product of a vast operation of social alchemy jointly conducted with equal conviction and very unequal profits, by all of the agents involved in the field of production..." (Bourdieu, 80).

The atmospheres of the Church and the Auction House thrive off a critical mass involved in the narrative of victory and defeat composed and planned to the very last detail. An expert mix of expected and rich traditions are dotted with surprise elements of spectacle to complete the most efficient use of time during the performances. In the following chapters, I will explore more fully all the items of the auction drama such as, to name a few, the careful

seating arrangements, group involvement, and pre-show habits. To the ceremonial similarities, the Anglican Church of England and the art market shared a common history of business practices.

Bourdieu combines the practice of performing symbolic shows of power through cooperative agents of authority through a disavowal of economic factors to form a very strong economy of spiritual capital. He says, “The fact that the disavowal of the ‘economy’ is neither a simple ideological mask nor a complete repudiation of economic interest explains why, on the one hand, new producers whose only capital is their conviction can establish themselves in the market by appealing to the values whereby the dominant figures accumulated their symbolic capital, and why, on the other hand, only those who can come to terms with the ‘economic’ constraints inscribed in this bad faith economy can reap the full ‘economic’ profits of their symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, 81). In short, powerful players in the art and religious economy use symbolic indicators to produce spiritual capital which is then translated into economic capital. However, the entire process is denied in a discourse of disavowal.

## CHAPTER 6

### **The Accumulation of Spiritual Capital in the Modern Art World**

The Medieval era of Church building formed the art economy’s fundamental operational structure, while the Renaissance successfully solidified the artist and their products as

spiritual interlocutress. While the Reformation separated the discourse of the art from its commercial and monetary trappings, the establishment of the art auction houses of the 1700's reintroduced tradition and ceremony to an art entity as was fitting for a spiritual object. As the art market grew and became diversified through agents, dealers, auctions, and museums, the rhetoric of art as a spiritual vessel outside the concerns of profane commercialism needed to be unified. "Tendency in the nation-state to look to art for a powerful moral effect on the public and citizenry; and the trend since to spiritualize art and its experience. Understanding this cultural history is crucial for situating the rubric of 'art and religion' within its proper historical context" (Taylor and Francis, p. 26). Philosophically, art and religion were subject to great changes in the rise of Romanticism, Nationalism, and German Idealism through writers such as Kant, Rousseau, Burke, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. Specifically, the nature of subjects and objects were being challenged by scientific rationalism and Empiricism.

By mirroring Christianity's shift from central hierarchical power structures in Catholicism to the multiplicities fractioning of Christian denominations driven by the nationalism of the 18th century, the art market learned that the strength of a healthy economic system had to depend primarily on centralized authorities of art. The markets searched out freedom wherever possible, and the only thing needed to guarantee success was an outward denial of its monetary motives. To methodize this rhetoric, all players of the art world remained independent, but believed in the spirit of art and its metaphysical virtues. Relevant here is Emile Durkheim's description of religion versus magic, which categorizes the social structure of Churches by determining their systems. He writes, "a group experience, symbols, and keepers of those symbols, the priesthood" are the necessary aspects of any religion. A spiritual economy relies on these arrangements to fluidly work in and

through". He continues, "The religious forces animating the clan become individualized by incarnating itself in individual consciousness" (Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1912). Faith, by definition, is a belief system based on what is unseen, rather than what can be proven. When faith in the operations of a system of material exchange occurs (such as the art market), there must necessarily be as few harbingers of truth as possible.

Writers and philosophers played a significant role during this critical period of spreading the traditional belief that the aura of art superseded the objectness of its earthly presence. However, in the public mind, the proof that art was removed from capital came with the rise of the museum. These institutions actually and physically removed art objects from any commercial context. I will delineate the exact ways in which the art museum resembles the Church later, but for now, I will trace the history of religion to nationalism and its effect on the art market as a structure of cooperative but independent agents unified by faith in a singular discourse. Theories of art can be diverse, but what has been eliminated from the vocabulary of art makes the strongest statement as to what art is. During the 17th and 18th century, art was described in various ways, but it was never a simple object in a marketplace of monetary exchange, even while its marketplace of monetary exchange was being built.

Recent scholarship has made very clear arguments for the development of nationalism and religious change as an interrelated phenomenon (Van der Veer 1994, Asad 2003, Spohn 2003). "Nationalist politics can accommodate the claims of religion, and nationalist rhetoric often deploys religious language, imagery, and symbolism; similarly, religion can accommodate the claims of the nation-state, and religious movements can deploy nationalist language" (Brubaker, 24). While an argument can be made for the parallel development of nationalism and religion through language, we can also see very strong currents of linguistic

connections between the development of the art market and religion as informed by nationalism.

Just as the auction house and its market structures began in England from Anglican roots, some of the first seeds of 17th-century nationalism began in England with origins in religious revolutions. “England had become the leading nation in scientific spirit, in commercial enterprise, in political thought and activity. Swelled by an immense confidence in the new age, the English people felt upon their shoulders the mission of history, a sense that they were at a great turning point from which a new true reformation and a new liberty would start. In the English Revolution, an optimistic humanism merged with Calvinist ethics; the influence of the Old Testament gave form to the new nationalism by identifying the English people with ancient Israel” (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/nationalism>).

As aesthetic discourse moved away from commercialization to distinguish art apart from the industrialization of all other products, civic humanism and nationalism arose as a justification for art’s elevated status. Romanticism was an artistic and intellectual movement set in high contrast to the grim realities of life in the industrialized world.<sup>xxi</sup> An intense emotional aestheticism developed from the fascination with nature, and as the root of its name suggests, Roman qualifications of beauty again came to the forefront of public consciousness. The concept of genius was revived and the artist as a sort of spiritual conductor became normalized. The moral virtues of cultivating civilized societies were still threatened by the vices of luxurious consumption, and art had to remain outside of the luxurious and consumptive categories. “English nationalism then was thus much nearer to its religious matrix than later nationalisms that rose after secularization had made greater progress. The nationalism of the 18th century shared with it, however, its enthusiasm for

liberty, its humanitarian character, its emphasis on the individual and his rights and upon the human community as above all national divisions. The rise of English nationalism coincided with the rise of the English trading middle classes”

(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/nationalism>).

One way we can understand the shared structures of the Church and the art world are by understanding the tiers of involvement one can attain within the system. “For economic intimacy, nothing beats the household as a mediator between the individual and the market. But there is a second tier of intermediaries, the club, and firm. Both of these are ways for participants to produce goods, share risk, and garner the best possible information. In the case of the club, the participants are volunteers who contribute so that the members can enjoy club goods. Like the household, those outside the club are excluded from its benefits. The firm is different: it produces products for general public consumption, and the more it sells, the more the firm and its employees benefit. Larger and more diverse than a household or club, the firm can gather more information, innovate more powerfully, and make collective decisions that maximize large-scale profits. The firm does not live primarily to achieve interior happiness. It lives to expand its market share and, when possible, achieve a monopoly” (Witham, 282). In simple terms, the earliest agents and dealers of art were charged with making meaning of art, and as the spiritual connection had already attached itself to the discourse of art, these related but cooperative market makers perpetuated the story.

To preserve the narrative that art and artists had a direct relationship to the spirit (either religious or national), artists themselves had to be removed from monetary transactions. The story simply could not be supported if a multitude of individual artists interacted with



aristocratic patrons who were themselves weary of direct financial transactions. As the narrative switched from artists being able to imitate God's Nature to the artist as an imitator of the nature of God as creator, the separation from materiality was of primary importance. A small number of art dealers arose to control the narrative and remove the psychological association between art and money. The reality of art dealing required the dealer himself to straddle the ideological conflict between art as a sacred object and its necessary economic valuation. His position then also necessitated that he embodies that ideology on the social field.

One of the first dealers, Arthur Pond in 1740, began noting his opinions on the back of the paintings that he sold. This practice gave him an authority and integrity emulated by countless other dealers in years to come. The spirit of the age demanded connoisseurship and judgments of taste as proposed by Emmanuel Kant and others<sup>xxii</sup>. "With the spiritualized rhetorical tradition from which it flows: disinterestedness, transcendence, and instantaneousness. Each of these essentially formalist aesthetic concerns has, following Elliot's notion of an "objective correlative," a spiritual correlative. The spiritual roots and implications of these themes are transmuted in multifarious forms according to the role that the aesthetic plays in each theorist's overall philosophy. For most, it replaces religion as that realm of ineffable experience that remains indefinable in practical material terms" (Taylor and Francis, 49).

Dealers of the 18th and 19th century had to front a good deal of the wealth they sought by buying works of art from individuals across the world, physically transport them, and finance them through private or public institutions. They had to be upper-middle-class intellectuals and merchants, but they also had to be speculators. Not only were they

merchants, but a vast knowledge of art history was necessary for success. “This heterogeneous fringe of the art trade is indicative of a proto-stage of the market’s genesis. At the same time, it characterizes an unregulated business without standardized professional prerequisites. Such low barriers were the engines of growth in a business environment that, in many ways, still wrestled with its medieval past” (Bayer and Page, 83). I am in agreement that this unregulated structure spurred the economic growth of the market and argue that its primary unifying factor which determined it to be “heterogeneous” was its façade of disinterestedness in monetary concerns. Only someone between the artist/producer dependent on money and the aristocratic consumer accumulating artwork as a spiritual good was able to achieve the end means of perpetuating a real market.

Here we can see the beginnings of Foucault’s theories on the development of power in social institutions. The beginnings of the art market as a comprehensive machine begin to take place, much like the *Panopticon* that Foucault describes. The *Panopticon* "is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up"(Foucault, Discipline, 202). The rise of the art dealer, paradoxically disindividualizes the art making process, creating a large bureaucratic process comprised of multiple agents and jobs.

Art dealers were crucial in the development of the art market as the builders and preservers of faith and trust, but they were only one of many jobs which arose from the expanding marketplace for art. Brian Massumi explains the importance of these two factors not only in the art market but also in the Church market, as they act as purveyors of spiritual

good. “Any state of system trust that emerges is just as effectively unjustified as it is rationally unjustified. It was not grounded in anything preparatory to action that could be qualified as in any way trustworthy. The transactions that worked out well and led to success proved themselves trustworthy. They became trustworthy, as a function of how they played out. The state of system trust is effectively self-justifying. It “justifies itself,” Luhmann writes, in the way that it has “become creative” (78): in the emergently creative way it is generated as a trust-effect of the economy’s complex self-organizing. The self-organizing emergence of the trust-effect is retroactively validating. It is affectively validating in the currency of satisfactions gained (loc. 375). Richard Polsky identifies art dealers as “prophets” (Polsky, 2011).

Art dealers can be likened to prophets because they understand the essence of the spiritual product itself through direct communication with the source of its mystique; namely, the artists. They are visionaries and tastemakers. They can support and understand their artists while pandering to and inspiring their collectors. Art prophets inspire hope for the artist masses and preserve a direct line of communication to their saviors. They discover work with a soul and deliver it with a historical context or story to selected believers. Their attraction is not limited to artists and dealers, but museum directors, critics, art school chancellors, and others in the culture industry. Foucault again explains the nature of this relationship as power which, “is not a renunciation of freedom, a transference of rights, the power of each and all delegated to a few” (220). Indeed, power is *not* the same as violence because the opposite pole of violence “can only be passivity” (220). By contrast, “a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that ‘the other’ (the one over whom

power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up" (220). In religion and the art market, prophets, as well as priests, are people who are connected to the supernatural or the divine. They speak for them, serving as an intermediary with their audience, supplying this newfound knowledge from the supernatural entity to all.

Bourdieu has very clear ideas that it is in fact authoritative agents who now create the creators. He says, "The ideology of creation, which makes the author the first and last source of the value of his work, conceals the fact that the cultural businessman (art dealer, publisher, etc.) is at one and the same the person who exploits the 'creator' by trading the 'sacred' and the person who, by putting it on the market, by exhibiting. Publishing, or staging it, consecrates a product which is 'discovered' and which would otherwise remain a mere natural resource; and the more consecrated he personally is, the more strongly he consecrates the work" (Bourdieu, 77). Bourdieu is using these religious terms such as consecrating and sacred to merge the concept of religious and artistic authority into an economy of spiritual capital. During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, art dealers developed an aura as redeemers, liberators, deliverers and preachers of art<sup>xxiii</sup>.

The art world prophet pointed to most often as the father of art dealers is Joseph Duveen (1869 – 1939) . Duveen embodied all of the qualities of persuasion, "impeccable taste" and ambition. He is responsible for delivering the glut of art being sold by the financially tight Europeans to the nouveau-riche Americans. "In 1882, the passage of the Settled Land Act reformed inheritance law in Great Britain. As a consequence of industrialization and the flooding of the European market with cheap American wheat, the fortune of British

landowners was in decline. After bankruptcies had begun to mount, the inheritance laws were changed, making it possible for the landowners to save their estates by selling their art treasures” (Boll, 19). In a simple supply and demand terms, Americans needed credibility through history and spiritual justification, and European art was the perfect vehicle to satisfy those requirements. Duveen’s success is attributed to his extensive network of connections, his understanding of fear, greed, and cultural insecurity, and self-promotion through charitable (and non-charitable) contributions. He operated, as a priest through the force of personality to inspire loyalty. Duveen understood the importance of location as much as he understood the psychological makeup of his buyers and sellers. Setting up in New York across from the Waldorf Astoria, he took advantage of wealthy travelers going back and forth to Europe.

John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Mellon, Henry Clay Frick, and William Randolph Hearst were among his most notable collectors; as their art inventories grew, so did the myth of American taste. Duveen’s main talents were speculation and the ability to take massive gambles. Both artists and the large American industrialists were able to appreciate these qualities and therefore invest in his stories. The importance of Duveen’s talents went well beyond financial gain for all involved. He and his clients were in the business of nation building, and the art museums built to house their collections of adopted European identities were powerful symbols of their new religion based on art, money, and power. “In addition, he was able to stir up enthusiasm among many industrialists for the idea of an American national foundation, which led incidentally to more collecting – the railroad, coal, steel, newspaper, automobile, oil, and bank millionaires regarded the acquisition of European masterpieces as an opportunity to assure the immortality of their names” (Boll, 21). A

prophet's ability to promise immortality and deliver the material evidence of it leads to the creation of American Museums whose primary functions were to preserve and honor the social accomplishments of a generation. Museums became the magnificent mausoleums of cultural identity.

Churches were harbingers of identity, and the art market followed suit. Cooperative but independent agents and their patrons communicated agendas to create new Cathedrals based on nationalism. "Romanticism was also readily applied to the modern project of the nation. This model of art was not simply about artistic genius but rather the power of art to recognize and exploit national genius" (Taylor and Francis, 38). The development of large-scale museums in the 19th century consolidated all aspects of a thriving art market into one mode of presentation. Museums acquired large physical spaces to display ceremonial symbols of power through a structure of cooperative agents while adhering to the discourse of disavowal which denied its market interests. The word museum was reintroduced from its Greek origins as "seat of the Muses" and was designed as a philosophical institution or a place of meditation and reflection. The words conjure up an image of a physical building preserving and displaying a collection for public use was solidified in 1753 by the British Museum. Its reference to Greek ideals signified a utopian dream through an architectural imposition on the city. By preserving the aura of a work of art for public consumption, a desire for cultural goods accelerated, resulting in the highest value of spiritual capital.

Museums were created to both exhibit the ideas of a nation and display the strength and wealth of its economic structures<sup>xxiv</sup>. "Museums are essentially collections of objects that reflect and convey a cultural heritage over time. Art museums preserve and present the artistic elements of that cultural heritage" (Heilbrun and Gray, 187). Preservation in both the

Church and the art market elevate the sustained object into a venerable icon. Works of art exhibited from other nations, signified the colonial acquisitions of an ever-expanding Empire and became an even more powerful source of pride for the ruling nations.<sup>xxv</sup> This nationalism was actualized through colonialism and plunder, as much as through religious duty and identity. The simultaneous trajectory of the art market and the Church again come to the forefront as each actively collect and protect physical symbols of superiority through art, archeological artifacts and curiosities. “Their job is to preserve, research, expand, and present collections. Thanks to their scholarship and their ability to define aesthetics – a function they took over from religious authorities as society became more secular – museums have some indirect influence on the art market, which transcends far beyond their role as buyers” (Boll, 40). The theories of the museum as new cathedral are not new, but the connection between the museums and Church’s economic policies have been widely overlooked. I will develop the historical roots of this parallel trajectory in this section, then unpack its significance in the current market in a later chapter.

James Silk Buckingham was the first to explicitly conceptualize the moralizing role of the museum in England. He believed that by cultivating the most refined aspects of man’s internal nature and his ability to rationally use the judgment of good taste, the identity of a nation could be built on a reformed morality. The public space of the museum was the ideal structure to nurture these private and public inclinations. “In these respects, then, high cultural practices formed part of an apparatus of power whose conception and functioning were juridico-discursive: that is, as Foucault defines it, of a form of power which emanating from a central source (the sovereign), deployed a range of legal and symbolic resources in order to exact obedience from the population” (Bennett, 590). It is significant to note that

museums collected symbols of power and utilized an existing power structure to appeal to already functioning ritualistic impulses in society.

The unifying elements the church used to create a mass appeal and the desire for proximity to the spiritual were reproduced in the original conceptions of the museum in three ways. First, the formulation of new rituals through codes of contact implemented control of the body. The public space of the museum was conceived by architects to control the flow and movement of the masses. People were to walk and observe a controlled narrative of representation. The dialogue was to be at a minimum or, even better, relegated to a contemplative internal monologue. The hushed tones of respect and structuralized temples of veneration lead to a reverence for both the institution and the objects within. Thus, a value was placed on the art works and its civilizing nature as a reflection of individual and national integrity. As a resource to governing institutions, museums were an invaluable tool in the economy of spiritual capital and the resulting desires of the consuming public. “Power relations within museums and galleries are skewed towards the collecting subject who makes decisions about space, time, and visibility; in other words, as to what may be viewed, how it should be seen, and when this is possible” (Greenhill, 247). Control became a necessary byproduct of the museum space flaunting imperial power, and this was very carefully followed by commercial influences over the well trained captive audience.

Horkheimer and Adorno address this process in *The Culture Industry*. The culture industry they refer to explains the commodification of culture through monopoly capitalism and its agency in the mass media. They explain that while the culture industry serves to control and dominate the masses, “autonomous” or “authentic” art has the ability to liberate society. An artwork could only remain outside of capitalism if it remained “functionless”,



thus creating an emphasis on form, rather than content. Adorno refers specifically to the “standardization” and “rationalization” of viewing artwork which destroys, not only the artist, but also the viewer’s ability to think critically and independently. In his explanation, artwork and the viewing experience of that artwork continues to strive for a model of maximum profitability through capitalism. The result is that our museum experience is meant for the masses, or the lowest common denominator. Therefore, a uniform social devoid of real emotion response is the only possible outcome. No challenges equate to a desensitized, albeit paying, audience.

In 1988, Noam Chomsky writes *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. While he is describing a very specific form of publicity and propaganda, we can find similarities between the media institutions in the United States and the function of public museums. He says, “(they) are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion” (302). When large institutions such as churches, museums, and the mass media use a language of denial, power, and authority Chomsky outlines the possibilities for both consent and control.

The Church and the art market developed these principles into an advanced method of spiritual commodification which promoted the social welfare of a nation in both language and appearance. Museums originated as places which could suspend and realign time and space through the accumulation of spiritual artifacts. “The museum takes objects off the market, effectively wiping out their commercial value. This is the foundation for a hermetic, non-commercial sphere that does not allow any interaction with the other side. All the same,

museums avail themselves of the art market, and not just when they acquire a work of art” (Boll, 40).

Karl Friedrich Schinkel may have done the most to foster the image of sanctity for art with his design of the museum in Berlin during 1820. “By detaching artworks from ritual, the museum recreates a new auratic status of art by placing it in a building that is set apart from the world, preserving art in specific places and times, set on pedestals, framed, and specially lit. Schinkel himself thought of the museum as a “sanctuary,” cordoned off from the other parts of life, and there was a great deal of debate over whether the new Berlin structure should be called a museum” (Adams, 2273). The function of museums is to collect and exhibit, but in so doing they have created an authoritarian narrative which is meant to provide answers to the questions of culture, identity, and history. Benjamin understood aura was produced by an object’s unique position in space and time. The museum promotes the feeling of a sacred space, and the veneration of objects preserved in time exude an aura due to their “originality”. The question then becomes, how these qualities are commodified? The commodification of these functions once again takes its cue from the Church.

The Church has a long history of selling time as a spiritual commodity. The meta-good of Christianity is an assurance of eternal salvation. Indulgences were created to buy less time in Purgatory and to speed believers transferal to everlasting time in Heaven. Burials were also a service under complete control of the Church as early as the 7th century. Members of the nobility were buried in individual crypts under the Church and were therefore recorded as permanent members of the city and Church history. Graveyards consecrated by the Church became not only burial grounds but also sites of the artistic production of stone memorials. “Owing to the acceleration of technological progress and the increasing average age of the

population, museums are taking on more significance, since they offer a place to pause for a moment and remember: the antithesis of acceleration and consciousness of approaching death” (Boll, 40). Therefore, museums borrowed their name, function, and economic viability directly from the church practices of commodifying time and space.

The decline of participation in the rituals of church life is directly opposed to the increase of individual involvement in museum exhibitions. “Moreover, museums, as a rule, consider themselves an alternative to the commercial art world, and on all levels of activity they insist on differentiating themselves and the expanding number of market-oriented events” (Boll, 40). By the early 19th century in USA, the conversion from private collections into private museums became common practice among the social elite. The Frick Collection, the Smithsonian, and many other great institutions became literal memorials to the people who spent their lives creating an identity for themselves through art.

A work of art occupies a dual status as a physical object held in a static state, seen by a viewer who witnesses the event taking place in the present, and a repository of knowledge or a system of belief. Like the Church economy, the art market exists concurrently as a unified whole and as the sum of a vast number of microeconomic systems working independent of each other but ultimately affected by the zeitgeist of its time. Each work of art has the potential to be a core of a mass of information, inviting spaces or concepts beyond the immediate matter of which it is composed “The highly ritualized way in which contemporary art is marketed is not just a matter of cultural camouflage; it is what the art market is actually about” (Velthuis, 52). As I argue, the roots of this discourse originated in the development of Church business structures because of their parallel trajectory in history.

From the High Middle Ages on, the art market developed alongside the Church, for both assumed the role of mythmakers and storytellers. As their modes were intertwined, they were able to develop simultaneous structures which are still in place today. Contractual agreements between the Church and artists in the High Middle Ages remain similar to the consignment agreements we are familiar with in the contemporary art market. Also, the art world's focus on land accumulation, such as the aggressive property acquisitions of the main art museums and galleries, is reminiscent of the Church's expansion by the same means during the High Middle Ages. The psychological power of the physical structures that have been erected by both the Church and the art world, in conjunction with a plan of monetary growth, continues to have an impact on the actual and perceived strength of the global art market.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Events in the Art Industry Upholding Ceremonial Symbols of Power**

We have established that spiritual capital is the power, influence, and value system created by the knowledge and practice of a belief system or narrative philosophy, but how does belief in the institutions producing spiritual capital become ingrained in our daily life? The economic success of art and religion hinges on its ability to enter the lived experience when we acquire art, but cultural events can also comprise a large part of the extraordinary occasions in our social environments. Art is lived and performed; it is both high and low, familial and individual. Various configurations of art market events and their corresponding spiritual overtones have created ceremonial symbols of power by using location and space to their advantage. “Since religious practices are inventive practices that create new artifacts and stories out of the old, often for their own survival, an examination of religious traditions must involve a perspective that retains a flexible approachable to account for the creative dimensions of myths, rituals, and symbols, even as they verge on the chaotic and complex” (Plate, 349). The cyclical nature of events on the international art calendar contributes to the economy of spiritual capital enhanced by a structure of cooperative agents, a rhetoric of disavowal, and an adopted physical manifestation. By taking over various forms of time and space, an implicit power structure of control occupied by a symbolic and spiritual capital came to be associated with the economy of art.

Foucault talks about the significant power of controlling time through ritual in *Discipline and Punish* by saying, “We must uncover our rituals for what they are: completely

arbitrary things, tied to our bourgeois way of life; it is good-and that is the real theater-to transcend them in the manner of play, by means of games and irony; it is good to be dirty and bearded, to have long hair, to look like a girl when one is a boy (and vice versa); one must put "in play," show up, transform and reverse the systems which quietly order us about" (Foucault, 12). He understood that ritual is powerful in shaping a social attitudes and philosophies as well as defining cultural realities. The symbolic images, practices, and actions that the art world has adopted have now become ingrained in the culture of art life. The identity and social reality of the art fair circuit, Thursday night art walks, blockbuster museum shows, and the art tourism industry signify power through participation. This chapter will break down these ritual practices and their origin in the religious calendar.

Kathleen Vohs and Yajin Wang of the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, along with Francesca Gino and Michael Norton of Harvard Business School, conducted a series of studies looking at how ritual changed the experience of consuming a variety of foods (Harvard Business Review, Halvorson, 2013). "How does ritual increase value? Vohs and her colleagues found evidence to suggest that personal involvement is the real driver of these effects. In other words, rituals help people to feel more deeply involved in their consumption experience, which in turn heightens its perceived value" (Ibid). The value for products consumed in a ritualized atmosphere in this study was almost double. This concept connects back a primary principle of value creation in the church and the art world: ritualized events as manufacturing sites for meaning, aura, or spiritual capital.

Rituals are performative operations which do and say specific things about the context in which they are implemented. Frequently, rituals are enacted with the help of

tangible objects. Rituals can be defined by anthropologists as “the cultural standardization of habitual activity” (Gudeman, 3). Liturgical rituals of many Christian Churches make use of every aesthetic device possible to activate the psychological connectivity of an individual to a larger group. The Reverend Thomas L. Weitzel instructs seminary students at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to utilize the following:

#### Our Lutheran Liturgical Tradition's use of Symbol-Ritual

1. Symbolic objects: Bread, wine, water, cross, altar, font, pulpit, book, candle
2. Symbolic colors: white, red, purple, blue, green, gold
3. Symbolic designs: fish, triangle, fleur-de-lis, three circles, Alpha-Omega
4. Symbolic actions: crossing oneself, reverence, kneeling, laying hands, anointing
5. Symbolic sounds: bells, organs, dull clap at Good Friday Tenebrae, Easter shouts
6. Symbolic smells: burning candles, incense

One of the most important factors in the establishment of spiritual capital is the disavowal of its monetary ties. However, the function of events in art and religious markets are to give permission for the profane exchange of art and money in specific times and places. The assumption that the Church or the art world can give or take away society’s ability to do business, or more importantly, that there are a limited amount of places and times to discuss the monetary significance of art, provides art industry players with a powerful tool to control spiritual capital. Despite the prevailing idea that the art market is without borders or beyond rules, events in the art world provide specific marketplace conditions which contribute to the art world’s narrative functions. How then do we theorize

the strength of the “purely economic” for activities that resist this determination because of the very definition of “spirituality”? Ritual events and the accompanying symbols they utilize may be the answer. It is a form of communication which circumnavigates explicit discourse through the control of body, space, and time.

A term popular in mapping the effects of art events on the art market is “Art Ecologies.” “One of the uses of the term is in presenting the relationships between an arts-funding body and its funded organizations, artists, and society in general. However, it brings a little more to the table in that the relationships can be mapped in regard a healthy spread and growth of benefits so that the ecology can be productive as a whole to maintain and enhance that vibrancy. How the movement of money, skills, access to resources and other factors occurs could also be mapped to make it a useful concept for arts and cultural planners and policy makers” (Du Cross and Joliffe, 14). Tracking the monetary impact of art fairs, museum shows, and gallery walks have become a common and accepted practice to understanding the cultural benefit for city placemaking objectives.

Market participants use the price system to communicate with each other. In functioning markets, price changes are meaningful utterances that express to individuals that the world has changed in some way and signals them to adjust their activities accordingly. As Horwitz pointed out in 1995, there are several connections between money and language. Both money and language, he writes, “mediate social processes ... money is the ‘medium of exchange’ ... while language is the ‘medium of experience’”. Austrians believe we can and do use prices to “speak” to one another in markets and that the market is a particular kind of extended social discourse” (Storr, 136). If the market is a place for communication, the tight



control of the space and time of market events effectively means you can control the narrative itself.

Market interactions, which function as a communicative language, are not exclusive to the art industry. There are historical and religious precedents for gaining narrative powers over specific spatial and temporal elements of market activity. Cyclical events and festivals in the ancient world gravitated towards agricultural celebrations and included offerings and performances to local deities. For Greek and Roman civilizations, poetry, song, drama, and sculptural elements were included and would draw crowds from outside the host city-state. Large gatherings of diverse people naturally led to market atmospheres for the exchange of specialty or exotic goods. Along with items relating to the festival, agricultural, and luxury goods would be available during allotted times. That a cyclical festival could create market activity is not an unusual concept.

The parable of Jesus expelling the money lenders from the temple does not serve as a condemnation of all financial activity in the Church, only the economic exchange of spiritual goods in the Church during a particular time:

13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep, and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!” 17 His disciples

remembered that it is written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.”<sup>18</sup> The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (NIV, John 2:13-19).

The Jewish Passover season was rich with tradition and rituals inside the city. Markets were a natural result, but the objection to money changing within the temple is very particular. Temples operated as business structures through gifts, tithes, and offerings of the items Jesus described such as cattle, sheep, and doves. These were goods to be freely offered, and the exchange of these potential offerings for physical coins negated the narrative structure of spiritual goods above economic value.

The history of the Church calendar year was established primarily by early Christians and expanded regionally through local customs and traditions. Pictorial representations emerge as early as the ninth century, but the symbolism and structure of the events were firmly established by the twelfth century (Henisch,4). The spread of Christianity through Europe codified a Church calendar which incorporated local customs and significant seasonal markers within the life of Christ. As events such as feast days and festivals moved into the fold of the Church, pictorial arts were commissioned along with the customary performance arts. Many of these days were assumed into the national calendar of European countries and still exist today. The consistent practice of religion and art through an established calendar will be of primary importance in both the determination of value and the adoption of an identity. “The calendar has traditionally consisted of two ‘cycles’ or groups of

commemorations: one pertaining to the Lord's Birth (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany), and the other pertaining to the Lord's death (Lent-Easter-Pentecost). These are also referred to as the Christmas and Easter Cycles, respectively. The entire year concludes, therefore, with the two original feasts of the pre-Nicene calendar, Pascha (Easter and Ascension) and Pentecost” (Scott David Foutz, *Quodlibet Journal*: Volume 1 Number 5, August 1999). The observances of Jesus’s life cycle in Europe corresponded with the symbolic agricultural births and deaths of pagan feasts. These seasonal markers were based less on divine revelation, and more on ecclesiastical law. Religious power could then control the observances of high holidays by the most financially lucrative points in the agricultural market. Because religious holidays in the Catholic tradition prohibited work and economic activity, preparatory consumption would be planned the week before in a frenzy of market exchanges. The holiday itself became a day of overconsumption and the celebration of gluttony.

In his studies of Rabelais and the carnival, Bakhtin explored the nature of religious festivals and their effect of reversing narratives. “Carnival is not contemplated, and strictly speaking, not even performed; its participants live in it they live by its laws as long as those laws are in effect; that is, they live the carnivalistic life. Because carnivalistic life is drawn out of its usual rut, it is to some extent “life turned inside out,” “the reverse of the world” (Bakhtin, 122). According to Bakhtin, there are four characteristics of a carnival which upend the usual order of life. There is permission to suspend hierarchical structures between people and there is “free and familiar contact among people” (Ibid, 123). Also, there is: “a new mode of interrelationships between individuals” which leads to the third category of eccentricity (Ibid).

Finally, “Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the high with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid (Ibid)” While Bakhtin praises this time of multivocality, it is important to remember how contained and controlled this environment still is. By relegating these activities to particular times and places, the overall narrative of the art and religious world’s place outside of monetary concerns is preserved. Festivals and feasts became a caveat to these principles. During these specifically marked religious holiday times, markets were established just outside of Church property but held by the permission of the Church.

Later, Martin Luther would condemn market activity inside the Church through the sale of indulgences. However, the business of the Church still needed to move forward. In addition to yearly observances, weekly services were installed on the Sabbath or Sunday. The congregation would gather to hear the Sunday sermon, but it was also a chance for the public to catch up, commiserate, strategize, and reconnect. “Another name for human capital is a habit. Psychologists and biologists have a way of explaining habit in terms of the physical body and nervous system developing routines, and this is all for the good. But in the economic view, it is also a mental process—a rational choosing of what is most beneficial and what costs less. As noted, one famous economist has quaintly called this ‘rational addiction’, which is a good or bad state of affairs depending on the object of consumption” (Witham, 763). This regular occurrence contributes to the generalized economy of spiritually based events, because again tithes and offerings - as gifts are freely given according to the Church law - are not in exchange for a material good.

The particular way the Christian Church appropriated this structure, and accordingly used the arts as a way to market and promote financial activity, points to their shared

historical economic narrative. Today, the Lutheran Church celebrates the control of time through ritual practice in much the same way. Again, from the seminary lectures of Rev. Witzel:

Church tradition provides a Church Year to help with choices

a. Rotation of seasons, lessons, colors, ritual, symbols

1' Rotation comes from earliest of days in Christianity

2' Ritual organization of seasons part of Judaism

3' Therefore participation in participation in ancient tradition

b. Rotation helps provide unifying elements for any given liturgy

c. Provides order and movement in the Christian life of worship

d. The Church year becomes one large ritual observance

1' From Christ's birth to Christ's resurrection

2' From prophecy and expectation to fulfillment and celebration

3' From high to low to high again

4' Mirrors life - provides hope - keeps us moving -

5' Keeps us connected - to God and fellow Christians also observing ritual

e. Ritual choices for consideration within the rotation

f. Don't forget the senses in planning the ritual

1' Sight - Bright/dark colors, veils, cross/crucifix, banners/none, greens

2' Sound - Music up/down/none, shouts, silence

3' Smell - Flowers/none, more/less candles, incense

4' Touch - oil, ashes, water

5' Taste - Red/white wine, un/leavened bread

The adaptation by the art market of a cyclical and permissive calendar of events also points to a performative function in the economic system. Spiritual capital can be defined as the power, influence, and a value system created by the knowledge and practice of a belief system or narrative philosophy. Under that assumption, the ceremonial symbols of power projected during art events directly correlate to the acceleration of financial gain for the art market which began in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Enlightenment marked a period of exploration for both science and the arts along with a decline in participation of traditional religious events. Correspondingly, European societies saw the establishment of World Fairs and art biennials. “The expositions and world fairs over the 1851–1939 period were often the only occasions that ordinary citizens would come into contact with unusual, avant-garde or spectacular artworks, and early arts and communication technologies. Auerbach has observed that expositions along with museums and art collections were robust mechanisms in the construction and representation of power relationships. Also, there was an unavoidable cultural text or subtext apparent in what was created, chosen and displayed. In particular, these events also allowed the opportunity for

countries to show off to exhibition visitors their supremacy in a particular field” (Ibid, loc 810).

World Expositions were vast and public displays of nationalism and cultural supremacy. “Paris’ first event of this kind, the Exposition Universelle in 1855, made the arts far more central (L’Art Nouveau 2013a). The third edition of this event, in 1889, attracted around 32 million visitors, 61,700 displays, and was held over 50 hectares in urban Paris, (L’Art Nouveau 2013b)” (Ibid., loc 870). Shortly after, the Venice Biennale was established as an art event which would draw an international crowd by carefully housing curated shows in national pavilions. Some of these fairs and exhibitions are currently running, and they birthed the modern-day commercial fair movement (which will be examined more carefully in the case study of Art Basel Miami). At first, large fairs were meant to celebrate the future and “the new” as opposed to the smaller folk festivals which were bound to tradition and religion. The move towards industrialization made such events feel out of sync with the constant momentum of modern life where commerce never stopped.

The Americas were a prime location for the growing trend to celebrate innovative and groundbreaking contemporary arts. “For instance, the Exhibition of Modern Art, held in New York’s Armory of the National Guard, 1913, held over 1,000 works of 300 avant-garde artists and also caused a storm of criticism and controversy” (Paglia, 2012). The public had not had much exposure to modern art prior to this time. The need to raise awareness and create a more sophisticated culture of art appreciation among the general public is possibly what spurred concerned cultural authorities to found the US Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in 1929. The first public exhibition opened in 1939 in New York” (Bazin, 1967). While the main concern of the 19th century was to establish America as a place of taste and

prestige through the purchase of European traditional arts and antiques, industrialization and the cultural capital associated with modern art set a new calendar rhythm for bourgeois society.

While art fairs, annual auctions, and the monthly gallery openings at private dealers set permissive boundaries on the context of buying and selling artwork through an established and expected rhythm of festival-like markets, museum shows were scheduled to counterbalance this activity in the sacred non-economic space. “The twentieth century also saw a huge and rapid development of new techniques of display (away from the salon style of ‘skied’ paintings and casually displayed sculptures to sparsely spaced ones in neutral settings); new values (aims of exhibitions had changed under the influence of individual curators, researchers and artists involved); influence of new museums (e.g. the Guggenheim Museum and MOMA in New York); new technologies (new arts, new ways of displaying arts and organizing content) and new diplomatic realities (cultural institutes, traveling exhibitions, cultural exchanges, arts and the beginning of soft relationships between countries). New techniques in display and global ambitions began turning one-off temporary exhibitions into circulating ones and eventually in some cases into international arts blockbuster extravaganzas. The first global traveling exhibition that could also be termed an ancestor of the current blockbusters was the ‘Family of Man’ photographic exhibition. It was curated by the Museum of Modern Art initially in New York in 1955 and then traveled around the world to be installed in various locations until well into the 1960s” (Ibid, loc 910). However, the cost of mounting and marketing these events to preserve the narrative of art beyond finance costs a significant amount of capital. Accordingly, museums have had to



recruit corporate sponsorship dollars, or elevate ordinary objects, to appeal to the buying public.

By controlling the place and time of money's entrance into the narrative, wealth in a museum becomes a celebration and justification. "Arts events are a natural part of the 'experience economy,' as promoted by Pine and Gilmore (1999), as they showcase the cultural rhythms or creative synergies of a particular place. The definition of such experiential encounters is still being developed in the literature about creative industries, events and arts experiences in a tourism context" (Du Cross and Joliffe, loc 410). Regularly, religious institutions distance themselves from market activity. I will follow the definition of "market" from economist Swedborg. "For Austrians, then, the market is a social structure or a spontaneous order which emerges as the result of the interplay of actions of various individuals who are both competing against each other for resources and cooperating with one another in the provision and distribution of goods and services" (Storr, 198). The marketplace for arts falls outside of the discourse of disavowal and can operate as its opposite. "This performative strategy of presenting art and money as 'allies', as 'natural' alliance, a relationship which elsewhere in the field of art would be regarded as a *mésalliance*, can only succeed when the 'nouveau' of the goods, the dealers, and the buyers confirm its appropriateness" (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, and Single, 15). Auction sales, annual art fairs, and weekly gallery openings operate under the same discourse of disavowal.

One of the first regularly scheduled marketplace events within the art world was the art auction of Northern Europe. "During the mid-sixteenth-century heyday of auction houses, Antwerp established a permanent art saleroom in the trade market and held weekly auctions at the *Vrijdagsmarkt* (Friday market)" (Robertson, loc 1058). Currently, Christies

Auction House has 53 offices in 32 countries worldwide. The auction house of today creates spiritual capital in the same way that the Medieval cathedral was able to. They have been able to develop an identity, tradition, and exclusive system of values. They have been a staple of the art world in London and New York City. The identity of Christies is strong, focused, and impermeable. The tradition of an art gallery is wonderfully ceremonial. In practice, attending an auction, even the most publicized, is an open event. You can call into the office for a paddle or attend just to be an observer. To get a paddle, you must provide bank references, personal credit history, and proof of funds. It has the illusion of being a democratic process. Unlike the galleries, who vet collectors for their ability to add value to their artists, at an auction house, you can gain access to the works of art if you have the deepest pockets.

The night of a major auction, the electricity is palpable. There are tense conversations, boisterous encounters, and lots of gossiping and air kissing. It is a social event, a place to see and be seen, much in the same way Sunday Church was in medieval England. After the ranks of people have found their seats, the nobility - the ones with the paddles - sit towards the front. The general admission tickets and the press can stand to watch the proceedings or are ushered into a side room with a large television screen. As the preacher or head auctioneer reaches the pulpit, a hush goes over the crowd and proceedings are promptly begun. It is the auctioneer's job to charge the room with energy, electricity, and communal awe. It is a highly controlled environment, a process perfected over time. Christopher Burge, head auctioneer of Sotheby's, explains, "We have this little army of trainers and voice coaches who watch us. We are videoed and given a 'crit' afterward, so

that we can stop using verbal tics, overused hand movements, and other mannerisms from slipping in” (Sarah Thornton, 6).

The ceremony begins with a few warm up lots. These are works that typically do not have the intrigue and power of the most publicized lots, which come towards the middle of the auction. Each work is presented individually and in a controlled and curated order of importance was deemed by the experts at the auction house. The headlining lot is unveiled three-quarters of the way through the auction, whereby the usually controlled crowd will begin their murmurs and discussions. The auctioneer will play off this excitement with dramatic effect, culminating at times in uproarious applause for higher-than anticipated prices or highly contested bidding wars. The crowd will then be gently led back down to civility.

This familiar structure illuminates the similarities between the early auction houses and the Lutheran church service requirements as listed previously. These ritualistic elements take the congregation from “prophecy and expectation to fulfillment and celebration” or “from high to low to high again.” As discussed in early chapters, the “collective witnessing” of the art markets strength and vibrancy led to “embedded” social scripts and actions which become practices and rituals (Heath, loc 618). “The concept of embeddedness serves to powerfully promote the interconnectedness and interrelationality that underpins market activity and treats coordinated, collaborative action as embodied in, and deriving from, common understandings and shared cognitions that can become, as Abolafia (1996) suggests, institutionalized. Callon (1998) suggests that the ‘notion of social network or more broadly embeddedness’ provides a vehicle with which to address the question of coordination in market activity, social interaction, the ‘primitive reality’ that underpins market activity and

lies ‘beneath the contracts and the rules’” (Ibid, loc 620). Many discuss the cultural embeddedness of economic commercialization, but I propose that there is an economic embeddedness in cultural institutions, using ritual to create spiritual capital.

In comparing the ritual of art auctions to the Lutheran Church ritual obligations of service structures, we find many striking similarities, all of which contribute to the emotional and financial investment of the attending group. There is, first of all, an annual rotation to anticipate every year which “helps provide unifying elements for any given liturgy” (Ibid). While the church rotates seasons based on the life of Christ (i.e. Advent, Lent, Epiphany, etc.), auctions houses base their events by categories with biannual dates. For example, the Post-War and Contemporary sale are always held the first week of November and May. In this way, the “Church year becomes one large ritual observance” and “provides order and movement in the Christian life of worship” (Ibid). The future pastors in this seminar are instructed just like junior associates at an auction house. “Don’t forget the senses in planning ritual”(Ibid). Aesthetic and atmospheric attention is paramount to providing an experience that “keeps us connected – to God and fellow Christians also observing” (Ibid).

Rituals in the religious and art markets trigger the economic principle of sacred consumption. This is a force in the advertising or marketing realm, where individuals consume objects during events only because they are presented as special or separated from normal life. They may be treated with respect or awe and become mythologized or treasured due to the unique immediacy of their appearance in time and space. The paintings presented at an art auction fulfill these exact market conditions and as a result are valued greater than ordinary objects. This is the exact social observation Walter Benjamin made when he said there is “a desire of the present-day masses to get closer to things” (Benjamin, 105).

The international art fair evolved from the most critical biennials developed during the middle of the 19th century. Another kind of event is the periodic international art fair or exhibition that only deals with the arts, especially visual arts. “The first of these (and still ongoing) is the Venice Biennial International Art Exhibition first held in 1895. It is the oldest periodic contemporary art exhibition in the world, and one of Italy’s most prestigious cultural events. It is also one of the first arts events to develop commercial practices still used by many international exhibitions, art fairs and biennales elsewhere today” (Ibid, 28). Art Basel and its subsidiaries entered into the more merchant driven format much later but has had a recent and rapid proliferation due to competition from auction houses, the globalization of the art market, and the new demand for contemporary art as a speculative investment class. “However, for the visual arts, the proliferation of contemporary art fairs is the clearest evidence of the increasing importance of market structures (Bagdadli and Arrigoni, 2005). These fairs have been the commercial rivals of the great periodic exhibitions since the 1960s. Contemporary art fairs, such as Art Basel (in Switzerland, Miami, and Hong Kong) and the Dubai Art Fair are now fixed dates on the international art calendar and herald the latest trends for the market. In addition to the conventional offering of participating galleries and their works, these fairs are now offering various ancillary events, which are more cultural than commercial to build up the loyalty of private collectors and art critics in particular” (Du Cros and Joliffe, loc 1060). While the art market usually operates under the veil of privacy, Art Basel allows for Bakhtin’s carnival principles of free and familiar contact among people. Attempts to prevent the social camaraderie of aristocratic art collectors and spectators have resulted in failed attempts to separate admission times for VIP, VVIP, and most recently, VVVIP admission.

The statistics point to the growth of this trend and its overall health for the global art market:

- Sales made at art fairs accounted for a reported 40% of all dealer sales in 2014 or an estimated €9.8 billion, the second largest sales channel after in-gallery transactions (McAndrew, TEFAF Report 2015).
- In 2014, sales of art online were estimated conservatively to have reached €3.3 billion, or around 6% of global art and antique sales by value (McAndrew, TEFAF Report 2015).
- Art fairs were again the second largest item of expenditure at €2.3 billion or 19% of the total, despite only being incurred by dealers (McAndrew, TEFAF Report 2015).

Again, as with other critical sectors of the art market, descriptions of Art Basel have been conflated with religious overtones. “The Art Basel is more than just a fair in the commercial sense of the word, more than just a temporally and spatially concentrated gathering of dealers offering their goods for sale to interested buyers. It is at the same time the site of the ‘holy’ goods in the presence of thousands and thousands of believers, a pilgrim’s goal for the ritualized adoration of traditional relics of art history and the forecourt of the consecration of their contemporary manifestations” (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, and Single, 7). The message to both critics and supporters persists in its proximity to institutional religious events. “It is all a façade, a ringing of bells at the start and end of the event conventionalized as a ‘High Mass,’ which asserts its ‘sacred’ significance through a totally worldly baroque, the ornamentation of its ‘profane’ significance” (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, and Single, 25).

Taking this one step further, not only is the place and time of the market narrative regulated and controlled, but the actual message as well. Money, per se, is again disassociated from the spiritual good itself and placed solely on the message of the event. “The self-presentations of Art Basel, its messages, ultimately function like the advertisements of a luxury product, whose quality exhausts itself more or less in the continuous assertion of its quality and in the continuous reference to its uniqueness and exquisiteness” (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, and Single, 18). To be sure, the celebration of record-breaking prices and museum quality work selling for astronomical amounts is published in the permissive spirit of a carnival, but the overall messaging focuses on the financial success of the fair itself.

Bakhtin's understanding of the carnivalesque in today's society points to a fundamental understanding of the monetary role of ritual for Benjamin as well. “The masses aren't becoming secularized; they are instead reformers who must deconsecrate that which has been built up with too much aura and made inaccessible. Sacredness is the result of a process of consecration, yet paradoxically, to access the sacred, a certain level of deconsecrating must take place. And in the history of religions, one of the places deconsecrating seems to occur is alongside new technological developments of media” (Adams, 2661). Art fairs are not a break from the status quo radicalizing the relationship between art and money. Art fairs are performing the same function as carnivals. They pull down the veils of secrecy, they expose connections, they allow for a break in tradition, and art fairs enjoy a relaxation of morals and decorum. In short, it signals another marker in religious history: The Reformation.

Benjamin reflects on ritual as tradition and its effect on the art object itself. He says that the work of art is “in service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind” (Benjamin, 226). Howard Caygill reflects that, “Aura is inseparable from ritual, and preserved in it; ritual, as Benjamin later defines the term, is a form of technology, a means of organizing and controlling the environment. The ritual origin of art is preserved, until the decline and crisis of ritual in the modern period whose implications are sensed in the work of art, and whose crisis ‘has become evident a century later’” (Caygill, 105). Ritual, in Benjamin’s context, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, art’s freedom from ritual allows it to truly be itself, but once ritual is eliminated aura also disappears. More dangerously, “instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics” (Benjamin, 226).

Art fairs democratize the art world. After the VIP days, they open the gates for the masses to participate in the spectacle of art. The art fair’s most radical development is that it brings art to the masses. One no longer needs to buy a plane ticket to New York or London. Instead, places like Calcutta can host the world’s best art galleries in their cities, reversing the structure of power. Art gallerists must make the most significant financial investment and shoulder the risk of traveling to an unfamiliar city. To make back their investment, they must interact with as many clients as possible and even strike deals, eliminating the mystery of the art deal itself. Finally, they must strip away the pretenses of exclusivity because so many of the best Art Fairs are held in conference centers, or, in the case of Art Hamptons, in a field at a working farm. Benjamin’s essay on “The Work of Art” points to the role of technology, mass appeal, and consumer demands. “The result was a mass movement that craved proximity to the sacred. Traditions, the masses were able to bring things closer, thus



displaying their desire to detach sacred objects from their traditions and make them accessible in the here and now. These two examples plucked from religious history, are undoubtedly too brief to provide full evidence, but it should not be too controversial to suggest how the impulse to reform is part and parcel of religious traditions themselves: Reform is indigenous in religion, and reform is reliant on changes in material culture. Religions do not survive through their conservation (their conservatism), but through their adaptability, and it is translations in media that bring this about, allowing more people access to the sacred” (Adams, 2744). The current reform of religion is the worshiping and ritualizing of art. The focus on its commodity and financial aspects attempt to make it accessible by desacralizing it. The new emphasis on the virtual could be its next reforming act.

The narrative of the blockbuster museum show elevates the art object out of its commercial form and neutralizes it again as an object of pure contemplation. “Museums can be regarded as cultural sites in that they are culturally demarcated spaces of concentrated, meaning involving a degree of culturally regularized collective performance (cf. Duncan 1995). Furthermore, they involve a particular kind of, and interplay between, authoritative knowledge (science) and enchantment (magic) – an interplay which, to some extent varies across time and space, and across different kind of museums and their relatives” (Macdonald, 210). While the gallery openings, art fairs, and auction events permit a controlled environment of market activity, the museum show again removes the art object from its monetary shackles and freely distributes it to the public gaze.

The creation of aura, not only around the object of art but around the museum itself, is the most valuable asset in the process of commodification. “The magic consists of both

the relatively calculated enchantment of museums and aesthetic exhibitionary strategies used to attract the visitor – and also the magical excess provided by the objects, which allows the visitors to read their own ‘occult’ (in the sense of alternative to Holy Truth) meanings into that which is displayed” (MacDonald, 213). However, the temples of art have been recently inundated by concerns of the mundane and secular world of money. Blockbuster shows featuring motorcycles, dresses, and advertising copy makes the historically significant work of art encompass any and all aesthetic mediums. I argue that the monetization of the museum was built into its very structure. Curated exhibitions, donor bequests, and museum blockbuster events utilize the powerful symbols of life and death was standardized by the early Christian Church.

Benjamin addresses aura inside the machine of the art world by separating it into two categories. Art now has ‘cult value’ or ‘exhibition value’. “In the prehistoric era, the situation of the work of art’ was characterized by an ‘absolute emphasis on its cult value; it was first and foremost an instrument of magic without any exhibition value’. In the modern period, by contrast, there takes place a ‘qualitative transformation’ of the polarity towards an exclusive emphasis upon exhibition” (Caygill, 106). This statement falls closer in line with my supposition that aura can travel in the space between the art object and the viewer. Furthermore, its strength and perceived value is directly related to the system which it has entered. An altarpiece once used in a cathedral, but now on display in a museum can have an air of aura about it when it is given a privileged place in that museum, it is part of a special ticket price, it has had critics write about it in the New York Times and other newspapers and journals. All of these conditions may not enhance the aura itself but does significantly increase its spiritual capital.

The first symbol employed in the commodification of events is the architecture of the site itself. Afterlife and burial practices were an important part of almost all prehistoric societies. Christian burial rites were adopted partially from Roman pagan traditions; in many cases, cemeteries, mausoleums, and churches were built directly over ritual burial grounds. For example, Constantine built the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. The Rotunda of the Resurrection was built on the spot believed to be where Christ was buried, and many more structures around the ancient world were built to replace temples and commemorate saints and martyrs. The very structural makeup of the basilica was taken from the mausoleum built for Constantin's daughter Constantina, who died in the year 354. The church of Santa Constanza in Rome became not only the plan for other churches, but for many baptisteries as well.

The architecture shared by Christian churches and museums is one powerful symbol which leads to the sort of trust and legacy security needed for wealthy patrons to bequest large collections. "The Church was the monopoly provider of a pure credence good. The credibility of Church courts, the validity of canon law, the acceptance of the Church was divinely sanctioned arbiter of earthly disputes, and the ultimate trust in the Church's various commercial commitments, all derived from the credibility of the religious doctrines promulgated gated by the Church of Rome" (Robert B. Ekelund, 363-365). Architecture symbolized the power and longevity of an earthly investment in the church, and soon museums followed suit. They did not copy the architecture of the Church, however, but the religious temples which predated Catholicism. The scientific discoveries of the early 19th century necessarily disassociated itself with outward signs of conviviality with the church.

Nevertheless, the market motivations and commercialization of these structures were borrowed from the Church.

The “pseudomorphosis” of the art museum as a modern church has obvious implications for comparative studies. They are both large cavernous structures, built with quiet veneration and preservation in mind. Praise and worship come together in these institutions to portray a feeling of community solidarity and social connection. However, the art museum as a protagonist in the narrative of the art world’s business landscape is what is primary. As “non-profit” entities, the church and the art museum must survive and acquire value outside of the realm of profit. Martha Buskirk explains in *Creative Enterprise: Contemporary Art Between Museum and Marketplace*, “Too often there is a double agenda at work, with art based on a close mimicry of all manner of goods and services asserted as self-conscious critique, at the same time that such work is pursued in a highly businesslike fashion, with an eye to maximizing actual dividends. Yet, even in the face of the organization of art museums in conformation with business models, as well as resemblances between artistic creation and other forms of celebrity, branding, and commodity production, the notion of art as a privileged sphere of activity remains a dearly held and indeed essential tenet” (loc, 114).

Building trust through outward displays of symbolic power was imperative, but the real prize for both the museum and church alike was the commitment to the institutions in the life beyond. The sale of indulgences for purgatory expanded the Church’s control of life and death and hit its pinnacle in the years before the Reformation. Relatives were encouraged to contribute to the forgiveness of sins of their loved ones, perpetuating the culture of atonement through monetary gifts. In fact, one attractive element of Protestantism was the

lower cost of life and death rites. Parishioners benefited from simple rituals and relatively low costs in comparison to the number and complexity of Roman Catholic rites.

“Indulgences also widened consumption alternatives for the faithful by providing the choice of paying for sins with money rather than with deeds” (Ekelund, 2178). The art world equivalent to the sale of indulgences could be the practice of bequests. Many wealthy patrons are asked to commit parts of their collection to museums or auction houses while they are still living. The decisions to donate, bequest, or sell artwork marks the end of the life cycle for the collector, but the attachment of the owner’s provenance will remain with the piece forever continuing his or her legacy with the everlasting work of art.

By the twelfth century, Church treasures were bolstered by the explicit request of the Church to bequeath all earthly wealth at the time of death to “ease the path to heaven” (Ekelund, loc 261). This practice was adopted exactly into the museum’s practice of accepting and even pursuing art collections from wealthy patrons at the time of their death. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City has thoroughly commodified and publicized their requests for “planned giving”. Their website directly addresses both the financial and social benefits of estate planning with the Met in mind:

- Appreciated securities are an excellent way of funding many of these gifts, often unlocking greater income while eliminating, or at least reducing, capital gains tax. (See the Planned Giving Glossary for a definition of the capital gains tax and other relevant terms.)
- Donors who contribute through a planned gift or make a provision for the Museum in their estate plans are eligible to join The Met William Society.

- Our Flickr collection includes photos from recent The Met William Society events.  
(<http://www.metmuseum.org/join-and-give/donate/planned-giving>)

The website further breaks down multiple options for giving along with their particular benefits for “bequests, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, retirement assets, life insurance, and pooled income funds.” It even includes handy tools to make contributing as easy as possible with a “Planned Giving Calculator” and a “Planned Giving Glossary.” To say that a museum has adopted posthumous giving as part of their business structure would be an understatement. Katherine Ford of *The Guardian* makes the argument that museums are already a social enterprise which other firms should seek to emulate. “The evidence on the ground is powerful – museums demonstrate an impressive array of profitable income streams and cost saving measures that most ‘not-for-profit organizations’ can only dream of” (<https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/jul/23/museums-social-enterprises-finance-development>).

Not only have museums borrowed the commodification of death and the events that surround it, but they have also recognized and underscored their new role as harbingers of faith and morality. Buskirk believes, “The museum as mass medium is Andreas Huysen’s characterization of the institution that has emerged, not from the museum’s triumph over the avant-garde, but a form of reversal, which he characterizes was the Pyrrhic victory of the avant-garde over the museum” (loc 322). Others such as Nicholas Bourriaud point to the commoditization of experience as new phenomena in the art world and specifically in the museum. As the previous research has shown, the Church and the art industry included the economy of the event from their inception. Recent event and situation-driven works

championed by Bourriaud under the banner of relational aesthetics de-emphasize the object for audience experience and participatory exchange<sup>xxvi</sup>. While Bourriaud draws a contrast between the continuous availability of art objects and the establishment of ephemeral situations where the artist summons the audience, museum success, in the business sense, this is predicated on parlaying the cult of the original into selling the museum as overall experience and the visit as "event" (Buskirk, 327). Museums and the events they celebrate use symbols of social power to create a cultural context under which economic consumerism flourishes. The mass appeal and participation in such events requires a commitment and provides a sense of inclusion inside an exclusive system of culture.

## CHAPTER 8

### **Structure of Cooperative Agents**

I maintain that both the art market and organized religion function through the same economic principles of operation: the acquisition of physical space, a structure of cooperative agents, an exclusive application of customary practices, and the use ceremonial symbols of power through events. Similarly, the Postmodern art world has become a globalized entity made up of individualistic movements and fractured doctrinal structures. What binds these diverse groups together is the economic structure in which they operate and the exclusive language they speak. Much like the complicated edifice of institutionalized Christian religiosity, the art world today relies on a structure of cooperative but independent agents to perpetuate the value of art. Individual churches, dioceses, national councils of bishops, religious orders, houses of those religious orders, institutions like schools and hospitals, and the Vatican itself were historically at once interrelated and institutionally, ideologically centralized by operationally multi-pronged and locally self-governing system. Policies and procedures handed down over generations have been adopted and implemented in different ways, depending on geographic location, cultural traditions, and state and federal laws. Financial laws and requirements for religious institutions in the United States take a very hands-off approach, allowing a very distinctive sub-market to develop in both the Catholic tradition and the Protestant sectors.

Similarly, the term “art world” does not designate a well-organized financial structure secured by set rules and transparency. Art world players independently fill their commercial



and symbolic roles without bringing attention to the economic portion of their responsibilities. However, one thread ties these empires of commerce together. Both institutionalized religion and creative economies operate with relative autonomy creating an aura and enchantment which feeds desire by capitalizing on the mysterious nature of spiritual goods sold by intermediary players. “Whatever else it may be, if we grant that enchantment is a human way of knowing, we should not be surprised at the desire among artists and scores of the public to make and appreciate art that involves spiritual meaning. What is perhaps more surprising is that many art critics, art school professors, and art historians should express contempt for art that intends to do so and viewers that welcome it. In the quest to control the profession, they exert a disenchanting influence, limiting art and its interpretation to their expertise. It is, after all, what professional guilds do” (Taylor and Francis, 17). As outlined earlier, denying the capital nature of the art market is a powerful tool in controlling narrative, judgement, and taste of the consumer/audience. Deleuze addresses this concept in his *Essays Critical and Clinical*, “Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring into existence and not to judge. If it is so disgusting to judge, it is not because everything is of equal value, but on the contrary because what has value can be made or distinguished only by defying judgment. What expert judgment, in art, could ever bear on the work to come?” (135). The entire concept of judgement as outlined by Kant has been stripped from the viewer, consumer, and critic and is now in the hands of the collective whole. We judge a work to be good if it has a certain price, is in a prestigious collection, or is housed in a prominent museum. It’s placement and narrative determine its judgement.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Not only is the collector controlled through the narratives of the art world, but also the workers inside the art production machine. In Deleuze’s *Negotiations* he is quoted as

saying, “We're strict functionalists: what we're interested in is how something works” (21). Again, this is in opposition to Kant’s more metaphysical explanation of judgement. He says, “The power of judgment’s concept of a purposiveness of nature still belongs among the concepts of nature, but only as a regulative principle of the faculty of cognition, although the aesthetic judgment on certain objects (of nature or of art) that occasions it is a constitutive principle with regard to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (Kant, 45). The art market has kept the language of spirituality for fine art, but it’s operational actualities are functionalist in nature based primarily on the function of cognition. He says, “[To think for oneself] is the maxim of a reason never passive. The tendency to such passivity, and therefore to heteronomy of reason, is called prejudice; and the greatest prejudice of all is to represent nature as not subject to the rules that the understanding places at its basis by means of its own essential law, i.e. is superstition. Deliverance from superstition is called enlightenment; because although this name belongs to deliverance from prejudices in general, yet superstition especially (in sensu eminenti) deserves to be called a prejudice. For the blindness in which superstition places us, which it even imposes on us as an obligation, makes the need of being guided by others, and the consequent passive state of our reason, peculiarly noticeable” (49).

Spiritual capital also has the ability to enter this world of existence by creating vocational opportunities. The art business consists of a broad range of entry points that have the ability to make money from spiritual enterprises. It is selective, exclusionary, and utilizes all other forms of capital. Moreover, there is a vocabulary of humility and self-awareness in all matters of spiritual capital. Again, the notion of disavowal towards financial gain plays an important part, not only in the public perception of spiritual capital but as a characteristic

of spiritual capital as well. Presumably, if an artist or priest has been able to tap into an everlasting currency, they have a metaphysical understanding beyond all of the base motivations of human operations. This is why their visions and voices are so highly regarded as being of leadership quality. Morals and values are something that can be universal and thus unify enormous amounts of individuals under one vision. Once there is a group identification, there has to be an “other.” “It is easy to understand why the barefaced appearance of money in this scenario seems disturbing, even shameless. We are, however, faced here in the first place with a very classical script. Modern art, as we wish to know and experience it, has lived since the end of the nineteenth century from precisely this realized myth, from a repression of the economic world, from its increasingly radical distancing from the demands of the state, of bourgeois taste, all kinds of decorative and affirmative needs – and it can only be converted into money when “worldly” tastes have been submitted to the aesthetic regime” (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, Single, 7). Stemming from the traditions of Kant’s disinterested pleasure in the fine arts, we know that an appreciation of art was predominantly an aristocratic indulgence<sup>xxviii</sup>. Those with the time, education, and means were seen as most able to experience the pleasure that came from viewing art.<sup>xxix</sup> Money was associated with the working class, and the twentieth century was a time of shifting perspectives from “bourgeois” taste to mass appeal in the art market.

While art’s articulation value is evident at numerous points between the Middle Ages through today, the message that art has surpassed religion was the doctrine of our time begs for a closer examination. Sharing a related business model, the Church and art world’s financial structures both picked up the story of redemptive faith in the unknown with one significant change: diversification through open interpretation. The search for “truth,” or

what may be beyond the truth of reality, results in control of a unified metanarrative and a defense of specialized knowledge. Greenberg and others have glorified the Modern distinction between “high” and “low” art by dividing it into two factions. Those with an education in art hold a form of cultural power, while the purchasing strength of the masses is inverted as a weakness in the work of art itself. This binary divides the subject/object relationship in an inequitable and unrelated way. If you understand the historical and contemporary lexicon of art, you are in possession of a powerful language; however, if you are part of a majority group who appreciates a particular type of art, your particular aesthetic judgment is devalued. The perception of an exclusivity on truth and beauty seem to empower the cooperative agents involved in the art industry.

An exclusive language and a historical knowledge of art are unifying factors for professionals in the art world beginning with the artist/creator and spreading through each subsequent gatekeeper. Alternatively, Nietzsche explains, “We have art in order not to die of the truth” (Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 16). Until the challenges of the Enlightenment, the Church packaged the truth, delivered the message, gained trust and widespread support in its message, performed the message, gained authority over the message, and made it consumable for a broad public. Peter Brown’s research in “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity” points to the role of the early Christian ascetics who found patronage in the Roman Empire as those with exclusive connections to God. The role of the mediator who intercedes on behalf of those who can pay for the service became one critical part of the early Christian Church’s financial operations. The Church’s metanarrative was adopted by the art world and became the Romantic notion that art itself reveals truth, or transports us past the truth of reality, through its aura or spirit. While observation, or even

being in the presence of art, can achieve the desired effect, it is assumed that the acquisition and possession of art ironically gets one closer to the metaphysical. For that, mediators are needed to guide consumers to the most spiritual object. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how these cooperative agents and their inherited roles are financially connected to the intention of, and value of, their spiritual goods.

Sarah Thornton's *Seven Days in the Art World* is a successful book with a following from art world insiders, higher educational institutions, and the broader public. Thornton's book followed in the same footsteps as Howard Becker's *Art Worlds* but gave the outline of an organized art world a contemporary and anecdotal spin. Her book identifies six occupations in the art world that contribute to a more organized structure. Artists, collectors, gallery dealers, museum curators, critics, and auction house experts round out the top echelon of decision makers in today's cultural landscape. However, she claims that the art world and the art market are separate entities. "The market refers to people who buy and sell works (that is dealers, collectors, and auction houses), but many art world players (the critics, curators, and artists themselves) are not directly involved in this commercial activity on a regular basis... It is a 'symbolic economy' where people swap thoughts and where cultural worth is debated rather than determined by brute wealth" (Thornton, loc 35). In this chapter, I will directly challenge this claim by linking the same players in an economic system which owes its structural composition, symbolic significance, and resulting financial strength to a system of spiritual capital. This follows much the same pattern developed by organized religion centuries before artworks identified with individual genius circulated in market economies.

The economy of aesthetic experience shared in the art world and the Nicene Christian

tradition is situated “in a dialectic between material culture and the creative human activities of religious practice. As such, aesthetic experience cannot be bracketed out as an autonomous realm of human religious existence because it always exists in a dialogical relation with language, cognitive capacities, religious practices, political ideologies, technological developments, and economic conditions” (Plate, 265). By examining the story of “truth” and its supposed spiritual infallibility in each art world role, I will be able to show a subsequent accumulation of value in its produced good: the artwork itself.

Those involved in the art market maintain a storyline of holy transcendence through their own historically acquired scripts. Aura, or spiritual value, in the work of art is born through the “artist as genius” and is preserved and venerated in the museum. The journey of this work is guided through the art world by players who embed the work of art with their particular form of enchantment, which becomes the work’s provenance, or record of ownership.

While many sociological studies like Bourdieu’s have informed the nature of this structure, few have been able to understand the dialectical character, and its material result which binds the various players in this social construct together. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu defines his map of the art world as a field which is “an objectively defined position defined by its objective relationship with other positions” (231). Bourdieu even rejects the idea that the work of art neutralizes or becomes available to all social groups when it is appropriated or displayed in a public museum. He believes the work of art is a language engaged only when the viewer has the social position or access to higher levels of education to be able to understand it. Only when they acquire the necessary tools for translation are they able to enter into a relationship with that work of art. Bourdieu takes language to be not

merely a method of communication, but also a mechanism of power. The language one uses is designated by one's relational position in a field or social space. He believes different uses of language tend to reiterate the respective positions of each participant. Bourdieu supposes that “access to works of art cannot be defined solely in terms of physical accessibility, since works of art exist only for those who have the means of understanding them” (Ibid, 22). In saying this, Bourdieu is not saying that art is a purely aesthetic experience, but he points to the social and ideological aspects of a work of art as well.

Later, Sara Thornton describes the players and their jobs on this field and also acknowledges the widespread convention that “contemporary art has become a kind of alternative religion for atheists” (loc. 48). However, she does not explore the implications of this analogy about the regulation of art's financial value. Instead, she has woven a narrative of independent agents in the art field connected through the journey of the work of art through distinctive perspectives. I argue that all the layers in the art world are connected by market driven values, beginning with artists and ending with museum curators.

The artist is the first protagonist in the genealogy of art's sacred value. An artist's ability to perceive the world and recreate it for the sensory perception of others has long been a point of speculation in the history of aesthetics. The philosophical and moral question of humans' ability to create, and what that creation could become, has both secular and religious roots. God is credited by the desert monotheisms with creating the world from a chaotic, formless void, and the ability to make tangible the intangible captures the essential core of both art and religion. Our current understanding of the artist creator rests upon a historical lineage, but it also shapes a work's current market valuation and its circulation. The secular West's understanding of art's value is a consequence of the role art played in early modernity

and before in articulating religious values and claims.

The vision of the artist as creator of truth inspired an eschatological hope through Romanticism and entered the formal canons of art history. “Romanticism spawned several traditions of thought and art that became part of the genealogy of art and religion. I count at least five— art’s relation to the spiritual progress or impoverishment of civilization; the beauty of nature as the signature of an underlying spiritual reality; the spiritual in art; the revival of religious art; and the quest to use art to plumb the national soul” (Taylor and Francis, 35). The Romantic notion of *genius loci* referred to a protective spirit of place. Early Christians adopted the idea that place could be inhabited by spirit. As artists worked inside the cathedrals through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the idea that God inspired supernatural miracles of creation through the artist became commonplace. As artists traveled further away from the production of spirit in the Church structures, the notion of genius traveled with them. The framework of aesthetic and cultural values allowed the individual to possess extraordinary and unreproducible talents labeled as genius, which manifested itself into the object of art as aura. Romantic writers such as Winckelmann popularized this notion by claiming, to some degree, that an encounter with creative genius could transfer an element of spiritual enlightenment on the viewer. “Implicit in Winckelmann’s cult of antiquity was a spiritualized response to art, an enrapt visual piety in which the work of art emerged as an expression of genius. The act of viewing became the epiphany of genius experienced empathetically by whoever had cultivated the taste or aesthetic capacity for such rapture. Winckelmann inaugurated a strong disposition in European cultural history to spiritualize art, to recognize in it a powerful cultivation of inner life and taste” (Taylor and Francis, 32). As artists are increasingly able to connect to their



users and patrons through the networks of social media, they are also crafting their own stories and personas. It remains to be seen if that transition takes the artist status back to craftsman selling their specialized work.

The spirit of genius was a desirable quality which could civilize nations, and this concept gained traction with Karl Philipp Moritz in 1785 and in 1790 with Emmanuel Kant. “I return the purpose from myself to the object itself: I behold it as something perfected in itself, not in me. [This perfection] constitutes a whole in itself, and grants enjoyment to me of its own will, inasmuch as I extend to the beautiful object not so much a relation to me as much as my relation to it” (Elkins, 32) This perception of what Moritz called “inner purposiveness” (several years before Kant borrowed the idea) led the viewer to a “forgetting” of the self in the contemplation of the work of art is also echoed by Schopenhauer *In the World as Will and Idea*<sup>xxx</sup>. This loss of the self, according to Moritz, was “the highest degree of the pure and selfless enjoyment that the beautiful provides us. In that moment, we offer up our individual, circumscribed existence for a kind of higher existence. Engrained in this understanding of aesthetic experience is an ethics of encounter that seems mystical. Aesthetic contemplation is a form of transcendence and revelation, a communion with a higher being” (Taylor and Francis, 32-33).

The random and exclusive character of genius artists drove the limited supply and demand nature of the art industry. Fewer artists made it past the rigorous qualifications of the gallerists and their collectors, making elitism a necessary byproduct of the art economy. Post-war art world operated as a business with very few untrained or uninitiated artists making it through the ranks. In fact, those who did achieve success outside of the prescribed art school, graduate school, on the starter gallery model were deemed outsider artists.

“Artisan, genius, professional: underlying all these models is the market. In blunter terms, they’re all about the way that you get paid. If the artisanal paradigm predates the emergence of modern capitalism—the age of the artisan was the age of the patron, with the artist as, essentially, a sort of feudal dependent—the paradigms of genius and professional were stages in the effort to adjust to it. In the former case, the object was to avoid the market and its sullyng entanglements, or at least to appear to do so. Spirit stands opposed to flesh, to filthy lucre. Selling was selling out. Artists, like their churchly forebears, were meant to be unworldly” (William Deresiewicz, *The Atlantic*, January/February 2015). Art world institutions now conflate the conflicting notions of money and spirit through mediation and presentation. The market demands an encounter with the divine, but because the divine does not exist in the market, cooperative agents must intervene.

While now considered creative entrepreneurs, the job description of the artist remains the same. Upholding the artistic standards of relating to the human condition, representing the “truth”, and reflecting the ideals of society are still at direct odds with the reality of market activity. Pleasing the customer, creating market opportunities, and crafting a market product based on demand could not exist within the ideological constructs of the definition of an artist. Keith Haring said, “Money is the opposite of magic. Art is magic. The worlds of art and money are constantly intermingling. The magic in art has to be applied in new ways to survive this mixture Magic must always triumph” (Haring, *Journals*). Artists and their artwork are not the same, but to be understood and entered into the public consciousness, they adhere to a sophisticated social script which allows them to be configured into the canonical narrative set forth by the critics. Artists in today’s market may still be labeled genius, but they are now subject to mediation and judgment from critics, galleries, museums,

and, ultimately, collectors.

Critics function as the determinants of value through communication and analysis. Arthur Danto's 1964 text entitled "Art Worlds" defined the relationship between writers, artists, and their audiences through a relational model, but begins by identifying the narratives that set the scripts. "Telling artworks from other things is not such a simple matter, even for native speakers, and these days one might not be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so. And part of the reason for this lies in the fact that terrain is constituted artistic in virtue of artistic theories, so that one of the uses of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art possible. To see something as art requires something the eye cannot de[s]cry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto, 471, 474). As in the Catholic Church, the art world was encouraged to define itself in theological and philosophical terms, perpetuating its spiritual nature and insulating it against attacks from the outside by the uninitiated.

While not organized, methodical, or harmonious, art critics function in a predetermined role developed by perpetuating and interpreting "the truth" of art. Walter Benjamin believed "the greater the decrease in social significance of the art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public. The conventional is uncritically enjoyed, while the truly new is criticized with aversion" (Benjamin, 234). Romanticism gave birth to aesthetic philosophy, but also began the slow march from art interpretation in an accessible way, to the art commentary of the great artists and their writers. Eugene Delacroix with Charles Baudelaire, Auguste Rodin with Rainer Maria Rilke, Pablo Picasso with Gertrude Stein, Marcel Duchamp with Andre Breton, Lee Krasner with

Harold Rosenberg, and Jackson Pollock with Frank O'Hara are just a few pairings which legitimized the role of the artist as mythical figures whose stories could be glorified.

Today, the façade of the art world continues to be attacked from the inside. British art critic Dave Hickey joins a long list of writers bemoaning the current state of affairs. "Money and celebrity have cast a shadow over the art world which is prohibiting ideas and debate from coming to the fore," he said, adding that the current system of collectors, galleries, museums and art dealers colluding to maintain the value and status of artists quashed open debate on art. I hope this is the start of something that breaks the system. At the moment, it feels like the Paris Salon of the 19th century, where bureaucrats and conservatives combined to stifle the field of work. It was the Impressionists who forced a new system, led by the artists themselves. It created modern art and a whole new way of looking at things" (The Guardian, Helmore and Gallagher, Oct. 27, 2012). While Hickey is correct in linking the financial art systems of the past and present together, his statement assumes a break with that tradition under the Impressionists. However, art critics from Greenberg to Lyotard and Habermas have all had the same critique of the system; namely, the corrupting power of money in the supposedly untouchable purity of art.

Jean-Francois Lyotard referenced the developments of 20th-century art critics in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979). Lyotard was one of the many theorists researching the cultural conditions of contemporary capitalism. His main stance was that Modernism and Postmodernism were bound in a dialectical relationship. His view of Postmodernism was that it was a continuation of Modernism which holds onto the hope of a new form of social existence. He defined Modernism by saying, "I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind

making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such was the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject or the creation of wealth” (Habermas, *Modernism, an Incomplete Theory*, AIT 1122). He intuitively understood that the prevailing narrative of art was a transcendental, pure, and disinterested object in Modernism was simply another story being used to legitimize power, exert authority, and perpetuate social customs. Religion, he thought, was one of the primary protectors of these controlling conventions, but as religion broke down in the face of Postmodernism, art appropriated its mechanisms of control. The authority of art critics resided in their ability to elevate the story of art beyond its functional purpose in the market.

So, while each subsequent generation of critic condemns money in the art market, they have used their platform to drive it. New York Times art critic Holland Cotter explains the mechanics. “Money — the grotesque amounts spent, the inequitable distribution — has dominated talk about art in the 21st century so far. It’s a basic fact of art history. Emperors, popes and robber barons set the model for the billionaire buyers of today. Of course, it is today that matters to the thousands of artists who live and work in New York City which is a punitively expensive city, where the art industry is often confused with the art world. The distinction between the two, though porous, is real. The art industry is the nexus of high-priced galleries, auction houses, and collectors who control an art market renowned for its funny-money practices. In numbers of personnel, the industry is a mere subset of the circle of artists, teachers, students, writers, curators and middle-range dealers spread out over five boroughs. But in terms of power, the proportions are reversed, to the degree that the art world basically functions as a labor source, supplying the industry with product, services and exotic color but, with the age of apprenticeships long gone, only uncertainly sharing in its wealth”

(NYT, Cotter, Jan 17, 2014).

Cotter goes on to explain the impact on art criticism. “The narrowing of the market has managed to attract a wave of neophyte buyers who have made art shopping chic. It has also produced an epidemic of copycat collecting. To judge by the amounts of money piled up on a tiny handful of reputations, few of these collectors have the guts, or the eye or the interest, to venture far from blue-chip boilerplate. They let galleries, art advisers, and the media do the choosing, and the media doesn’t particularly include art critics. What, after all, does thumbs up, thumbs down matter when winners are preselected before the critical votes are in? In this economy, it can appear that the critic’s job is to broadcast names and contribute to fame. Conservative art can encourage conservative criticism. We’re seeing a revival — some would say a disinterment — of a describe-the-strokes style of writing popular in the formalist 1950s and again in the 1970s: basically, glorified advertising copy. Evaluative approaches that developed in the 1980s and 1990s, based on the assumption that art inevitably comments on the social and political realities that produce it, tend to be met with disparagement now, in part because they’re often couched in academic jargon, which has become yet another form of sales-speak” (Ibid). So how can a critique of money in the art system lead to more money in the art system?

This concept is a long rehearsed economic narrative of elitism which perpetuates rather than denigrates the art industry’s ability to function. The gallerist took on the economic art role of intercessor at precisely the same moment as the secularization of the Church during the Enlightenment. If art was to replace the Church as transmitting apparatus with access to the spiritual, layers of separation and interpretation needed to be put in place. When art critics write about a gallery’s newest art show but deride the many collectors who

packed in for opening night, the result is voyeurism. Art galleries become places for spectators to see artists interacting with the collectors who ostensibly come to judge and perhaps buy their work. As the genius artist creates, the critic brings attention to the high prices and deplorable state of the market, and while the gallerist mitigates the difference for the collectors.

The role of the gallery in the narrative economy of the art world is to package and deliver the art of the creative genius to the public. Galleries do this by launching one-month solo shows of the artists as public and rotating events. With hundreds of art galleries in the small but expensive real estate scope of New York City, gallerists are challenged to stand out. They must do so by promoting the most extreme, yet predictable, aspects of the artists they present. In the culture of sales, the artwork, the artists, and the reputation of the gallery must work together to contribute to the social climate of art acquisitions. Guy Debord references the relationship between the drama of contemporary culture and religion in *Society of the Spectacle*. The spectacle Debord describes is the relationship of society to its representation in images. Commodity, he argues, has taken over the social in a way that mirrors religion's appropriation of communication, time, and territory. He writes, "Semi-historical religion establishes a qualitative point of departure in time (the birth of Christ, the flight of Mohammed), but its irreversible time – introducing real accumulation which in Islam can take the form of conquest, or in Reformation Christianity the form of increased capital – is actually inverted in religious thought and becomes a countdown: the hope of access to the genuine other before time runs out, the expectation of the last Judgement" (Debord, thesis 136). The time that the gallery produces looks finite and cyclical. Fashion, art, and culture operate under the pretenses of what can wither and decay. Exhibitions can

only last one month to contribute to the immediacy of the sale, or to hide the disgrace of artists who failed to strike a chord with their audiences.

Benjamin wrote on this cyclical nature of the culture of art and fashion through an obligatory denial of its systematic operations and final destination of death. The cyclical nature of art in a gallery or fashion on a woman “was never anything other than the (...) provocation of death through the woman” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 63). The continuing praise and exaltation of new artists and fashions through the critic and gallerist is likened to that of Benjamin’s description of the motivation of women. “That is why she changes so quickly; she titillates death and is already something different, something new, as it casts about to crush her” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 63). The gallerist’s role is to feed the spectacle and story of art so as to obfuscate its anchor in the world of economy and commerce. Alexia Bretas explains in *The Eternal Return of the New – The Aesthetics of Fashion* on Walter Benjamin, “The rehabilitation of allegory against the romantic hegemony of symbol is one of the main accomplishments of the book on the Baroque and will be recurrent in all the late Benjaminian production. In brief, the allegorical transmutation consists of a systematic procedure through which dead things are somehow reanimated and brought to life as pure signification. Such operation was already present in Benjamin’s essay on Baudelaire and will also be identified as a prominent feature in the artistic demarche of the surrealists” (Bretas, *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, vol. 5, 2013, 156).

While art galleries maintain the capitalist thirst for the new, art auctions straddle the difference between the value of the established and the acquisition of history. Until recently, auction houses provided a format for the circulation of works on the secondary market. They have routinely positioned themselves, like gallerists, as intermediaries between the artist and



the collector. Their role in the metanarrative of the art market is well established and they taut a more transparent role in the valuation of individual works of art. Auction houses are meant to build trust, and not trust from its established reputation, but trust from the unwavering order of its ceremonies. It is the repeated performative operation of the auction that feeds the art economy, not necessarily the consumption and distribution of art itself.

Auction Houses have an advantage as they are known establishments consistently projecting the message of positive results from a supposedly free market atmosphere. The benefits of the auction house events are many. For one, the price is based on the highest bidder, and auction competition has historically shown people will spend more, inclining collectors to sell by way of auction. Additionally, both the seller and the buyer have to pay the auction houses. With that, there is a buyer premium for each sale, thus the house will make a commission regardless of sale price. Even though the auction houses will not release minimum price sale, they will release presale estimates low to high, which is in their favor. These factors contribute to the perception transparency.

I have already indicated the borrowed mannerisms and known parallels between the auction house event and the ritualized church service. However, there are some disadvantages to the auction house model. Most notably, the buyer premium can detour buyers, as other channels of buying secondary art are available and their limited supply of secondary art means limited growth. Auction houses have found ways to compensate for these losses by marketing “wet paint” art and circumnavigating gallerists to go directly to living artists. However, the most damaging factor affecting weary collectors came after price fixing scandals were revealed dating back to 1992. The high prices at auction, the undercutting of established galleries, and the years of double charging both sellers and buyers

could not damage the industry as much as a loss of faith in the system. Trust in the establishment, in the event of the auction sale, and in the known reputation of Sotheby's and Christie's was the most valuable asset these art institutions had. "The volatility of price at auction draws attention to the operation of the event, the transaction and the contingencies that arise during the course of its accomplishment. This is not to suggest that social relationships are not important to the operation of auctions like any other market activities, but rather to point to the ways in which those relations coalesce in and are sustained through the social interaction that enables the legitimate and ordered accomplishment of actual transactions and the valuation and sale of works of art and antiques" (Heath, loc 650).

The cooperative agents working independently in the art industry understand that the economic cycle depends on the tenuous narrative of an ever changing and evolving story rooted in the stability of historical context. While the critics grant the prophet/gallerist the narrative of fashionable change and discovery for collectors and investors, museums are venerated as keepers of historical memory for the masses. Debord explains the implications of this narrative. "Thus, the bourgeoisie made known to society and imposed on it an irreversible historical time but kept its use from society. There was history, but there is no more, because the class of owners of the economy, which cannot break with the economic history, is directly threatened by all other irreversible use of time and must repress it. The ruling class made up of specialists in the possession of things who are themselves, therefore, a possession of things must link its fate with the preservation of reified history, with the permanence of a new immobility within history" (Debord, thesis 143).

The story of art's social and historical stability and value makes it an attractive Shiloh for corporations and private collectors alike. The museum's reliance on public and private

patronage, along with its economic needs, make it less of a purveyor and preserver of critical discourse and more of a caterer to it. “The art museum’s expanded compass is reflected in collaborative procedures for producing art, at the same time that it constitutes only one component of a tremendously interwoven system of exhibition and dissemination that also includes galleries, auction houses, fairs, and biennial-type events, each with its own dynamics with respect to the type of work likely to be highlighted or even generated within its precincts” (Buskirk, 68). Conforming to the demands of an audience should not subject the museum to reproach by the art world. However, when the narrative veneer of the art museum as directed by economic base functions is made too obvious, the art world and others object. “When art takes on spiritual meanings, it requires of the professional interpreter an expertise that far exceeds the narrower and more defensible boundaries of formalist criticism, art-world journalism, knowledge of artists and their works, and skill at making art and cultivating one’s career at it. What institution will endorse judgments about the spiritual valence of art if not the church or theosophical society or some comparable guild of mystics? Moreover, the gatekeeping and reward systems of the art world are founded on the myth of the avant-garde, that is, a historical narrative rooted in the secular vision of artists as critical opponents of bourgeois respectability and such reactionary institutions of middle-class authority as church and state” (Taylor and Francis, p. 17). The role of the museum is resacralization. As an artwork travels through the muddy waters of the commercial art market, the work of art can again be purified through the entrance into the museum. As a “non-profit” entity, the museum is presumably outside the realm of commercialization.

Museums must operate as memory keepers and information presenters. Thus, the curatorial process has taken on the most important role in preserving not only the story of art,

but the story of the story of art. Bourdieu speaks specifically to this topic stating that a work of art does not have the power to transcend social hierarchies only because it is put on public display. Instead, he believes social hierarchies are reinforced because the general public may look at these works of art but are ultimately frustrated by a lack of socially determined education which would endow them with the keys to understanding what they see. He believes the museum is “a field of transactions where economic capital from the field of commerce can be reconfigured into more highly consecrated personal and institutional capital” (Grenfell and Hardy, 67). Museums display “authentic” images which are meant to help the viewer have an unmediated experience in search of a true identity.

Museums engage the cooperative network of agents essential to the art economy by utilizing an experiential tradition mechanism of the Catholic Church. The economic and social structures have evolved to adopt similar philosophies and styles of presentation. “In an apparent paradox also noted in discussions of new religious movements, alongside the ideology of ‘responsibility without authority’ (quoted in Heelas:1999, 73) there may well be a very marked authority in practice exercised by particularly charismatic figures. In the museum field, this has in some instances become institutionalized in the adoption of ‘star’ curators and designers who are given ‘artistic license’ to create exhibitions with relative autonomy” (MacDonald, 215). The strict authoritarian hierarchy is now out of fashion, and even the power structures of the museum and church must conform, at least in appearance, to a level of democratization.

Lacan also describes the frustration of viewing a work of art in a museum, but through psychoanalytic terms. Steven Z. Levine, a scholar studying Lacan, explains, “Lacan turns to works of art in order to exemplify his thesis on the sublimation of the disturbing

fleshy allure of the Imaginary maternal presence in the pacifying formal structures of the Symbolic paternal inference” (Levine, 49). Lacan always believed that the artist was able to dampen the burnings of desire by creating beauty in art. When a work of art enters the context of a museum, we can keep in our sights the object of our desire but can never touch or possess it, perfectly reflecting Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories. The entrance of a work of art has further psychoanalytic implications. If possession of a work of art never directly translates into the satisfaction of desire, then its abdication by the collector into the public realm may come closer to satisfying desire because it will be recognized by the Other. In Bourdieu’s terms, the Symbolic capital will be given by the general public, located in a distinctive social field, to the former collector who resides in the higher social field, thereby transcending fields. In spite of Bourdieu’s theory, the acquisition of social capital within the realm of the museum apparatus is not as easy as it may seem. Regulating structures which prevent the equitable distribution of aura are built into the nature and structure of museums.

The question of democratization and public access to larger institutions hit the church and the museum at the same time. “Just were conservatives objected that opening museums to the public would result in the destruction and desecration of art by the mob, so it was argued that cathedrals, in allowing unrestricted entry during service time, ran the risk of undermining their own spirituality. ‘Even now, with the restricted right of entrance,’ the Reverend Smith of St Paul's thus argued in his written submission, ‘we see beggars, men with burthens, women knitting, parties eating luncheon, dogs, children playing, loud laughing and talking, and every kind of scene incompatible with the solemnity of worship’ (Report, 1841, Minute 23)” (Bennett, 55). Once opened, and the public sufficiently controlled, the church and the museum adopted the role of preservationists. The museum would preserve

national identity through veneration of objects, and the church would preserve the moral fiber and legacy of its congregations.

The role of the art collector then becomes one of the most complex in the structure of cooperative agents who dominate the art industry. The collector is not, as a Romantic concept would suggest merely an observer hoping to understand a higher truth by being in the presence of a genius inspired work of art. The art collector is also not a mere consumer of a product with a high social value. Instead, the collector is the player who has the most choice in developing his narrative. When a collector owns an art object, this purchase allows a certain degree of freedom in recontextualizing the work. The art object can become part of a thematic collection, it can be put on display for public observation, or it can be hidden away outside the public view. In *Contemporary Art and Its Commercial Markets*, art analysts Maria Lind and Olav Velthuis talk about the role of the collector.

We argue that the love of art here characterized was ascendant property of art market transaction beyond the normative duties of care and control is not simply a fetish, but a powerful agent in the further redistribution of wealth, practiced in a clear systemic collaboration with artists, curators, critics, and other actors in contemporary art's infrastructure. As elaborated below, art is situated as an 'alternative' commodity in part because of standard received expectations of the personalities and passions of both artists (as quixotic, passionate, unpredictable) and their dealers and collectors (variously holding back ready stock from the market, not selling at the height of profit, etc....) The art market is in this sense peculiar not just because it lacks transparency because of its unregulated, opaque, and inefficient market, but also because it is a market built on the impulsive and chancy gift of love. As we shall see,

such amorous/erotic transactions filter across the private to the public sector as museum and state-run galleries become increasingly reliant on the donations and bequests of private collectors in order to maintain both their permanent collections and temporary exhibitions, thus significantly blurring the boundaries between state care and private passion” (Lind and Velthuis, 210).

Again, I am not as interested in the particular economic function of the collector or donor; instead, we need to see the narrative feature behind the economy of the art world which makes it function. Love, desire, mystery, and ecstasy dominate language and perception of this commodity which call to mind religious overtones and a desire for the Holy Spirit.

There is an emotional relationship of projections and internalization that characterizes our interaction with objects, specifically works of art. Bourdieu would argue that social stratification enters into this context, because one must have the means to be able to acquire objects. This principle is valid in many cases but taking that statement at face value overshadows the rhizomatic impulses behind collecting which have their unique characteristics. In referring to objects, Baudrillard says that “they are a mental realm over which I hold sway, a thing whose meaning is governed by myself alone” (Baudrillard, *The System of Collecting*, 7).

Theories of art consumption or collection as an arboreal model of social hierarchy obscure the significant dialogical and rhizomatic aspects of collecting. By exploring the polyphonic relationship between the work of art, the collector, and the collection, I will show

how this action is more than a formal stratification lying within the confines of a particular field. Specifically, there are significant psychological characteristics of collecting that go beyond cultural, social, and symbolic capital to point to the economy of the narrative in the art industry. By pointing to Lacanian and Freudian concepts of desire, the common perception by Bourdieu and others impermeable boundaries in the art industry can become elastic and capable of encompassing the most complex aspects of a work of art. I suggest that a work of art transcends fetish, neurosis, or a capitalist urge to possess when it enters the context of an art collection through the rhizomatic and transformative power of aura and spiritual capital as I will explain later. Russell Belk explains in *Collectors and Collecting*, “The legitimization and sanctioning of acquisitiveness is related to another phenomenon that occurs in collecting – the transformation of ordinary profane commodities into sacred icons” (318). When an item enters a collection the art “ritually transforms into a personally and socially significant object” (319). Most significantly, a home, or place of veneration, is found for those objects so that they are separated from their utilitarian value and also put in communion with other like objects.

Traditionally, once an artwork was acquired and placed in a permanent collection or museum, it was deactivated from the capitalist system. However, spiritual capital has found a way to subvert this disassociation through the rhizomatic process. Branches of capitalism can even reach the unobtainable. Private collections and museums give observers the feeling of acquisition by making special ticket prices high, exclusive viewing by invitation only, and limited run shows with long waiting lists. The feeling of exclusivity for a price now surrounds a work of art even “outside” of the capitalist system. Thus, producing more aura and building the power of spiritual capital. Each narrative within the context of individual



collections can vary widely as a result of the impulses that drive the accumulation of specific objects; we have more than just social factors driving the stories. The relationship between the possessor and the object changes in each case. Baudrillard explains, “Possession cannot apply to an implement. Rather, it applies to that object once it is divested of its function and made relative to the subject” (Ibid). In other words, there is always a mutual relationship that refers to the subject, constituting a system where the subject can piece together its motivations according to its view of the world. This trademark of collecting and possession directly correlates to the artist’s motivations to create an aesthetic object. The strong social and psychological indicators which could be seen as negative in any other context become a marker of pride for a collector. Belk says, “The fact that many collectors readily admit to being addicted indicates the power of the attraction or of the social sanction bestowed upon compulsive activity when it is legitimized with the label ‘collecting’” (318).

We have already determined the rhizomatic aspect of collecting, which has a dialogical nature and is not merely reducible to social capital. One important thread through this examination has been the question of desire as an essential element outside of Bourdieu’s field of cultural production<sup>xxxix</sup>. Primarily, the desire to collect is to produce an extension of our self in material form. It is the desire for immortality. Collecting as acquisition through purchase and bidding can be positioned within Bourdieu’s hierarchical cultural apparatus but collecting as dissemination through purchase and bidding can also embody a response to Lacan’s theories of unsatisfied desire. Nevertheless, Bourdieu explicitly separates himself from the field of psychoanalysis on several occasions. He says, “This is not the place to question the relation between the mode of exploring subjectivity proposed here and that practiced by psychoanalysis. But, at the very least, it is necessary to guard against thinking of

these relationships as alternatives to each other. Sociology does not claim to substitute its mode of explanation for that of psychoanalysis; it is concerned only to construct differently certain givens that psychoanalysis also takes as its object” (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, 510). I argue that the two disciplines overlap in many ways, especially in the context of art collecting through the narrative of spiritual capital. Lacan’s desire function and phsyic drives are embedded in Bourdieu’s work, despite the latter’s focus on purely sociological elements.

The most visible link can be found between Bourdieu’s theories of symbolic Capital and Lacan’s symbolic order. For Lacan, the symbolic is defined by our relationships to the Other. Zizek explains it as a place where we “look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likable, worthy of love” (Zizek, 105). Bourdieu’s symbolic capital is also based on recognition and can only exist through the dependence of others who can grant this form of esteem or credit. Bourdieu uses this theory to back up his claim that social hierarchies are reciprocal and regenerating inside of a particular field. Lacan can transcend that theory through his exploration of desire. The subject can only enter Bourdieu’s symbolic field by the desire for someone else’s recognition of his cultural capital. Bourdieu believes that artistic production must be understood regarding sociocultural conditions of production. An individual’s propensity towards a specific aesthetic taste is the product of that person’s particular place and time frame. Any changes in social structure during that person’s lifespan would result in a change within the field of painting and therefore society’s response to the art created during that time.

Mapping these connections gives us a rhizomatic form with different stratified locations, not a homogenous field as Bourdieu would suggest. As we have established,

Bourdieu's field of cultural production's arboreal model of art conceals the significant psychological aspects of the driving forces behind the collection of art. This is a function of its polyvocal, dialogical nature which is positioned between the material and the spiritual. Bourdieu's theories are ultimately unable to separate these two aspects. It can reconfigure itself. Deleuze and Guattari explain, "For both statements and desires, the issue is to never reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or to make it signify according to a tree model. The issue is to produce the unconscious and with it new statements, different desires: the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious" (Deleuze and Guattari, 18). It is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari's views on desire as a materialist psychiatry are antithetical to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis which focuses more heavily on the Oedipus Complex. The distinction is that traditionally we understand that a thing is produced and then desired. Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is a production machine that can make a thing.

One of Benjamin's primary objectives in *The Arcades Project* was examining the role of the collector apart from the traditional function of the connoisseur. "The Collector" is an essay "where we see the ways in which the collector both destroys the aura of an object by 'detaching' it from 'its original functions' (AP, 204), and ends up reinstituting another shell: 'It is the deepest enchantment of the collector to enclose the particular item within a magic circle, where, as the last shudder runs through it (the shudder of being acquired), it turns to stone. Everything remembered, everything thought, everything conscious becomes social, frame, pedestal, seal of his possession' (205). While objects invested with aura (holiness) 'take possession of us,' the collector possesses the object. Nonetheless, the collector works toward establishing a 'new, expressly devised historical system: the collection. And for the true collector, every single thing in this system becomes an encyclopedia of all knowledge of

the epoch, the landscape, the industry, and the owner from which it comes' (ibid.). The collector ultimately labors toward completeness, to recreate a past in the present. Having been pried from its original shell, the object may now take on a new value in its exhibition" (Adam, loc 2249). The role of the collector in perpetuating the narrative of spiritual or auratic value in a work of art is not only consumptive but transformational.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural production as a model of social hierarchy is inseparable from the material condition of existence, but this can disguise other rich and diverse relationships that exist within an art collection. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Bourdieu puts forward a philosophy of relationships; the difference is that his theories are based upon cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Symbolic power refers to the amount of accumulated prestige, honor, or recognition one has. Cultural capital is the knowledge of an inherited disposition towards particular works of art. Interestingly, Bourdieu shows how cultural and symbolic capital does not necessarily relate to economic capital. For Bourdieu, "the specific economy of the cultural field is based on a particular form of belief concerning what constitutes a cultural (e.g. literary, artistic) work and its aesthetic or social value" (Bourdieu, 9). As I have argued, these factors combine to form a spiritual capital through the narrative of access to transcendental goods as art through the various cooperative agents working in the art industry.

Bourdieu's social theories are heavily influenced by Marx, who believes that relationships between men have a direct correlation to the relationships between men, objects, and labor. This principle extends to the conditions of economic production. While the partnership between artistic practice and economic aspirations is a familiar one in today's contemporary art market, Bourdieu deconstructs these relationships by placing the

participants, or players, in a particular field of interest. This field is a structured social space with its rules, systems of power, and terms of engagement. People connect and force their way through webs of social interaction, but these connections are primarily contained to a set field. This theory allows for some amount of intertextuality, as players have the ability to make vertical and lateral moves, but it differs from the rhizome in that there are no ruptures or moves outside of the fixed arena.

## Language and the Discourse of Disavowal

While the Catholic Church was forced to revise its relationship with money during the Reformation and the rise of the auction house in the 1700s in England, ceremony and conspicuous wealth were reintroduced into the economic structure of the art business through an alternate religious entity. The traditional Anglican Service informed the newest market structure of the art world with a form of power conveyed by ceremonies and symbols which resulted in a specialized language of art buying still in effect. Knowledge of this ceremonial language once again served as a signal to society that art was for the elite. As the Church continued to splinter off into more and more specialized sects, the art market diversified through the rise of the art dealer.

The artists, curators, auctioneers, dealers, and collectors in the art industry play a sociological role, as Bourdieu described. However, the structure of cooperative agents performs a polyvocal role in the narrative of the art economy that goes beyond the sociological and psychological into the transcendental. The Church understood its function in marketing a spiritual product, finding agents and mediators for the delivery of that message to the public, and gaining trust and widespread support in its message, and the art market imitated this performative role in its distributive functions. David Morgan believes “both art and religion to be linguistic-cultural practices, practices that not merely give form to inward experience but are responsible for producing it”(Siedell, 75). Moreover, Morgan’s research reveals that artistic practice and religious practice are inextricably related. Furthermore, they are similar in structure. Morgan’s approach enables the subtle yet

profound spiritual and religious echoes of much contemporary artistic practice to be heard, echoes that get easily overlooked by critics who are predisposed not to see religious and spiritual implications in serious high art, to see art and religion as autonomous and mutually exclusive” (Ibid). I argue that there is more than a linguistic-cultural practice connecting religion and art, but a material and experiential connection as well.

I will be referring to the term authorship as Michel Foucault describes it in his essay, “What is an Author”. “The coming into being of the notion ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy and the sciences” (Foucault, 225). Foucault’s work can easily be interpreted through a psychological lens, but it also serves our purposes in regard to Bourdieu’s sociocultural studies. Foucault explains, “The author’s function is, therefore, characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within society” (Ibid 950). Foucault’s contribution to our understanding of religion points to a Christianity whose traditions offer the faithful a language by which one becomes cognizant of, and situates oneself in, the world. In this understanding, we view ourselves as autonomous, having access to a truth beyond language. The metanarrative of the Nicene Christian faith became a script whose power translated into an economic system that could conceal its maneuvers. The art world operates in much the same way.

Roland Barthes’ essay, “Death of the Author” is also significant. He says, “We are going to locate the avenues of meaning. Our aim is not to find the meaning, nor even a meaning of the text, and our work is not akin to literary criticism of the hermeneutic type.... Our aim is to conceive, to imagine, to live the plurality of the text, the opening of its ‘significance’” (317). Separating the creator from the creation allows the viewer to create

their own impressions, leaving language to “speak” for itself. The author /god complex is thus destroyed, leaving multiplicitous interpretations.

The most significant contribution to the understanding of meaning and language comes from Foucault. He explains how the discourse of disavowal can bind two separate fields such as the spiritual and the economy outside the normative episteme of each subject. Foucault challenges regimes of acceptability as the current basis for our notion of truth. This allows us to question the basic tenants underpinning the narrative of any given regime. If rationality is informed by history, culture, and society, we can question the very nature of reason and how we have inherited the story of art’s pure and immutable agencies. This project attempts to analyze the current structure of the art market and explains why it denies close ties to the world of religion and economics. The language of value in culture was so important to Marx that he prefaces *Kapital* on the linguistic differences between worth and value. “In English writers of the 17th century, we frequently find ‘worth’ in the sense of value use, and ‘value’ in the sense of exchange value. This is quite in accordance with the spirit of language that likes to use an Anglo-Saxon word for the actual thing, and a Romance word for its reflection” (Marx 1967, I:36n). The language of the art world, borrowed from the Christian church, has become part of the unquestionable fabric of art history and theory where value and worth have become a reflection of one another and hidden the true meaning of art in the marketplace.

Foucault also believed that people can participate in many different forms of languages such as "social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions” (Foucault, *What is an*



*Author*, 949). This diversity of voices shows a distinct point of view on the world, characterized by its meaning and values. Foucault challenges the rational understanding of the regime of acceptability which is the very foundation of modern establishments. The art industry should also be subject to the same kind of examination. In the previous chapter, I showed how a system of cooperative agents positioned themselves as mediating truth both in the art world and in early Christianity. This narrative tries very hard to exclude all mentions of a capitalist economy, but in so doing has created a greater fascination with the combination of art and money. The surplus value of this fascination has created or produced an auratic element the art industry itself. Dave Beech's book "Art and Value: Art's Economical Exceptionalism in Classical, Neoclassical, and Marxist Economies" is a byproduct of the current fascination with discovering the alternate truth behind the inherited story of art's special place in the realm of economic evaluation. If we accept, as Foucault does, that the discourse of art is cultural, historically, and socially informed, we can begin to understand how and why the art world distances itself from its relationship with money.

Foucault's work shows us that what we understand to be true and rational within a given system is a result of choices made by governing powers and the forces of domination and subjugation (Foucault, 258). His approach to history is called "effective history." This methodology does not see truth as a continuous whole, but instead, as a discontinuous, displaced, and dispersed projection without the narratives of dominant institutions appearing as ideologies. The economy and the art industry must be examined through the lens of effective histories. The understanding that art is exceptional in the marketplace, or worse, that the commingling of art and money should not happen, is merely a long term and evolving narrative. I have shown previously that this discourse has spanned centuries and

taken a variety of different forms, but today it has become an undercurrent of the art world. It denies its presence and decries critics who point to its apparent economic events. However, when we do understand the original episteme and the now unconscious, highly symbolic role of money in the marketplace of art, we can locate the resulting visible and invisible cultural shifts.

Lacan's concept of desire is also tied to the discussion of language. He writes, "The unconscious is the discourse of the Other" (Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminars of Jacques Lacan Book XI* edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, 214). Our unconscious desires are organized by the linguistic system that Lacan terms the symbolic order. He explains that our desire is never really our own but is created through fantasies that are embroiled in cultural ideologies. Desire must exist through the persistence of lack and acts like a screen for our narcissistic projections. He says that "man's desire is the desire of the Other" (38). If the collection, ownership, acquisition, and possession of art are futile exercises in fulfilling that desire through the reflection of identity, then the dissemination of a work of art may come closer to satiation by reentering the dialogue of a rhizomatic exchange in the public sphere. This satiation is available to the collector, rather than to the work of art itself. The truth about desire is that it is always somehow present in discourse. However, discourse can never fully articulate desire. There is always a surplus that must be confronted. I argue that, in the case of the art world, money and desire have become the surplus which is now unable to be fully articulated.

Lacan relates to the transition from nature to culture through need, demand, and desire. His principles hinge around the fact that as Beings we are in a constant state of desire, which produces a sense of lack. It is through these experiences that we are conscious

of our rupture from the world. Need is simply what we require as humans to survive. Demand describes the need for language. Language is required to turn our needs into symbols. In his book *Walter Benjamin, Religion, and Aesthetics: Rethinking Religion Through the Arts*, Brent Plate explains, “Fundamental to this project is the contention that sense perception is a central locus for the reception, creation, and reproduction of our religious worlds. By looking at aesthetics through its materialist guise of sense perception, we find ourselves scrutinizing the construction of our religious worlds in a way more primary than the second-order reflection that is standard in much of religious studies with its examinations of sacred texts and theological doctrine. Religious historian David Chidester argues in his study of the religious discourse surrounding the senses of seeing and hearing: To adapt (and modify) a familiar aphorism from Paul Ricoeur, perception—particularly the perceptual modes of seeing and hearing—gives rise to symbols, and symbols give rise to thought ” (Plate, 2). Desire then becomes the gap between need and demand in the art market. Deleuze and Guattari see desire as a result of productive forces, and we are the desiring machine not run on lack. If Freud believes that his patients are driven by wishes, Lacan believes that his subjects are driven by desire, and in the economy of Christianity and the arts, this desire is for spiritual capital.

Lacan tells us that automatism is a compulsion to repeat situations in the hopes that a different outcome will result. This is how we have come to readily adopt the notion that art and money cannot be relatable, despite all of the evidence. The definition of Lacan’s real is that which is outside the scope of the making or meaning of existence. He broke this down into the automaton (a symbolic feature that relies on the force of signifiers) and *tuche* (a return to the real, or a vague perception of the real) which is always beyond the automaton.

For Lacan, repetition automatism is continued by the failure of symbolization, which is produced by the real of trauma. In this case, the trauma of money and spirit go back to the historical rupture of the church and its discourse of disavowal.

As argued above, the art market relies on a form of language, or a story, to ensure its growth. John Dewey explains, “The work of art is a language. Rather, they are many languages. For each art has its medium and that medium is especially fitted for one type of communication” (Dewey, 100). Any language, in Bakhtin's view, stratifies into many voices. To Bakhtin, language is the signature of the speaker. Consequently, each author takes a position in relationship to other authors and viewers. The concepts of discontinuity, disappearance, rupture, and oblivion can all relate to the Bakhtinian notion of the “space in between” which I will develop further in this dissertation.<sup>xxxii</sup> For Bakhtin, this is a place where relationships come together to create meaning. Lacan calls this the gap theory and similarly bases his theories of the development of meaning in the unconscious off of this principle. More specifically, the relationship between discontinuity and totality is that discontinuity is where the unconscious shows itself as a phenomenon, but this does not necessarily mean that there is a totality of the relationship. In regard to disappearance, he says, “If we choose being, the subject disappears, it alludes us, it falls into non-meaning” (Lacan, 211). Lacan believes that absence or oblivion appears in the rupture. The unconscious must be experienced there in the rupture, which is between perception and consciousness. It is in this gap where the connection between art and its economic value exchange lives. “Even if there is a large market in art about spirituality, the professional discourse on art will resist recognizing it because it does not fit the grain of the discourse, which does not run in the direction of personal or institutional affirmation of metaphysical

commitments” (Taylor and Francis, p. 18).

Benjamin talks about the space in between as aura, and it is also in this space where sense perception and experience occur. He believes that technology, and ultimately the marketplace for art, are in danger of changing the way we perceive art individually and as a society. Caygill says, “The change in sense perception and the character of experience is ineluctable, as is also the decision on how to respond to this change. One response is the nihilistic appeal to aura in establishing new aesthetic distance within which the change in experience can be dangerously maintained and denied within existing structures” (Caygill, 117). Benjamin’s concept of experience was ultimately shaped by how Kant privileges intuition, comprising of space and time, and “things unseen instead of the things that can be rationally deduced” (Caygill, xiv). Even Benjamin’s description of such concrete concepts of color and surface take on a tone of magic. “Painterly color is but a reflection of phantasy, in its phantasy is bent into creation, it makes transitions with light and shadow, it impoverishes. The spiritual basis of the image is the surface... the surface lights up the colors, not the other way around. The infinity of space is the form of the surface, it is the canon from which the colors issue” (1915c, 21). In this very early passage it seems as though Benjamin is positioning aura on the surface of the painting, but a closer look reveals the transcendental nature experience in regard to the spiritual and auratic perception.

Perception for Benjamin took place in the tension between space and time. It is inside this vessel, or *khora*, that aura reveals itself. “For aura not only named the most precious facet among other types of experience he described was irrevocably in decline, to be grasped only through their historical erosion. Aura’s epistemic structure, secularized and modernized (qua ‘profane illumination,’ Weimar *fla^nerie*, ‘mimetic faculty,’ and ‘optical

unconscious'), can also be seen at work in Benjamin's efforts to reconceptualize experience through the very conditions of its *impossibility*, as the only chance to counter the bungled (capitalist-imperialist) adaptation of technology that first exploded in World War One and was leading to the fascist conquest of Europe. These efforts entailed exploring new modes of apperception and adaptation equal to a technologically changed and changing environment" (Hansen, 338). We must remember that Benjamin's conception of aura came at a time of simultaneous awareness of the destructive qualities of commodification, but his recognition of the merge between aura and its market is precisely what I identify as spiritual capital.

The attempt to commoditize the market, or at least accept the fact that the art market has commodities, has only managed to perpetuate its value and allow yet another distraction in the narrative of art beyond value. Articles, studies, and books on the investment value of art have obscured the true nature of arts economic function. "Why is it that these sensation-conscious depictions of these superlatives are at the same time accompanied by a certain degree of moral indignation, which is often only scantily clad as an attempt to show ironic distance? The ambivalence of this constellation becomes intelligible when one takes into account the enormous claims which the art of the present day not only makes but is also confronted with - it should achieve scarcely less than the shaping of a different truth and reality beyond the banality of everyday life and our entanglement in the world. And what is more, it should do so independently of this claim, committed only to its own ideal and exclusively obeying its laws" (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, Single, 7). The sensory perception of both art and religion translated into an experience of the material goods produced by each entity. The economy of those organizations has necessarily followed a parallel trajectory.

In today's contemporary market it is harder to argue that a discourse of disavowal exists. Newspapers and other popular media channels report on earnings at auction houses and art fairs. However, these numbers account for less than 5% of the estimated \$6.5 billion global art economy and tend to glorify the strength of the art economy. "The developments make one point quite clear: the market has established itself in the art field. It is a market of a modern kind, which pushes the autochthonous exchange processes of the old art system further in the background, forces them into new constellations, impels their rationalization as continuous and ubiquitous forms of socialization, and thus triggers off those secularization tendencies with which the art world today is confronted. The rationalized public nature of the exchange of art into money reveals this relationship for what it is and so questions the gravitational center of an economy of symbolic goods whose existence fundamentally depended on the denial of this relationship" (Egger, Mazzurana, Schultheis, and Single, 35). I argue that this is no more than a Deleuzian rupture in the discourse of disavowal in the art market. As a fluid language, the narrative of art can take many forms. This interest in the financial extremism of the top end of art insulates its spiritual capital in other locations. The fact remains, "Even if it is allowed that modern art had been able to preserve a measure of truth in its expressed content by a strategic withdrawal from the terrain of the commodity, still the damage was done at a deeper level. For as art withdrew from the particularity of the world of commodities as depicted subject, its being in the world was putatively spiritual production (creation) was being undercut by the increasing commodification of the art object itself. The commodification of spirit made no exception for art" (Wood, Nelson and Shiff, 1996, 397). As I have argued, the commodity fetishism of the spirit in art did not begin in the Modern Age but is the result of a long history of commodifying the spiritual, while

denying its worth and subsequent value in society<sup>xxxiii</sup>.

Aura, in this scenario, is a substitute of the real. It gives us the illusion of satisfied desire, following Lacan's theory which says we can never find true satiation. Benjamin describes the aura as exactly this. He writes, "The main idea is to something inaccessible and elusive, something highly valued but which is deceptive and out of reach" (Benjamin, 22). Benjamin explains that the "desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly" bears as one of its symptoms need to surpass uniqueness by accepting a reproduction of an object of reality (Benjamin, 223). He believes that every reproduction extinguishes a part of the original's aura, as multiple copies replace the original from which it was made. For Benjamin the original, defined as "But whereas the authentic work retains its full authority in the face of a reproduction made by hand, which it brands was a forgery, this is not the case with technological reproduction" (21).

In *The Precession of Simulacra*, Jean Baudrillard challenges the idea that anything is original in contemporary society. He deconstructs the definition of the original as that which only exists in the realm of the real. He also defies that a copy has a negative connotation. He says, "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody" (Baudrillard, 2). By tracing the routes backward, from last copy to purported 'original,' Baudrillard finds no "mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept" (Baudrillard, 2). Benjamin's aura has been contemporized into an aura of privilege<sup>xxxiv</sup>. At some point since "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," an economic value has been added to what constitutes the contemporary aura.



Capitalism has an essential function in Deleuze and Guattari's theory. Schizophrenia opposes the psychoses that capitalism uses to preserve a repressive society. This is a departure from the traditional Marxist examination of society based on a material dialectic. By eliminating our understanding of history as a class struggle, they show how society has created a reality through desire, specifically desiring production and its resulting machines. Deleuze and Guattari's social sphere programs desire, but the capitalist machine is different from the desiring machine because the capitalist machine is self-generating and autonomous, while other machines have varied parts. It begins with itself but is not limited to itself and is constantly attaching itself to other machines. Capitalism is challenged because its relationships are not coded. Capitalism is limited to making money and more money. "Capital is at present the work sustaining ability. Money is not an economic value, though. The two genuine economic values involve the connection between ability (creativity) and product. That explains the formula presenting the expanded concept of art: ART =CAPITAL" (Joseph Beuys, 80). Similarly, aura itself has been duplicated by its inertia, and like the ever-expanding connections we make in network society, aura now can independently recreate itself wherever it will be noticed. The press has given an animating quality or a soul to the market in the absence of a soul in art itself. Did the shock art era disinvest the spiritual in favor of the temporal? Art does not last because of our need for the new, but the operating qualities of the art market have become the predictable and stable force.

Baudrillard identifies the culture of denial within the focus on consumer society. He writes, "Just as medieval society was balanced on God and the Devil, so ours is balanced on consumption and its denunciation. Though at least around the Devil heresies and black

magic sects could organize. Our magic is white. No heresy is possible any longer in a state of affluence. It is the prophylactic whiteness of a saturated society, a society with no history and no dizzying heights, a society with no myth other than itself” (Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 142). The realm of an art economy lives in this state of affluence which is allowed to make its symbols, present them to the public as undeniable truths. “Precisely because they are responding here to something quite different, which is either the social logic or the logic of desire, for which they function as a shifting and unconscious field of signification” (Ibid). The discourse of disavowal in religion and the art industry is a real-world semblance of its underlying value principles. Spiritual capital manifests itself as aura inside the art object, but as I have argued, the aura has reproduced itself so many times inside the art industry that it has started to appropriate aura as its own. Aura is now represented as an inherent quality of the art industry itself and the denial of this fact only serves to reproduce it further.

## CHAPTER 10

### **Physical Space in the Economy of Art**

The final pillar of aura as spiritual capital is how the economy of art, and Church financial structures, establish a quantifiable aura through architecture, the acquisition of land, and the control of movement in the public sphere. In this chapter, I will develop the concepts of Henri Lefebvre from *The Production of Space*, into a working theory that patterns of labor, production, and consumption are inexorably tied to the physical space in which these

actions take place. In fact, it is in these specifically designed spaces that aura can be transferred into actual value in the marketplace for the art and religious market. I will use the city of Miami with its art fairs and new museums as an example of a rapidly developing art market producing and profiting from the aura of art.

In today's globalized economy, we have heard the arguments for and against the apparent benefits and negatives of gentrification. Putting those arguments aside, it is important to recognize two factors supporting the argument that the development of space creates, and profits from, the creation of aura. First, both religion (historically) and art (most recently) have been forerunners in developing less desirable areas into profit making centers. Second, the art world learned the skill of land appropriation from the Christian Church. In his book, *The Lives of Artists*, Giorgio Vasari says, "But what inflicted incomparably greater damage and loss on the arts than the things we have mentioned was the fervent enthusiasm of the new Christian religion. After long and bloody combat, Christianity, aided by a host of miracles and the burning sincerity of its adherents, defeated and wiped out the old faith of the pagans" (Vasari, 57). By destroying pagan temples, monuments, and works of art and appropriating them to serve the functions of the new religion, the symbolism of space became immediately important. The Christian Church continued this pattern of space development, just as developers in New York City in the 1970's appropriated the grand structures of industrialization such as warehouses and factories for the new religion of art. Similarly, both organizations learned the theory of production and profit through physical spaces.

Henri Lefebvre worked within the scope of Marxist theory to develop ideas around the reproduction of social relations of production within space through both art and religion.

He says, “if the gestures of ‘spiritual’ exchange – the exchange of symbols and signs, with their own particular delights, have produced spaces, the gestures of material exchange have been no less productive” (Ibid, 217). Lefebvre asserts that there are several modes of the production of space which he calls “specialization” from natural, or absolute space, to more multifaceted spatiality’s whose importance is socially constructed creating a social space. Lefebvre evaluates each period of time in history as an exchange of ideas between “everyday practices and perceptions, representations or theories of space, and the spatial imaginary of the time” (Lefebvre, 38-39).

Lefebvre contends that space is a complex social construction formulated on values, and the social production of meanings. This can affect spatial practices and perceptions, particularly in the case of art and religion. He says, “It is arguable, for instance, that Frank Lloyd Wright endorsed a communitarian representational space deriving from the biblical and Protestant tradition, whereas Le Corbusier was working towards a technicist, scientific and intellectualized representation of space. Perhaps we shall have to go further and conclude that producers of space have always acted in accordance with representation, while the ‘users’ passively experienced whatever was imposed on them inasmuch as it was more or less thoroughly inserted into, or justified by, their representational space” (Ibid, 44). This statement scrutinizes processes of spatial production, the social nature of these spaces, and their political and economic value. Ultimately, Lefebvre contends that the social production of urban space is essential to the reproduction of society and its operating structure: capitalism.

Lefebvre argued that every society and mode of production produces a very unique space with its own spatial practice. For example, he uses the development of the Western

town in the Italian Renaissance as a space built around the Church's linear division between Heaven and Hell. This ideological understanding of space became an actual representation in the architectural "logic of visualization" as the "*code* of linear perspective" that has been handed down to us through generations. If Bourdieu claims that the art market works within a *field* of cultural production, Hegel sees time working with a cyclical history of creation, and Deleuze sees rhizomatic lines of interconnectedness, how does Lefebvre map the social economies of art and religion? The answer is very close to Walter Benjamin's description of aura.

Lefebvre says, "The space of work is thus the result, in the first place, of the (repetitive)gestures and (serial) actions of productive labor, but also – and increasingly – of the (technical and social) division of labor; the result therefore, too of the operations of markets (local, national and worldwide) and, lastly, of property relationships (the ownership and management of the means of production). Which is to say that the space of the work has contours and boundaries only for and through a thought which abstracts; as one network among others, as one space among many interpenetrating spaces, its existence is strictly relative" (Ibid, 191). I believe that the network of relative boundaries that he describes is the currency of aura. Benjamin describes aura in a similar manner. He calls it a "strange web of space and time" and a "distance as close as it can be". Foucault then fuses Benjamin's web of space with Lefebvre's network with his ideas for the most comprehensive understanding of the social space and spiritual aura.

Foucault believes that we live our lives within overlapping and intersecting social relationships or spheres. He states that public spaces have been moving away from their sacred and religious functions since the Renaissance. Where once there was a hierarchy of

sacred and profane spaces, as Foucault describes, "all laden with qualities and haunted by fantasy", in practical terms, both in private and public space, relations are still being controlled by an unspoken sacralization" (Foucault, 1964). As a countermeasure to the desacrilization of spaces, society has tried to insert meaning into all spaces. Utopias are the result. These are spaces without place, which only signify a real space in society. Foucault recognizes that real space still remains in society, but these have been set aside. He calls these spaces heterotopias. These are based on reality that were once concrete, or actual, that are reserved for very specific actions.<sup>xxxv</sup>

He points to one very notable art world example. "Museums and libraries are heterotopias in which time never ceases to pile up and perch on its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, and up to the end of the seventeenth century still, museums were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating every-thing, the idea of constituting a sort of general archive, the desire to contain all times, all ages, all forms, all tastes in one place, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside time and protected from its erosion, the project of this organizing a kind of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move - well, in fact, all of this belongs to our modernity" (Foucault, 1964). If we follow Foucault's argument that the museum is already an exceptional space, set aside by society for extraordinary activity, as I will show when we view this already engineered construction through the example of Miami, we can see how heterotopias can be accelerated, celebrated, and ultimately replicated for profit.

How, then, are these spaces built through abstraction to actualization become commodified? Lefebvre argues that it is through the social production and activity that the space dictates. For this to happen, space must first be occupied. It must transform from the

metaphysical realm to the actual world. He says, “From the beginning of the *Ethics*, Spinoza treats absolute space as an attribute or mode of being – that is, of God. Now space ‘in itself’ is defined as infinite, has no shape in that it has no content. It may be assigned neither form, nor orientation, nor direction. Is it then the unknowable? No: rather, it is what Leibniz called the ‘indiscernible’” (Ibid, 169). It is then for the body to occupy the space, but more often institutions become involved and dictate how a body uses space. Leibnitz explains how the transferal of spirit, or aura, became separated from the body and it’s work through design. “Many, like Descartes and his followers, though they found it hard to believe in such engineering, simply shifted agency to a ‘spirit’, whether human or not, without attending too closely to how that spirit’s ‘design’ might be realized otherwise than through the providential or transcendent action of the Idea (in the Hegelian sense)” (Lefebvre, 23).

Spiritual capital must finally attach itself to a physical object, and as demonstrated earlier, spiritual capital through aura now has the symbolic and transferable power throughout the entire art industry. This includes the property in which it inhabits. The common perception is that aura becomes a quality of the artwork itself; however, I contend that in today’s global economy, spiritual capital is intimately connected to the consumption and development of land as well. “Evolutionists such as Frazer (1909) argued that magical beliefs and ritual taboos had an adaptive logic that facilitated the ‘growth of institutions’ such as private property” (Gudeman, 3). Currently, large amounts of physical space are being transformed into cultural districts. Neighborhoods are being raised, communities are being displaced, and centers for the arts are being put in their place. Miami is the most obvious city being transformed through the use of spiritual capital. From 2002, the first year that Art Basel was introduced in Miami, the cultural tourism industry has grown exponentially.

Herzog and de Meuron has created a new Museum Park, the contemporary art museum PAMM opened in 2013, the National YoungArts Foundation moved their campus to Miami, and new arts districts such as Wynwood and Faena are developing all over the city. Miami is not alone in its development of an art economy based on the consumption of land. I will examine first the correlation between real estate trends and the dominance of culture, and then look at the effects of “Designer Arts Districts” and what they mean for the art economy.

One important consideration when studying the economic impact of creative spaces is their geographic location. Economist Alfred Marshall and Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter believe in the continued significance of like-minded entrepreneurs who “cluster” in specific geographical areas. Companies have long held the practice of grouping together for several reasons. They can better understand their competition, they can choose from a highly concentrated talent pool, and the competition is a motivating factor in innovation and economic growth. A host of economic geographers and urban economists are beginning to understand that non-market forces lie at the center of modern business decisions in regional development studies.

The freedom to grow and change is the most important factor in both the impact of religion and art. One report from America for the Arts says, “The numbers impress: the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity annually and is responsible for 5.7 million full-time jobs in the United States. Moreover, this industry generates nearly \$30 billion in revenue to federal, state, and local governments every year” (Malmuth, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/press-releases/2012/america's-nonprofit-arts-industry-generates-1352-billion-in-economic>). In many ways, it is obvious that a city develops growth through technology and talent as a form of social capital. The



most significant factor allowing a city to attract and retain creative capital to their city is tolerance. Tolerance is an open and diverse population willing to integrate others into vibrant communities while still allowing them to preserve their identities. The economic advantage of those cities willing to embrace change is an attractive and powerful factor in the current politics of urbanization and gentrification in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to Florida, a recent Wall Street Journal study found that high-level college graduates first chose the city that they wanted to move to and then chose the potential employer to apply to. The evidence is clear that city places and their amenities will have an increasing role in the marketability of a region which will also directly affect the economic impact of that job force. Florida points out, “cities that focus on building – sports stadiums, freeways, urban malls, and tourism entertainment districts that resemble theme parks – are irrelevant, insufficient, and even unattractive to many Creative Class people” (601). Instead, the creative class is looking for high quality interactions with like-minded individuals so that they may validate their identities. The most vibrant communities today have successful arts and music scenes, green building programs, outdoor recreational opportunities, and a wealth of unique high quality casual restaurants. These factors will increase the likelihood of a high-ranking employee to choose a job in that city by triple. Young workers today work odd, long hours, and they want to know that when they are finished, they will have a range of recreational activities to choose from that are not work related. Cultural offerings, efficient transportation, and casual participatory activities are important for the sort of lifestyle markings that large companies who are looking to relocate also take into consideration. Studies show that the top 10 USA cities for technological innovation are also among the top 10 USA bohemian enclaves (Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, 2). One explanation is

the regional advantage communities have in quickly mobilizing talent and resources in an open and innovative way. One major new finding is that the gap between the bohemians and the bourgeois is closing. Economists show that a rising number of high-income individuals are attracted to the amenities typically found in developing communities such as art galleries, performance spaces, and alternative dining options.

Geographers have found a direct correlation between consumption patterns and subculture. Unfortunately, 2012 studies show that large numbers of creative workers have abandoned the South and Midwest. A high concentration of creative individuals in an area drive up property values, as they are attractive to others who crave diverse communities. Sociologist Daniel Bell comments, “What has happened in society in the last 50 years – as a result of the erosion of the religious ethic and the increase in discretionary income – is that culture has taken the initiation in promoting change, and the economy has been geared towards meeting those wants” (Florida, loc 1515). This is an interesting statement because it points directly to the fact that religion traditionally took on the role of promoting cultural identity and building communities, and the economy was shaped to respond to those elements.

How is community building different now from the kind of social structures we saw in the past? Lefebvre says, “Formerly, artistic ensembles – monuments, towns, furnishings – had been created by a variety of artists according to subjective criteria: the taste of princes, the intelligence of rich patrons are the genius of the artists themselves. Architects had thus built palaces designed to house specific objects (‘furniture’) associated with an aristocratic mode of life, and alongside them squares for the people, monuments, and institutions. The resulting whole might constitute a space with a particular style, often a dazzling style, but it

was still a space never rationally defined which came into being and disappeared for no reason” (Lefebvre 124). The newest cities built around art tourism are developing differently. Historical societies, which were exclusive and closed, repel the sort of bonds that creative individuals need in order to be able to thrive. When a community is open to newcomers from different regions, a combination of resources and ideas results in unique opportunities for creative talent. The Christian Church did not begin with strong, exclusive regulations. Instead, it began as diverse, malleable communities which adapted to the historical strengths of the region it inhabited.

On which model does the art market base its geographic flexibility? And when have we seen it done in the past? I maintain that the relationship between the art market and its physical location mostly resemble the early Medieval Church’s reliance on land in city urbanization for economic progress. Art, religion, and architecture have been in a mutually beneficial relationship since the Neolithic Era, but the way in which the current art market uses these relationships to its benefit has a more direct correlation with the geographical expansionist policies of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

Patterns of art consumption follow a recognizable need. Through history, most dominant art markets have evolved alongside population and housing booms. With construction comes the need for decoration. Affluence, recreation, and a need to fill space on walls will always lead to a high concentration of artists moving towards an area that recognizes and can pay for their talent. More demand in the art market led to a critical mass of artists who influenced each other and competed for a select number of galleries and clients. They had to work harder to get noticed, and competition created critical acclaim. Their success was due to the dominant narrative of art as an overall lifestyle choice and not a

business of crude exchange. Dutch painting's rise in prominence resulted from a population boom due to merchant trade. Art was needed, and amazing artists were set apart from the mass of other artists through commercialization. The industrialization of England and France similarly brought attention to the mass of artists, who moved into larger cities to fill the need for decorative arts. Miami, Florida, in the United States, along with growing interest in BRIC Nations, has renewed an interest in the link between the consumption of physical space and that of art Renaissances. Again, this model, which relates the rise of land development to important centers of art, can be seen in the model of the Catholic Church. The church benefited from population booms, which organically met the needs of a changing lifestyle. A structure of rational services, products, and exchange were needed through a familiar, trustworthy entity.

One recent and recognizable example is postwar New York City, but the same formula occurred during the Renaissance population spike which caused a church-building boom. Artists, their art, their ideas, and most importantly, the space that they occupied caused perceptible shifts in society and economy. Lefebvre says, "The belief that artists, plastic artists, are the cause or ratio of space, whether architectural, urbanistic, or global, is the product of the naivety of art historians, who put the social sphere and social practice in brackets and consider works as isolated entities It is worth stressing here was a change of course, not only in the history of art but also in the history of modern society and space" (Ibid. 304). It is my contention that art and artists are able to create such a transformation because they are operating through spiritual capital.

The art market's influence on property values and holdings has a very real material and ideological impact. In fact we now know, "Fairs along with lines of credit and the

development of luxury goods was the result of the development of capitalism from land ownership and trade. The strength of the market economy in each city resulted in the concentration of artists and the resulting “art centers” from Italy, Northern Europe, London and then New York. In fact, the value of art can be traced to these cluster centers. A work of art for sale at an auction will have an 11% increase in value if it comes from a cluster center during its’ height” (Hulst, 9). I argue that the cultural authority of aura is most affective, from an economic standpoint, when it plays a dominant role in the organization of space. When looking at economic growth as it relates to geographical development, Richard Florida identified the most important factors in his book *Cities and the Creative Class*. He defines three “T” s of booming creative markets as being Technology, Talent, and Tolerance. On and global level, the creative sector accounts for more than half of all wages or salaries earned, but in numbers they only constitute one third of the work force. The creative class encompasses technology, arts, or knowledge-based industries, which includes artists or performers but also those involved in research and development, health care, finance, and law all people dedicated to creating meaningful new forms.

How did Miami’s art industry grow similarly to the model of the medieval church’s growth? The power of the spiritual aim of artistic innovation has spurred capital interests in the case of Miami’s investment in art. Like the Catholic Church in London after 1100, the rationalized pursuit of self-interest and institutional reproduction for longevity is justified as being part of the noblest aim to celebrate an atmosphere of cultural development. By tracing the same process of growth, we can see the tension between the dual goals of outreach and self-enrichment, where monetary security is a necessary element in attaining success. Religious and cultural institutions are justified by their material and spiritual output;

however, what begins as a means to an end becomes, over time, an end itself. In the same way that the Catholic Church grew its influence and wealth, Miami's art and tourism industries have capitalized on the social, symbolic, and cultural capital of the creative field. I will attempt to show Miami as a city which contains some of the same systems that Benjamin criticized. This is a place with a dangerous and rapid development of spiritual capital built on the commodification of aesthetic perception. When describing the new buildings and shops of Paris he says, "The fantasy creations prepare themselves to become practical as commercial art...All of these products are on the point of entering the market of commodities" (Benjamin, 1935c, 176). I will begin with the critical step of land acquisition in the growth of Miami's art scene and move on to its intricate system of cooperative but independent agents. Next, I will examine the development of ceremonial symbols of power through the all-encompassing event that is Art Basel and its resulting spiritual identity.

In the 1990's, Miami's Downtown area and the Wynwood neighborhood was home to a mix of cultures and businesses. Mainly a Puerto Rican neighborhood, it was also home to traditional Jewish garment factories, auto shops, and storage areas for the nearby shipping ports. The availability of abandoned space and under-the-radar profile began attracting artists, performers, musicians, and small start-up businesses in a very slow trickle. In 2003, Miami organized a fledgling society of art galleries and studio spaces in the derelict neighborhood of Wynwood. Now, this area is home to over 70 galleries, museums, and public collections. The current statistics claim that art in the city of Miami is a one-billion-dollar industry. For the most part, it has been developers, not members of the art elite, who are leading the charge. This development is one unique departure from the Art District models that sprung organically from artist groups in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s.

Developers were usually the last inhabitants of places like SoHo, Chelsea, and the neighborhoods of New York. In Miami, however, big business interests and property investors are the primary catalysts for change in the area. Nonprofit groups and government agencies came to the scene relatively late, and only after some of the major restructurings took place.

Craig Robins, the force behind the Miami Design District, assembled large areas of unused and dilapidated factories, auto repair shops, tenement housing, and storage facilities to repurpose into creative field gold mines. Galleries and public art spaces have attracted restaurants, and retail shops are making this once blighted neighborhood into a taxi destination for urban adventures and international celebrities alike. Carlos de la Cruz, Jorges Perez, the Rubell and the Margulies families are prominent art collectors who have bought some of those once blighted warehouse spaces to house their world-class art collections. What is now deemed “The Miami Model” refers to their successful ventures into the museum world. These millionaires debut privately funded exhibition spaces open to the public to share their art collections with the public. These spaces have been a boon for Miami’s volatile real estate market because the very people who have a personal financial stake in property investments are the very people improving the market through cultural, not real estate, investments. The Wynwood neighborhood and the Design District, just north of downtown Miami, are now home to graffiti murals by world famous artists and galleries that attract collectors from around the world. The Toronto Sun states, “Most people can't believe the changes,” said Jorge Perez, chief executive of the Related Group, known as the ‘Condo King’ of Miami. ‘Art has been one of the great catalysts in producing this great reaction to Miami, and it translates most clearly in the real estate market,’ he added, citing a new boom

in luxury condo construction in the Miami area, with some buildings featuring high-priced art installations to attract buyers” (Zachary Fagenson, <http://torontosun.com/2013/12/05/art-basel-miami-beach-evolution-beyond-the-beach/wcm/12427b8b-1f42-469c-8fa2-eea647e6f1b1>).

The newest museum, PAMM, partially funded by a \$100 million public subsidy, came under attack in 2011, when Perez - one of the main culprits in Miami’s real estate collapse due to speculative purchases and inflated, over-ambitious projects - got his name attached to it thanks to a donation of cash and art valued at \$40 million. “Perez, who came under fire when billions of dollars of Related Group projects went into foreclosure, fired back at his critics, saying his intent with the museum was not only to burnish his legacy but to inspire more philanthropy from other wealthy Hispanics in the city. ‘Many times, we've gotten the rap that either because we're young migrants, or because we don't have a tradition of giving we haven't given our fair share to philanthropy,’ he said. ‘Hispanics will be part of the mainstream of philanthropy it won't just be Guggenheim, Getty, and Whitney. You'll also have Gonzalez and other Hispanic names that are becoming more and more a part of the economic mainstream’” (Fagenson, Business World, “Record Sales, Crowd at Miami Art Basel”). Perez deftly navigated the waters of corporate expansion by relying on cultural altruism. By gaining the support and advice from other prominent figures in the art world, the plan to bolster real estate investments through gentrification and creative capital gained social validation. “I think it's going to be a Miami icon without trying to do anything other than being a great museum,’ Terence Riley, former curator at New York's Museum of Modern Art, said during a public talk in November. ‘It's going to be considered one of the



most important contemporary museums anywhere,' added Riley who helped launch PAMM" (Ibid).

The hot real estate market, which just three short years before was deemed as one of the worst hit cities in the country, has also attracted some high-profile firms, including the most sought after late architect Zaha Hadid, designer of a 62-story tower close to the new art museum, as well as Denmark's Bjarke Ingels Group and Britain's Lord Norman Foster. In June 2014, the New York Times reported on how some of the most high-profile projects in the country, which have carefully integrated art and real estate into a hybrid marketing tool are attracting wealthy buyers. Julian Schnabel is designing sales centers for condo developments in Miami, and Thierry Dreyfus is planning a massive light installation outside a residential building in New York City. This goes beyond corporate acquisitions for "lobby art," and the motivation for inclusion is transparent and aggressive. "Those who invest in high-end luxury homes also tend to have a strong knowledge of art," said Helidon Xhixha, an Albanian-born artist who has shown his work at Art Basel Miami Beach, and who recently sold a piece titled 'The Wall' to a private art collector for more than \$540,000. The developers Property Markets Group and S2 Development hired Mr. Xhixha to create sculptures tailored to each buyer at Muse, a 68-unit condominium in the Sunny Isles neighborhood of Miami" (Julie Satow, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/realestate/using-artists-to-sell-condos-in-miami-and-new-york.html>). The *World Property Journal* similarly reports, "Miami-based One Sotheby's International Realty CEO Mayi de La Vega said, "Art Basel, now on its ten years of operations, draws a sophisticated national and international crowd to attend the many fairs and activities this venue provides. I think no matter how much we read about Miami's

vibrancy and glamor, this art fair has helped establish Miami as a major city of cultural substance. This art fair's yearly exposure has made our city an oasis for culture and art and that translates into buyers having second homes and condominiums a la New York City or Paris" (<http://www.worldpropertyjournal.com/us-markets/vacation-leisure-real-estate-1/art-basel-miami-beach-miami-art-shows-art-miami-hotels-in-miami-beach-south-beach-art-shows-greater-miami-convention-visitors-bureau-jason-loeb-miami-beach-chamber-of-commerce-one-sothebys-international-realty-5056.php>).

The commingling of art and structure for marketing efforts goes back to Medieval Europe but is still met with cynicism and justification. In the same article, Schnabel is almost defensive of the role he plays in this practice. "Mr. Schnabel, who created the interiors of the Gramercy Park Hotel and built Palazzo Chupi, a pink condominium in the West Village, is no stranger to this connection. 'The idea of living with art is a good thing, not necessarily a scam,' he told me recently. 'Obviously, when something is popular they can turn that into something trendy, but it has a historical precedent'" (Julie Satow). Whether it was the Catholic Church commissioning an artist guild, or Picasso creating a tapestry for the Seagram building, this "historical precedent" shares more in common than merely a beneficial relationship. I argue that much of the art market's systems and practices were influenced and formed by the proximity they had with the Catholic Church's expansionist era.

The Catholic Church relied on a fluctuating relationship with the aristocracy and ruling system of government, and Miami's cultural reach is no different. According to the Arts and Economic Prosperity IV study of 2013 (completed by cooperation between Miami-Dade County, The Department of Cultural Affairs, and Americans for the Arts), there has

been a 17% increase in arts' generated money since 2006. Non-profits account for half of the billions of dollars spent in Miami every year, with the other half spent by arts audiences. Over 30,000 full-time, cultural workers are employed full time, generating \$935.3 million dollars in taxable income. This has encouraged Miami-Dade County to invest more than \$1 billion dollars of its money into arts-related projects. Their reasoning from Adolfo Henriques, the Chairman of the Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, states, "This landmark study confirms what we already know to be true: the arts and cultural industries in Miami-Dade County is a major force in making this a world-class metropolis for business and a great place to raise our families. Our outstanding cultural community is putting us on the map as one of the newest and most culturally vibrant places in the world and is a go-to destination for economic and cultural innovation and diversity".

The hope for art to act as a savior to downtrodden communities was not limited to Downtown Miami. When Opa Locka saw a success story in the making with arts at the center, he tried to recreate the model. The Root newspaper outlet titles its headline "The Beauty of Change: How Art is Transforming One Notorious South Florida Community." Law enforcement, nonprofit groups, and commercial developers have worked for years to try to revitalize this community but combining their efforts in the name of art has been received without suspicion from residents and also applauded by external agencies. All this despite their very public motivation to use art as a tool to generate income and gentrify the neighborhood. The article states:

It was a Field of Dreams moment for the Opa-Locka Community Development Corp four years ago when it decided that the South Florida city plagued with poverty, violence, and drugs deserved a chance. So, the nonprofit development organization

that helps revitalize neighborhoods and keeps them affordable figured if it wanted the neighborhood to be beautiful, it first needed to make it look beautiful—through funding from the Knight Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts to transform public art spaces in one of the city's most notorious neighborhoods. First ‘comes a painting, then comes a gallery, then comes a restaurant, then comes a café, then comes a club, then comes a housing development, then comes businesses that support that and hopefully investment,’ OLCDC President Willie Logan tells The Root regarding how the Art of Transformation series, now in its third year, was a celebration of the artistic revitalization, was born to help the city. ‘For one, it was seen as a way to attract investors’ Breanna Edwards).

As evidenced in the article, agencies working in a singular way have no chance of defeating decades of decay in urban neighborhoods. However, by invoking the altruistic calling of cultural development through the arts, they are not only able to assist residents of the area, but also capitalize off those efforts by attracting more money to the area. The documentary “Right to Wynwood” explored the double-sided coin of the art development movement in the area. Interviewing artists, gallerists, old residents, and property developers side by side, this short film dug into the motivations and emotions of all parties involved. Highlighting the fact that Miami’s rapid recovery from the financial devastation of 2006 was led by big money capitalists, attitudes varied from small business owners and urban sociologists alike. David Lombardi, one of Miami’s most progressive developers, says such things as, “I made chicken shit into chicken salad” and “you get the biggest bang for your buck in arts and culture.” This is clearly the most extreme case of the question, “Is money in

the art world a means to an end or an end in itself?” The story of Miami’s museum development is a bit more ambiguous. Benjamin’s description of Paris in the 1920’s bears a striking resemblance to Miami today. “It presents the ‘decay of experience’ occasioned first by the commodification of social relations - in which ‘money stands ruinously at the center of every vital interest’” (Caygill, 130). In fact, it is within this context that Benjamin first writes about the decay of aura.

Two important ceremonial symbols of power in the art world are the massive institutional buildings dedicated to the art treasures of, and the claim spiritual nature of its content. Art is meant to beautify, provide insight into the world’s truths, challenge us, or motivate us. Just as the Catholic Church was built on the foundation of physical structures that created jobs, identities, and gathering places of worship, the arts have also formed congregations of followers. Miami’s cultural identity is bolstering its status with building boom dedicated solely to the arts. They are gaining notoriety for their methodology and approach to arts initiatives and programs. With equal praise and criticism, Miami is leaning on the powerful aristocracy to fund and develop cultural programming for the less fortunate.

As mentioned above, the “Miami Model” refers to the practice of wealthy Miami residents to open private, and/or public spaces to exhibit their extensive art collections. Art critic Tyler Green is credited with coining the term. He has stated, “There aren’t many cities where this concentration of private museums is possible. Miami’s rare nexus of wealth, warehouse space, and permissive zoning allows these folks to do what they want to do.” And what they want to do is collect and exhibit art in their way without the restrictions of a board of directors or public financing. Miami didn’t always have great traditional museums in which collectors could display their art. Rather than wait for the next MOCA or MOMA to

be built, starting about 15 years ago, these benefactors simply built their own institutions” (ArtKabinett, “Colossal Collectors Create Miami Model”, 2017).

These private museums have come under fire for being ostentatious displays of wealth, the use of very obvious tax havens or the elite’s soap opera like infighting. Others welcome the outreach programs they promote, the cultural resources that they pull, and the community involvement which they aspire. Four private exhibition spaces in particular stand out: Mera and Donald Rubell’s Family Collection, Martin Margulies’ Warehouse, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz’s Collection Contemporary Art Space, and Ella Fontanals-Cisneros’ CIFO Art Space. Although there are others with quasi-public gallery spaces, these four have grown to the point of truly functioning like museums complete with regular hours, education programs, extensive libraries, and a variety of grants for financing the work of emerging artists and curators.

The shared focus of these museums is almost entirely in contemporary art, further distinguishing them and other Miami model organizations from private museums. “The pure square footage in these spaces devoted to art from the last five or 10 years is very large, particularly for a city of Miami’s size,” says Green (Ibid). Together, they boast nearly 125,000 feet of exhibition space, roughly half of which houses “very recent” work, with the vast majority of the rest of the art being from the past 40 years (Ibid).

The Rubell Family Collection holds the distinction of being the first Miami model exhibition space, dating back to 1993 when the Rubell's transferred their vast art collection to a converted Drug Enforcement Agency confiscated goods facility. The couple uses the space to explore their strong interest in introducing new and often controversial artists, many of

whom have never been shown in the US. Martin Margulies, on the other hand, has dedicated his 45,000-square-foot Warehouse to procuring seminal, historically significant pieces of contemporary artwork. It is widely seen as Miami's most important private collection and is best known for highly recognizable sculptures, such as George Segal's 1968 work "The Subway" and Anselm Kiefer's 1989 work "Sprache der Vögel," which are part of the permanent store. The city's most remarkable photography collection, a portion of which is always on display. Despite Margulies' focus on contemporary art, he gives the piece's context with historical works. The space now holds 6,000 pieces, including 3,500 photographs that date back to 1917.

Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz's interests lie in the 21st-century art from American abstract artists, and this theme carries through their 30,000-square-foot de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art. Finally, Venezuelan collector Ella Fontanals-Cisneros uses the CIFO Art Space to showcase her collection focused on Latin American abstraction, which is one of the largest collections in the world with more than 600 pieces. The Perez Museum and the soon to open Nadar Museum of Art differ slightly from the aforementioned private institutions but fall into the class of wealthy institutional patronage. Each of these collectors was essential in bringing Art Basel to Miami Beach and bringing notoriety to the city as an art world destination. In exchange for MCH Swiss Holdings Ltd. agreement to hold the break-off fair in Miami, the company requested open access to the collections of the Rubells, the de la Cruzes, Fontanals-Cisneros, and Margulies. The result was intriguing for both the patrons and the crowds of people clambering for an insider's peek into buying habits of the elite. Benjamin could have been forecasting this process when he said, "Any given amount of money may be converted into a specific power, and the market value of all power can be

calculated. So, things stand on a large scale. We only speak of corruption where the process is handled too quickly” (Benjamin, 1927b, 194). As we now understand art to be a lucrative form of capital, an entire city is quickly being transformed by its power.

A trip to Art Basel in the first week of December allows everyone an opportunity to witness the institutional, private, public, and commercial world of art all in five days. "Miami is becoming the complete package for people seeking to have an additional residence. Our lively entertainment, expanding culture, exciting nightlife, and superb restaurants coupled with our beautiful weather and beaches make us unique. Historically the missing piece was our lack of exposure to the arts, and now Art Basel has satisfied that need," concludes de La Vega (Michael Garrity). Whereas New York City's art gallery scene mainly developed the character and vitality of the art market as it took over from the European powerhouse cities, Miami's success is due in part to the annual pilgrimage known as Art Basel. The Economic Impact of the Arts report from Miami-Dade County reports, "Just in the non-profit art world it's \$1.1 billion a year that gets produced in Miami-Dade County. I think you can conservatively double that number if you took into account all the commercial activity that goes in here as well. I would estimate more than \$2 billion of economic activity attributable to the arts and cultural events" (2015).

Again, Benjamin saw the same sort of rapid transformation through commodity fetishism happening in Paris and Moscow in the 1920's. He wrote extensively in *The Arcades Project* and *One Way Street – Imperial Panorama* about the transformation of these cities through technology and the resulting loss of aura. Benjamin felt cities as an aesthetic experience. Caygill explains that urban environments for Benjamin "contain excessive moments which, whether oriented to the future or the past, whether directly or indirectly,



mark the involvement of the absolute within experience... What is more, this presentation of the speculative experience of the city, with its sensitivity to the interweaving of the past, present and future, also required a sensitivity to the issue of freedom” (Caygill, 121). Again, the categories of time, space, and authenticity are as present in Benjamin’s writings over cities as they are over the capacity for aura in art. Similarly, both the magic of a city and the spiritual capital of an art object, he believed, could be destroyed through technology and commodification.

As I have stated, the accumulation and transformation of physical property through building programs, or even city-wide gentrification is inexorably tied with the notion of spiritual capital. Benjamin also fused art, religion, capitalism and city building into one overarching philosophy developed right after he read Lukacs’ *History and Class Consciousness*, Simmel’s *The Philosophy of Money*, and Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to produce his own work *Capitalism as Religion* where he described the decay of the human experience synonymous with the decay of aesthetic experience (Caygill, 129). As I have described in this chapter, Benjamin was not witnessing the decay of aura in art, or in a city. Instead, he was seeing its transformation into a commodity itself: spiritual capital.

Lefebvre is again brought to mind when he says, “What exactly were the great cathedrals? The answer is that they were political acts... One is tempted to say, in fact, that the appearance of art, for a short time prior to the appearance of its concept, implies the degeneration of works: that no work has been created as a work of art, and hence that art – especially, writing or literature – merely herald the decline. Could it be that art, as a specialized activity, has destroyed works and displaced them slowly, but implacably, by

products destined to be exchanged, traded, and reproduced ad infinitum” (Ibid, 74)? He correctly predicts art’s decline as a mere product of reproduction, but could he have predicted that a city model of art tourism like Miami, would be reproduced all over the world for capital? Is this the final stage of aura in art? Has it moved so far outside of the product itself that it must hover over the spaces and events within the most culturally progressive cities?

## CONCLUSION

Walter Benjamin's article in "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" makes a claim that "what withers in the age of the technological reproducibility is the latter's aura" (Benjamin, 22). I argue that it is desire through monetary systems of exchange which produces aura and that the apparatus of the art market determines its context and placement. Benjamin defines aura as the tension of experience in the temporal and spatial dimension. He says that "aura" is a "strange web of space and time" or "a distance as close as it can be" (Benjamin, 23). This project locates the spatial existence of aura as it has been determined through various market systems. Ritual and tradition caused aura to attach to the work of art itself under feudal law; the capitalist art market has not destroyed aura, but rearranged its configuration outside the work of art. Divine right is no longer involved in the process of art making or revering it as a religious object. Instead, aura comes from the mystique of the art auction system, the headlines of high prices, and the glamorous collectors bequeathing their prized possessions to museums. Aura is still alive. It is everywhere in the current art system, except within the work of art itself. I used the concept of spiritual capital in art to trace the history and migration of the spatial and temporal location of aura determined by various market structures. The creative force that is desire translates into an aura which multiplies through the relationships and connections of a capitalist economy. Spiritual capital leaves a reverberating trace of identity in the network of social and cultural structures in the art market. Therefore, aura cannot be destroyed through technology as Benjamin believes, because its driving force, desire, as has been noted, is embedded within our psychological nature. Desire forms an elemental part of our experience

and nature, however it can be intensified and enhanced through ideological and manufactured constructions such as the capitalist system.

In both the art world and the Church, money and desire have become the surplus which are now unable to be fully articulated because of their vast operating system. Desire is now the driving force between need and demand in the art market creating a structure of multidirectional flows of communication and capital. As Deleuze and Guattari believe, desire is a result of productive forces, and we are the desiring machine not run on lack. Our desires are “capitalized” in the social arrangements of the art world and the Church which makes spiritual capital through aura possible. Simmel explains how an intangible concept, such as aura, can be translated into an object of desire, and thus a drive for consumption. “If an object of any kind provides us with great pleasure or advantage we experience a feeling of joy at every later viewing of this object even if any use or enjoyment is now out of the question. This joy, which resembles an echo, has a unique psychological character determined by the fact that we no longer want anything from that object. In place of the former concrete relationship with the object, it is now mere contemplation that is the source of enjoyable sensation; when we leave the being of the object untouched, and our sentiment is attached only to the appearance, not to the sense that it may be consumed. This whole development of objects from utility value to aesthetic value is a process of objectification” (Simmel, 76). As stated before, aura is the energy between the work of art and the gaze of the viewer. Intuition and “beingness” play a role in the animation of the object, but also signify the biological connections through desire. I believe that in the economy of Christianity and also in the art world, this desire is for spiritual capital.

The desire for spiritual capital was not born in the Renaissance with the rise of art markets. Instead, the art market borrowed the notion of spiritual capital from organized religion. The Catholic Church utilized the principles of spiritual capital as I have identified them: a language of disavowal, cooperative but independent agents, events as symbols of power, and the accumulation of physical space. Aura surrounded the Church and as a result, consumers bought into the notion of a metaphysical good. This is possible because “religion legitimates so effectively because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality. The tenuous realities of the social world are grounded in the sacred realissimum, which by definition is beyond the contingencies of human meanings and human activity” (Berger, 32).

The social and experiential element of aura is key to creating a large enough movement, or belief system, that can become engrained in our collective consciousness. “To repeat, the historically crucial part of religion in the process of legitimation is explicable in terms of the unique capacity of religion to “locate” human phenomena within a cosmic frame of reference. All legitimation serves to maintain reality — reality, that is, as defined in a particular human collectivity” (Berger, 35). The mystique of the art world, or the power that came from the Church, did not naturally occur by the same enigmatic forces dictated by the doctrine. Instead, it was consciously and purposely formed by humans. “The term “dialectic” is useful precisely in avoiding this misinterpretation. Religious legitimations arise from human activity, but once crystallized into complexes of meaning that become part of a religious tradition, they can attain a measure of autonomy as against this activity. Indeed, they may then act back upon actions in everyday life, transforming the latter, sometimes radically” (Berger, 41). The legitimation of spiritual capital has become so embedded into

our consciousness that it has almost gone beyond the point of observation in both art and religion. Adorno commented on this phenomena in *The Culture Industry*, “Ultimately, the culture industry no longer needs to directly pursue everywhere the profit interests from which it originated. These interests have become objectified in its ideology and have even made themselves independent of the compulsion to sell the cultural commodities which may be swallowed anyway” (Adorno, 99).

As I have shown, philosophers as early as Plato and Aristotle have discussed the aesthetic value and aura of spiritual capital and also spiritual capital and aura in objects with aesthetic value. Winckelmann argued that a capitalist society could not produce important or lasting art.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Similarly, Schiller and Kant valued aesthetic play and the freedom that it provided versus the chains of financial concerns. “Art is likewise to be distinguished from craft. The first is also called free art, the second could be mercenary art. We regard free art as an art that could only turn out purposive (i.e. succeed) if it is at play, in other words, an occupation that is agreeable on its own account; mercenary art we regard as labor i.e. as an occupation that on its own account is disagreeable (burdensome) and that attracts us only through its affect (e.g. pay) so that people can be coerced into it” (Kant, 170-71).

While the disavowal and condemnation of money betwixt with artistic production continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, it would hit a fever pitch in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before, the artist was condemned for “mercenary art”, but during the dawn of the Industrial Revolution the condemnation was transferred to the consumer. “The masses” who dictated the taste of art production threatened not only culture, but the moral standing of all of society spurring critiques from Danto, Greenberg, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, and Adorno to name a few. The focus of art as it relates to money has changed over time and leads me to conclude that

aura never existed in the work of art, but in the conditions surrounding the consumption of the work of art: it's spiritual capital.

Recently, more critics have looked into the function of money in the art world. As it has grown to a \$6 billion-dollar industry, some notable organizations are taking a deeper look into the workings of the art market and how wealth is created and disseminated. A United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report states: “Thus it can be seen that the concept of the “creative economy” has evolved along several paths over the last ten years. It has emerged as a means of focusing attention on the role of creativity as a force in contemporary economic life, embodying the proposition that economic and cultural development are not separate or unrelated phenomena but part of a larger process of sustainable development in which both economic and cultural growth can occur hand in hand” (UNCTAD 2010, 10). The art world is and always has been embedded in the economy. The effects of globalization have made it necessary to study the complexities and effects of the rapidly expanding value system I call spiritual capital.

Just as in our concept of aura, the art market has no established center and no exacting periphery. Instead, the art market has currents of multidirectional flows. “Thus, they have succeeded in framing the arts—a group of contingent, sometimes oppositional, and occasionally revolutionary practices and transactions—as a single economy, albeit as a subset of a larger structure. The subject of economic impact studies is not just the art market, though this is the most common way of grasping the arts economy. Rather, these studies outline a distinct economic process in which the arts, and the creative spirit essential to them, acquire a putative fiscal value that can have a tremendous impact on local, national, and international economies” (Zarobell, 2). The paradox of globalism is that art is more diverse, but the

economy is more homogeneous. At the same time, this is a multipolar effect with a simultaneous expansion and concentration of power in various economic centers.

The accumulation of spiritual capital on a global scale has had a powerful impact on artists, institutions, and organization involved in the art world. “Endowment for the Arts has to defend the very limited funds that the federal government in the United States delivers to artists each year on economic grounds alone, the important distinction between the values of art and the value of the arts is being eclipsed. Whether you believe that any government has a responsibility to fund the arts, it is clear that a bottom line has been drawn beneath artistic creation, which on some level argues for the significance of culture but on another level reduces it to a subset of the global economy, another measure of our collective productive capacity. We need to consider the concept of economic impact and the creative economy, taking stock of calculations that glorify culture as an economic force in the global economy” (Appadurai, 38). I have shown that through the conscious creation of aura, spiritual capital is now situated in the process of globalization. This effect, “both increased diversification of content and the dissemination of norms, a homogenizing system that allows that content to be transferred anywhere” (Appadurai, 38).

Currently, money itself is part of the process of spiritual capital in the globalized art world, but how is value being built? Simmel explains, “The distance between subject and object that establishes value, at least in the economic sense, has an upper and lower limit; the formula that the amount of value equals the degree of resistance to the acquisition of objects, in relation to natural, productive, and social opportunities is not correct” (Simmel, 75). Instead, I believe that there is more than a linguistic-cultural practice connecting religion and art, but a material and experiential connection as well. As I have mentioned, the economic



forces of an epoch determine the placement of auratic presence and this external context in which aura is found directly relates to the economy in which it was created. Here we can again see a multidirectional flow between aura, spiritual capital, and the art market.

In the past, we assumed that art has a value which could not be measured or understood. As I have shown, art is part of a market operating on the principles of spiritual capital, building the transient properties of aura. “In fact, the acquisition of the aesthetic attitude derives from and marks a position of privilege in the very realm of economics from which that attitude officially declares its independence. And although the conception of art as transcendent of social reality provides a natural disguise for the actual historical process within which it came into existence and for the socio-economic prerequisites – leisure and education – of its enjoyment, the truth, as we have seen, will out” (Mattick, 45). Today’s perception is that the entity called “the market” creates value. We are again blind to the fact that market value is still assigned by human beings.

In common conceptions of economics, the use value must be greater than the commodity value of any product or service for surplus value/capital to be produced. In the art world, the use value is a belief system and a satisfaction of desire, and in this way, we realize that financial gain is not only possible from spiritual capital, but probable when operating at the highest level of the art market. “Each product affects an individualized air; individuality itself serves to reinforce ideology, in so far as the illusion is conjured up that the completely reified and mediated is a sanctuary from immediacy and life” (Adorno, 31).

Curiously, as powerful as the creative economy has become, the unwritten rules of silence remain. In fact, a crucial factor for the health and strength of the art market is a

disavowal of the market. As stated before, without an established ontological structure, an entity can exist with complete freedom. Spiritual capital and its currency, aura, actively travel towards the most accommodating environment for this requirement. “Because of its social role, disturbing questions about its quality, about truth or untruth, and about the aesthetic niveau of the culture industry’s emissions are repressed, or at least excluded from the so-called sociology of communications. The critic is accused of taking refuge in the arrogant esoterica. It would be advisable first to indicate the double meaning of importance that slowly worms its way unnoticed” (Adorno, 101). “Embeddedness” is the natural consequence of the discourse of disavowal.

Art world players have created an aura of tradition and ritual that protect their underlying operations from scrutiny. When we say that a work of art has aura, it immediately enters a sacred space, both culturally and economically. A work of art created by an artistic genius whose natural disposition is a gift from the divine creator necessitates an uncontested appreciation. Those who attempt to explore the basic impulses of the art market are called heathens and by creating untouchable elements of mysticism into the art making process, the monetary exchange of art has become a job only for those with power and authority. The gallery owners, auction houses, and museum curators, whose operation of exchange in art can only be understood by those deemed holy enough to understand its forces.

If there is no way to talk about spiritual capital in the art market, then we must rely on aesthetic perception to understand its effects. The art market very clearly borrowed many of its operational principles from the Church. “Attempts to rescue aesthetics as an originary point for the study of religion. Fundamental to this project is the contention that sense perception is a central locus for the reception, creation, and reproduction of our religious

worlds. By looking at aesthetics through its materialist guise of sense perception, we find ourselves scrutinizing the construction of our religious worlds in a way more primary than the second - order reflection that is standard in much of religious studies with its examinations of sacred texts and theological doctrine. Religious historian David Chidester argues in his study of the religious discourse surrounding the senses of seeing and hearing: “To adapt (and modify) a familiar aphorism from Paul Ricoeur, perception — particularly the perceptual modes of seeing and hearing — gives rise to symbols, and symbols give rise to thought.” (2) By understanding the ways humans sensually interact with the world around them we understand the ways humans create symbols, myths, rituals, and, indeed, entire religious worlds. Thus, aesthetics offers itself as a mode for analyzing and comparing religions” (Plate, 2).

Even Kant blended the two notions of aesthetic perception and the economy through a moralized lens. “Freedom, at least that of the will, is essential to morality; the freedom of aesthetic play signifies the bracketing of material desire and so of the economic domain to which those desires look for satisfaction. Aesthetic appreciation requires neither ownership nor consumption, but only perception” (Mattick, 43). This belief has influenced countless generations so that even now both artists and collectors alike fuse the conflicting notions of money and spirit through mediation and presentation.

To keep the storyline that art and artists had a direct relationship to the spirit of genius, artists themselves had to be removed from monetary transactions. As Kant dictated, “Genius is the exemplary originality of a subject’s natural endowment in the free use of his cognitive powers” (Kant, 186). Schiller completed this narrative by saying, “Let him direct his gaze upwards, to the dignity of his calling and the universal Law, not downwards towards

Fortune and the daily needs of life” (Schiller, 57). He went further to state, “Those who know no other criterion of value than the effort of earning or the tangible profit, how should they be capable of appreciating the unobtrusive effects of taste on the outward appearance and on the mind and character of men” (Schiller, 65)? The idea that artists and their products had to remain indifferent to monetary concerns simply could not be supported if artists interacted with patrons, and thus the need for the art dealers. In this way, “On the wings of taste even that art which must cringe for payment can lift itself out of the dust” (Schiller, 219).

As the narrative switched from artists being able to imitate God’s Nature during the Renaissance to the artist as an imitator of the nature of God as creator in the Romantic Period and beyond, the separation from monetary concerns was still of primary importance. The value of the labor involved in making a work of art is intangible so those involved in the art market maintained and created a narrative of holy transcendence through their own historically acquired scripts. Aura, or spiritual value, in the work of art may have been conceived during the era of “artist as genius”, but it was preserved and venerated all of the way through Modernism. As the Church continued to splinter off into more and more specialized sects, the art market diversified and grew through the rise of the art dealer.

In simple terms, the earliest agents and dealers of art were charged with making the new meaning of art separate from money. Adorno commented, “The culture commodities of the industry are governed...by the principle of their realization as value, and not by their own specific content and harmonious formation. The entire practice of the culture industry transfers the profit motive naked onto the cultural forms. Ever since these cultural forms first began to earn a living for their creators as commodities in the marketplace they had already

possessed something of this quality” (Adorno, 98). The work of art is controlled by the art world players who embed it with their own particular form of enchantment. Again, this process was, and remains, secretive and deregulated, and consequently, the direct and individualized nature of artist/patron relationships derestricted the art trade and made the exchange of money and capital untraceable and covert.

As I have shown, art consumption and collection are an arboreal model of social hierarchy that obscures the most significant aspects of spiritual capital; namely, the creation of aura through power. “The masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject, but its object” (Adorno, 98).

I have shown how the source of authority changes in a work of art and then so does the placement of aura. It is the unique presence of aura itself that connects art with the power of authority to those who encounter it, and in turn, makes it valuable. “Marx’s early confrontation between art and religion hinges on the term “fetishism”. It denotes the use of human images contrary to their true meaning, as fictitious deities, tools for dominating men” (Werkmeister, 501). This connection between authority and aura was of primary importance to Benjamin. “Because the latter is founded on the former, in reproduction, where the material presence has withdrawn itself from the human, so too does the historical testimony of the thing begin to waver. What is represented as wavering is clearly this: the authority of the thing” (Illuminations, 221). Art dealers and other art world influencers have built the authority which through events conveying symbolic shows of power, which has created a space for aura to reside. The cyclical nature of events on the international art calendar contributes to the economy of spiritual capital enhanced by a structure of cooperative agents,

a rhetoric of disavowal, and an adopted physical manifestation. By taking over various forms of time and space, an implicit power structure of control occupied by a symbolic and spiritual capital came to be associated with the economy of art.

As we have seen, the authority of aura is most affective, from an economic standpoint, when it plays a dominant role in the organization of space. Every city needed a church for validation, now every city needs an art museum. “Moreover, cities in emerging economies are experiencing significant growth as a result of changes wrought by economic globalization, and they seek cultural institutions to burnish their status as global metropolises. Two important innovations in museums that have emerged from these historical developments are the income - funded museum, best represented by the West Kowloon Cultural District, and the role of place making to encourage not only art museum expansion but public - private partnerships that are explicitly connected to economic growth and consumer development” (Zarobell, 49).

Aura is not a quality of the artwork itself. Instead, spiritual capital has a close connection to the consumption and development of land. “Another point is that art shown in museums generally increases in value, and the museum building itself (as well as the land it sits upon) both appreciate, so a private museum is a real estate investment — one often is secured with the aid of local governments, since it will provide ostensible benefits for the community it serves” (Zarobell, 52).

The accumulation of land has become such an important aspect of building the cultural value of a city and displaying the power of authority, that it has become a known pathway to revenue in the developing world. “Private museums are proliferating because

China has a lot of property developers,' says Shen Qibin, the former director of the Zendai Museum of Modern Art and the director of the planned Himalayas Art Centre, both funded by property magnate Dai Zhikang . Developers often build a museum 'as an advertisement for nouveau riche developments '" (Movius, 2011 ). This is very similar to Miami where many of the museum funders are real estate developers. Just as land owners-built Churches during the Middle Ages to display their wealth and power, the most affluent collectors today are building museums in their name. This shows irrefutably that spiritual capital is tied to land development. They are also setting an example for other new collectors to follow. "Private collectors are setting the agenda for which artists are the most significant by stimulating other collectors to emulate them and compete for works, which drives up prices" (Adam, 85 ). This is an example of aura being created before the paint is dry.

I have shown that the separation of aura from the work of art through the art market did not begin during the age of mechanical reproduction as Benjamin suggests. Instead, it is a continuation and appropriation of the value of spiritual capital stretching back to the Middle Ages. "Adopting Benjamin's designation of the traditional work of art by the concept of aura, the presence of that which is not present, the culture industry is defined by the fact that it does not strictly counterpose another principle to that of aura, but rather by the fact that it preserves the decaying aura as a foggy mist. By this means the culture industry betrays its own biological abuses" (Adorno, 101). As I have argued, there is no need to "preserve" the notion of aura, as it has an extended history. The principles of spiritual capital created it and will always preserve it: the acquisition of land, a disavowal of financial concerns, independent but cooperative agents, and events as symbols of power.

The internal/external qualities of aura are mirrored by Adorno when he explains the concept of technique. “The concept of technique in the cultural industry is only in name identical with technique in the work of art. In the latter, technique is concerned with the internal organization of the object itself, with its inner logic. In contrast, the technique of the culture industry is, from the beginning, one of distribution and mechanical reproduction, and therefore always remains external to its object” (Adorno, 99). This concern with the space of occupation for the concepts of aura and technique seem predicated, not on the creation of a thing, but on how it is distributed. Furthermore, the financial system by which it is disseminated determines its placement, location, and strength. Kopytoff explains further, “a culturally informed economic biography of an object would look at it as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories” (Kopytoff, 67). Thus, aura not only can move, but it has the power to move us. Proximity or the distance between the subjective and objective is the space in which aura survives. Rather than being a fixed point, aura travels that distance and has the ability to inhabit either point.

Despite the serialization of art and modern commercial disfigurements, we can see that aura exists, even if its placement remains obscured. “We need not pursue...remarks on the origin of aesthetic value into a discussion of all the ramifications of the subject in order to recognize that the objectification of value originates in the relative distance that emerges between the direct subjective origin of the valuation of the object and our momentary feeling concerning the object” (Simmel, 77). As in Benjamin’s description of aura, aura is not a thing in itself, but as a name given to the experience of viewing a work of art. It is the relationship between the subject and object. Benjamin warns that, with the advent of



technology, aura is in decay. I would suggest that aura can morph forms. I believe that it is still pervasive in culture, but it has spread itself thin, leaving only a trace on all art objects and practices. Its dominating force is not immediately noticeable, but has now infiltrated everything, just as the economy touches every aspect of life.

I have laid out the theory that Christianity and the art world share an economy of spiritual capital delivered through aura. What we understand as aura is actually the accumulation of circumstances that brought a work of art to its value. This is spiritual capital. As I have defined it spiritual capital is the determining factor in valuing a work of art. It is a unique, extra-economic factor that is the combination of tangible conditions and intangible behaviors and beliefs. It is the driving force behind operations in the art economy.

An artist alone cannot produce spiritual capital in the 21st century. Instead, the well-organized art world and its operators have created and perpetuated aura since its very early guild formations in the Middle Ages and it is leveraged for other forms of capital: monetary, intellectual, relational, and physical. My project has shown that aura is not a property of the work itself. Instead, it is a byproduct of the art market, which attaches itself to the material forms of art. Furthermore, we can identify aura as an asset within the art market which produces, and packages value and desirability manufactured through spiritual capital. The concept of spiritual capital can be explained through Adorno's understanding of the culture industry. "It is industrialized more in the sociological sense, in the incorporation of industrial forms of organization even when nothing is manufactured" (Adorno, 100). The desire for capital's timelessness, its association with an unobtainable surplus value, and its community enhancing capabilities are only a few of the characteristic of spiritual capital transferable to the art world.

As I have shown throughout this project spiritual capital is the combination of extra-economical tangible conditions coupled with intangible behaviors and beliefs. The combination of these conditions, behaviors, and beliefs increases the value of art objects. Both religious and art economies acquire physical space, establish a structure of cooperative agents, use an exclusive language which produces a discourse of disavowal that denies active participation in a consumer driven economy, and deploy ceremonial symbols of power during ritual events in order to create aura. However, none of these principles are discussed because the art world claims that its goals and commitments remain outside of the realm of the marketplace. The necessity of negating the profitable elements of business, and a perceived disinterest in the accumulation of symbolic value, allows spiritual enterprise an unprecedented autonomy from governing agencies.

By utilizing principles borrowed from the creation and expansion of the Christian Church, the art world used high spiritual attributions connected to a work of art enhance the financial value of a work of art and produce an aura which leads to spiritual and financial capital. “The importance of the culture industry in the spiritual constitution of the masses is no dispensation for reflection on its objective legitimization, its essential being, least of all by science which thinks itself pragmatic. On the contrary, such reflection becomes necessary precisely for this reason. To take the culture industry as seriously as its unquestioned role demands, means to take it seriously critically, and not to cower in the face of its monopolistic character” (Adorno, 101). Distinctive conjunctions of use of space, networks of cooperative agents, use of exclusive language, and deployment of ceremonial symbols engender and enhance spiritual capital and have created unprecedented amount of wealth for those with authority in the art world. Understanding the nature of aura, how it relates to spiritual capital,

and what qualities build value in the art market takes the first steps to uncovering the implications of the growing culture industry.

As Zarobell explains, “Nevertheless, all of these reports represent a transformation of thinking on the arts that needs to be evaluated in order to get beyond some of the reductive assumptions that such studies embody. Here is the fundamental turn: creativity now means economic growth, not artistic decision making. Instead of an author struggling against the proverbial empty page, a member of the creative class may instead be trying to determine what data to plug into a spreadsheet. If the success of a postindustrial economy is tied to a cognitariat and their innovative capacity, creativity is a value that needs to be cultivated in order to achieve financial success, and even sustainability” (Zarobell, 13). Just as religion functioned as a product of spiritual capital in the past, fine art now operates within a rhizomatic structure of multidirectional flows created by power structures, discourses, and agents to fabricate a metaphysical product with monetary implications. This is the new function of aura in a global economy.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Ranciere describes the heterogeneous sensible as the aesthetic, or a sensory experience that encompasses art and its beneficial promises in the lived life of individuals and communities.

<sup>ii</sup> The term *ex nihilo* is most fitting here. This is a Latin term with theological implications explaining how God created “something from nothing” in reference to the earth’s origins.

<sup>iii</sup> Aesthetic distancing is the difference between the artist’s representation of a world or image on a work of art and the actual environment that a viewer is conscious of in his lived environment. When that gap is closed, and a viewer is consciously immersed in the work, the aesthetic distance is closed.

<sup>iv</sup> Due to Benjamin’s Marxist views he is at the same time bemoaning the loss of aura but sees the emancipation of aura (with a religious connotation) in society as liberating. He says, “The concepts which are introduced into the theory of art in what follows... are useful for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art”(Rainey, 1096).

<sup>v</sup> While approaching the concept of authorship from different angles both Barthes and Foucault come to similar conclusions. Namely, they both say that the traditional concept of an author has disappeared, replaced with translators of signs and symbols.

<sup>vi</sup> See “Magnetoencephalographic fields from patients with spontaneous and induced migraine aura”( san M. Bowyer PhD, Sheena K. Aurora MD, John E. Moran PhD, Norman Tepley PhD, K. M. A. Welch MD Annals of Neurology November 2001).

This is a significant study measuring the aura of patients with visually stimulated migraines.

<sup>vii</sup> Simmel was a Neo-Kantian philosopher who traced the metaphysical implications of money and charged it with a value outside of pure commodification. For example, “In the tradition of Western Marxism, Marx’s theories of alienation and the fetishism of commodities are combined with Hegel’s dialectical phenomenology of spirit, Simmel’s theory of the tragedy of culture, and Max Weber’s theory of formal rationalization to form a critical theory of society. The concept of reification is used to refer to the relatively autonomous, alienating and alienated functioning of the social (sub-) systems of modern capitalist societies that impose their constraints from without on individuals, limit their freedom and tend to reduce them to powerless ‘carriers’ or passive ‘executioners’ of the system. As products of practices, institutions and organizations (like factories, bureaucracies, tribunals, and increasingly also universities) are human objectivities, but in the course of their development, the social (sub)systems have been complexified, formalized, rationalized, and depersonalized to such an extent that eventually they have been transmuted into self-referentially closed systems that function independently of the will and the consciousness of individuals, thwart their plans, threaten their autonomy, and perhaps even their existence” (<http://logosjournal.com/2013/vandenbergh/>).

<sup>viii</sup> Claude Levi Strauss theorized that certain kinship groups shared mythologies and some homologous cultural attributes. “In [sociology](#), [anthropology](#) and [linguistics](#), **structuralism** is

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the methodology that elements of human culture must be understood by way of their relationship to a larger, overarching system or structure. It works to uncover the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel. Alternatively, as summarized by philosopher [Simon Blackburn](#), structuralism is "the belief that phenomena of human life are not intelligible except through their interrelations. These relations constitute a structure, and behind local variations in the surface phenomena there are constant laws of abstract culture".

<sup>ix</sup> The term aura was first used in ancient Greece to identify a breeze or breath. This definition continued throughout the Roman Empire and we see evidence of its use in Middle English to identify a gentle wind.

<sup>x</sup> The Latin word ingenium referred to an innate aptness and aptitude, particularly used in describing poets whose topic was nature (Wary, [Arethusa: Volume 40, Number 2, Spring 2007](#) pp. 127-143 | [10.1353/are.2007.0018](#)).

<sup>xi</sup> This would be solidified as an innate property of art by Kant in the 17th century. "The sacralization of art took shape from the late eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. Romantic writers and artists believed that art and nature could produce a bracing experience of what was variously called the infinite, the sublime, the timeless, or the divine. Artists were geniuses who had access to such domains and needed to be championed against the incursions of bourgeois sensibility, Orthodox religion, false taste, and the state. Like many artists and theorists before him, Wassily Kandinsky added: "prophet" to the artist's office, claiming that artists were geniuses who propelled an upwardly arcing movement of spiritual enlightenment that gradually pulled their societies into the progressive development" (Taylor and Francis, 15).

<sup>xii</sup> Kant says in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, "A religion, accordingly, can be natural, and at the same time revealed, when it is so constituted that men could and ought to have discovered it of themselves merely through the use of their reason, although they would not have come upon it so early, or over so wide an area, as is required. Hence a revelation thereof at a given time and in a given place might well be wise and very advantageous to the human race, in that, when once the religion thus introduced is here, and has been made known publicly, everyone can henceforth by himself and with his own reason convince himself of its truth. In this event the religion is objectively a natural religion, though subjectively one that has been revealed" (Kant, 262).

<sup>xiii</sup> In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber argued that working for economic gain was not only permissible in the Christian Church but should be applauded as moral and good.

<sup>xiv</sup> The definition of the word usurer stems from Medieval Latin as a person who lends money at an exorbitant interest. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/usurer> : a person who lends money and charges interest, especially at an exorbitant or unlawful rate; moneylender. 2. Obsolete. a person who lends money at interest.

<sup>xv</sup> "During this era, the absorption of classical models of thought along with the ambitions of emulating Christ, which was previously separate, merged. Artistic-intellectual achievement became a measure of individual success in realizing ideals, and emulation of excellence via the proximity of excellent writing and art came to be viewed as a precursor to its achievement. Humanists developed as Christians working simultaneously for the reform of the church and of literary and artistic culture. To achieve those ends, they promoted a return

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to the basics of Christian civilization - that is, to the Greek and Latin classics and critical biblical literature. Erasmus edited the writings of most of the major Church Fathers in both Latin and Greek. His edition of the Greek New Testament, the *Novum Instrumentum* of 1516, was intended to stimulate a renewal of authentic Christian faith and life, which he called "the philosophy of Christ," in a corrupt Roman Catholicism (Eisenman, 35). Significantly, this merciless critic of the state of Roman Catholicism died a faithful member of the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>xvi</sup> Rembrandt is the ideal example of an artist who could represent Protestant humility and humanity while capitalizing on the demand and business it produced. Antwerp's position as one of the first popular markets allowed Rembrandt to grasp the commercial demand for all manner of mediums. Commissions from wealthy merchants, original pieces, prints and engravings, and popular copies resulted in cultural creativity and proliferation for Rembrandt and many other painters in the 1600s. Rembrandt's particular gift was being able to please the pious and wealthy customers by appealing to two contradictory qualities: affluence and virtuous devoutness. For example, *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (1635) denies the polished opulence of its Italian counterparts, but still manages to appeal to a wealthy merchant's familiarity with luxury. The aesthetic appeal of Rembrandt's biblical narrative depicting the crucial moment of an angel interceding in the death of Abraham's only son Isaac does not reside in the physical drama of the work or the tortured expressions of the characters. His work draws the viewer in through materials. Furs, silks, and linens were depicted with stunning accuracy and detail. These luxurious items symbolized the industriousness of a nation and a lack of idleness that resulted in material accumulations. From his portraits to his secular and religious paintings, Rembrandt was able to balance modesty, frugality, and sobriety in the faces of his patrons while just barely avoiding brazen opulence in the dress of his figures.

<sup>xvii</sup> Examples of Counter Reformation artist would include Titian and Tintoretto in Southern Europe and Peter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt in Northern Europe. These artists worked as a reaction to Reformation and Protestant artists such as Lucas Cranach.

<sup>xviii</sup> "Estimates based on extant auction catalogs suggest that as many as 35,000 paintings may have been offered on the block between August 1689 and March 1692" (Bayer and Page, 74).

<sup>xix</sup> A rule not specified plagued the auction market then as it does now. Fakes were prevalent, but the educated elite saw it as a mark of distinction to be able to practice their judgment of taste and their ability for excellent connoisseurship for auction spectators.

<sup>xx</sup> Collective Witnessing, which is a shared experience of visual communication has become connective witnessing in today's internet society where images are not only viewed but individually consumed and then shared again. This is a distinct contrast to collective witnessing which necessarily has all viewers physically present, contributing to a more singular collection of views on the same event.

<sup>xxi</sup> Romanticism was expressed through the writings of figures such as Kant, Rousseau, and Burke. This is differentiated from, but followed closely by, German Idealism by philosophers such as Hegel and Schopenhauer.

<sup>xxii</sup> Kant's *Judgement of Taste* is of course subjective in nature and based on pleasure and displeasure, which differs from empirical judgments. From this, judgements of beauty and ugliness are possible.

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<sup>xxiii</sup> During the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, London’s art market thrived as French aristocrats were forced to sell their transportable goods such as art and jewelry. Specifically, the Agnew Gallery arose in 1817 to meet this challenge for the nobility on both sides of the war.

<sup>xxiv</sup> For example, the Venice Biennale was created in 1895 as a juried invitational system to display the works of art from participating nations.

<sup>xxv</sup> “For example, bronze artifacts were looted from the Benin Kingdom in Africa and remain in the British Museum collection despite countless requests from the government of Nigeria for their return. These items were historically used to justify British rule and were even politicized to provide an example of Christian ‘practicality and superiority’ over tribal mysticism” (<https://qz.com/1054364/the-british-museum-will-return-bronze-sculptures-looted-from-benin-nearly-two-centuries-ago/>).

<sup>xxvi</sup> Relational aesthetics refer to art as a social circumstance with the artist being the conductor of the event, but even this can become part of today’s art industry. “Art critic Hal Foster pointed out in the 1990s that with relational aesthetics, ‘the institution may overshadow the work that it otherwise highlights: it becomes the spectacle, it collects the cultural capital, and the director-curator becomes the star.’ ” (Claire Bishop, *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*, pg. 54-55)

<sup>xxvii</sup> This is in stark contrast to Kant’s notion of judgement. He says, “The judgment of taste is therefore not a cognitive judgment, hence not a logical one, but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective” (1). A work of art in the system of spiritual capital is actually the opposite. It is now judged based on measurable cognitive factors.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Kant says that the judgement of taste is based on disinterestedness. “Kant claims that (a) pleasure in the beautiful is “disinterested”, and (b) only pleasure in the beautiful is “disinterested” (Kant 1790, pp. 42–50).

<sup>xxix</sup> Kant’s distinction between “fine art” and “agreeable art” is clear. “While Kant attaches special importance to the beauty of nature (see e.g., FI XI, 20:244), he also makes clear that judgments of beauty may be made also about “fine” or “beautiful” art [*schöne Kunst*]. In the course of his treatment of beautiful art in §§43–54 he discusses fine art in relation to the production of human artifacts more generally (§43), compares fine art to the “arts” of entertaining (telling jokes, decorating a table, providing background music) (§44), and makes some remarks about the relation between the beauty of art and that of nature, claiming in particular that fine art must “look to us like nature” in that it must seem free and unstudied (§45). Kant also offers a typology of the various fine arts (§51) and a comparison of their respective aesthetic value (§53), with poetry at the top and music — at least as far as the “cultivation of the mind” is concerned — at the bottom. Kant’s remarks about music in §§51–54 suggest that music might not even qualify as beautiful, as opposed to merely agreeable, art. This is seemingly in tension with Kant’s reference to music without words as an example of “free beauty” (§16, 5:229)” (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/#2.3.6>).

<sup>xxx</sup> In Schopenhauer’s work he significantly expands Kant’s ideas of free play and the imagination to include genius “Genius is the ability to leave entirely out of sight our own interest, our willing, and our aims, and consequently to discard entirely our own personality for a time, in order to remain pure knowing subject, the clear eye of the world; and this not merely for moments, but with the necessary continuity and conscious thought to enable us to

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repeat by deliberate art what has been apprehended and 'what in wavering apparition gleams fix in its place with thoughts that stand forever!' "(87).

<sup>xxxii</sup> Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* also builds off of the ideas of Marx, Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari to address desire in capitalism. "All structures contain libidinal energy as an under-exploited potentiality, waiting to be released and to flow into new structures. This libidinal energy is the event, which always contains more possibilities for interpretation and exploitation than any single structure can give it. Lyotard's libidinal philosophy prescribes a "freeing up" of structures, so that events may be allowed their maximum potentiality of expression in competing interpretations and dispositions. Releasing the energy in structures in turn creates new events, with their own energetic potentialities"

([www.iep.utm.edu/lyotard/#H3](http://www.iep.utm.edu/lyotard/#H3)). I believe that Lyotard is discussing aura and spiritual capitalism. structure of multidirectional flows created by power structures, discourses, and agents to produce a metaphysical product with monetary implications.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Kristeva and Heidegger further this notion of the "space between" as place of aura by referring to the ancient Greek term *khora*. Heidegger sees khora as the space where being takes place, or a "clearing". Julia Kristeva calls khora the place between the symbolic and semiotic realm. The term originated from Plato who called it the "space" or "interval realm". He suggested that khora "rests between the sensible and the intelligible, through which everything passes but in which nothing is retained". An alternative place not inside, nor outside, the Greek polis. Derrida called it the "radical otherness" that creates being (Derrida, *Khora*, 1993). This long used philosophical term delineates a receptacle where aura lives.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Commodity fetishism is a concept from Karl Marx which proposes that social relationships involved in production become nothing more than commercial exchanges, so that things with actual value become objects of intrinsic value. He says, "The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labor as objective characteristics of the products of labor themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labor as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labor become commodities, sensuous things what are at the same time supra-sensible or social" (1.4.4).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> In the contemporary art market, very few artists, art world professionals, and collectors have access to works that contain "aura". They are the privileged minority who are able to work within the highest ends of spiritual capital.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Foucault merges the heterotopian space with heterochromia to describe the preservation of time, space and objects as in museums and libraries.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> This in contrast to Greek and Roman art which he felt was far superior.