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Miscreation

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Introduction

Many modern critics of art have regarded criticism as an art in itself. The critical account has its origin in the work of art but strikes out on its own, perhaps to extend the artistic world formed by the object of its scrutiny or even dialectically to confront that world and re-form it into yet another creation. In such critical practice, strict evaluation of new artistic constructs, in terms of old or traditional norms, may in itself be considered bad form; judgment of this kind binds human creativity to a fixed center by a chain of finite length, and the circle of creative activity cannot expand. Yet, as I will ultimately argue in this essay, the critic's first responsibility is to his own fixed principles, not the rude innovations of an unfamiliar art. Criticism has good reason to maintain its critical distance from art and to challenge malformed creations, miscreations, wherever they appear.

The notion of miscreation readily calls forth visual images. We may think of grotesque mutations, combinations of unrelated species or improperly formed beings with the wrong placement or number of limbs. We may even conjure up a familiar object, distorted with regard to its internal proportional relationships — a chair with legs of four different lengths. Such images challenge conventional definitions and are inherently both frightening and comical; our specific emotional response will depend upon the context in which we encounter these bizarre constructions that confuse our rational order.

Images that may threaten are often transformed into ones that provide humor through the art of caricature. The foreign warmonger looks funny and harmless in the political cartoon. Alternatively, caricature may exaggerate a form so that its largely hidden impropriety stands revealed. Caricature both employs and exposes miscreation. Thus, in order to investigate the relation of a modern critic to a work of art — an adversary relationship where creation may appear as miscreation — we shall study examples of caricature as well as art which lends itself to caricature. But first we must understand what makes the modern critic specifically “modern”; we must consider his tendency to subject his evaluation of creativity to a judgment of originality. When originality is at stake, questions of creation become especially difficult.

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Part I

“To create something means to make it non-technically, but yet consciously and voluntarily.” Such was R. G. Collingwood's definition of artistic creation made in 1938. In his concern to distinguish artistic activity from technical procedure, or, more simply, to distinguish art from craft, Collingwood was typical of his time, and even of our time. He argued that, although human creation was distinct from divine creation, it was yet a pure bringing into being, not a mere transformation of preexisting material. Works of art, Collingwood writes,

are not made as means to an end; they are not made according to any preconceived plan; and they are not made by imposing a new form upon a given matter. Yet they are made deliberately and responsibly, by people who know what they are doing, even though they do not know in advance what is going to come of it.

The creation which theologians ascribe to God is peculiar in one way and only one. [The peculiarity] is that in the case of his act there lacks not only a prerequisite in the shape of a matter to be transformed, but any prerequisite of any kind whatsoever. [In contrast,] in order that a work of art should be created, the prospective artist... must have in him certain unexpressed emotions, and must also have the wherewithal to express them....

The artistic experience is not generated out of nothing. [1938:128 — 130, 273]¹

Still, for Collingwood, works of human art may be “original,” like God's creations, despite their contingency and the need for an artistic medium or language. He writes that

Every genuine [artistic] expression must be an original one.... The artistic activity does not “use” a “ready-made language”, it “creates” language as it goes along. [1938:275]²

Collingwood takes pains to argue that artistic expression is not restricted by preexisting expressive patterns. In effect, he seeks to deny any fully determining role to the world of discourse and technical procedure in which the artist is situated, although this situation is surely a major aspect of what he calls the “circumstances” that facilitate creation, circumstances to which God is not held. Collingwood is cognizant of the importance of the medium when he writes that “there is no way of expressing the same feeling in two different media” and that a conscious (or imaginative) “idea is had as an idea only in so far as it is expressed [in a medium].” But the defining force of the medium itself seems to dissipate as Collingwood approaches the logical extreme of his own

position — “every word [i.e., every objectified artistic expression] as it actually occurs in discourse, occurs once and once only” (1938:245, 249, 256).³ Artistic language does not await its use in repetition; man “creates” language as he “goes along.” Every expression is original.

For Collingwood, then, artistic translation must always be problematic. In the broader view, what can be expressed in French cannot be conveyed in English; in the finer aspect, what can be said with one word at one time cannot be said with another, or even with the same, at another time. To use the same words self-consciously to mean the same thing a second time, is, for Collingwood, to deny expression and to convert art to cliché (1938:245, 275–276). In a recent publication, Northrop Frye points similarly to the degree of “re-creative” translation in any proper appreciation of another’s artistic expression, or indeed in any appreciation of God’s creation (1980: 64 ff). Human creation, for both Collingwood and Frye, thus cannot be confined to imitative *representation* but involves an original *expression* (Collingwood) or an original *re-creation* (Frye). Curiously, the accounts of both Collingwood and Frye indicate that mere representation, if it were desired, would be no simple matter. Representation would fail because of the impossibility of any perfected translation. Something, if only the intangible sincerity of expression of which Collingwood speaks, would be altered. Hence, even mere representations, in differing from their “originals,” would be unique and original to some degree, however accidental this originality might seem. Do Collingwood and Frye (along with many others) confer privilege on genuine artistic creation by ascribing to it an originality that is *consciously* generated?⁴ The unique aspect of any human creation might result equally well from the inevitable failure of language or mediated communication as from a heroic struggle to gain knowledge of one’s self and others.

Although he remains undaunted, Collingwood does not speak to this issue with his customary certitude. He admits, in fact he willingly asserts, that

community of language is not [prior to its use]. One does not first acquire a language and then use it. To possess it and to use it are the same. We only come to possess it by repeatedly and progressively attempting to use it.

The reader may object that if what is here maintained were true there could never be any absolute assurance, either for the hearer or the speaker, that the one had understood the other. That is so; but in fact there is no such assurance. The only assurance we possess is an empirical and relative assurance, becoming progressively stronger as conversation proceeds, and based on the fact that neither party seems to the other to be talking nonsense. The question whether they understand each other *solvitur interloquendo* [is settled in the talking]. If they

understand each other well enough to go on talking, they understand each other as well as they need; and there is no better kind of understanding which they can regret not having attained. [1938:250–251; cf. 309]

But, we might argue, there is, indeed, a better kind of understanding — a silence, an end to the talking. Continuing communication, continuing attempts at communication, may indicate a continuing doubt or misunderstanding. Conversation remains subject to the refractions of mediation or translation; only silence is unmediated. Does silence, not conversation, indicate agreement? Or is it merely lack of communication? Collingwood does not explore this problem, for he associates human language and human creation with a life of change and growth, a continuing creation (like Frye’s process of re-creation), which is not limited by time, but defines it. Only silence escapes time and the question of origin; true silence, unlike a mere pause in conversation, is immeasurably repetitious, lacking even the differentiation of temporal displacement. An end to the talking, to the linguistic exchange, would signify an end to Collingwood’s emotional expression, or, alternatively, the final convergence and identity of Frye’s re-creation with its antecedent (and ultimately divine) creation. Continuous silence would signify either a stasis of death or of an eternal life, but not the changing, transient human condition we know.⁵

Collingwood’s sense of originality involves much more than the uniqueness of displacement, difference, or alterity.⁶ It establishes a primacy and a subsequent hierarchical process of communication in which conscious meaningful expression is privileged. Technical procedures evident in acts of human creativity are subordinated to the demanding presence of emotional experience, the living origin. The meaning of a work of art comes into being by means of an artistic language which is somehow guided by human will to embody meaning. Although artistic meaning does not exist prior to artistic creation, it seems the essential core toward which any conscious act of will is directed. Hence, exchanges of meaning, conversations, have for Collingwood more than arbitrary or accidental significance; genuine discovery, communication, and sharing of meaning occur. For post-Structuralist critics, such as Jacques Derrida, this hierarchical relationship might call for “deconstruction” (1977, esp. 195). One might wish to investigate the hidden consequences of privileging originality and unique, even “discovered,” meaning as essential qualities of artistic creation.

Collingwood must indeed admit that human creation, unlike divine creation, involves some technical procedure, a specific process of making that may be known to many. In general, human creative activity is conceived as mediated, having an internal logic and running a finite course through time — such are its “circumstances.”⁷ An example of a “creative” activity

Collingwood would *not* consider art serves to demonstrate the importance of our awareness of this mediation, despite its secondary role in Collingwood's system. When a magician waves his arm and a rabbit appears, the adults in the audience assume some special technique has been employed; the rabbit is not created immediately and out of nothing, but as a result of a process which may have escaped the notice of both adults and children. One assumes that the magician knows full well that the rabbit will appear. Because the magician has preconceived the end of his "art," his activity is not art in Collingwood's terms, but craft. Yet, without an allowance for the technical procedure *that was not observed*, one would have to admit to having witnessed some genuine transcendent "art" rather than the performance of an ultimately material skill or "craft." This mere magic, denigrated by Collingwood, would become a truly magical art. The rabbit would become an unforeseen and original expression, the expression of a most powerful being who can bring forth not only living language, but life itself. Humans, however, should not create, or even procreate, rabbits. We may laugh at the miscreation of the magic act because we know it results from mere clever craft. But would the comical act of miscreation evoke fright, rather, if its magic were perceived as "real?" How extreme a case of creation — extreme in its independence from craft — can we tolerate?

Despite our need to assume the mediation of technical procedure in the case of the magician's creation, modern critics have freely associated *artistic* creativity with genius and originality; these qualities, like magical appearances of the most mysterious sort, seem disjunctive and independent of any known generative or mediating process. In the case of art, in other words, we willingly expose ourselves to potential miscreation of the sort we refuse to acknowledge in magic. We may grant that Collingwood's sense of artistic language seems to allow for both mediation and originality, so that art can maintain a footing in both rational expression and free discovery — this is the appeal of Collingwood's theory. Still, such an open concept of artistic means precludes certain kinds of judgments, or at least makes them impractical. Given the innovative nature of artistic language itself, we are led to establish fixed categories, corresponding to modes of activity, in order to contain that language in its proper place. As a result, we cannot judge magicians as we would artists, simply regarding the consequences of their immediate actions without necessarily applying a standard of craft. We seem to expect a standardization in magicians' acts that we do not expect from "artists'." One act of creating a rabbit is regarded like any other, but one act of painting is not like the others before it nor the others to come. If we do not expect paintings to be alike, how then can we know who is a true artist? Is anyone who makes

any painting an artist? Do we judge simply by distinguishing the medium employed, the means of creation? If so, one conclusion is indeed simple: those who produce rabbits are practicing magic, while those who produce paintings are practicing art.

Paintings, as works of art, are original; yet each may result from the same general creative technique. The procedures of artistic creation are shared like the magician's tricks, while the distinguishing artistic originality, supposedly lacking in magic acts, seems to arise "out of nothing." Despite the fact that we frequently use the terms "original" and "creative" as near equals in everyday speech, they have the potential to diverge, just as "art" differentiates itself from repetitive magical performance. Creativity seems more naturally linked to technical procedure than does originality. Magic acts do not have to be original to be good.

In general, judgments of creative technique seem capable of standing on a more rational foundation than do judgments of originality. According to the shared conventions of the medium, one can investigate whether a work has been made properly, efficiently, or elegantly. The judgment of originality, in contrast, is bound to the living person of the artist as a source of expression; the sincerely searching failure may thus appear more praiseworthy than the facile technical success. When the critic considers originality of primary importance in the act of creation, defining creation (as Collingwood does, for example) in terms of originality, judgments of creativity cannot depend upon an evaluation of technical excellence. Good magic may result from a good hand, but such skillful manipulation will not guarantee good art. Whenever creativity is associated with originality, the factor of rational making becomes secondary. The value of craftsmanship is cast into doubt, and questions of technique become confused. Miscreations arise from this critical chaos.

Part II

"Miscreation" is a word rarely used today; it is an evasive term, yet part of the family of the more familiar "creation." Its difficulty does not lie in the prefix "mis-" that calls our attention to deviance. We all make mistakes, misinterpret, and even misbehave. We are often misinformed, suffer mishaps, and at times may feel misanthropic. Few of us, however, are likely to be called "miscreant," a strongly pejorative term that bears upon "miscreation" when we consider the practice of criticism.

Possibly, "miscreant" and "miscreation" share a remote linguistic origin. The rare words "creant" and "miscreance" have a double existence, deriving in their first sense (believing/misbelief) from the Latin *credere*, and in their second (creating/misgrowth, misshaping,

miscreation) from the Latin *creare*. Whether or not the two forms of "miscreance" relate to a single distant source, "miscreant" and "miscreation" seem to converge semantically in some sense of education or development, entailing both belief (or principle) and growth. I wish to argue that the judgment of an act of creation/miscreation, when associated with originality, does, indeed, bear strongly upon, and can be correlated with, a judgment of the belief (or heresy) of the creator. A modern sense of creation, in other words, with its focus upon originality, brings issues of belief and social value into question. Furthermore, I will argue that the evaluating judge or critic must play a negative role, revealing fraud but never (save by indirection) "creative genius." Finally, I will relate miscreation to the interpretive strategies of the critic and art historian.

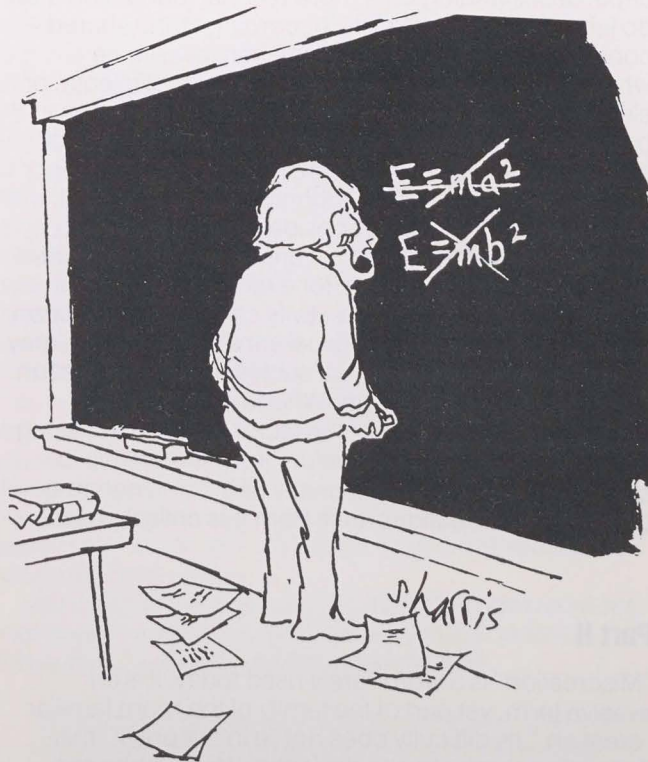


Figure 1 Sidney Harris. Cartoon for *American Scientist*, reprinted in *Time*, CXIII, 8 (Feb. 19, 1979): 75.

Part III

As I have noted, caricature both employs and exposes miscreation. In addition, caricature plays upon our sense of conventional wisdom or shared, received opinion; it reveals the gap between what is readily accepted and what challenges belief. So we begin our study of images of creation and created images with two humorous drawings that comment on works of "creative genius," that is, works which might claim both creative (technical) excellence and originality. These drawings are potentially destructive of the dignity of their subjects. Both suggest the relationship between creation and miscreation. The first deals with Albert Einstein and the realm of science, and the second with Edouard Manet and the realm of art. We leave open for the moment the question of whether scientific and artistic creativity are generally evaluated in the same manner.

Sidney Harris economically represents Einstein with the familiar pipe and baggy clothing and the distinctive amorphous tussled hair—the product of "neglect," as Einstein himself put it (Figure 1). Harris renders Einstein's personal eccentricity distinctly; he is not the neatly groomed Niels Bohr, another "genius," but one who never attracted the same public attention to his physical presence. Einstein's environment seems as disorderly as does his person: papers are scattered about. There is surely no great sense of authority here, yet we recognize the figure's special identity, in particular because of the immanent presence of the formula $E=mc^2$. The correlation of energy with mass by means of the factor of "the speed of light" has generated useful physical models as well as powerful imaginative fictions. Yet Einstein, the author of the equation that inspired both scientists and artists, remains undignified, his activity in a certain disorder, or rather in an improper order. His mathematical, theoretical speculation seems as given to chance ("neglect") as is his physical appearance. He works systematically, but his system is one of nonsense. He tries out $E=ma^2$; it doesn't go. $E=mb^2$ is no better. Lucky Einstein, we laugh, he got it on the third try; if the symbol for the speed of light had been as anonymous and antepenultimate as "x," he would have been up late into the night.

Einstein's accomplishment, the creation of the formula $E=mc^2$, is here shown to be a product of chance, and hence created, as it were, out of nothing, through no consciously meaningful procedure. Whether this amounts to an admirable act of genius or perspicacity, as opposed to a mere lucky break, will depend upon the viewer's ultimate identification of Einstein as "one of them" or "one of us." Is he one of an alien class of distinct geniuses? Or is all apparent genius contingent upon chance occurrence, so that some day we might all have our own moments of great

discovery? In either case, genius, in popular commentary, is depicted as disjunctive, independent of rational procedure. As Roland Barthes has pointed out, direct "*photographs* of Einstein show him standing next to a blackboard covered with mathematical signs of obvious complexity; but *cartoons* of Einstein (the sign that he has become a legend) show him chalk still in hand, and having just written on an empty blackboard, as if without preparation, the magic formula of the world" (1972:69).⁸ Einstein is well known to have denied a role to chance, both in the physical universe and in his own creative process (Wertheimer 1959:69). Yet the evidence of cartoon and caricature indicates that in the popular mind *his scientific creations appeared as works of art*, as original as could be, discovered like (in Barthes' words) "a basic element, a principial substance," independent of any complex, rational generative procedure.

If the Harris caricature makes Einstein seem more like one of us, subject to our own chance discoveries, his *personal* achievement is thus belittled. Still, Einstein's theory of relativity is seen very much as his own creation; we wonder whether this scientific "fact" could have been observed by another mind. It seems as if Einstein has—in god-like fashion and, paradoxically, perhaps in spite of himself—created something out of nothing. Although college freshmen can be taught to perform Einstein's mathematical proof, the essence of the creative act does not seem to lie in this acquired mathematical skill. As Polanyi and Prosch notes, "Once a scientist has made a discovery or an engineer has produced a new mechanism, the possession of these things by others requires little effort of the imagination" (1978:85). Perhaps there was, indeed, some luck involved in the difficult original discovery; perhaps Einstein was, at that moment, as confused or as astounded as his caricaturists might imply.

Einstein's creation may appear threateningly foreign to his audience; and in caricature, it might even frighten the scientist himself. The popularized version of the Frankenstein story reveals that when chance is introduced into scientific procedure, the result can be monstrous, an obvious case of miscreation. Although not a living monster, $E=mc^2$ may yet be a very imposing figure, not only because of its ultimate incomprehensibility, its disconnection from simpler common knowledge, but because it is formed from the "foreign" symbolic language of higher mathematics. Significantly, the caricaturist chooses to identify Einstein with this seemingly opaque language, still further removed from our everyday reality than is the strangely awkward man himself. The special language facilitates the scientist's thought, yet will seem to deflect our own

attempts at penetration. And so it is the language itself, the scientist's means of expression and discovery, that may suffer at the interpretive hands of the trivializing caricaturist—the generating principle of Einstein's symbolically coded message becomes nothing more than the sequence of the alphabet. He merely proceeds from *a* to *b* to *c*.

Because "original" creation appears as the making of something out of nothing or the production of something greater than the sum of its parts—the creation of new value or significance—the caricaturist, reintroducing common sense, shows that, in fact, out of nothing will come nothing and out of something, nothing more. Let us consider our second example of caricature, this one from the realm of artistic creativity. As in our scientific case, the creative means of expression, the artistic symbolism, comes most directly under attack. Cham's humorous representation of Manet's *Incident in the Bull Ring* (Figures 2 and 3) exaggerates to absurdity the technical features for which the artist was known.⁹ Manet's painting exhibited only a limited range of modeling; he would employ two or three tones within a given area of local color where five or six might be demanded by conventional practice. Cham represents Manet's painting as an image of the crudest silhouettes; there is no modeling at all, no sense of gradation from dark to light, merely black on white in its barren flatness. To his caricature, Cham added the following caption: "Having had to complain of his paint supplier, Manet resolves henceforth to employ only his inkwell."

Cham succeeds in impugning both Manet's technique and the artistic intention which informed it. For Émile Zola, Manet's public spokesman, this artist wished merely to express himself and his own environment; simply put, he wished only to paint what he actually saw in his own individual experience. His task necessarily became a heroic one, radically creative, as soon as he realized that he could not depend upon inherited artistic convention but must draw forth his technical means from an intelligent use of materials directed by his own immediate vision. In other words, according to Zola, Manet subordinated his creativity to his originality. Zola and other sympathetic critics argued that Manet's "summary" system of modeling could adequately express the artist and his special world particularly because this attenuated modeling ultimately was independent of convention.¹⁰ Zola's recognition, however, could come as a challenge to those less concerned with individuality who would accept a mode of vision already established. Wary of fraud, the caricaturist Cham thus proceeds to accuse Manet of ignoble intention or trivial concern, attributing his reduced modeling not to the authenticity of his vision, but, in the end, to a lack of rapport with his

paint seller. In Cham's representation, this suspect modeling becomes not merely diminished, but unrecognizable as any valid variation of standard practice. We see only flat, cut-out forms gesturing with a resultant lack of expressive refinement. Manet sought to create a powerful art with limited means; Cham represents this limitation as extreme deprivation that can generate no richness, but only an impoverished expression. Manet, according to Cham, rejects a valid technique of painting, replacing it by far inferior means from which he can bring forth no more than the given — from something very slight comes nothing grander. Manet's attempt at creation fails; it is, in terms of the artistic achievements of its day, misconceived, misinformed, and misformed — a miscreation.

Part IV

At this point our caricatures call forth a potential similarity in valid scientific and artistic procedure, for we see that Cham seems to suggest that the visual artist, like the scientist, might deserve more personal credit if his achievement were attributable to a directed application of technique. Perhaps the artist has no more cause than the scientist to respond solely to immediate feeling. Just as Harris could challenge Einstein's "genius" by showing his discovery to be the product of chance, so Cham seems to make Manet's choice of technique depend upon an extraneous condition — Manet, angered at his paint merchant, has been led to use only black ink rather than a range of colored pigments. Thus, Manet's reduction of modeling is portrayed not as the product of reason but of a situation outside his complete control and unrelated to the artistic problem at hand. Traditionally, however, acts of both artistic and scientific genius have been held to be directed by uncontrolled inspiration or impulses that may indeed originate outside the world of reason — Plato, we know, referred to "divine madness."¹¹ But there is nothing of the divine in either Cham's presentation of Manet or Harris's depiction of Einstein. Cham's caricature displaces Manet's putative lofty inspiration so that his external motivating force becomes an otherwise trivial aspect of the material situation in which he finds himself. Similarly, Harris humanizes the ethereal Einstein to the point where



Figure 2 Cham. Manet's *Incident in the Bull Ring* (1864), from *Charivari*, May 22, 1864.

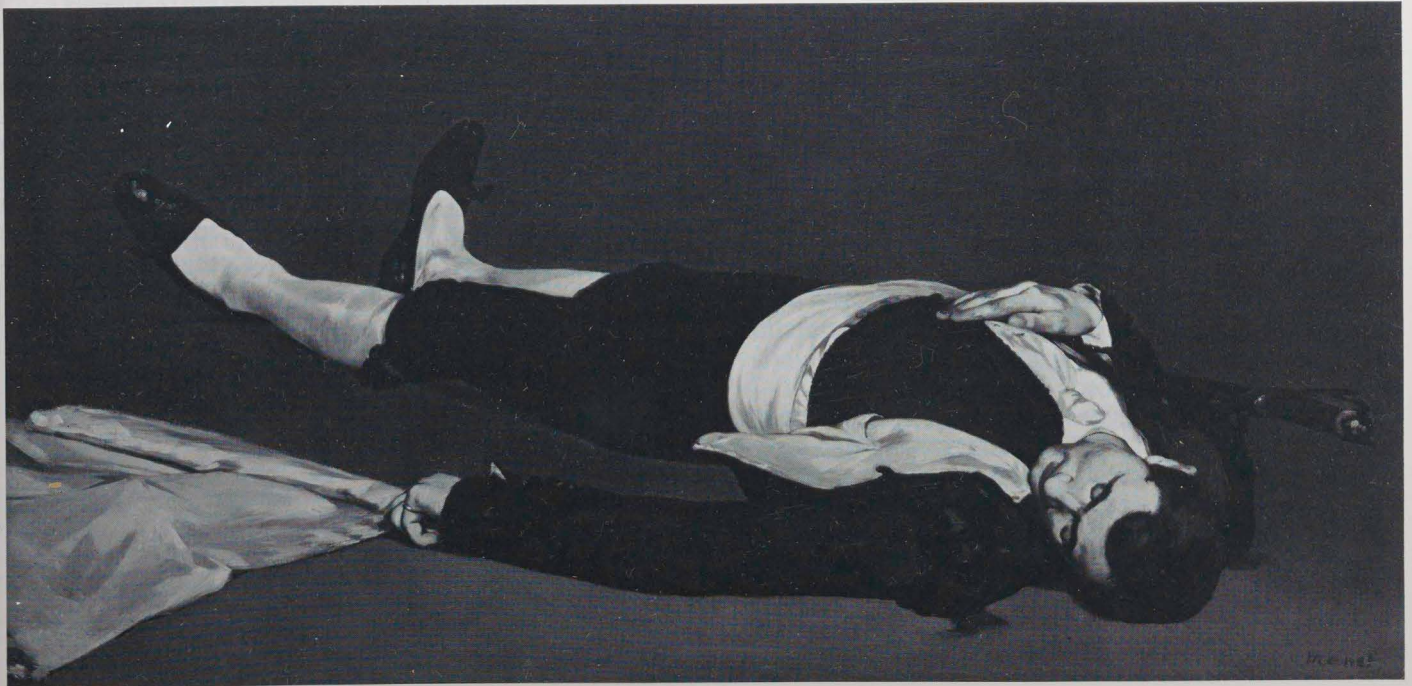
Figure 3 Edouard Manet. *The Dead Toreador* (1864). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Widener Collection.

the common man may identify with his simple-minded determination; it takes no divine force to make one's way through the order of the alphabet. Nor is Einstein's discovery attributable to the great power of his reason. How then do we evaluate it?

At issue here is a problem that arises in the evaluation of all types of creative invention: from the point of view of the outside observer or critical interpreter (the caricaturist in our two specific cases), the creation must appear the product of rational procedure if it is indeed to be judged rationally. The humor in caricatures of creation derives not only from the accusatory posture that the caricaturing public takes toward the threatening foreign object, exposing its miscreation, but also from the implied attempt to find rational foundation where there can be none. Creation, conceived as original invention, can remain within no conventional system of rational order. As Barthes noted, it is perceived as genuine magic—in this case the "rabbit" appears *without* our assumption of its dependence on technical procedure.

The issue can be stated somewhat differently: all "original" creation is likely to be regarded as miscreation, and indeed all such creation *is* miscreation. During a period when creativity is generally identified with originality, "miscreation" becomes an unnecessary term, a redundancy, and we are not surprised to have observed, at the start, that it is an obsolete word, only rarely used during our own age. "Miscreation" does not stand to "creation" as "misbelief" to "belief"

or "misbehavior" to "behavior." Systems of belief and patterns of behavior are established socially and shared among individuals. False beliefs and improper behavior are usually easily recognized and held up in contrast to the norm. In the case of the most radical creation, there seems to be no norm, for something new appears that is not merely a variation on the old. Such creation in any area must appear deviant from what reason would lead us to expect; and if any norm is to be applied, the creation will appear to be miscreation. All "original" creation is deviant. All such creation is miscreation.



Part V

Much in our experience must be associated with the individual, yet evaluated socially. Social judgments imposed upon individuals do not deny individuality but frame it, restrict it to the realm of the assimilable. In attempting to preserve our values, we tend to be more troubled by deviance than by outright negation. One who holds a belief that seems a false variant of the prevailing belief becomes more of an immediate problem than one who holds no belief or whose values are so displaced that he seems simply insane. And those who misbehave are much more disturbing than those who do not behave at all.¹² A behavioral void signifies an annihilation, a physical death, or perhaps a total failure of will. While the prospect of annihilation, negative creation, normally seems remote, we must continually *live* with flawed creation, miscreation. Annihilation, even if it should occur, will either appear as a clearly distinct and very special phenomenon or will escape our notice, just as the fact that conversations end in silence seems to have escaped Collingwood's full attention (1938: 250-251). In other words, the loss of an object through annihilation, or the end of artistic expression in silence, may be mistaken for a mere misplacement or a misunderstanding. Although death or complete insanity (negation) may be feared, unlawful behavior (deviation) is the more immediate presence in our lives and thus the greater concern and threat to society.

Miscreation, then, is like misbelief—it threatens *not because it lacks or negates value, but because it introduces false value*; it does not appear worthless, but fraudulent, a representation that misrepresents. And the fear of fraud which always accompanies the socialized experience of the work of art makes us all, even as critics or art historians, into caricaturists. When we perform as critics, judging acts of creation, we may not exercise the wit of Harris or Cham, but we nevertheless must trivialize, recognizing any creation which serves originality, by denying its claim to reason. We insist on revealing the deception.

I will attempt momentarily to develop my argument concerning criticism, but I must first reinforce a sense of creation that may not yet have come fully alive in my logic. I have argued that the relationship of miscreation to creation is not that of misbelief to belief; and I have also stated that miscreation is like misbelief. This argument suggests that creation as well as miscreation may be linked to misbelief; thus the potential identification of creation with miscreation can be sustained. Such is the result, again, of the association of creativity with originality; for any *original* making seems to express a dissatisfaction with the prevailing order of things. The creative act, if it must be original, becomes the act of misbelief, the act of the heretic, the expression of false or deviant values. The modern creator doubts; he

challenges his society's institutions and seeks a deviant truth. The creative act belongs, then, to the miscreant, who may appear not only heretical, but villainous, a danger to his society. The miscreant artist does not have full faith in accepted laws and procedures; to a significant extent he works outside formulation and convention; he seems to assume a godlike, or even satanic, stance. He may, moreover, seem the destructive wildman; for he upsets order, causes confusion, and, in general, introduces the unpredictable. He seems to deny our rational sciences.

Now the critical interpreter always assumes a rational stance; he must do so in order to attain a level of public discourse giving form, or rather formulation, to the creation in question. This responsibility to reason cannot be obviated by the use of indirect or evocative critical description; for such language, if effective criticism, will still follow conventional patterns and suggest relevant comparisons. For example, one of Manet's distinguished critics, Théophile Thoré, had this to say in response to his viewing the *Incident in the Bull Ring*: "M. Manet has the qualities of a magician, effects of luminosity, flamboyant coloration, which pastiche Velasquez and Goya, his chosen masters" (1893: Vol. III, p. 99; my translation). In dealing with the radical nature of Manet's painting, Thoré invokes the figure of the magician, who like a remarkable artist can manipulate his technique to produce startling effects. Through his own creative analogy, Thoré manages to traverse his critical field with a rational dodge—that is, he makes a move that appeals to our reasonable expectations. Attributing "magic" to Manet, Thoré seems to explain unconventional effects in a conventional manner; and he reinforces his reasoned argument by comparing Manet to two earlier masters, equally innovative perhaps, but of a past age, and hence assimilated within the critical canon.

I do not wish to deny that criticism may (or even must) have an artistic component, nor that it may lead to further creative discovery—caricature itself is a revealing art. The critic cannot, however, allow his art to dominate his rational science, for he would himself then lose the distinction between creativity and originality, producing his own original art rather than a clearly defined criticism. Unabashedly artistic criticism might itself appear fraudulent; it would not test its object against any rigid standard. To the extent that criticism serves to maintain or reinforce desirable standards, it must hold a rational line against the release of disruptive forces. It must question innovation, rather than merely accept or extend it, to maintain authority and guard against the fraudulent. If, to return to our first example, the truth of Einstein's $E=mc^2$ is not immediately apparent, Einstein's critic must demand a rational explanation.

We know, however, that radical creation lies beyond identification by typing, comparison, or simple deduction from the given; it should be as free of its origins as $E=mc^2$ seemed free of its scientific context *before* it was creatively discovered.¹³ A creation, in other words, demonstrates originality when its specific origins cannot be found, when it seems to have no sources of its own, but becomes the source for other, lesser creations. Although $E=mc^2$ may be deducible from preexisting mathematical laws, it did not seem predicted by them; it appeared the product of an individual intuition, not a mechanical mathematical operation available to any investigator. Its generation, appearing as spontaneous to the popular mind, presented a powerful challenge to belief.

The critical interpreter is a believer, and one who wishes to bring the deviant creation back within *his* system of belief. If the creation presents difficulties, he will not hesitate to see it as miscreation, ridiculing it in the process. In fact, the most radical creations most readily become miscreations when re-formed by their critics. The critic must distort creation, making it miscreation, re-forming and rehabilitating it, as if to expose the miscreance, or at least prevent more damage from being done to society, that is, the society of both artist and critic. As a re-former, the critic may save the miscreant artist from his own acts of creation and seek to confine the deviant truth within accepted bounds. Thus, critics often suggest, in advance, the path an artist's creative activity should take.

A creance is a line used to hold a hawk in training at bay or in check; it is a line defining belief and limiting behavior. Miscreance or misbelief introduces wildness into a society. When the critic cannot find rational explanation, when he cannot assimilate creation, he can either yield his critical stance, accepting, at face value, the new truth of creation, or he can seek to expose the act of miscreance. The committed critic's aggressively skeptical attitude toward creation reveals not irreverence, but belief, a healthy attitude toward the reality of his (our) own world. He would prefer not to allow the release of untrustworthy hawks and must choose to caricature, to exhibit any original creation as miscreation.¹⁴

Part VI

Have I gone too far in making critics and creative artists (and creative scientists) adversaries? Can there be no critical cooperation, perhaps a completion of the work of art by means of a body of critical commentary? The creation or work of art considered as an external object seems capable of bearing endless (but not any) interpretation; it is an undeniable fact in the world, a truth to be perceived. But the association of creativity with originality leads to questions of artistic genesis rather than of final artistic form. Where does the work come from? How does it develop? When the meaning or truth of creation is verified not in objectively defined (yet not necessarily permanent) properties of the work, but demonstrated rather in its genesis, the problematic nature of the critique of creation emerges. Often we speak of creation intensified by the term "radical" to designate its genetic originality—radical creation has no simpler antecedent form; it is a root from which other forms grow. Its own parentage and kinship relations are not known with certainty; it may thus evade our categories and comparisons.

Our two caricaturists have demonstrated indirectly that radical, "original" human creation can be the product neither of simple reason nor of mere chance. Like Collingwood, they do not wish to confine genuine creativity to questions of craft, nor do they wish to eliminate the sense of a directing human will. Harris and Cham both chose to reduce creation to the comical by making the creative act appear outside human control, with the success or failure of the creation only ironically related to the conditions of its generation. They might both have succeeded equally well, however, had they chosen to expose some truly rational procedure to account for the productions of Einstein and Manet. This, too, would serve to discredit any claim to radical creativity. In this alternative situation, Harris and Cham would not as readily appear as caricaturists, but rather as hard-headed detectives uncovering acts of fraud or charlatanism. They would show that the creations under investigation were something less than we (or their creators) might presume. The creation would appear as if prefigured in its assumed preconditions. In this viewing, any obscurity in its apparent generative procedure could be attributed to either one of two failings—to an inelegant presentation, that is, an act of technical ineptitude, or to an intentional deception, some pretense of sincerity. The latter failure, one of character rather than of skill, would amount to a conscious act of making the easy look difficult, so that originality might seem to arise from some radical technical discontinuity. I will come to argue that the art historian (as opposed to the art critic) characteristically demands, and finds, a rationally structured context, however well hidden, out of which the creation under investigation may logically arise. But first we

must consider the critic's evaluative task of distinguishing what is technically easy, or only deceptively difficult, from what is genuinely difficult or "original."

Albert Aurier, the early champion of Van Gogh's artistic originality and sincerity, admitted that this evaluative project could not be completed by applying any objective critical standards (1893: 260). The critic who encounters Manet, Van Gogh, or any other creator whose technique seems deviant, lacks the means to judge whether the departure from convention (or from evidently rational procedure) is an indication of a mere avoidance of difficulty or a consequence of its necessary acceptance. For, if technical deviation were associated unquestioningly with radical creativity, then fraud might become rampant; any "artist" might readily master the technique of originality by exhibiting a faulty craft which the critic would take to be a sign of creative authority, genuine creative deviance. The miscreation would seem the most genuine creation.

In approaching this unsatisfactory solution, we seem to have slipped into speaking of creation as located in a fixed created thing, an end product of craft, subject to (or resisting) analysis. But we had already suggested that the genuineness of "original" creation would be best determined by an investigation of the act itself, not its resulting object. Harris and Cham seem to have speculated as to what acts or situations could have generated $E=mc^2$ and the *Incident in the Bull Ring*; their interest lay in the creative process. The related desire to make the most empirically founded judgments of creative acts has led others to photograph Picasso and Matisse working out successive stages of their paintings and to record before the camera a performance of Jackson Pollock, pouring one of his "drip" paintings upon a sheet of glass seen from below. Nevertheless, firm evidence of any principle linking specific technical patterns to authentic creativity has remained elusive. The committed skepticism of Harris and Cham seems justified.

Charles Baudelaire, who spoke in defense of Manet's creative powers, sought to solve the problem of the critic by allowing him neither the easy shortcuts of complete acceptance or complete rejection of creation, nor the diversion of his own self-indulgent creative activity. There remained a firm distinction between critical and artistic conduct for Baudelaire, and (as a critic) he maintained his distance from works of art. Yet he recognized a dual nature in artistic creation itself. Of Delacroix he wrote:

It is clear that, in his eyes, imagination was the most precious gift, the most important faculty, but that this faculty remained powerless and sterile if it did not have at its command a swift technical skill (*une habilité rapide*), capable of following the great despotic faculty in its impatient flights of fancy. There was certainly no need for him to stoke up the fires of his imagination, constantly at white heat; but he always found the day too short for the study of the technical means of expression (*les moyens d'expression*). [1972:363]

Baudelaire never regarded the study of technical means and conventional devices as unworthy of the attention of the artistic imagination, the source of creation. If something new was to come into our world, it could do so only with the active cooperation of an artistic medium or language subject to reasoned analysis. According to Baudelaire's standard, the works of Einstein and Manet, if technically malformed as Harris and Cham depicted them, would indeed be suspect. For Baudelaire, "a great painter [or any creator] is of necessity a good painter [i.e., technically skilled], because a universal imagination comprises the understanding of all technical means and the desire to acquire them" (1972:306). The artist must be master of both his immediate passions and his mediating science or technique.¹⁵

Baudelaire as critic sought a means of preserving the sense of mastery in the work of art. His was at times a passive criticism, yet a productive one. As critic, Baudelaire often seemed himself to assume the "animal-like stare" of curiosity, wonder, absorption, and even ecstasy that he associated with the childlike element in the modern artist (1972:398). And Baudelaire willingly gave up the critic's greatest defense against disruption — not his reason, for he kept that, but his belief. Baudelaire associated belief and principle with systems, schools, and academies. The Universal Exhibition of 1855, which included products of many foreign cultures, seemed to provide him with a field of experience that no system of belief could encompass; his world was at once radically expanded and multiplied. He recognized the opportunity for his own education and growth before an abundance of products of the imagination serving to call his attention to the power of any single such product. In the foreign, the incompatible, he discovered a vital beauty: "Anything that is not slightly misshapen has an air of insensibility...irregularity is *the* characteristic of beauty...*le beau est toujours bizarre*" (1975:161-162; 1962:215). In associating the beautiful with the bizarre, even the "ugly," Baudelaire realized, in effect, the identity of creation and miscreation and the need to suppress his own belief, his own prejudgment. He wrote in the theoretical preface to his review of the Universal Exhibition:

Like all my friends I have tried more than once to lock myself inside a system, so as to be able to pontificate as I liked. But a system is a kind of damnation that condemns us to perpetual backsliding; we are always having to invent another, and this form of fatigue is a cruel punishment... And every time, some spontaneous unexpected product of universal vitality would come and give the lie to my puerile and old-fashioned wisdom... Under the threat of being constantly humiliated by another conversion, I took a big decision... I became content to feel; I came back and bought sanctuary in impeccable naiveté. I humbly beg pardon of academics of every kind... at least I can now declare, in so far as a man can answer for his virtues, that my mind now enjoys a more abundant impartiality. [1972:117-118]

Without abandoning his powers of reason (he has much lucid commentary to apply to Ingres and Delacroix), Baudelaire allows himself to deviate in his belief, to submit himself to the products of artistic miscreation. This is to say that Baudelaire comes to hold a different kind of belief, perhaps a misbelief, one more compatible with the full concept of creation, whether linked to originality or not. He comes to believe in or value change and growth in the individual. He expects to benefit from a changing rather than a stable world, and he locates the source of creative change in human imagination. Still, his concern is for the growth of the world of his society as well as of the individual; and such social or collaborative change is best conceived as *continuous* rather than radically *disjunctive*. In the absence of any ultimate all-powerful artistic experience that would obviate the function of rational critical discourse and lead to silence, Baudelaire depends upon the reasoned mediation of artistic technique and critical language to establish a community of shared creative experience. When he speaks, for example, of the painter's use of color, he refers both to clear rational principles—"the bigger the picture, the broader must be the touches of color"—and to artistic achievement founded upon such principles, yet extending beyond his own reason's firm grasp—the colorist's "most delicate operations are the result of a sentiment which long practice has brought to a degree of sureness that defeats description." At the point of such technical facility, imagination is liberated. The creative process develops through a rational application of technique to a point where it may *seem* to transcend that background—this is artistic mastery. Artistic media are "no more than the most humble handmaids of a unique and superior faculty. If a very neat execution is necessary, that is so that the language of dreams may be very clearly translated" (1972:304-305).

Believing in both reason and the dream, but not in fixed beliefs, and identifying artistic creation with apparent deviance, Baudelaire could, as an individual case demanded, defend an artist he admired by demonstrating either his capacity for rational science or for imaginative art. He could seek to negate the effects of caricature by claiming that his artist was indeed rational—or indeed imaginative. In the case of Manet he found it necessary to do both.

Baudelaire defended the very creation we have seen Cham ridicule, the *Incident in the Bull Ring*. This painting, aside from being attacked for exhibiting a misapplication of technique, came to be seen as revealing a lack of originality. This amounted to a most serious charge against the artist, since genuine artistic imagination, in Baudelaire's own words, "creates a new world" (1972:299). If Manet's art could be shown to reveal nothing original, to reduce to a pastiche of "sources"—familiar images and stylistic devices merely recombined so that the new work amounted to no more than the sum of its well-known parts—then Manet would appear a fraudulent artist, misrepresenting old forms as a new creation. Cham's caricature of Manet was reinforced by some remarks made by Théophile Thoré, to which we have already referred. Unlike Cham, Thoré found something favorable to say of Manet, noting that, although his style was unconventional, and perhaps extremely so, it was forceful. Thoré nevertheless raised the problem of artistic originality by speaking of "sources," asserting that the dead toreador in the *Incident of the Bull Ring* had been copied after a figure by Velasquez and that the general style of the painting was dependent upon both Velasquez and Goya (1893:Vol. III, pp. 98-100).¹⁶ (The "source" of the figure of the dead toreador given by Thoré, a painting at that time in the Pourtalès Collection, is no longer attributed to Velasquez.) Although Thoré might expect to find a complex of resemblances, even in works of the most original artists, Baudelaire took the challenge of his remarks very seriously.¹⁷

Having previously made Thoré's acquaintance, Baudelaire sent a friendly reply to his critique of Manet. He insisted that Manet was both rational and creatively original. With respect to the first point, Baudelaire wrote: "M. Manet, who is regarded wild and insane, is simply an ordinary straightforward man, doing everything he can to be reasonable (*raisonnable*), but unfortunately touched with romanticism since birth." For Baudelaire "romanticism" was associated with individuality and passionate feeling; yet Manet, like Delacroix, exhibited as much reason and science as could be applied to this imaginative force. Baudelaire thus implied that Manet's technique was appropriate to his artistic enterprise. Moreover, Manet was an original, for whose work the term "pastiche" could not be employed—Baudelaire stated flatly that Manet had not

been influenced by the Spanish masters; there were no "sources" for his creation; any resemblance was a "mysterious coincidence" (1948: Vol. IV, pp. 275-277).¹⁸

Arguing in this manner, Baudelaire sought to restore to Manet's painting the two qualities which caricaturists would have removed: a sense of the rational, meaningful application of technique and a sense of originality, the creation of something genuinely new. Art historians, as opposed to critics, tend to concentrate on the second factor, originality. Thoré himself was a pioneer of art history, adept at relating works of art to historical contexts, both social environments and pictorial traditions. In speaking of Manet, he was facing the task of evaluating a contemporary, not an established historical figure. Baudelaire thanked Thoré for rendering Manet at least some justice in regarding his work as a serious contribution. Baudelaire knew well that the denial of originality was a more advanced stage in the process of critical acceptance than either a lack of critical commentary or critical ridicule.

Historians especially are likely to be silent before radical creation. This is silence as Collingwood might interpret it, the silence of incomprehension. Faced with the task of "explaining" or providing a historical context for a work that resembles little of the familiar, they may act as if the work did not exist; resisting interpretation, the work seems unworthy of any interpretation at all and remains unassimilated. To point out its flaws, to describe it as fraudulent creation, is to accept its presence, however grudgingly. At this stage caricature is most apparent and the work may be compared unfavorably with accepted members of the tradition; clearly it is miscreation. Usually, however, art historians begin to discover sources for the work, a context eventually so well defined that the character of the new work seems inevitably determined. Assuming Manet's experience of Goya and Velasquez, for example, one argues that he is led to produce the *Incident in the Bull Ring* by way of a reasoned use of an imitative technique. Simply conceived, such completion or perfection of explication seems the ideal of art history, especially of an art history regarded as a rational "science." Unfortunately, once the art historian's work is completed, the artistic creation seems — perhaps not miscreation — but rather no "original" creation at all; it is merely the sum of its parts, lacking any mystery, devoid of any personalized element that can resist public understanding. Now a dead issue for the critic, it becomes dead art. An insistence upon originality may lead to a standard that cannot be met; the able historian will eventually construct an amalgam of antecedents to substitute for any work he considers worthy of his study.

My position on the historian's role risks oversimplification, yet I think this view fundamentally accurate in its focus. The historian, like the critic, can perform his task too well, can believe too strongly in the rational order of things; he can overdetermine the creative work so that it appears a product solely of reason and familiar technique rather than of a higher Baudelairean imagination. Nevertheless, as Baudelaire knew, in the face of creation one still does not abandon reason. Art history can become caricature when it retains too much of the mystery of creation just as when it seeks to eliminate all such mystery. The art historian's appeal to the unarticulated evidence of the visual can produce an explication, couched in rational language, having no firm foundation in reason. In the alternative to the search for clearly identified sources and other elements of a structured historical context, the art historian can appeal too strongly to a nonrational sense of individual artistic identity and the "look" of the objective evidence he presents.

My choice of illustration for this point — Herbert Cook's brief and generally forgotten "Note on Spanzotti, the Master of Sodoma" (1918:208) — will seem so extreme that it might be considered a caricature of art history itself, an example of miscreated criticism. The resemblance to other more successful art historical presentations should, however, be evident, as well as should the unsatisfactorily indeterminate nature of any appeal by a critic-historian to his reader's own critical vision. Spanzotti, an Italian Renaissance painter, was, as Cook admits, "hardly of the first, or even second, rank as an artist." Cook's purpose is to attribute to the oeuvre of Spanzotti, reconstituted only in the publication on this artist by Conte Alessandro Baudi di Vesme, one more painting, a *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, previously attributed to the school of Foppa. Cook notes that the *Madonna* bears a monogram found also on a painting given by Conte di Vesme to Spanzotti's hand. To this circumstantial evidence, Cook adds what he takes to be more conclusive:

The general style of the *Madonna* tallies with other works of the kind [attributed to Spanzotti] (all published in [Conte di Vesme's] book), to which the reader must be referred. Suffice it to say that Conte di Vesme concurs in the addition of this picture to the list of Spanzotti's works, although he only knows of it from a photograph.

Cook has given his argument a form that allows him to evade any rational analysis of the work itself; he meets creation with his own creative insight and he reaches a decision without establishing any clear grounds for doing so. The reader is referred to photographs of Spanzotti's works (and secondarily to Conte di Vesme's authority), but never to analytical descriptions of the photographs; and he must thus reach *his* own creative intuition regarding the question of attri-

bution—he will either “see” to agreeing with Cook or he will not. Ironically, Cook’s “Note on Spanzotti” was followed by this bracketed comment from his editor:

Owing to the difficulty of procuring photographs, we are precluded from the possibility of supplying illustrations of the pictures which, as Mr. Cook points out, strengthen an attribution which *prima facie* seems not fully convincing.

The editor here refers to those illustrations which would, according to Cook, establish “links” between the admitted “extremes of style” exhibited by his two primary objects of study, the two paintings bearing the same monogram, but presumably differing in date of execution. In sum, Cook’s “argument” depended upon the simple presentation of a certain number of Spanzotti’s works (as photographs), but the works could not be present—consequently Cook was left with no argument and his reader, or viewer, could experience no conviction. Had Cook’s editor attained only slightly more ironic distance from his own journal, he might have asked whether the mere *presence* of photographs could ever have settled a question formulated around concepts of historical context and stylistic attribution. If the works reveal “extremes of style,” what concept of style is sufficient to bridge the logical gap between them? How many mediating images must exist to give us a sense of orderly technical evolution?

Cook’s mode of art history and criticism might be very creative in its association of images linked by stylistic qualities that remain ineffable. If, however, art history is to be considered not a “creative” art, but an academic study, rational like a “science,” Cook, as scientist, would seem to open himself to the same caricaturing criticism that Einstein suffered. If indeed no stylistic link among Spanzotti’s works can be articulated, then perhaps Cook has operated under no meaningful principle and has discovered the contents of his artist’s oeuvre merely by chance, as Einstein, according to Harris’s humorous account, may have fallen into discovering $E=mc^2$. We have seen that, on the one hand, the art historical study of sources may attenuate or even defeat the power of creation by moving toward a final denial of originality. But, on the other hand, the appeal to a sympathetic critical “vision” may render creation meaningless, subject to the endless vagaries of individual sensibility. The refusal to use any clearly articulated standard of appraisal serves the ends of criticism no more than does the reduction of a work to a conventional pattern.

Now if indeed we were *all* to be equally convinced of some truth by the mere presentation of a visual image for our inspection, without our being able to speak rationally of the cause of our agreement, might we not feel that our critical enterprise of interpretation had succeeded? Would this be a silence of complete understanding? I must argue that such a result is not one of an ideal criticism, but of some ideal art. The critic must assume that such universal agreement will not be reached; there must always be further investigation and debate with regard to the work of art. The critic must not remain passive indefinitely before the work; he must retain his will, a kind of belief. He expresses his will, his resistance, even his stubborn misunderstanding, by means of his reason. He assumes, as Baudelaire did, that both the artist’s return to the creative, imaginative vision of childhood and the critic’s own assumption of a childlike naïveté are to some extent *voluntary*. He assumes that although art strives for perfection, this state is never attained; beauty must be transient. If the unexpected act of fully “original” creation should occur, the critic would seem to face a divine rather than human creator, one not to be questioned. In this case, any critical commentary would surely be an act of irreverent miscreance. In order to be both critic and believer, the critic must assume that artists only pretend to divinity; their miscreations must be unmasked. In this manner, the ideal of individual and social growth can be maintained amidst the continuing encounter with creations, none of which will effect complete or final change; each will be seen as flawed or misformed to an extent sufficient to call forth further creation. Creation becomes possible only in a world of miscreation, a world not completely formed.

Part VII

In my own play upon words, as I linked miscreation to the miscreant, there was perhaps an element of caricature involved; for the “reason” in my argument might have seemed to derive from the chance alphabetical placement of “miscreation” following upon “miscreant.” Perhaps it appeared that I had no more reason to associate the concepts of misbelief and misgrowth (or misshaping) than did Harris’s Einstein to move from $E=ma^2$ to $E=mb^2$ to a final miscreated solution. I played briefly with etymology, too, speculating upon the possibility of a core of meaning subsuming both belief or principle and creation or growth, a concept such as education or development. If at the end of all this speculation any belief can be reached, it must be in the relevance of the notion of education or human growth to both artistic and critical enterprises.

Creation is a change from which we learn. In its *most* radical form it would force an entirely new system of belief, a new set of principles, upon us; growth would follow from a new root. It seems, however, that the "radical" creation we normally encounter is only of a *relatively* radical nature—the creations, for example, of Manet and Einstein, allowing room for doubt, remain subject to caricaturing criticism. We learn from such criticism so long as it does not continue to demand insistently what creation cannot provide, a final rational explanation for its own presence. "In the realm of poetry and art," Baudelaire wrote, "the great discoverers rarely have precursors. Every flowering is spontaneous, individual." And, just as the artist must to some extent be cut off from models or sources, so the scholar or critic must embody the creative imagination in his work: "What does opinion say of a scholar without imagination? That he has learned all that can be learned, because it has been taught, but he will never discover laws as yet unsuspected of existing" (1972:122, 300). The critic must be receptive to a new truth.

Yet not passively receptive. Whoever performs the critical act must assume that the truth of a work of art is not self-evident; the artist may have intended to falsify or he may simply have been deluded. The problematic area to be investigated is not originality, but creativity in the narrower sense. One must consider the artist's means of expression, for technique conveys the artistic communication that we must presume to have failed; it fails to attain immediate universality, to convince, or to silence. As he remains unconvinced, the critic is free to disassociate creativity from originality, to expose any pretense to full artistic originality. As he applies reason to resistant creation, the critic seeks neither the identification of a complete set of "sources" nor the reception of a final message. Instead he concentrates on the language of creation, the structured source of communication and community. He remains silent on proper usage and points of agreement, but must speak out on seeing any irregularity or discontinuity. To take such an evaluative stance, to become active in response to the work and to defend oneself against it, is already to have considered the communication flawed and to have posited a greater art to come. The present creation begins to appear subject to caricature and we, in turn, seem able to transcend that which seemed itself to escape the world of our own past. With some irony, the critic must see all who claim the special status of artist as miscreants and all their creation as miscreation; but such vision makes continuing education and growth—indeed life itself—possible.

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Notes

- 1 When Collingwood speaks of deliberate and responsible making that is yet not predetermined (1938:236-238), he has in mind a distinction between automatism and self-consciousness in the use of an expressive medium.
- 2 See also Collingwood (1938:43) where the author distinguishes, as a falsification of artistic originality, any uniqueness or novelty planned and achieved for its own sake.
- 3 Cf. Polanyi and Prosch (1978:98): "the *meaning* of a poem comes into existence *only with its words*." (Original emphasis.)
- 4 Cf. Collingwood (1938:273): "The activity which generates an artistic experience is the activity of consciousness...[art's] origin lies...in [man's] nature as a thinking being."
- 5 I have explored the relationship of art to life in an essay entitled "Art and Life: A Metaphorical Relationship" (1978a).
- 6 But it need not involve extreme individuality; original artistic expression may be, indeed normally is, collaborative. See Collingwood (1938:315-324).
- 7 Cf. Collingwood (1938:130, 291). In postmedieval Christian theology, divine creation is usually conceived as *ex nihilo* (as it is in Collingwood's theory of art). Nevertheless, the Biblical account of creation need not be regarded primarily as an account of origins but rather as a statement of the relation of man to God (man's creator); and the notion of a "continuing" or immanent creation also competes with that of creation as a first cause or historical origin. To speak of an original act of divine creation in terms of a working of preexisting matter (as in pagan myth) seems a metaphorical inversion—that is, the act of God is, to some extent, demystified or dedifferentiated by being described in terms of a familiar human procedure. (On this point, cf. Frye [1980:4]: for some the "notion of a creating God is a projection from the fact that man makes things, and for them a divine creator has only the reality of a shadow thrown by ourselves.") If creation, as a kind of crafting or fabricating, is to be distinguished in its mundane and divine modes, divine creation is, indeed, best associated with the notion of creation *ex nihilo*.
- 8 Original emphasis. The translator renders Barthes' "Einstein *dessiné*" as "cartoons of Einstein." Barthes is contrasting the photograph to what he regards as a more interpretive and distorted class of images, all artistic drawings or renderings, whether self-consciously caricatural or not.

- 9 Cham was the pseudonym of Amédée de Noé (1819–1879). The translation of the caption to his caricature (following in the text) is my own. The *Incident in the Bull Ring*, that Cham represents schematically, no longer exists in its entirety. Manet, himself, dismembered it, and two fragments are known today: the *Dead Toreador* in the National Gallery, Washington (Figure 3), and the *Bullfight* in the Frick Collection, New York (illustrated as Plate 8a in Hamilton 1954). For general discussions of the critical response to the painting and its history, see Hamilton (1954:51-64) and Hanson (1977:82-85). On the problem of Manet's cut canvases, see Hanson (1970:158-166).
- 10 In 1867 Zola remarked (1970:108) that the fragment of the *Incident in the Bull Ring*, the *Dead Toreador*, was nevertheless relatively "detailed" and "tightly" modeled; the public would prefer it to some of Manet's other works. Apparently, however, the public (Cham) had previously found Manet's *entire* painting incoherent. The perspective was considered faulty, as well as the modeling, and Cham's drawing seems to ridicule both these technical features—but his caption calls our attention to the modeling especially.
- 11 Erwin Panofsky argues (1962:121-182, esp. 172-173) that the modern association of either artistic or scientific genius with inspiration, "divine madness," and related notions originates in the Renaissance.
- 12 There may, indeed, be situations in which negation becomes more threatening than deviance, but creative activity (as here conceived) is not among them. The problematic nature of the individual who lacks belief, will, patterns of behavior, or "preference" is presented by Herman Melville in his "Bartleby the Scrivener." In this short story, the characters Turkey and Nippers may be described as deviant, and therefore troublesome, but finally assimilated comfortably within their society. Bartleby, on the other hand, seems the negation of all that society serves to establish—he does not express improper desires, but no desires at all—and it is Bartleby, not Turkey or Nippers, who must be institutionalized in the end. Franz Kafka, too, raises the problem of negation in, to choose one example, his parable "An Old Manuscript." In this brief tale, Kafka describes villagers who *mistake* as deviance, or the desire for the unacceptable, the negativity of their nomadic intruders—the nomads' inexpressiveness, the absolute unpredictability of their behavior. See Shiff (1978b) for a discussion of the Kafka parable.
- 13 On this issue, cf. Polanyi (1958:117-131).
- 14 I have argued (1978b) that the critic (or audience) must impose rational standards upon art even while he maintains that true art must always evade such judgments.
- 15 Similarly, Collingwood locates art in an imagination conceived as mediating between unarticulated desires and rational intellectual constructs (1938:195, 213, 221-224, 281-282).
- 16 Michael Fried, who argues from within a more specific historical context than that of the present essay (1969:28-82, esp. 67-68), provides the deepest understanding of the comments that Thoré brought to bear upon Manet's art, relating them to notions of national character and realism which Thoré had previously developed. Fried's essay is an unusually rich account of the *significance* of an artist's use of specific sources and transcends many art historical difficulties to which I wish to call attention in my account of the exchange between Thoré and Baudelaire. Cf. Fried's distinction between "sanction" and "influence" (1969:fn. 47, p. 70).
- 17 On Thoré's habit of noting resemblances, see, for example, the passage on Diaz's originality, written in 1846 (1893:Vol. I, pp. 290-291).
- 18 Letter to Théophile Thoré, c. 20 June 1864, reprinted in Baudelaire (1948:Vol. IV, pp. 275-277; my translation). Baudelaire, in 1846, had defended Delacroix in very similar fashion, arguing that this painter was a master of rational technique, in whose works chance played no part whatsoever, and that he was one of those "who retain their originality even after having borrowed from all the genuine sources" (1972:65). Thoré replied to Baudelaire's objections in what has become a familiar art historical manner: conceding to Baudelaire's claim that Manet had not seen the Velasquez in question, Thoré simply argued that the artist must have encountered some intermediary image, perhaps a photograph of the work or some graphic study or reproduction (1893:Vol. III, pp. 137-138).

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