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Kaeleigh De Silva April 15, 2018

RE-THINKING THE HUMAN RACE IN ACADEMIA:

Tracking Where the Expressive Arts Movement Leads

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Abstract

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This thesis supports the conclusion that expressive arts does not fit into existing scholarly forms due to its multi-sensorial integration, embodied presence, and immediacy. Such *intermodality* contrasts with scholarly work that discursively engages discreet sense, such as writing and static images. I establish the context of my investigation by firstly reviewing Levine's historical concept of *poiesis*, which encapsulates a tension with science dating back to Plato. I go into further depth on Schiller who offers a necessary exploration into questions surrounding the synthesis of multiple sensory modes of knowing. Second, I intersperse my scholarly history and analysis with personal anecdotes that serve to embody myself as a scholar in this work. This tradition of inserting autobiographical sketches into one's work sits within expressive arts' phenomenological approach, which is grounded in subjective, lived experience. I present Leavy's review of arts-based research to illuminate the potential that such a creative form has in surpassing more rigid forms of inquiry. My biographical narrative of dealing with the death of a friend through the arts and my personal struggle to find a place within academia are meant to convey the power that subjective experience has in establishing a more relatable and accessible intellectual voice. I conclude by presenting three of my expressive arts interventions as demonstrations that expressive arts is a multi-sensorial medium for visceral and rational forms to harmonize and defy the deep-rooted science-art divide.

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Dedication

Moms,

Thank you for being my biggest cheerleader. Knowing that I always have your love and support behind me gives me the strength to fearlessly pursue my passions in life.

Pops,

Thank you for teaching me to “keep my head on”. Your wisdom and humility have shown me what it truly means to be successful. I strive for greatness in your example.

Keegs,

Thank you for keeping it casual and being the voice of reason that reminds me to take a step back. I will forever admire your charismatic and carefree approach to life.

In loving memory of Georgie-Porgie.

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Introduction

What does it mean to be human?

This is a question that my college career has confronted me with on numerous occasions. I cannot confidently say that I, or any of my peers, have come to a definite conclusion. Instead, I choose to display how our capacity to create through the arts, while sensing and shaping the world around us, is a fundamental component of our innate human potential. This potential has often been overlooked within the domains of knowledge-making legitimatized through the scientific form. I present the expressive arts as a noteworthy field demonstrating the potential for a more creative form to enter into scholarly spheres: merging science and art into harmony.

It has become an accepted reality that the arts are an underappreciated component of our everyday lives. This is particularly evident through the funding cuts and ridicule that the arts face within educational institutions. At what point did we lose our respect for the arts? There was a time when our ancestors found solace in the spiritual practice of art-making and performance to connect with themselves, with each other, with their environment, and with a higher power. When tracing back through human-kind's practices on Earth, it has only been in recent times that the arts have been pushed into a tight vacuum of professionally-trained portions of the population.

The expressive arts remind us that art is not just a skill. Art is not just a grade. Art is not just a profession. Art is not just a product. Art is also a process. Art is also an expression of our inner worlds that provides a stepping stone for us to see and understand our surrounding world in a new light. Art is a universal language that welcomes all. Art floods into wide and deep creeks of our human experience, it taps into cracks of our awareness, and it provides welcomed

surprises that allow exploration of the world and our place in it. Art is a vehicle for us to explore and embody what it means to be human. This potential is especially relevant in today's context where our society's rapid pace has prompted many thinkers to stop and consider how to hold on to our humanity and recognize others as fully human.

The expressive arts field's phenomenological approach recognizes the human being as full of knowledge and emotional insight that is born out of their lived experience; thus, the subjective lens from which we share our work is rooted in an objective of conveying the larger connections revealed through our interactions with the world. Through staying true to my voice, I hope to offer you an intimate glimpse into the power that your own voice holds in communicating knowledge and sensation. This thesis is a product of the questions that my own personal journey has confronted me with. To dismiss my place in this work would be to diminish its scope.

I do not attempt to suggest that this is a complete investigation into the broad subject that is expressive arts. Instead, I provide moments that tap into my personal history and interactions with expressive arts to highlight potential forms of thinking that are revealed through my own lived experiences. I recognize the irony of attempting to convey the embodied form of expressive arts through a written scholarly work that has worked to limit its potential. This conflict has presented me with challenges in staying true to my authentic, creative voice. But, ultimately, this thesis has given me a special moment in my history to merge both my artistic and academic voice towards a creation that I hope contributes to the on-going work that celebrates the expressive arts, and the potential for creative forms of scholarship.

Thinking Outside the Box

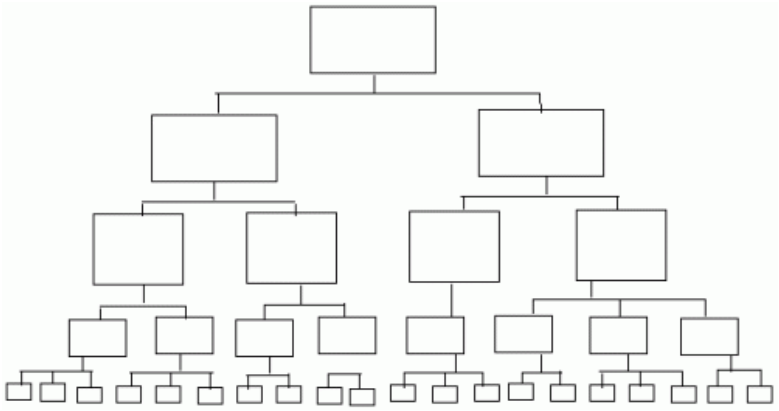


Figure 1. Business hierarchy model from 1900 (Jacobsen, 2013).

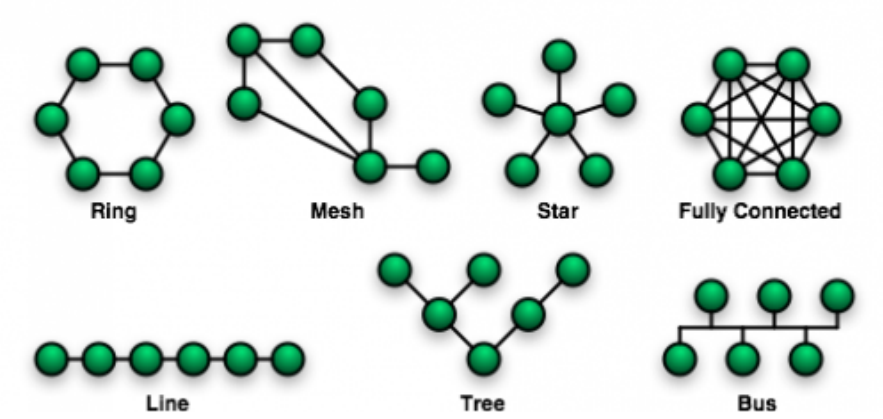


Figure 2. Model influenced from computer network design (Jacobsen, 2013).

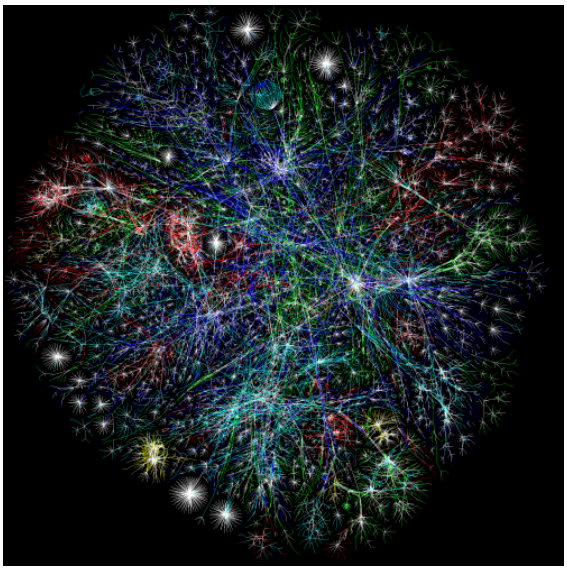


Figure 3. Model of Internet from 2005 (Jacobsen, 2013).

☐ *Think outside of the box.*

■ *Tick which box you identify with.*

I was thrown into an arena of such contradiction when I entered the sphere of higher education from the small Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago. Fit myself into a box? After settling on 'Other', I would then stare at the blank line of never-ending possibilities before concluding that 'mixed' best encapsulated my racial existence. But, why did this matter? It was a testament to the surface-level approach taken by our institutions to understand who we are and where we come from. A poor attempt to situate our experience within their larger framework. If that wasn't dissatisfying enough, I would spend my first year attempting to fit myself into one of the pre-selected boxes that claimed to provide a coherent field of study for me to focus my attention. I was unfilled. I was surrounded by life-less bodies acting out of a need to fulfill requirements that did not satisfy their urge to truly take in the knowledge that higher education claims to provide.

I have struggled to understand why our advanced modern age is stuck in outdated attempts to fit people into boxes. My experience leads me to believe that it is a strategic move to keep order and whatever remnants of a power hierarchy society may be trapped in. Jacobsen (2013) beautifully provides a progression of images that model the influence of computer network design on our society's communication. The rigid, boxy structures of Figure 1 evolve into a free state of connectivity. We are not boxes. We are units of limitless possibilities and we reach towards larger networks that heavily shape how we come to be in and understand the world. Each individual box no longer has the power to disrupt the whole network, instead we are a connected mesh of topology (Jacobsen, 2013). I have always been fascinated by the re-emergence of circles in my encounters with expressive arts. I now view this symbol as a

reminder that we are each situated within a larger sphere, whether that be our family unit, our community circle, our national identity, or a higher power. We no longer view ourselves as separate identities contained by borders. Thus, we must move away from frameworks that force us into such unproductive constraints.

Expressive arts, as a field, can be understood within this shift from the singular to the expanded mesh of connections. What started as a purely therapeutic work has transformed into an approach of many different sources, shapes, and sizes. The field of expressive arts grew as a branch diverging from the individual creative art therapies (i.e. art therapy, music therapy, dance therapy, and drama therapy) that were limited in scope by their purely psychological frameworks. As a discipline, expressive arts was introduced at Lesley University in the 1970s by leading pioneers in the field such as Shaun McNiff, Paolo K. Knill, Norma Canner, Elizabeth McKim, and others. It is important to note that the field was originally deprived of the "arts" portion of its title, simply being named "expressive therapy".

Defining a term is never free of power dynamics that stem from the politics of its day. Shaun McNiff (1981) admits that the term "expressive" was influenced from outside sources that would provide initial funding towards the young field. Not only was the naming of the field subject to political undercurrents, it was also susceptible to a misnomer that would instill misconceptions that continue to limit its scope today. The term expressive suggests that art is self-expression, an act that allows hidden feelings to be represented. "Express yourself!" was a common phrase preached during the time of expressive arts' inception, ensuring that potential followers would identify with the field. But, such a strategic move would prove limited as the arts are capable of surpassing the suggestion that it expresses outwardly what is felt inwardly.

Stephen K. Levine (2011) notes that even at that time, people were well aware that the arts are capable of surpassing such notions of expressing outwardly what is felt inwardly, that artistic expression did not exist within already established psychological states. For the first time, a therapy associated with art-making was grounding itself in a "theory indigenous to the arts". Creative change-makers were standing up and dismissing foundations built from the sciences to embrace a way of understanding that was in harmony with aesthetic experience. Expressive therapy was ground-breaking as it sought to move beyond the creative arts therapy framework of solely working within specialized artistic forms (whether visual art, dance, drama, poetry, etc.). Paolo Knill's notion of *intermodality* was pivotal in the formation of an expressive therapy theory. This detail is a key component that distinguishes expressive arts from other creative arts therapies, a source of confusion for most individuals being introduced to the idea. Understanding the categorization of art forms as a recent historical phenomenon that limits artistic freedom helps to put this idea of *intermodality* into context. The idea stems from the field's belief that artistic disciplines are all rooted in modalities of sensory experience. Humans can make visual art due to the sense of sight; humans can make music due to the sense of hearing; humans can dance due to the sense of touch and the body's ability to move. Such a theory is centered around the shared human experience of having a body. Indigenous roots of the arts reveal that art-making has traditionally been intermodal within the context of ritual performance. It was only through the act of removing art from everyday life that it was specialized into neat categories that allow individuals to specialize and schools to judge more concretely (Levine, 2011).

As time progressed, post-modern influences would allow for an interdisciplinary interest in art to emerge. Traditional boundaries on art were torn down as cross-disciplinary work was welcomed. Pioneers of the expressive arts began to advocate for an artistic rather than

psychological base for the expressive arts framework. Most practitioners were artists first and foremost, who had experienced the power of the arts within their own bodies, thus dedicating their lives towards sharing this experience with others. This is a further contributor to our emphasis on subjective experience as we are motivated to share the very activities that impacted our lives. The development of the field from 1980 to 1990 would welcome an addition of the word "arts" to expressive arts therapy. Ripple effects of such a seemingly simple change could be felt as the primary professional association in the field was changed from National Expressive Therapy Association (NETA) to the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA). Not only did this change root the field in its proper place, it also opened up the potential for expansion beyond psychotherapy. IEATA opened registration to include expressive arts educators and consultants as programs were developed to include such new initiatives. This shift highlights the acknowledgment of art's innate educational capacity. The European Graduate School's doctoral program in Expressive Arts Therapy was expanded to reflect such progress, now taking on the title of Expressive Arts: Therapy, Coaching, Consulting & Education, Conflict Transformation & Peacebuilding. I am a strong advocate for this school's approach as they are pushing beyond the boundaries of a psychological framework to conceptualize a space where students are prepared to evoke change from a wide array of approaches. EGS draws upon the idea of *poiesis*, the act of shaping or making in which all human beings engage. The struggles that we often face can be understood as our inability to effectively engage in this *poiesis*.

I view my creation of this thesis as an act of *poiesis* that offered me the freedom to shape a piece of work stemming from the sensations of understanding my current place in the world. Having dedicated my thesis towards the creative pursuit of meaning and change making, I have often been challenged by the restrictive expectations of a traditional research paper. I have

specifically chosen to stay true to a more narrative-based form of knowledge sharing to further illuminate the power of the creative form. It was encouraging to see that other thinkers in the field have also taken such an approach. Stephen Levine and Ellen Levine are a husband and wife duo dedicated to the advancement of the expressive arts field. In presenting a snippet of their published conversation, I hope to give you a better sense of what pioneers in the field sound like and what challenges they attempt to overcome as we move forward. I invite you to enter into their creative conversation in an attempt to situate your own voice within the on-going debates that drive the expressive arts field forward. Please note that I have purposefully selected portions that I believe are most relevant for my thesis, but I invite you to join the discussion with two of the field's most respected thinkers; the piece is titled *Is order enough? Is chaos too much? A Dialogue about art, therapy, and the search for wholeness* (Levine & Levine, 1994):

> SKL: I want to get back to the question of post-modernism at this point…
> Post-modernists seem to be saying that the whole idea of integration is an illusion and actually a pernicious one that ends up with us splitting off certain parts of our experience that can't be integrated. So it's always a kind of foreclosed totality. No structure is big enough to include all the parts of our experience; and the ones that seem to, do so at the expense of splitting and consequently projecting the rejected parts.
>
> EGL: What about this thing that I struggle with within myself-my natural tendency to produce order? This could be a characterological tendency. And I wonder about so many art therapists now who talk about integration and wholeness and pulling together all the split-off parts, as well as the emphasis in our field on healing, the idea that anything can be healed once and for all. This seems like a fantasy of Eden, a time when there were no splits and no conflicts. It reminds me of people who think that peace means the end of all conflict, who have a notion of total harmony. What

do we do about this impulse toward conflict-free harmony? Is this the myth of our era? At the same time, we do need to make sense out of our experience and find meaning in it. Are you saying that there is no meaning in our experience?

SKL: No, I don't think that I am saying that. What I am saying is that there may be multiple meanings, that no one meaning, no matter how complex, is capable of grasping the variety of life. I like the idea of characterological differences between different theorists. I certainly recognize in myself much more of a tendency toward multiplicity than toward unity or unification. I'm much more interested in processes that break down and fall apart and seem to be chaotic but end up perhaps with a meaning, at least with a great deal of variety and richness. That's one of the reasons why in my own artwork I work mostly with improvisatory theatre and with clowning. In improvisation, there is always a feeling of being at risk, of not knowing and not being able to control what is going on, but also of having the faith that if you allow a creative process to take place, something will emerge that will have value. I like also the work of the clown who always introduces disorder and chaos into every seemingly orderly situation. Now whether this is purely characterological or not is debatable.

EGL: What I have enjoyed in my own work with clowning is to take my tendency toward order and to play with it. To bring this tendency out in its most exaggerated form, one that is really absurd. My clown work is about being able to control the world; I do feel that on some level things are totally out of control and that it is not possible to control our environment. We can control small aspects of our lives, but in general the world is not subject to our control.

SKL: That's right, and I think there is a question of whether it can be. But I would like to go back to your statement about the emphasis on healing and wholeness. I think you are right in putting them together; healing etymologically relates to being whole. The important thing is to distinguish between Arnheim's position here and a tendency that I see in the expressive

therapies that I think is particularly reprehensible. This tendency would be to look for a totality that is harmonious and without tension. The overcoming of tension is somehow conceived of as wholeness. Arnheim is clear that this would be a simplistic solution. Human existence is so complex that the only kind of artworks that could do justice to it would have to be works that include a tremendous capacity for tension. In fact it is the tendency toward tension that Arnheim sees as one of the sources of pleasure in art. So for him the concept of a perceptual whole is not harmonious in the sense of a percept without any tension. The wholeness is a wholeness of directed tension in which the dynamic forces in one part of the field are balanced by the forces in another. In any work of art there is a great deal of aliveness and vitality. The forms are alive; they're moving; they're tending toward a certain outcome. These forms are counterbalanced by others tending toward different outcomes.

EGL: What you're saying is interesting if you don't talk about a work of art but about an individual's life or about a family system. In these cases, this idea of a balance of tension would be a more creative resolution as an outcome of therapy than the idea of wholeness that I am describing.

SKL: Yes. I particularly find objectionable the use of the arts to achieve this kind of tension-less wholeness. Then you usually get quite insipid art.

EGL: Static, uninteresting works.

SKL: I don't think that Arnheim is recommending at all the same thing as what we are characterizing as the conflict-free concept of wholeness, but he does emphasize the importance of an integrative whole. Because Arnheim makes the best possible case for integration, it's worthwhile to encounter his thinking from a post-modernist perspective and ask whether it is adequate for understanding our situation.

EGL: But doesn't post-modernism err on the other side, of being so much a philosophy of fragmentation

and the celebration of fragmentation, that there is nothing that holds the center together because there is no center? Where does that leave us in terms of our experience of ourselves and the world?

SKL: It leaves us with a question: whether we can live in a de-centered world or with a de-centered sense of self, whether multiplicity or what James Hillman has called "polytheism" is enough. Do we need a center, do we need a guiding principle? In that case, where is it, where can we find it? I think the notion that if we can't find a central meaning in our life, we can find it in art, is hard to take. Then we're saying that art is really illusion, that art promises a unification and a totalization that is in reality impossible. In a way, art then becomes less satisfactory.
The most interesting artists today are moving away from this notion of a central meaning that structures an entire work. In literature, for example, narrative authority is more and more rejected by writers. Who knows what's going on in these works? Who can say what it all means? Who is the main character-is there a hero or protagonist who goes through a course of development in post-modern fiction? I don't think so. In someone like Pynchon or even in Joyce, identity is always shifting; it's unclear who the central character is, let alone what the plot is, what the author's position is, and how the reader is implicated in the text. Now, some people don't like this style of writing as a matter of taste. This kind of writing is very unsettling.

EGL: But somehow these works have become touchstones for our epoch because people really do experience their lives like this.

SKL: That's right. Other kinds of work begin to seem boring. We want art that corresponds to our experience of chaos, at least I do. Other forms of art run the risk of being irrelevant, even though, to a great extent, these are the forms of mass entertainment.

EGL: Most people want to see things that have a beginning, a middle and an end.

SKL: Most people want desperately to cling to the notion of a coherent world and self.

EGL: I think for us the danger in the field of expressive arts therapy is to begin to cling like that. If we do, we'll lose the connection to what is really happening in our lives; it will become an ideology rather than a practice.

SKL: I agree with you. What happens is that people go into therapy to find a wholeness that is lacking in their lives. They will indeed find this wholeness in therapy, but it will have to remain in therapy because there is no place for it in the world in which they live. People then become addicted to therapy and want to keep going back to the experience of wholeness that they had at that moment in that setting. What I wonder is, can we use our work as artists and as therapists to help people to live with multiplicity? To enable them to tolerate ambiguity, paradox and loss of control, and even to be able to play with the chaos that they find in the world? Then I think therapy would have a useful purpose.

EGL: Perhaps the way we can tolerate and even embrace ambiguity and multiplicity is by forming therapeutic relationships in which the imagination can be given free play. Within the order of the relationship, there can be room for the chaos of art. Arnheim would accept the idea of striving for a relationship complex enough to encompass chaos. Human beings can tolerate a high degree of disorder but only within a framework that can contain it and allow for the emergence of new forms. The therapeutic relationship holds the promise of allowing new forms of art- and soul-making to emerge.

The human race towards wholeness is a never-ending pursuit of the unobtainable. Our fascination and obsession with the goal of reaching a final point forces us into a pace where we lose sight of the bigger picture. We isolate ourselves into narrow lanes that lead down a single straight path, ignoring all other avenues of possible paths to pursue. I urge you to slow down and

put things back in-sight. Re-search for what has moved you forward and you may find what you lost sight of. Perhaps, acknowledging that we will not ever reach a point of completion allows us to appreciate the present moment – a moment that confirms our fragmentation in a world that constantly breaks us a-part. Whether the place we once called home is now across the ocean or a person who feels like an extension of our selves is no longer living, we must come to terms with feeling incomplete. In a world that is increasingly de-humanizing, we must pause to consider how we can hold on to our humanity. From modernism to postmodernism to network culture, it is becoming clear that we are no longer neat distinct units that are disconnected from the world that surrounds us. We are all connected and thus, we are all fragmented. The arts are a tool for us to glue these pieces together for brief moments of magic in time and a vehicle that moves us towards our humanity and deeper understanding. We may not ever truly experience wholeness, but perhaps healing may allow us to feel full; full of thought, full of feeling, full of hope, and full of life. The arts will take us where our legs won't, and where words can't. So, re-imagine the human race and join me in the expressive arts movement.

"Thinking Outside the Box" seeks to situate my thesis within the larger power-dynamics and history that have given rise to the expressive arts field. The creative force that drives this field is often difficult to convey through scholarly forms of writing, thus, I provide Stephen and Ellen Levine's dialogue as a glimpse into the thought-processes that are currently dominating the explorations of expressive arts work. No field is free of historical and political movements, thus, understanding the influences that gave rise to this field is critical before attempting to understand its current place within academia.

Clinical Confines on Creativity

The power relations embedded within the expressive arts field extends beyond the politics of naming as the over-arching domain of academia has housed an arts-science divide, which works to discount contributions of expressive arts based on scientific standards. While the expressive arts field holds the power to have these two supposedly opposing forces of science and art work in harmony, psychological frameworks from the field's inception continue to limit its potential to extend beyond individual therapy. This section seeks to highlight the clinical limitations that have limited the expressive arts field, to establish what setbacks the field must overcome to reach its full potential.

> The expressive arts combine the visual arts, movement, drama, music, writing and other creative processes to foster deep personal growth and community development. IEATA encourages an evolving multimodal approach within psychology, organizational development, community arts and education. By integrating the arts processes and allowing one to flow into another, we gain access to our inner resources for healing, clarity, illumination and creativity. (IEATA, 2018)

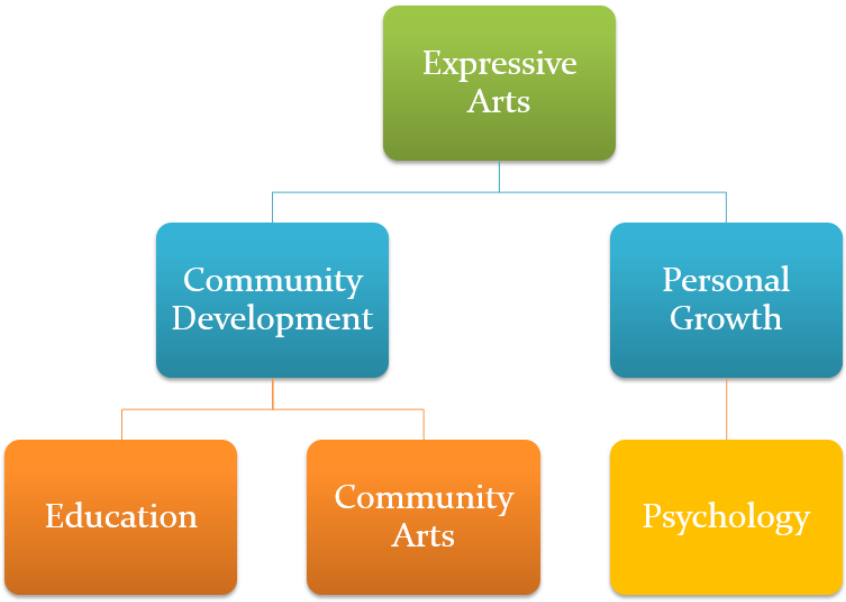


Figure 4. Expressive Arts Breakdown

The IEATA's revised definition of the expressive arts reflects a progressive understanding of the discipline that seeks to extend it beyond the shadows of its clinical science-based past. Unfortunately, the initial framing of the field within pre-established psychological frameworks has worked to limit its scope within the personal growth sector, ignoring the potential for community development. Situating this field within today's context reveals the necessity to emphasize the interrelatedness of artists and their surrounding influences. The scope of expressive arts would be fundamentally reduced if it continues to live within the confines of psychological influences on solely personal growth.

Psychoanalysis proved problematic against the intentions of the expressive arts (Burt, 2012):

1. Psychoanalysis places emphasis on the individual rather than the community, and upon deficits and pathology rather than resources.
2. Psychoanalysis reduces the person to a set of explanations deriving from their experience in the past.
3. Psychoanalysis makes a one-to-one correspondence between the artwork and the life or personality of the artist.

In stark contrast, the elements that make up expressive arts therapy are (McNiff, 1992):

1. Expressive arts place emphasis upon an individual's resources and capabilities.
2. Expressive arts work to open up the artwork as being part of the world, pointing to the present moment and to a possible future.
3. Artwork is more than a mirror of the self; it goes beyond the self to have a multiplicity of meanings that extend from the artist's inner world.

The primary focus of the expressive arts surrounds a sense of play, a fluid method that hopes to free individuals, groups, and communities of the rigid state that tough circumstances tend to

leave them in. Such interactions of play invite participants to imagine new ways of being and acting, allowing them to change and shape the world that surrounds them.

It is necessary to take a step back to assess how domains of power are shaping the current state of expressive arts. The elusive clinical focus of the expressive arts is a result of its initial limitations within the field of psychology. It was a field where students were trained to become therapists and to work in mental health settings. Early expressive arts practitioners emerged from the countercultural energy of the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S., heavily influenced by the emerging multimedia and performance art movements in conjunction with the human potential movement. Such movements allowed pioneers of the field to push beyond traditional boundaries of self-expression and artistic expression by bringing interdisciplinary arts experience into therapy, community, and education. Early artist-therapists gravitated towards the idea of working in mental health out of a desire to be an agent of social change within their communities. The work of such practitioners was countercultural as traditional mental health, community, and education settings, like society, had marginalized the arts and transformation. By placing the arts at the center of their work, these artist-therapists asserted the radical notion that creativity is a human birthright and that the creative process inherently links to movements pushing towards growth (Rogers, 1993).

The practice of the expressive arts has evolved to take on a stance that questions core concepts and central ideas of traditional models of psychotherapy and clinical practice. A key example of such an instance is the expressive art's defiance against any notion that therapists take on the role of "authority". Instead, the field has embraced a fresh perspective that sees the role of "expert" as shared through the experience of creation, amongst therapist, clients, their artwork, and the community (McNiff, 1993). Expressive arts therapy, from its inception, has

been marked by its belief in following the image, following the client, and following the community where they are. The artist-therapist's role is to facilitate an environment where arts-based inquiry and connection can take place. All of this stems from a belief that the process will transport participants to a place where suffering can be experienced, where feeling can be given form, and where the whole self can be enlisted in the service of healing; a self that is both personal and collective: mind, body, spirit, and imagination.

Early employers of the expressive arts field expected their employees to conduct standardized art therapy assessments within the understood framework of clinical practice. Such a hierarchy of prioritizing the sciences over the arts sits within a larger power dynamic that has similarly found its way into our education system. The belief that standardized arts therapy tests could measure specific personality characters of symptoms stands at complete odds with the ideals of the expressive arts. Instead, the field now understands that there is no concise synthesized system of classifying one's artistic products. Meanings from images are derived from the client within the context of the expressive art therapy session which incorporates interactions with the therapist and the artwork. The central point to this argument is that one's interpretation of their artwork says more than the artwork itself.

The techniques of expressive art therapy are based on the belief that every individual, whether trained or untrained, has a latent capacity to project their inner conflicts into visual form (Naumburg 1987, p. 1). It is based on the recognition that our fundamental thoughts and feelings are derived from the unconscious and often reach expression in images rather than in words. By means of pictorial projection, art therapy encourages a method of symbolic communication between patient and therapist. While initial practitioners of expressive arts therapy were heavily influenced from psychoanalytic and psychiatric approaches to the individual unconscious and

healing through self-awareness, a shift towards de-emphasizing any attempt to fit within the medical model can be felt today. Influence from the postmodern era is apparent today as expressive arts now places the client within the role of expert on him/herself and the therapist embodies more of a consultant who co-constructs a path to wellness alongside their client. The modernist notion that one could be an objective observer has been replaced by a postmodern belief that there is no objectivity. Instead, there are multiple perspectives, and the only perspective you can take responsibility for is your own. Expressive arts' ability to shift so dynamically with the ideals being re-shaped from social movements that surround the field suggests an ability to fluidly adapt to changing circumstances, a phenomenon not limited to the relationship between client and therapist, but instead, extended to the expressive arts field as a whole. This fluidity holds promising possibilities for a future of expressive arts that can meet the needs of a rapidly advancing society.

The creative form of expressive arts has been hindered by attempts to succumb to more scientific frameworks that legitimize the field. But, pioneers of the field recognize how detrimental such a defeat would be towards the potential of this creative form's impact. I present this chapter as a glimpse into arguably the most significant challenge that confronts the field today. It is necessary to understand the clinical limitations that have haunted the expressive arts if we are to imagine a place for its expansion to extend into wider and deeper facets of life. The next phase of my argument focuses more on historical accounts that illuminate the significance of art, demonstrated through the attention it has attracted from some of history's most respected thinkers.

From Plato to Levine's *Poiesis*

Plato is arguably one of the most influential instigators of the arts-science divide. Stephen Levine, regarded as the philosopher of the expressive arts field, centers his theory on Plato's term—*poiesis*. The impact of his contribution can be felt as leading thinkers in the expressive arts field extensively reference not only his appropriation of this term but also the surplus of ideas that Levine's writing has generated. Beyond Levine's remarkable studies and practices of expressive arts, it is necessary to understand that he was a significant figure at the time of the field's inception. Thus, his intimate and comprehensive historical account of the field has been selected to frame my review of expressive art's development. Choosing a term that dates back to Plato demonstrates the timelessness of the debates surrounding expressive arts and stresses the significant questions that art-making has posed to critical thinkers throughout time. I strive to illuminate how art-making, an act of *poiesis*, has held a significant place within human history given its ability to transcend alternative forms of meaning-making.

At the core of the expressive arts framework is the pulse of Levine's significantly influential appropriation of the classical Greek term, *poiesis*. It was initially used to signify the general act of making, with an emphasis on artistic creation. Levine's contribution was especially influential due to its ability to justify art-making within the larger understanding of forms of production. One of the greatest misconceptions that hinder the field's advancement is a false belief that the arts are a specialized skill that select portions of the population are capable of performing. But, the notion of *poiesis* invites onlookers to see art as an extension of the human capacity to shape our worlds. Levine sees human beings as shaping creatures. Unlike many other species, we are not pre-adapted to an environment. Thus, we are called to take on the task of shaping the world we live in while subsequently being susceptible to how that world will

inevitably shape us. It is a symbiotic relationship of cause and effect that we cannot escape. In this context, shaping our worlds is a fundamental component of what it means to be human. The challenge given to us is to respond to what we are now presented as we are challenged to adapt to wherever life may take us. Levine uses the example of our current environmental crises as a mal-formed act of *poiesis* that represents the destructive consequences of our ability to misshape the world. It is important that we acknowledge this capacity within us as our world directly re-affects back on to us. Thus, we are ultimately destructively shaping ourselves. Such an understanding of *poiesis* allows us to embrace the potential we have to create change in this world, and we must hold on to this sense of hope.

Levine traces the term *poiesis* back to Plato's discussion of the arts. Just as post-modernism heavily shaped expressive arts, Levine situates Plato within the broader context of his day. Plato was writing during Athens' civil war, a time of great upheaval. Citizens were lost as they struggled to come to a consensus on how they were expected to live their lives. Levine suggests that a lingering danger of upsetting the order at any moment is at play with Plato's thinking. Mathematical science and its ability to provide a universal truth appears to have enticed Plato. Levine understands the beginning of science as a model for truth that brought stability into Plato's otherwise chaotic surroundings. Plato adopts the philosophical practice of viewing truth as that which is eternal and universal. Movements such as justice and politics provided a secure foundation where a sense of order could be re-introduced to the city. Levine argues that this is the reason Plato dedicated his writing towards dismissing the disorder that art appeared to bring into one's life. Plato dwelled on his observations that artists did not know what they were doing in advance. The ideal of reason that science provided was at direct odds with the emotion-driven process of art, which Plato saw as far removed from truth. Thus, he argued that art was a poor

attempt to imitate the eternal and universal forms that science allowed. Such imitation rooted in emotion over reason was thought to be harmful to human existence. Levine presents the irony of Plato starting off as a poet, as he would spend his life holding on to many poetic dimensions, such as the dramatic form of his dialogues. Stephen Levine likes to argue that Plato banished *poiesis* from the city, but was unable of banish it from himself.

Levine traces the philosophical tradition of accepting the arts as a poor cousin to science back to Plato's denigration of *poiesis*. Aristotle would devote his life towards providing more justification for art-making, particularly in his account of tragic drama. He settled on the term he coined, catharsis, which would later be taken into psychological discourse by Freud etc. On one hand, catharsis was understood as a purification. But, it also was introduced as a medical meaning of purgation where the body got rid of toxic elements. Aristotle firmly believed that the arts have a cathartic power due to their ability to eliminate troubling emotions of both the individual and society. Aristotle argues that there are three ways of knowing that Levine breaks down as:

1. Theory: concept of truth where observer is not involved (objective truth)
2. Knowing by doing: particularly ethical and political action
3. *Poiesis*: knowing by making

While Aristotle saw the arts as valuable, he still saw it as a poor substitute for theory. Ultimately, he believed that *poiesis* could benefit people's lives, but it would not pave the way towards truth.

After all, the tradition of philosophy can be understood as an attempt to transcend the human condition by finding truth via the eternal and universal. But, as we have come to realize, none of us has a grip on the eternal and we are each different. Nietzsche saw philosopher's fascination with eternal forms as a weak attempt to escape time. Similarly, he saw the religious promises of eternal life as futile attempts to get past time. Interestingly, Nietzsche would come to

a new understanding of human existence through Greek tragedy. Greece was being represented by the bright sun, clarity of thinking, and beauty of seeing. Greek writers such as Sophocles and Euripides allowed Nietzsche to appreciate the beauty of language and articulate forms. But, Greek tragedy was so much more than the text—it was performance based on music and dance that allowed citizens to compete at a ritualistic event in honor of the God Dionysus. The chorus' ability to articulate language through more embodied forms of music and dance struck Nietzsche. He concluded that everyone else had gotten it wrong; human existence was not based on form, it was based on embodied action. Such revelations would inspire Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* where he distinguished between two distinct principles that gave rise to Greek culture. The first, Apollonian, was inspired by the sun-god who represents light, clarity, and form. The concept corresponds to Schopenhauer's "principle of individuation", which is the foundation for analytic distinctions. All types of form and structure are Apollonian as they individualize that which is formed. In contrast, Dionysus, the wine-god, represents drunkenness and ecstasy. Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian is directly opposed to the Apollonian because such states force the individual to give up their individuality and submerge into a greater whole. Music is one of the most Dionysian art forms as it appeals directly to our instinctive emotions without any need for the reasoning mind. Nietzsche saw Greek tragedy as an affirmation of the tension between forces of reason and emotion.

Stephen Levine, working through his own conflicted emotions, admits that Heidegger is worth investigating despite his affiliation with the Nazi party. His book, *Being and Time*, was ahead of its time as he dismissed any claims of truth being eternal. Instead, Heidegger argues that there is no transcendent truth, there is just a shared embodied existence in a world with others. This claim suggests that truth is only true in the current moment of one's existence. This point of

view opened up possibilities for becoming that are genuine while we are still alive. In his essays, Heidegger contemplates where we can find truth. He argues that truth comes through art-making, a process that shows the world and self as they are. Thus, art is an embodiment of truth that reveals parts of the self that have not been disclosed before. By disclosing the essence of what surrounds us, truth comes to be. This would lead Heidegger to formulate the concepts of world and earth, whose conflicting relationship mirror that of Apollonian and Dionysus forces. *Poiesis* can be understood as being grounded in Dionysian life but giving birth to Apollonian form. Instead of sticking to the rigid attempts that thinkers were adopting to categorize forms, this philosophy allowed for a creative form to be celebrated and understood as chaos within order that underlies living creatures. Thus, expressive arts can be appreciated as a new form of art-making that corresponds to movements in the arts themselves where the body comes into play in a way that it has not in the past. The chaos of not knowing is welcomed as we discover through the act of creation. Expressive arts does not impose any pre-conceived notions of form on to participants; rather it allows people to go where the art takes them as they all collectively let go of control and gather together to respond authentically. Our purpose is to be present and respond to the chaos of our world as we trust that we are each capable of shaping it into something new.

This chapter outlines the long-going debate surrounding the complex relationship that art has had with forces of reason. Our current society's limited appreciation of art as a professional practice calls for a concept that encompasses the relatability of the act of *poiesis*. From Plato to Aristotle to Nietzsche to Heidegger, I have highlighted the attention that key thinkers have given to art throughout time. The possibility of a more widespread appreciation of art may be on the brink given an on-going sensory turn in academia that I turn my attention towards next.

The Sensory Turn in Academia

In response to the inherent power dynamics of prejudice that have found their way into Western society's emphasis on the five senses, an expansion into the field of sensory studies has extended across disciplines to embrace a more multi-sensorial approach to knowledge making. This section focuses on David Howe's *The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies*, which is a comprehensive study into the advancements taking place within this area of study's dedication towards a more inclusive practice of the senses within academia.

Paolo J. Knill's notion of *intermodality* provided a much-needed framework that not only grounded the emerging field in a theory indigenous to the arts, but also set it apart from other creative art therapies. All human beings are united by our shared experience of having a body. This body is a vehicle for us to sense and ultimately shape our worlds. Situating my work within our society's current technological advances further invites us to appreciate such an emphasis on the body as our human experience is rooted in the physical world as opposed to a virtual reality.

What role does the body play in healing? Levine (2011) argues that art-making provides experiences that restore participants to a feeling of being fully alive through its ability to affect us through the body and emotions. The human being's bodily experience is one of fragmentation that prompts us to seek a sense of wholeness and healing. The act of art-making can be understood as a sensory-affective experience that sparks transformation towards wholeness. Our sensory way of being in the world defines our human experience and is the foundation for one's aesthetic response to art. The senses are our starting point towards shaping our worlds.

The work of Rudolf Arnheim offers a window for art therapists to better understand the role that our senses play in healing. His heavy emphasis on sensible experience suggests that talk therapy fails to address the full spectrum of a client's personality. The human personality is the product of a wide array of interweaving bodily perceptions of the world. Thus, therapy must address the wide-spectrum of senses if it hopes to access the soul. Such an understanding of art stands as a further reminder that art is our primary way of expressing being in the world. The arts utilize the senses as its media, heightening them to a reflective and conscious level worth employing. Thus, the therapy of the senses must be done through the wonder of art-making, and through the human body.

Human understanding far surpasses the bounds of language, which have dominated psychotherapy thus far. Arnheim's Gestalt analysis of visual perception allows us to see a continuity between art and the senses, allowing art-making to be both comprehensible and human. We all possess an innate ability to shape our surroundings in a creative and meaningful manner that employs principles of perception. While this may seem like a basic concept to some, it holds powerful implications. It dismisses misconceptions that art is a specialized skill that is separate from our everyday lives. In other words, every human being is an artist due to their embodiment in the sensible world.

Furthermore, Arnheim's observation that there are structures within our perception suggests that forms have meaning. If meaning is directly embedded in forms, we must reconsider the influence we have given to representational images. Stephen Levine (1994) understands Arnheim's analysis of art as a rehabilitation of the senses. Through our bodies' ability to sense art-work, meaning is made. We naturally perceive the art-work as a whole that completes the

sum of its parts. Interestingly Arnheim points out that the art trends of realistic representation are an "unnatural" form of creation that has only recently come into play. Realistic forms of creation are not an expression of our human nature. Modernism movements of abstract art seem to tap back into a source of art-making that was bound in the creativity of visual perception. Art's most significant strength is its ability to capture the highest levels of complexity within the most compact forms.

The expressive arts' focus on the senses can be framed within a larger sensory turn in contemporary scholarship. Geography, sociology, linguistics, aesthetics, and communication studies are a few of the many disciplines that have reframed their approach to the senses. Of particular interest to me given my encounters with the field, anthropology's adoption of the senses illuminates a shift away from rigorous academic methods of scientific fieldwork. I see many parallels between the fields of expressive arts and anthropology, which are both working to embrace a more all-encompassing approach to accessing the human condition. The politics of the academy loom in the background of both attempts, but David Howe's *The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies* paints a hopeful picture of the academic shift towards an embrace of the senses.

The recent emphasis on the senses within anthropology builds a bridge across anthropology and art. The senses hold power to give the arts some much-needed respect within the academy. But, anthropology's "academically restrictive, self-chosen elitism" limits the possibilities for this newfound collision with the arts to reach its full fruition. Branches of anthropology which show promise include "multi-modal anthropology" and "multi-sensory anthropology," but they are currently being lumped under the title of "visual anthropology" (Wright & Schneider, 2010). Just as we saw with expressive arts therapy, the politics of naming

reveal hidden agendas to protect elitist qualities of the work. Recognizing the senses as a distinct mode of fieldwork would welcome the arts into a field that has previously worked to dismiss the contributions of influential creative minds. The split identity of artist and anthropologist could finally be given a space to find connection and embody theory in non-text. The prejudices that come with focusing knowledge within the written form and academic circles could be stripped away as creative forms allow anthropologists to reach their communities directly.

The anthropology of the senses was initially introduced out of an anti-textualism movement. Anthropology had always been a discipline of words as anthropologists have relied on interviews to gather data and articles to disseminate their findings. In recent times, anthropologists have drawn their attention towards the bias that interpreting and writing culture took away from sensing cultures. As society developed, technological advances further extended biases as tape recorders and camcorders gave anthropology an audio-visual cast. Mirroring movements from other disciplines, it was time for anthropologists to recognize that human beings make sense of the world through a plethora of perceptions and forms of diverse media that tap into the full spectrum of senses (Finnegan 2002, MacDougall 2006).

Echoing sentiments from Levine's conception of *poiesis*, key pioneers in the field of American sensory history believe that the senses are both shaping and being shaped by history (Schmidt 2000, Gabaccia 2000, Thomson 2002, Hoffer 2005, Promey 2006, Smith 2007). In Simmel's "Sociology of the Senses" (1997), he argues that city-life has forced citizens to spend long periods of time staring absently as they go about their days. Compared to country life where glances and greetings are pleasantly exchanged, Simmel believes that the over-stimulated sense of sight causes the modern urban subject to feel isolated and perplexed. More recent studies

observing clubbing habits have suggested that our modern life has been defined by a sensation-seeking drive. The club has come to be understood as a zone of social and sensory experimentation where club-goers can escape from the habitus of everyday life. The ingestion of sense-enhancing stimulants has become a norm where new forms of behaviour play out (Howes 2013). The impact of sensory ways of thinking can also be seen within urbanism and architecture where the sensuous science of creating an ambience has taken over from visual-technical art.

In *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments and the Everyday* (2010), Joy Parr asks: "Our bodies are archives of sensory knowledge that shape how we understand the world. If our environment changes at an unsettling pace, how will we make sense of a world that is no longer familiar?" (cited in Howes, 2013). This thought proves particularly necessary within the larger framework of a place in history that is being met with refugee crises and constant displacement. I dare to extend this argument to address the impact that a network culture plays on our senses. Does the virtual world count as an environment that shapes our perception of the world? If so, how do we make sense of the endless worlds that we are now capable of inhabiting at once? Is there a danger in the unlimited stimuli of potential environments that our network culture now makes accessible? Furthermore, are other people's perceptions not embedded within our human understanding of where our place in the world is? If anything, the network culture has confirmed that we are an extension of a mesh of interconnectedness that constantly impacts our existence.

The sensory turn has developed such a strong following, it now rivals the linguistic turn's impact on scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. The sensory revolution was born out of a calling to liberate the study of sense perception from the psychological laboratory and return

it to its rightful place in society (Bull et al 2006). The thinkers pushing this movement recognize that most academic disciplines have been limited and biased by their vision-based processes and modes of interpretation (Smith 2004). We must recognize that every attempt to order the senses is subject to a social ordering. Larenz Oken's grand evolutionary taxonomy, which was used to categorize the five races of man through the traditional Western model of "the five senses", is a notable example of such embedded social prejudice:

1. The skin-man is the black, African
2. The tongue-man is the brown, Australian-Malayan
3. The nose-man is the red, American
4. The ear-man is the yellow, Asiatic-Mongolian
5. The eye-man is the white, European (Gould cited in Howes 2009: 10)

Howes confirms that sensual relations are social relations, a plausible impact of our network culture at play. Consider how traditional Western notions of men having "higher" senses of sight and hearing have supported that they are more suited for activities such as exploring, ruling, and studying, whereas women are associated with senses relegated to the home and bedroom such as smell, taste and touch. This prejudice extends into social class where lower classes have been limited by their ability to perform manual labor through the sense of touch—workers were even referred to as "hands." Whereas, higher class groups were set apart by their distinguished visibility and refined "taste" in the arts.

Howes' (2013) essay concludes with eight theses for sensory studies (17):

1. The senses are (not) passive receptors. They are interactive, both with the world and each other.
2. Perception does (not simply) go on in the head. "The personal is cultural and political" (Bull et al. 2006).
3. The limits of my language are (not) the limits of my world, pace Wittgenstein, for the senses come before language and extend beyond it.
4. The senses collaborate but they may also conflict. The unity of the senses should not be overstressed, pace Merleau-Ponty. It can often be forced.

5. In most societies, the senses are hierarchized, with higher ranked groups being associated with the "higher" senses and what are considered refined (or neutral) sensations.
6. No account of the senses in society is complete without some account of being taken of the subaltern sensoria of less advantaged groups, such as women, children, the disabled and others.
7. "The senses are everywhere" (Bull et al. 2006). They mediate the relationship between idea and object, mind and body, self and society, culture and environment.
8. The meaning of the senses is in their use, and the number of different ways of sensing is boundless: "As we sense, we also make sense" (Vannini et al 2012). The senses are made, not given.

Howes provides an informative and useful summary of points derived from the sensory turn, but he also reminds readers that science is constantly changing. I believe that expressive arts has much to gain from this evolution as the senses are at the heart of our human capacity to create art-work and shape our worlds.

As my analysis has confirmed thus far, there is no escaping embedded power dynamics and prejudices. The five senses are a story that the Western world has come to accept as fact, but my investigation into the sensory turn in academia has revealed the inaccuracy of such claims. This chapter seeks to highlight the recent admiration given towards sensory studies and the potential benefits that such a shift could place on legitimatizing the multi-sensorial form that expressive arts, and more creative approaches, generate. Now, more than ever, it is becoming apparent that we must enforce more multi-modal forms of engagement to tap into the plethora of experience that spans the spectrum of human experience. To remain in an exclusive hierarchy of singular forms of sense would be detrimental to fields that extend across academia. A new-found appreciation of the role that the senses play in our lives proves promising towards the recognition of expressive arts' potential to explore more embodied forms. I now shift focus over to a key thinker who acknowledges the power of the senses and constructs his thoughts towards formulating a proposal of how best to reach a balance of the senses.

Aesthetic Education: Surveying Schiller

This chapter focuses on Friedrich Schiller, whose influential work addresses questions surrounding the synthesis of multiple sensory modes of knowing. *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*, a compilation of letters written by the German philosopher, is widely accepted as Schiller's most influential work. Many great thinkers throughout time have meditated on the importance of art and the aesthetic dimensions of experience, however, Schiller's emphasis on sensory modes of knowing coupled with the influence of his work has prompted me to devote a chapter towards reviewing his philosophies more thoroughly. The emphasis that he places on coupling thought with feeling is a timely argument that strongly contributes to the synthesis of science and art that my larger thesis tackles.

Perhaps, it was a focus on thought over emotion that caused me to struggle to find a place within academia. From a very young age, the classroom was a space that instilled fear and anxiety into my bones. I wilted into the defeated assumption that I was simply dumb. There was one right answer, and I never seemed to find it in time, or at all. In stark contrast, the stage was a platform where I could explore a plethora of responses that were all celebrated as possible approaches to the task at hand. I thrived within the boundless possibilities of my imagination. I was free to embody a feeling, to reflect on a thought on my own time, and to tap into parts of myself that I was unaware even existed. The stage became my escape from the fast pace of the classroom and the competitiveness of the tennis court. My learning disability and ADD didn't exist when I stepped into the role of performer. I was unstoppable and capable of harnessing a potential that would develop the confidence I needed to carry into academic settings. Now, I have grown to realize that despite my slower pace, I am capable of keeping up and reaching places that other students often fail to venture towards given their concentration on more rigid

forms of understanding. I am thankful for the role that the arts played in my personal growth within academia and I am learning more and more that it is possible to break down the divide between my academic and artistic selves to engage in heightened forms of understanding that extend beyond the classroom.

Fast forward to the present moment where Sir Ken Robinson's "Do schools kill creativity" is the number one watched Ted talk on YouTube. This fact confirms that I am not alone—there is a shared sentiment that our schools are failing us. Students are going about their studies feeling unfulfilled. Children have their inquisitive and fearless energy stripped away when they enter into the rigid framework of education. Our school's emphasis on literacy over creativity has deprived students of the chance to discover other ways of understanding and being in the world. Robinson takes us back to the industrial revolution when the education system was being developed in the midst of a need to cultivate math and science skills. Despite a changing world, we have managed to stay fixated in a hierarchy within our education systems where math and language flourish at the top, the social sciences live in the middle, and the arts are ignored at the bottom. Robinson declares that it is time we redefine our education system to develop the entire body of the child instead of just their heads. He points to our imagination and creativity as a source of such change that holds the potential to tackle unique challenges that our society faces.

Robinson's argument echoes that of Schiller who expresses similar sentiments in the context of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. *The Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795) offers readers an analysis of human psychology, a transcendental account of beauty, and an assessment of art's psychological and political importance, which all lead to a proposed ideal

form of a government that provides the means for humans to reach their full potential. Schiller blames the rise of civilization surrounding him as the cause of fragmentation within individuals. He saw the Greeks as still having a unified grip on intellect and sense. But, he noted that modern civilization had become split fragments due to an over-emphasis on reason and thought, which establishes more clear-cut divisions of rank and occupations against the shadow of superior science. He understood his time as being marked by a need for humans to embrace their capacity for feeling, not just reason. More specifically, Schiller suggests that society needs the instrument of fine art to develop this human capacity for feeling, while still allowing humans to hold on to their rational capabilities. Schiller admits that art has historically been known to have a corrupting effect. He turns to Kant's transcendental method as a source to encourage us to re-frame our understanding of art. Even today, it is clear that art's ambiguous definition limits its scope. Schiller suggests that instead of relying on the sensuo-relational nature of our experience, we must follow the transcendental way to truth. Otherwise, we risk failure in accounting for the whole essence of human nature.

Letter 11 begins with a further examination of human nature. Schiller distinguishes between the person and their condition; two opposing forces that attempt to find harmony. In Letter 12, he goes on to outline two drives that come into play in pursuit of this harmonious fulfilment: the form drive and the sense drive. The sense drive declares man as "nothing but a unit of quantity, an occupied moment of time—or rather, *he* is not at all, for his personality is suspended as long as he is ruled by sensation" (p. 65). In contrast, the formal drive is the force of unity in the self that is related to the abstract, the eternal, and the absolute. When both of these drives are in balance, Schiller believes that a new drive of play is awakened. The combination of being conscious of one's freedom while also being sensible of one's existence sets the

foundation for the play drive to free the individual from the possible domination of either separate drive. The clarity that such harmony brings allows reason and the senses to flourish as one. Schiller connects each drive to an object: life is the object of the sense drive and form is simply the object of the form drive. The play drive's ability to provide unison between these two forces gives rise to the object of "living form". Living form can be attained through beauty, and beautiful objects can allow humans to realize their highest potential. Through the contemplation of beautiful pieces of art, Schiller argues we are given the chance to feel the sense drive and form drive equalized. The play drive's equilibrium between the poles of sense drive and form drive allows for freedom and the will to choose between the drives. Thus, the contemplation of beauty can be understood as a completion of the concept of human nature. For humanity to exist, there must be a balance of both thought and emotion. Schiller sees play as a point at which human nature is fulfilled: "man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and *he is only fully a human being when he plays*" (p. 80).

Schiller admits the paradox that comes with beauty's ability to liberate our minds. While beauty does not create knowledge, or build character, it does empower the mind. It is beauty's ability to live beyond the realms of form and matter that offer an opportunity for the individual to discover their own potential for both forces to live in harmony. Such harmony of our drives gives us the will to act freely. The interplay of this freedom and power mirrors the mood that art can invoke within us. Schiller observes beauty's task of facilitating this condition as the gift of humanity itself. All genuine art will allow for balance that forces the will into a state of heightened strength and self-determination. Schiller does clarify that each human being will have a distinct experience in reaching such an aesthetic condition, however. He expands on this point by outlining a dichotomy that exists within beauty. The sensuous side of the self is linked with

energizing beauty, which tenses us. It forces us into prompt reactions fueled by the emotions. Whereas, melting beauty belongs to the spiritual man who thinks too much. Schiller cautions his reader as both forms of beauty have the potential to be dangerous if taken to their respective extremes: energizing beauty can lead to extravagance, and melting beauty can leave one feeling empty. It is when these two forces combine that human beings are given a window to reach their highest potential.

These distinctions set the foundation for Schiller to lay out three developmental stages for both individuals and humanity to follow: physical, aesthetic, and moral. Schiller works under the belief that we are each ruled by nature. But, with the embrace of reason, he argues that humans have lost grasp of the physical world to pursue an unlimited future. The opposing forces of nature and reason force unconditional laws to be met as coercive: humans either attempt to resist reason or humans let go of their sensuous natures to attain it. In contrast, beauty invites both the natural and rational sides of the human being to unite in harmony. Schiller attempts to trace human beings innate love of play through observations in nature where he notes that lions play when they have excess energy, and plants send out shoots despite their adequately nourished state. Schiller concludes by envisioning the highest attainable state, the "aesthetic state," where citizens are propelled by equal drives of thought and emotion, and where the state can come together as a unified whole.

This tradition of aesthetic education dating back to Schiller has heavily influenced the current structure of the European Graduate School, one of the few institutions offering expressive arts curriculum. Unlike most universities of today where the arts are separated both disciplinarily and physically, EGS offers learning through the arts. Levine (2015) sees other institutions separation as confirmation of the destructive impact that traditional distinctions

between theoretical and artistic ways of knowing has instilled within academia. The arts have come to be accepted as a non-cognitive, subjective activity that is at odds with the objective truths that science provides. The influence of such thinking has been so far-reaching that even humanities departments have dismissed the arts as a form of learning. Like Schiller, Levine tracks his analysis back to the Greeks where he argues that the beginnings of philosophy forced creative forms to be replaced by an over-emphasis on thought. Plato's heightened disgust with art became apparent as he ordered poets to be exiled for fear of their work's potential harm in creating disorder of the soul.

Levine acknowledges the role that Schiller's *Aesthetic Education of Man* played in defying the exclusion of arts from schools of thought. Levine sees Schiller's emphasis on aesthetics as a force capable of overcoming the fragmentation of body and mind. Furthermore, Schiller's proposed ideal of unifying thought and emotions provides direction towards our pursuit of wholeness as human beings. Levine appreciates Schiller's contribution as it allows readers to re-imagine aesthetics as "what we might call the royal road to learning, unifying the different faculties of the mind and, potentially, the different strata of society" (2015, p. 15). Despite Levine's support and admiration towards Schiller, he points out the limitations of an emphasis on contemplating art versus the actual art-making process. *Poiesis* was recognized as the realm of genius. But, it was aesthesis, the reflection of beauty, that Schiller argues provides the basis for humankind to attain wholeness. Levine urges thinkers to put their imaginations into play and discover knowledge that had previously been dormant through not only the reflection, but also the creation of art. Such a conception of aesthetic education fights back against misconceptions that knowledge through the arts is subjective. Instead, we can appreciate such practices of the imagination as a path towards recognizing truths of the present moment. Schiller's conception of

aesthetic education is worth understanding and utilizing as a foundation to develop students holistically and tackle the fragmentation that society often faces.

My focus on Schiller's contribution towards aesthetic forms of knowing seeks to situate my thesis within a larger movement where thinkers have been attempting to merge the opposing forces of reason and emotion. I admire Schiller's comprehensive review of the senses that proposes a synthesis with the potential towards embodying the balance of apparently opposing forces of the human condition. His emphasis on beauty offers a strong case for the expressive arts and works to legitimatize the aesthetic contributions of the emerging field. Next, I introduce the practice of arts-based research, which results from such emphasis on more aesthetic forms of knowing that Schiller encourages.

Epistemologically, arts-based research has worked under the assumption that arts can create and convey meaning (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Schiller's concept of beauty finds its way into this form of research as the aesthetic components of the research product are explicitly linked to its ability to foster reflexivity and empathy in the onlooker (whether researcher or viewer) (Dunlop, 2004). Such a fresh approach to more rigid forms of research seeks to disrupt the ordinary in the hope of stimulating change, transformation, and even transcendence (Neilson, 2004). Expressive arts therapy's influence on the development of arts-based research is often overlooked, but recognizing both practice's ability to harmonize artistic and scientific approaches to meaning-making is necessary to move towards legitimizing more creative forms within academia.

Arts-Based Research: Following Leavy's Lead

Patricia Leavy is regarded as one of the world's most visible proponents of arts-based research as a means of public and creative scholarship. One of her many ground-breaking contributions to the field, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, reviews and synthesises the developing relationship between cross-disciplinary social research and the creative arts. Given the scope of this thesis, I turn to Leavy as an expert in the field possessing key insights for me to survey arts-based research (ABR), which is a branch of innovative investigation that was inspired by creative art therapy's ability to harness the potential that art possesses to facilitate and enhance research. This innovative form paves the way for enhanced findings, such as: meaning-making, empowerment, identity exploration, emotional expression, multisensory communication, consciousness-raising, healing, self-reflection, personal growth, relational connections, intersubjectivity, and expressive power (Chilton, personal communication, 2013).

> We all enter the academy wanting to do work that is engaging and of some value to others . However , operating within a context of institutional pressures of tenure and promotion clocks , coupled with publish - or - perish dictates and funding agencies that reward " hard - science " practitioners , many academics soon become disenchanted . Moreover , the limitations of traditional methods for both carrying out research and then sharing that research can become disheartening (Leavy, 2015, p. 1).

Leavy's emphasis on public scholarship coupled with her bold attempts to address the power dynamics and political structures that are embedded within research practices provoke necessary thought-provoking responses. This chapter situates me within the conversation that follows Leavy's daring assertions. I focus on her literature because her embrace of the expressive form, and the subjective voice that accompanies it, enticed my curiosities and revealed the plethora of knowledge that she possesses surrounding arts-based research and its strong

connection to expressive arts, which is often overlooked. The point I want to draw about my eventual argument is that despite the limitations that currently plagues academia, there are initiatives pushing against more rigid forms of research practice that stem from the benefits associated with art-making. This practice is gaining an increased following as more and more thinkers are turning to creative forms that allow them to tap into broader domains of knowledge and offer new ways to share their findings with a greater demographic of the population. Patricia Leavy began her scholarly career by attempting to fit within the limited academic article structure. She reflects on this experience as a "cycle where cumulative wisdom doesn't always make its way onto the page" (p. 2). Thus, she turned to an expressive art form that allowed her to deliver a more multi-layered fictional format that she believes provides a sensitivity towards composite characters, builds empathetic understandings, promotes self-reflection in readers, establishes longer-learning experience for readers, and floods into wider creeks of the public sphere (Leavy, 2015).

Following Leavy's lead, I turn to my own personal dealings with limitations embedded in current scholarly research approaches to kick-start a survey of art-based research endeavors that extend beyond strictly artistic disciplines and facilitate knowledge through the medium of art itself. My objective is to shed light on the re-structuring and creative expansion that intellectual mindsets and frameworks need. My thesis has gone through a creative evolution that unfolded from my initial vision of conducting research with Trinidad and Tobago's Santa Rosa First Peoples community. The thought of giving a voice to those who had been silenced for so long in a land that has long been their home excited me. In many ways, this opportunity stemmed from my own personal longing to connect with my Carib ancestry. I spent many daydreams picturing how fruitful my findings would be as I imagined a space where a research initiative rooted in a

theory indigenous to the arts could flourish. But, as an undergraduate college student conducting my thesis, I was required to go through the Institutional Review Board. There, I was met with hesitation as my process rooted in the open-ended wanders of the creative process were frowned upon. I was asked to fit my work into a scientific framework that could establish the credibility of my choices. But, a process rooted in expressive arts does not fit within traditional scientific frameworks. The true power of the creative process is its ability to facilitate discoveries in the human condition that had previously been dormant. Nevertheless, I fit myself into the mold: I completed extensive paperwork that outlined every corner of my creative case-study. Then, when it was time to begin my work, I pulled out the pile of paperwork that was required for me to provide to the group. The entire mood of the room shifted. While I assured the community that my intentions were pure and that they had the right to leave at any point, it became clear that a wall was built between the paperwork I held and the group. The time that I had dedicated towards establishing a level of trust with the community was wiped away with the academic jargon of a world that they did not understand. One member of the group even pulled me aside and asked, "this isn't a hoax right?" When I assured the individual that I simply wanted to share my love of the arts with her people she sighed in relief and exclaimed "I know that! That's what ah tellin them but they scarred!". When we reconvened, I paused to reassure the group of my intentions. While smiles filled their faces, I could sense more mixed emotions bubbling beneath the surface. I suddenly felt very uncomfortable, but I trusted in the process and carried on once everyone assured me that they were willing to give it a try. After endless remarks of "I'm not no artist you know," the individual pieces of art came to life. Their faces filled with pride as they presented their work. But, something in me still did not feel at ease with the hesitant energy that was shared in the space. Thus, I decided to let that creative encounter live on within that space as

a special moment in time and nothing more. This experience allowed me to understand that my true purpose was to give them a sense of accomplishment and content. I cannot help but wonder if things would have gone differently had I been free of the IRB materials that subjected the community to feeling like specimens under a microscope. Why is art not enough? Why must artists fit themselves into a scientific framework to be worthy of recognition? If art were embraced as research, would we respect the creative process more as a meaningful form of knowledge and change making?

Tawnya D. Smith shares my dilemma in attempting to come to terms with an artistic approach to inquiry within the framework of institutions that preach traditional scientific forms of knowledge. Smith attempts to tackle the following concerns:

> Can I really do an art-based study for my dissertation? Will that really count? Will anyone take me seriously as a researcher when I look for a position? How can I make my art-based enquiry fit into a recognizable form that my committee members and colleagues will accept as legitimate research? This article illuminates the challenges faced by graduate students who are inspired by art-based research (ABR), but who are studying at institutions where there are no established art-based researchers to serve as mentors (Smith, 2013, p. 87).

This conflict between the researcher and artist is especially alive within anthropology. *Between art and anthropology: contemporary ethnographic practice* credits itself as being one of the first books to extensively explore the shared set of practices and ethical issues between anthropologists and artists. This objective is situated within a larger mission of calling for greater experimentation within the two fields of anthropology and art. As we saw with the turn in sensory studies, more creative processes associated with art-making are finding their way into ethnography. It has become clear that the split identity I felt between my academic and artistic selves is a shared struggle that creative academics believe limit the scope of their practice. T.

Ingold challenges science's point of view from a vantage point above and beyond the object of its concern:

> All science depends on observation, and observation depends on participation…a close coupling of perception and action between the observer and those aspects of the world that are the focus of attention. If science is to be a coherent knowledge practice, it must be rebuilt on the foundation of openness rather than closure, engagement rather than detachment…knowing must be reconnected with being, epistemology with ontology, thought with life (2001, p. 19).

Basu and Macdonald (2007) point out that anthropology research has been limited to a traditional PhD model where the steps of a research proposal, set of hypotheses, fieldwork, post-analysis, and publication writing are diligently followed. While they admit that the undertaking of fieldwork provides some flexibility in approaching the original research question, Macdonald and Basu observe that the process tends to be geared towards the ultimate goal of publication. Such undertakings dismiss the possible contributions of experience, where new ways to approach the production of knowledge can take flight. But, unfortunately, mainstream institutionalized departments of anthropology remain reluctant to step into the more non-traditional spheres of experiment, open-ended research designs. This choice stems from the discipline's fear of being labelled as outside the elitist departments of scientific thought and practice. There is hope, however, as hybrids of such research done by public culture and exhibition projects welcome more creative forms of knowledge exploring and making. Such a fluid experimental design allows knowledge to be produced through experience instead of simply through replication (Sutherland and Sophia, 2007). Researchers nurture the emergence of knowledge as opposed to simply finding or having such knowledge be embodied in a final product. Acknowledging and welcoming the entangled forces of art and knowledge making sets the foundation for anthropological research to embrace art. What began as the study of non-verbal communication

has now evolved into a resurgence of interests in the senses. It is time for anthropology to re-imagine how its research can maximize access to the human condition. The incomplete and open-minded nature of the arts provides a novel perspective that anthropology can learn from. While incompleteness is understood as a part of the art-making process of creation, anthropology has avoided and ignored such a prospect. Wright and Schneider share their vision of the impact that the arts can have on coming to terms with such incompleteness:

> To treat ethnography (and the concomitant processes of research and representation) as ruin and fragment, possible sites if intended and unintended, past and present destructions and reconstructions, from which new meanings can be engendered in processes of bricolage and assemblage, is a challenge that anthropology can take up, from, and in collaboration with, contemporary art. For anthropology, to have a debate on the incomplete, unfinished and not-yet-ready, is more than timely. Despite endless pondering on the status of fieldwork, field notes, and representation, there still has not been enough thorough discussion on how the fleeting experience of fieldwork can be captured and represented in other ways then by artificially crafted texts, that frequently enclose forcible completion (2010, p. 20).

The post-modernism influence on anthropology kick-started an interrogation of the field's heavy emphasis on textuality and interpretation. A shift in the field's relationship to art could be felt as anthropologists began to step beyond investigating the anthropology of or on art, and instead utilized art as a mode of accessing knowledge and understanding the world. The scope of such investigation was broadened by a new-found emphasis on making that allowed the larger picture to be understood. Artistic thinkers within anthropology began to speak up in defense of the arts. Ingold and his collaborators advocated for 'anthropology and art' where artists were invited to be a part of the process rather than separate influencers. Schneider and Wright proposed 'border crossings,' which hoped to allow creative collaboration and borrowing of techniques between artists and anthropologists. The traditional anthropologist's fear of contamination in the face of arts has worked to establish a clear conflict between the two forms of investigation.

Laury Rappaport (2013) shares her own encounter with art-based research where she attempts to make a case that direct experience and artistic expression are needed to attain embodied knowing and experiential meaning. Such heightened levels of the felt sense are often inaccessible through words or others' authority. She notes that her students are given the tools to access a connection beyond the limitations of their cognitive minds through art-based research. Rappaport believes that the core of the disconnect inhibiting the appreciation of arts-based research can be found within an underappreciation and misunderstanding of the value that self-inquiry plays as a research tool. Art has had a history of being dismissed as a form of self-indulgence, but Rappaport argues that the discernment provided by arts leads to an inner wisdom that is unparalleled by other modes of investigation. Arts facilitate a felt meaning that words are often unable to capture. Somewhere along our human development, we lost this way of creating and understanding our world. But, Rappaport reminds us that art is a form of knowledge making that dates back to ancient wisdom traditions, which paved the way for self-discovery, insight, and transformation.

What strikes me most about Rappaport's article in the "Journal of Applied Arts and Health" is her ability to communicate how her own art-making informed the research conducted for her dissertation on *Opening the heart: Psychological and spiritual perspectives*. As she began her literature review, Rappaport recounts how she was reminded of her intuitive sense to experience rather than just write her work. Knowing that the evolution of her research methodology needed to extend beyond words, she designed an art-based reflection component of her work. The process allowed her to better understand at what points her own heart was open and closed. Her artistic process's facilitation of self-reflection and meaning making was

confirmation of its ability to provide felt meaning. She notes that her creations allowed her to gain insights that she is convinced would be not accessible otherwise.



Figure 5. Drawing 1 (Rappaport, 2013).

Figure 5 was a vehicle for Rappaport to come face to face with a manifestation of a form of personal suffering that embodied a closing of the heart. She discovered how necessary it was that she bear witness to such pain:

> Through the reflection, I came to know that as I engaged in the creation of the drawing, it was as if I was throwing a life preserver to a part of myself that had been buried and not fully known. As I got to know this little boy through the art-making, I experienced in the present moment my own heart opening. I felt the waves of compassion move through me. Nothing could have taught me about this level of opening the heart except by reflecting on the art itself and the unfolding moment-to-moment direct experience of the process (Rappaport, 2013, p. 100).

Similarly, Jordan S. Potash (2013) advocates for the potential that arts-based research holds in finding its way into academia. He dedicates his article towards *A more complete knowing: The subjective objective partnership.* On the one hand, society has celebrated the role that emotions play in igniting meaningful acts of chance. But, there also appears to be a consensus that emotions are fleeting and weak in comparison to the more advanced force of reason. Potash recounts a research study he helped design that utilized art making and art viewing in the hope of raising awareness, reducing marginalization and combating stigma surrounding mental illness in Hong Kong. The tedious and time-consuming tasks that defined his various roles as coordinator and co-investigator forced him to become disconnected from the project as it progressed. He admits that participants were reduced to anonymous forms of identification and their art had become nothing more than digital files. What began as an act of genuine passion had become a nuisance. The guilt that followed prompted Potash to immerse himself in a critical reflective artistic process. He returned to the exhibit with color pencils and paper where he created artwork in response to the voices that were communicating to him through the various products of mental illness. Below, figure 7 displays his response to the participant's art-work shown in Figure 6. Potash describes the doubt that he was met with when initially attempting to tap into his empathetic capacity in response to the piece. Figure 7 depicts the experience of a chronically ill patient whose illness vanished after miraculously being cured by doctors in a dream. Potash admits to being initially struck with feelings of wonder and disbelief, and fascination and cynicism, that inhibited his ability to transfer such strong feelings into art. It was only through embracing the subjectivity of imagining being the figure within the painting that Potash was able to spontaneously engage in the art-making process. The vantage point of the subject shifted to where remnants of a Tibetan mandala would inspire Potash to tap

into ancient ideas of healing that went beyond mere acceptance or disbelief of the story, towards a full immersion of empathizing with the experience of the patient.



Figure 6. Miraculous Incident (Potash, 2013).



Figure 7. Response to Miraculous Incident (Potash, 2013).

The original spark that drew Potash to pursue a career in social change through the arts was reignited through this art-based research. His place within a research-centred institution had grilled the routine of conducting randomized control trials, evidence-based research, generalizable results, and transparent coding strategies. While guiding frameworks are important, the meticulously obsessed attention to procedure tends to tune individuals into small details where they miss the bigger picture. Furthermore, researchers fall into the trap of pursuing a singular truth, some attempt at a degree of the truth, or some facet of the truth. It is very rare for the researcher's stance to be questioned. As Potash became disconnected from the project's participants, he also lost sight of his calling towards this work. He attributes this detachment from his emotions and from his subjectivity to succumbing to the researcher's strict adherence to pursuing one singular truth. But, Potash declared, "In this case, I could not remain empty waiting to be filled by data, as I needed my knowledge and experience to make sense of the art" (2013, p. 51).

The creative dialogue that ensued can be understood as a merger between the exhibit artist and Potash. This empathetic connection flooded beyond the exhibit into the wider-reaching social issues and philosophies informing the project. Interestingly, Potash's (2013) final remarks are in direct conversation and serve to support the notion of a balanced play drive that allows one to freely choose amongst the sense and form drives:

> Perhaps surprisingly, the acceptance of emotions did not make me more sentimental or forgetful of my commitments to research integrity. Instead of swinging me to the extreme of irrationality, the art-making process brought me to what felt like the centre. Where I was always inclined to value the objective, art making allowed me to simultaneously feel and observe my emotions, ideas, expectations and findings. There was no need to choose between extremes. As a matter of fact, it was the urgency I felt to select one instead of the other that led me to the more dispassionate position (p. 55).

This chapter's shift towards surveying arts-based research has revealed strong ties to not only the influence of creative art practices, but also the philosophies that were outlined in Schillers' *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*. The underlying current of moving towards a more multi-sensorial synthesis of academic work suggests that there is a building demand for the unique benefits of more creative, multi-modal forms to be acknowledged and respected as worthy pursuits of knowledge making and sharing endeavors.

This thesis highlights how art is a process of research that offers more than just a final product; that art materials are a medium for creators to transfer meaning into external forms that can be analyzed and reflected upon to gain greater connections; and that art fosters a unique and sensually-heightened experience to be shared amongst the artist and audience. We saw each of these features embodied through the work of Leavy, Rappaport, and Potash. But, I now present my own work as demonstrations that expressive arts is a multi-sensorial medium for visceral and rational forms to harmonize and defy the deep-rooted science-art divide.

Reflections on My Expressive Arts Movements

Personally, the act of *poiesis* is a way of being in the world that no other form of human experience has been able compare. This thesis is a creation that both reflects on my college career and allows me to leave a mark that supports a prosperous future for the field that I have dedicated my life towards. If there is anything I have learnt, it is that we are only capable of genuinely understanding our own experience. I cannot speak for the experience of others. Only their voice can give life to truth. Thus, I have dedicated this section of my creation towards sharing my own truth, my own path towards embracing *poiesis* my way. This process was an act of re-searching and re-discovering as I was pleasantly reassured that my path was always leading to this very moment. Somewhere along the way of getting through deadlines and breakdowns, I had forgotten to stop and reflect on my experience. What follows is a series of artistic projects and reflections that I use to demonstrate how the arts have allowed me to understand not only myself, but the changing world around me.

Catching Feelings

Complete, Debate, Create was a dance freshman seminar that I stumbled upon when frantically attempting to find a course to complete a college requirement. I did not anticipate that this course would set the foundation for me to confirm my creative spirit's longing for a career that allowed the arts to flourish in my life. The images that you see featured are snapshots of a video attached afterwards, which display a moving sculpture accompanied by a spoken word piece that played from a speaker placed at its center. 'Catching Feelings' is a popular Trinidadian phrase that I manipulated to symbolize our society's fear of feeling. Looking back now, it strikes me how much this experience echoes the thoughts shared in this thesis. The reflection that follows was written as a final paper that would live on as a letter to our senior selves.



A collection of personas.

A battle of identity. A struggle of the self.

Who are you really?

Do you even know who your best friend is?

Or have they been hiding behind the comfort of a smile all this time?



Figures 8. Still Images: Catching Feelings (De Silva, 2014).

I see you looking at me with that puzzled face. You don't understand me but I intrigue you because you see something more than what you see. What you don't see is that I am you. I am you and every other person in this room. I am many and I am one. We are a generation of masks, concealing our deepest truths during this epidemic where we run the risk of CATCHING FEELINGS. Don't you damn lie to me and tell me you are an exception.



I sense your hesitation so I ask you this- can you afford to be wrong? I was wrong once and I paid the price at my best friend's funeral. No mask could ever conceal THAT pain. No comfort could ever heal that wound. So, I urge you to put down the masks- genuinely commit to relationships and embrace the vulnerability of exposing your innermost being. Touch the core of those who matter to you and in turn feel yourself begin to matter. FEEL your feelings. Don't conceal. Just feel. I truly believe it holds the power to heal.

Figure 9. Interactive Video: Catching Feelings (De Silva, 2014).

"Beauty is a universal language spoken by the masses to communicate truth. Digging into greater depths of subject matter which we feel a great connection to is the foundation of beauty. Truly committing to this concept and carrying it out with bravery to break the boundaries of "accepted" ideals is what preserves the innocence of beauty.

In today's context, where advancements in technology and thinking have strangled the strides of creativity, beauty has become contaminated. Kim Kardashian's nude pictures which "broke the internet" can attest to this phenomenon. Our society has formed a false, fabricated form of what we believe beauty to be and what we will inevitably pass on to future generations.

I would argue that the current generation's confusion with their sense of self spilling over to disrupt the formation and commitment to their own truths can attest to the deterioration of beauty outlets. There is a lack of appreciation for those who really do take that leap to break

through the boundaries of beauty that society has constructed. As a result, the number of artistic minds who speak their mind is slowly decreasing and their lights are diminishing.

Beauty is more than what meets the eye—there is a force generated from within which shines through to compel us towards it. When we execute a project driven by passion we automatically insert this light for others to notice. We always seem to know beauty when we see it but can never quite pinpoint what it is. Beauty touches our souls in unexplainable ways and is meant to be felt not analyzed.

When individuals build walls to protect against anything really touching them, they miss out on the opportunity to embrace beauty. I walk around and I see beauty in everyday simplicities because I am so in touch with my truth that even the slightest bit of connection can trigger a response in me. Beauty is all around us unintentionally by both human nature and nature itself.

Everything has the potential to be beautiful. How far we take ourselves to connect is what seals the deal. Many times, we see what we want to see which is why we often stick to the same artistic platforms, failing to branch out and embrace the beauty beyond our comfort zone's constraints. Often we assume that our limitations to beauty are fixed and we approach situations with a closed mind, eliminating any opportunity to shed new insights.

Fear is a key player in this game. If one hasn't been exposed to or encouraged to explore outlets of beauty, they run the risk of building walls so high that no amount of beauty could ever shine through. I believe everyone has the ability to appreciate beauty and think both critically and creatively. It's not about having a set formula; it's about being human and feeling.

Human beings all have some level of insanity and in many ways art forms and beauty are what allow us to maintain even a slight degree of sanity. It's a proven fact that immersing ourselves in our passions help us to reach a state of flow which promotes happiness towards a more meaningful and peaceful life.

This being said, it always disappoints me to see our education system neglect outlets of expression. I was pleasantly surprised by both this class and my Acting Fundamentals course. Suddenly, it wasn't about being a number to add to my GPA, I got back my name and was able to let my thoughts be heard, my actions be felt and my truth be understood.

Something as simple as writing an essay with no set format but rather allowing my own personal expression take flight was enough to completely alter my perspective. I had forgotten how much I loved to be different and how to allow my ideas to flow without any constraints of a structure. We are constantly being told that we need to stand out yet our education system continues to confine us in a box with no escape.

Taking on both sculpture and spoken word for my final project was the perfect opportunity for me to really step out of my comfort zone. Things have always touched me and I find inspiration all around me, however, I never had the chance to really execute anything in this way. The positive feedback that I got from my piece was really humbling and it has given me the confidence to continue on in pursuit of artistic outlets outside of my comfort zone.

Art really allows me to see myself. It is so easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday life and lose focus on what really matters. These past few days I was surrounded by

gloomy faces all stressing about finals as I was in a state of pure flow executing my project—not letting a worry in the world affect me. Art gives perspective.

When I went through the hardest struggle of my life, I never thought that theater would be my therapy. In my head, I was simply immersing myself in something I loved but what I was really undertaking was an escape from reality where my connection to my character allowed me to help myself. It was an out of body experience that allowed me to take control of my body in the process. It was both terrifying and enlightening. It was life-changing and it will forever hold a place in my heart.

We can often times find ourselves feeling alone. We may not even realize it but we all see the world differently than how we view ourselves; in our minds, no-one else understands our story. This may hold some truth but what art has taught me is that there are universal truths which we all share and discovering this through art is one of the most comforting and beautiful feelings in this life. Knowing that you aren't alone, that someone else feels what you feel. That is beauty.

More than anything, human beings are beautiful to me. We devote our lives to trying to understand all that goes on around us but we rarely stop to assess what's taking place internally. We look around a room of characters and personas taken from a scene of their stories intertwined but all we can think about is our own pre-occupations. We walk around campus and all we can manage is to look straight ahead and forget that there are other living beings waiting to be embraced all around us. We have lost our human nature. Art and beauty give me hope that it's still possible to re-discover this, however. That maybe our generation isn't doomed to raise a walking mob of robots who are incapable of embracing beauty.

I can't think of anything that would bring me more satisfaction and accomplishment than healing through art, protecting beauty from its near extinction, and preserving beauty for future generations to come. In a world of so much unknown, art provides the opportunity for us to discover truth and to connect with others as its energy is contagious and inspiring. This may not allow us to find any answers but it will ease the worry of uncertainty as we begin to understand that not everything is meant to be analyzed but sometimes just felt and embraced.

Of course, it is our human nature to form our interpretations and truth to everything presented before us which is why beauty is such a subjective and controversial topic. I have a clear target audience of youths in my mind with a mission to reach them with expressive arts therapies before society has the chance to dim their lights. I want these children to know that it is possible to connect, to commit, and to feel.

Many people may doubt my abilities when moving forward with an arts-based career path but I am one of the lucky ones whose light was preserved and I know this light will propel me forward to overcome any obstacle in my way and to ignite the spark of others. I vow to never lose sight of the beauty around me, to commit to every passion that has captured me and that may find me in the future.

Up until now I always knew that I was different. My brain just never quite worked like everyone else. I saw things differently. I did things differently. I listened instead of speaking because I know that there is so much more to gain from voices that aren't only mine. I thought I was missing something but through this class I began to embrace this artsy side of myself and I'm starting to think it is society who is really missing out on what I have to offer."

The arts installation was born out of a need to embody a form that encapsulated the complex experience of balancing the battling roles that live within us. At the time, I was in an Introduction to Psychology course where we were exploring the id, ego, and superego. I was intrigued by the dichotomy that exists within our psyche, and the scope of my inquiry needed a more multi-layered form that could tap into the depth of my inquiry. I began by venturing into the art-making practice of sculpture. But, even this form proved limited. I needed to embody a form that could move and speak within a multi-sensorial integration that could confront onlookers in a more all-encompassing manner.

I turn my focus over to poetry given the emphasis on the spoken word component of this installation. The words were projected from the center of the moving sculpture, as the stimuli that was generated from other activities in the performance space required onlookers to intimately gather and be present to the audio recording. Leavy (2014) argues that "poetry can interrupt traditional ways of knowing and help us see differently and thus may be particularly appealing to those conducting identity research or seeking to express alternative or nondominant viewpoints" (p. 299). I created a moving entity that held the power to confront onlookers from a multi-sensorial tactic of moving to the tune of a spoken word embedded with meaning and weight as visual stimuli of thought-provoking imagery moved away from the vantage point of the spectator's point in space. It was a product of multiple sensory choices that were all necessary to build the final form; a form that inevitably would take on a different meaning for each individual that brought their respective lived experience and projections towards their response. I invite you, the reader, to compare your experience of viewing the static words and images on page 52 to the interactive video clip that is attached on the following page. How does the simultaneous confrontation of audio and visual cues enhance your experience? The ability to

witness the movement and sound that give life to this piece is a testament of the embodied presence and immediacy that more artistic forms hold the capacity to generate. The product exhibits an embodiment of theory through my analysis of Freud's conception of the human psyche. The self is not one-dimensional; layers extend from the conscious to the preconscious to the unconscious. Presenting three mannequin heads that further concealed their identity through masks with symbolic details invited onlookers to contemplate how their own understandings of their identity related to the moving embodiment before them. It is critical that I highlight the role that my own subjective, experience played in forming this product. Working through the loss of a friend who struggled with his own dissonance of dueling identities gave me a deeper understanding of the complexity and heaviness of this subject. It was only through the coupling of more rigid forms of theory through psychology and my more subjective emotional response that this piece could build to its final form.

Pierrot Femme

This piece was born out of a Visual Culture course grounded in feminist theory. This was very much a political piece that took my art-making to a level that situated my voice within a larger calling to speak from a place that extended beyond the personal. Or, perhaps it was a testament to the personal-is-political movement. Everything about this project fell into place. I was inspired by events taking place back home and it was very much a creative dialogue between my country and myself where I could feel more connected to the struggle that previously felt so fragmented from my own world at the time. The snapshots and video footage are taken from a performance piece where I created costuming and choreographed improvisational movement to the tune of our national instrument – the steel pan.



Figure 10. Still Images: Pierrot Femme Video (De Silva, 2016).



Figure 11. Interactive Video: Pierrot Femme (De Silva, 2016).

"My piece, titled *Pierrot Femme*, is inspired by recent events of heartache and disillusionment. Following the much-anticipated celebrations of Carnival, considered the "greatest show on earth" back home in Trinidad, a homeless man found the remains of a female masquerader disposed of in one of our nation's most famous landmarks. Already enraged, citizens were further shaken to hear the response of our city's mayor. According to Emma Wilson, Raymond Tim Kee stated that "woman has the responsibility to ensure that they are not abused. It's a matter of if she was still in her costume – I think that's what I heard – let your imagination roll" (2016).

I am frustrated with the ignorance displayed by one of my country's leading figures. Struggling to find the words to express my disgust, I am inspired to create a piece of art that both

illuminates the faults holding back the progression of my country, while also honoring the life of the deceased, Asami Nagakiya; I hope to give a voice of strength and hope for the voiceless through this piece. Asami was a Japanese woman who fell in love with the beauty of my country and devoted her life to playing our national instrument, the pan. Holding on to the classic elements of our Carnival characters, I will break away from the traditional Pierrot Grenade, illuminating the beauty and strength of the modern bikini costume.

Pierrot was a popular pantomime character in French theater from the 16th century onward. He was later introduced to Trinidad by upperclassmen who held Carnival balls towards the end of the 18th century. His elaborate costume of satin, with hanging sequins and mirrors, was complemented by his boastful speeches that display his superior intelligence: all qualities that stereotypically signify a male character. The "mock" pierrot, or pierrot grenade, became the freed slaves of Grenada's caricature of their former master's elaborate masquerade. Lower class individuals did not have the resources to compete with the extravagance of their masters' costumes, thus they resorted to burlap bags and scraps of cloth. Despite the shortcomings of the pierrot grenade, he performed in order to prove the point that he was just as capable as his former master. (Henry 2008). Much like the freed slaves wishing to demonstrate their identity through the mockery performance of their superior, I wish to display the power of female performance. The activities that gave rise to Carnival were each born out of strong acts of resistance to foreign doctrines. The masses were able to find outlets that allowed them to build something of their own since everything else was taken from them. The core of these practices was aimed at giving a voice to the people, yet women's contributions were largely dismissed. "Throughout the decades, what story tellers were expressing was a desire to create their own paths in order to move away from the thoughts and expressions of the dominant power groups. Through trial and

error they wanted to find some direction rather that what had been dictated" (Henry 2008). Storytelling has been limited to the male voice throughout history, but it is time that women's voices are heard because our stories are worth listening to.

bell hooks draws on similarly oppressed personal and historical accounts of the origins of the black female spectator in "The Oppositional Gaze." hooks recalls being punished for staring as a child because certain looks were deemed confrontational from authority figures. hooks goes further back in history to recall the role of the gaze in the context of slaves being severely punished for looking at their white slave owners. In response to all of these attempts to prevent black individuals from gazing, a longing to look was developed (hooks 2010). For the purpose of my exploration into the female masquerader, I would argue that our history of oppression has prompted us to take stage in an effort to be seen. Witnessing a woman take full ownership of her body as she parades through the streets, side by side with men, is one of the most satisfying things that I have had the pleasure of witnessing. Much like Bracha Ettinger's aim to reconfigure the formation of feminine subjectivity, I hope to present a new way of thinking about woman's performance in her Carnival costume as one of liberating satisfaction and self-expression. Ettinger's non-phallic perspective on subjectivity allows the focus to shift away from the masculine. Thus, the feminine is no longer seen as a lack and now has the potential to develop its importance independent from the masculine (Ettinger 2006). In the context of my project, it is time for women to develop their performative identity separate from the pre-existing male-dominated masquerade.

Belinda Edmonson explores the various meanings that we have come to attribute to different forms of female public "performances." He defines performance as a cultural ritual and

behavior that can be found in the public sphere. To further break down the concept, a performance must include a physical body, a gesture of agency, and a passive viewing audience. He focuses on the performance of Caribbean masqueraders who have been impacted by a past of slavery and indentureship where nonwhite women were no longer seen as subjects. Edmonson argues that the black, brown, and Asian desire for a publicly respectable femininity is interwoven with their desire for social mobility and economic advancement. The Western world has always framed the viewing of women's bodies in public as political. As feminist theory would support, the public space is equated to the masculine, whereas the domestic space is associated with femininity. Therefore, any crossing over from private to public space must be driven by a process that allows the woman to preserve her femininity or a social violation that masculinizes her (Edmonson 2003). Placing the female body in a traditional pierrot grenade costume displays this social violation, but the performers immediate transition to exposing her body allows for this femininity to be preserved so that the two forces can coexist.

Jennifer Thorington Springer examines how Alison Hinds, the "Queen of Soca," has shaped the art of calypso and dance to empower women cross-culturally. Calypso is a type of music originated in Trinidad that gives the artist an outlet to resist local politics and scandal. Thus, the calypsonian holds great power in contributing to the formation of a national identity. Traditionally, the Calypso scene was male-dominated, which had clear implications for the lyrics created and messages received. Springer tracks the strong impact that Hinds had on the empowerment of women. Drawing off of bell hook's "oppositional gaze," Springer argues that Hinds resists the oppressed female voice by shifting the gaze to allow women to take on the role of subject. This is evident through her liberating lyrics and performative presence that invites women to be comfortable with their bodies and ways of expressing it. She specifically chose to

explore Hinds' contributions to calypso because no other scholarly work had addressed this artist. Much like the role of costume and masquerade that I am exploring in my project, calypso was a space where women's contributions were dismissed yet the core of the practice was to give a voice to the people (Thorington 2010). I would argue that the female Carnival masquerader has developed alongside Calypsionians, where women are empowered enough to take control of their bodies, mirroring the reversal of the gaze that Hinds' arguably accomplishes. The disconnect exists within the male gaze which fails to relate to the performance of women, which is why I specifically chose to begin my performance within the mask of a pierrot grenade. Once onlookers connect with this traditional costume, their comfort is able to be provoked as the costume is shed to display the modern bikini costume.

Pamela Rosemarie Franco explores how nineteenth-century Afro-creole women's performance has evolved through history. Having just come out of slavery, yet still having to endure the indignities of plantation culture, nineteenth-century Afro-creole women were able to utilize Carnival as a political platform of their own making. They undermined stereotypes implanted by Euro-creoles by taking on the overall fancy dress aesthetic of the upper classes and used this as a mask to re-invent themselves. The women joined forces and used the festival to demonstrate their support for freedom and equality, to embarrass the state, and to re-create the image of the Afro-creole woman as powerful, authoritative, and equal to men. The female performer who once devoted her life to dressing up, a tool used for enhancing her visibility in the public's eye, gradually led to the art of undressing, which allowed her to express herself and became her mode of articulation. Contemporary female maskers now explain their choice of dress as a strategy for, or a mode of, 'freeing up.' In other words, wearing 'skimpy clothes' that put their bodies on display, is a way of extricating themselves from the restrictions and

limitations that society places on women throughout the rest of the year. Franco argues that, "symbolically, [the women performers] are negating a patriarchal system that historically has oppressed them. In their performance, the women transform themselves into the architects of a new world order in which they are at the center, empowered to chart their destiny. If clothes signify the extant social order, lack of clothes represent a new and different, order, a tabula rasa on which women can inscribe their world view" (Franco 2001). It is time that we rid ourselves of the excessively heavy burden that society has placed on us, it is time that we see the power we hold in our bare bodies."

This performative piece, which allowed me to step into the role of mask-bearer, covers arts-based modalities of music and movement. Firstly, as Leavy eloquently states,

> Music is a penetrating and integral force in social life , able to enter a person's body in a profound and immediate way . It has unique capabilities for healing , empowerment , promoting psychological and social well - being , and evoking emotion . Music also has the capability to cross language , cultural , and other barriers and thus can make bridges across differences (2014, p. 299).

Having the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago be the inspiration of sound for this improvisational movement piece gives a sense of ownership where its embodiment is clearly situated within a conversation taking black nationally back home. Furthermore, having a foreigner be the pianist who creates and performs the arrangement illuminates music's capability to cross cultural, language, and racial barriers to foster greater connection between individuals. Major advancements in embodiment research, efforts to dismantle the mind-body dichotomy and a greater initiative of performance studies have all allowed music informed research initiatives to take flight (Leavy, 2014). Thus, the musical form represents a departure from word heavy forms to more embodied approaches rooted in performance. Pierrot Femme lives within such initiatives as it elevates the audio of Asami's *Dreaming Girl* to inspire movement that is a direct product of

the emotional response that my body generated. Leavy confirms that "the performance of music, as well as the experience of listening to it, merges the mind and body; making music and listening to it necessarily embodied experiences" (2014, p. 299).

Dance as a method of inquiry within arts-based research developed in response to dance studies in anthropology, advancements in embodiment research, phenomenology that places value on bodily knowledge, feminism, and the increased use of dance as a therapeutic tool. Qualitative researchers have devoted time towards demonstrating the similarities shared between the choreographic process and the research process. Leavy suggests that dance combines all other art forms, but she dismisses any claims that is can be reduced to any one art form or be regarded as the sum total of all. Dance is a process that extends from the body and exists only in the present moment. Leavy (2014) breaks down dance's potential purpose for research as follows (p. 300):

- Celebrating different and/or transcending social, cultural, and economic barriers
- Raising awareness
- Propel self-and social reflection
- Access bodily, embodied, experiential, sensory knowledge
- Challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and jar us into feeling or seeing different
- Creating empathetic connection

My creation and performance of the Pierrot Femme piece allowed me to touch on each of these points. Firstly, my overarching objective was to highlight the power of the female body. This feminist pursuit was rooted in a personal need to defy cultural norms that allow men to view the display of women in their Carnival costumes as an invitation to degrade and objectify. This choice naturally raises awareness about the experience of the female body within Trinidad and Tobago. As a response to the specific event of finding Asami's dead body still wearing her costume in the heart of the Carnival celebration, this piece holds a place in history that directly

reflects political agendas of the day. Creating a costume that was inspired from traditional mas characters that could conceal my body and face allowed me to embody the revelation of reflecting on my self and the social implications of my performance choices. Trinidadians are expressive creatures that use the Carnival arena as a platform to move and dance in a manner that expresses their freedom. It only felt natural to utilize a form that stayed true to our cultural practices of movement and dance. To have limited my project to a static written form would have been to neglect the expressive form that my people embody. Embracing such a multi-sensorial and multi-modal method of inquiry allowed me to access all the forms of knowledge that Leavy lists: bodily, embodied, experiential, and sensory. Stepping into the embodiment of my analysis allowed me to shatter any shields of objectivity that protected me from the harsh reality of the subject matter that has directly affected my life. I entered into an out of body experience where my body led me down a journey of discovering what power could be gained from shattering the fabrications of power and dominance that men have casted over the female body throughout time. It was both heartbreaking and empowering all at once. I cannot speak for the experience beyond the performer, but I can confirm that the performance jarred me into feeling and seeing my place within the larger social conflict more clearly. My hope is that the authenticity of my performance carries through to establish an empathetic connection to onlookers, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I focus my argument on expressive art's capacity to introduce social history, embodied sympathies, and shared experience between artist and audience.



Figure 12. Still Images: Unmasking Maskulinity (De Silva, 2016).



Figure 13. Interactive Video Clip: Unmasking Maskulinity (De Silva, 2016).

Unmasking Maskulinity

While studying abroad in Sydney, I was exposed to a course titled Arts, Activism, Publics. Students were not only taught about arts as tools for social change, we were also expected to carry out initiatives that brought theory into practice. Being very aware that our entire class was filled with women, my group felt the urge to explore masculinity through the experience of men that we knew. Growing up in a hyper-masculinized society, I was very aware of the wall of strength that the men in my life seemed to put up. Feelings were associated with vulnerability and vulnerability was seen as weakness. I wanted to give a platform for men to open up about their experiences and a space where their vulnerability was welcomed. This artistic project marks an endeavor that shifted my approach from embodying to being a vehicle of the embodiment of others; I see this as coming full circle, where my own *poiesis* was able to inspire others to experience art's wander:

"Don't be afraid to draw on your personal experience and knowledge. This is your strength and your power and your heart." This message from Rajni Shah resonated with me and inspired me to incorporate my love for expressive arts therapy with reaching our population of men. Having taken a course this summer, I felt confident that I could facilitate a session with a small and intimate group of boys from the college that I live in. Connie and I reached out to the boys, simply asking that they help us with a group project to avoid any over thinking or anxiety surrounding the process. After gathering all of the crafty material we could find, we placed it in the centre of the room and asked everyone to sit surrounding it. The mood was very light as we worked in forming a safe space and calming their nerves. An audio of meditative music also helped to set the tone of the space. I then took the floor explaining my career interest in Expressive Arts Therapy and asking them to help me complete a task for a project. I emphasized that this was meant to be a fun and relaxing experience, unlike the fear inducing art classes of our primary school days. Connie and I joined in the process to eliminate any potential in establishing superiority and also as a sign of respect for later steps when personal details were to be shared. My initial prompt was to create a representation of who you are using absolutely anything in the room in absolutely any way that you please. The boys were initially overwhelmed but the mood quickly shifted as we entered a meditative like state. After some time, I added another layer to the task and asked everyone to now incorporate how other people see you. Once we were done I had a debriefing stage where everyone shared how this felt within their bodies. The boys were surprisingly open about how much they enjoyed the task despite their initial hesitation. Now it was time for everyone to share their creations with the room. Before we began, I explained what our true purpose there was and why we wished to provide platforms for the male voice to be heard. This opened up discussion as the boys agreed that they

often feel that their struggles as men are not addressed or encouraged to be open for discussion. I began the presentations to establish the vulnerability and commitment to connecting to the pieces that we hoped for.

Next was Connie and then our first participant who identifies as homosexual. His initial comment was confessing his surprise at feeling the need to conform to a color scheme of black and blues while also maintaining an organized and rigid design. His exact words were "I don't know that says about me," followed by his usual heartfelt laugh. The beauty of that statement is that he acknowledged a confrontation with some form of confusion, which formed the initial building blocks for him to further work through this on his own. Despite the "boring" color scheme and layout, he incorporated textures such as feathers and flowers which he attributed to his personality. Unable to find the words, he embodied what this meant by shaking his entire body up and down while he wiggled his spirit fingers. Anyone who knows him would agree that this is an accurate portrayal, and it was accomplished using absolutely no words. When moving on to the aspect of his piece that depicted how others see him, he pointed towards the large gate protruding out of his paper and connected this detail to his openness with all of those around him.

Up next was the closest stereotype to the 'macho man' that Connie and I could agree on, and his artwork proved insightful. He was clearly the most uncomfortable with the process and often attempted to make jokes or brush off the more serious components of the task. Once it was his turn to speak, however, surprising revelations found their way through his walls. He confessed that he is never as good at things on his first try, so he must put in extra work as he hopes to be the best in everything put before him. He then pointed towards a crown in the centre

of his piece, which works as a symbol for the power that he constantly seeks. However, when moving on to how other people see him, there was a big ball of texture within a barrier that he attributed to his playful and approachable side that comes with getting to know him better.

Our final participant, a psychology student, impressed both Connie and I with his ability to communicate and connect with his feelings. He portrayed all of the "selves" that he embodies, acknowledging that certain people see different sides of him. This network of possible selves connected to an inner nest where his true self lives. It is encapsulated by layers of barriers and he admits that there is no possible way of articulating what this part of himself is. This analysis clearly had an impact on him as he worked to keep his composure and as he shared his approval and interest in the process of expressive arts therapy in the debriefing stage.

This intervention proved to be successful in creating a safe space where we invited the voices of our participants to be heard and appreciated. Each of our artists had positive feedback and encouraged us to continue this approach with others. The process impacted us just as much as them as both Connie and I were inspired to see that they were open to our ideas. They proved us wrong as we initially questioned whether they would take the process seriously and we were pleasantly surprised to find that they genuinely enjoyed participating."

This initiative was the most directly linked to the expressive arts structure. It provided an opportunity for me to put what I had learned from my first expressive arts course into practice. I had spent so much of my academic career focusing on feminist teachings, I wanted to provide a platform for male voices to express their own vulnerabilities. The expressive arts form provided a fruitful structure to follow as establishing a safe space where both facilitators and participants

could feel equal fostered a sense of connection that allowed the following process to unfold naturally.

> Visual images are a powerful communicative tool with the potential to help us see things in new ways. Visual art challenges viewers in an immediate and visceral way while remaining open to a multiplicity of meanings. Images also make lasting impressions in memory and can jar us into seeing differently . Visual art may serve as a vehicle for transmitting ideology while it can also effectively be used to challenge , dislodge , and transform outdated beliefs and stereotypes (Leavy, 2015, p. 302)

Having witnessed such potential in my own expressive art interactions, I opted to facilitate a visual art activity that sought to tap into men's reflections on their identity. I specifically did not reveal that I was most interested in understanding how their relationship to masculinity informed their identity. As I anticipated, each of their art-works contained embedded symbols that were directly tied to their experience of being men. Now, it is important for me to clarify that I did not come to this conclusion on my own—it was through each individual's reflection of their respective creations that I was able to understand how they understood the influence of perceptions of masculinity.

I provided a wide array of art materials that could offer every participant the opportunity to choose what resonated most with their personal preference. It is natural that individuals follow their first impulse to choose materials that aesthetically please their senses. I point this out to highlight a common misconception that art is solely about the fragmented steps of either creation or contemplation. Instead, the expressive arts is grounded in the synthesis of creating and reflecting on the choices that were made to give life to one's art. The boys were each working through their own modes of meaning that they had transferred from somewhere deep within themselves to an external form that directly confronted them once their creations were complete.

As I laid out earlier: art is a process of research that offers more than just a final product; art materials are a medium for creators to transfer meaning into external forms that can be analyzed and reflected upon to gain greater connections; and art fosters a unique and sensually-heightened experience to be shared amongst the artist and audience. This particular initiative provides a clear demonstration of each of these ideals. I set out to investigate the role that masculinity plays in men's lives. The process of creating the art, coupled with the key insights that were shared during debriefing steps of reflection allowed each participant to find their voice and articulate how their creation embodied what identity meant for them. In each case, the participants experienced a moment of revelation as they became aware of the motivations behind their choices. Whether it was color, texture, or placement, for example, we were all engaging in sensorial forms of meaning making. Sharing moments that tapped into deeper layers of our understanding allowed all members of the intervention to gain a sense of empathetic connection that allowed us to better understand ourselves, each other, and larger frameworks that influenced our place in the world.

Conclusion: Re-Imagining the Human Race in Academia

> LIZ-BETTE: Liliane Ginsberg was the prettiest girl in my class. I thought maybe she was safe, because she had long blonde hair and blue eyes. She was so pretty. But the police came right into our class at school, and they took her away in a big bus, and now we're never going to see her again (LIZ-BETTE calmly turns the radio on. We hear a poignant Edith Piaf ballad. She mimes that an invisible boyfriend is asking her to dance, point to herself, as if to say "me?", thinks about it, nods yes. Then she puts her hands up to her invisible partner, and slowly dances in his arms as the lights fade to black, and the music crackles and becomes a BBC broadcast) (Bennet and Gottesfel, 2002).

This excerpt monologue from Cherie Bennet and Jeff Gottesfel's award winning play, *Anne Frank and Me*, was the piece of text that awakened my embrace of the expressive arts as a powerful vehicle for creative transformation. I was lucky to have a mother who embraced the developmental benefits of the arts. I have fond memories of my childhood where I owned the stage alongside my brother and close friends with a theater and dance youth group by the name of Lilliput. Somewhere along the winding road of growing up, I decided to give up the stage for the tennis court as I showed promise as a national player for Trinidad and Tobago. It was not until I was required to take a theater course towards the end of my high school career that I re-discovered the exhilaration that performance brought into my life. I had grown exhausted from the competitive nature of the sporting world and my body craved a deep form of connection to something more meaningful. I was in awe of my theater professor's ability to shut down misconceptions about acting and to invite her students to bridge the gaps between art and real-life. Thus, Miss Tucker and I developed a strong bond that heavily shaped my journey. After my lackluster audition for the fun little sister character in *Anne Frank and Me*, Miss Tucker pulled me to the side and expressed her disappointment, but also her faith in my ability to truly give life to the character. I admitted that I struggled to come to terms with the stage direction that prompted me to transition from such dark words to carefree dancing. Miss Tucker explained that this was an attempt for the young character to hold on to her innocence despite the harsh reality

that she was now facing. I left that space with a new-found appreciation for the scene, with a fueled sense of urgency to delve more in-depth into the scene's meaning. The next time I stepped into the role, I connected to the character in an indescribable out of body experience that resulted in a complete breakdown of my senses. In that moment, I discovered that I was weeping for not only LIZ-BETTE, but also for myself. My childhood best friend, whom I shared the stage with, had recently taken his life. It was the first time I was faced with such great loss and I went through the mechanical motions of life in an attempt to convince myself that I was coping. Stepping into the role of this character provided a pause, a step back, where I had no choice but to confront my hurt. How could someone so beautiful be taken away from this Earth? Is there any hope for us if such beauty could be met with such unexplainable destruction? These were some of the questions that a 15-year old girl from the small Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago was being met with due to a young Jewish character coming to terms with the Holocaust. That to me was magical. A fictional character was giving me the strength to overcome a hurt that I was unaware I even held within my body. Each time I transitioned into turning on the radio, a soft smile of hope settled onto my face as my body would begin to sway to the motions of a soothing lullaby. To have both my loved ones and complete strangers witness this, and share their connection to the life I gave to this character was a further enhancement of the encounter. I was revived by a newfound sense of connection that was only made possible by my recognition that I was disconnected from my body, from my emotions, and from my world. Adopting the terms from co-counselling, we all enter this world and inevitably face great hurts. These hurts are transformed into 'distress recordings' that find their way deeper and deeper into our body. Our bodies hold the pain, but our eyes rarely look inward. The arts provide a window into our inner worlds, where we cannot escape the true sensations of our experience.

Daria Halprin (2014) devotes a chapter of her book, *The Expressive Body in Life, Art, and Therapy*, towards detailing "How [she] got here". Halprin addresses the risk that most therapists and teachers associate with revealing their own story. But, as Halprin and many other expressive arts practitioners have recognized, our work is a direct result of our personal stories. Thus, to leave our experience out of the equation would be to dismiss a core feature of what propels us forward. Following their example, I have devoted multiple pages towards narrating key moments of my history that have led me to this thesis. It became necessary for me to conclude by detailing the moment that I discovered the embedded healing powers that the arts possess to transcend other forms of understanding.

Through this thesis, I have demonstrated how influential the prioritization of science has been across the board of academia. One factor that emerged throughout was the overemphasis that this ranking places on objectivity in the pursuit of "truth". This is a direct result of the negative connotations of subjectivity, such as weak attributes associated with expressing emotion. Looking back, I was addressing this fear of sensitivity through my first piece, Catching Feelings. The clear separation between thought and emotion is further established through the divide that is often accepted between science and art. Emory's College of Arts and Science confirms this clear separation within the politics of its naming that blatantly separates the two words. The disconnect felt between the arts and sciences on campus, where art students often feel disregarded is a consequence of this opposition. The split is so embedded in our thinking that most individuals have not stopped to consider an instance where arts and science could flourish together as a unified whole with the shared objective of illuminating aspects of the human condition.

> Art is mysterious . Science is straightforward . Art promotes thought through its reliance on metaphor , symbolism , and imagination . Science offers " facts " and " truth " through its reliance on numbers , words , and objectivity . These kinds of polarizing and one - dimensional views of artistic practice and scientific inquiry have guided the building of paradigmatic borders within which artistic inquiry and social inquiry have been artificially separated (Leavy, 2014, p. 302).

Leavy's defiance in challenging the accepted polarization of science and art is powerful and necessary. Songs concerning the opposing forces of reason and emotion have been sung throughout time as I illuminate through my historical review of key thinkers such as Plato and Schiller. It is critical that we take a step back to assess the validity of this divide and to consider the implications of such claims. I present the expressive arts as a field that directly contradicts notions of a separation between visceral and rational forms of inquiry within academia. As my demonstrations confirm—the expressive arts is a medium for the seemingly opposing forces of the *form drive* and *sense drive* to find harmony and suspend individuals into a state of empowerment where more playful approaches associated with the arts can flourish within the human body. My findings were not there to be discovered, I had to create them through this play.

Expressive arts is not just therapy. It does not fit within existing scholarly forms as it has an embodied presence and immediacy that are encapsulated within its multi-sensorial integration. This intermodal form cannot be replicated in the limited sensory interactions that academia currently practices. In fact, my investigation suggests that the embedded dualism that has worked to legitimize scientific ways of knowing over others establishes and maintains the dominant power relations that have found their way into academia. Expressive arts' ability to simultaneously engage rational and visceral forms holds the power to erode the artificial art-science divide that has prevented exploration into untapped advancements of human understanding that embrace the full spectrum of our senses.

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