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### Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars: Theory to Practice

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Rudolf Steiner  
and Peter Sellars:  
Theory to  
Practice

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Creative Voices in  
Collaboration  
Through Ideas,  
Spirituality and Action

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Louis Balestra Di Nolfi

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Creativity can be found all around us. It can be witnessed, experienced and overlooked every day. Across the globe and cross culturally, evidence of creativity exist since the beginning of documented time, from ancient Greece to the present. At the same time it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what creativity is. Everything in humankind's journey from the invention of the wheel, philosophy, modes of religious expression, the arts, politics and everything in between, stem from expression which is creativity in action. No matter the language or semantics (which are themselves expressions of creativity) all human output derives from creativity.

To tackle the subject of creativity would require a comprehensive investigation into all the threads of human discourse from across documented time including examples of the wisdom and accomplishments humankind has achieved. Anything less would leave out some facet of the all-inclusive, collaborative nature of creativity. Any component of creativity and its expression shares commonalities, and are simply different manifestations from the same original source. Therefore an examination of any one creative individual or product will provide a window into creativity and its importance. This paper will be examining two individuals in two different fields.

Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars are two creative voices who though separated by thousands of miles of cultural origin and a century in time, share a bond grounded in the intelligence, spirituality, and social response inherent in humankind, and within their respective creative missions. At first glance these two individuals may seem unlikely collaborators, speaking different languages and working in different arenas. Though their individual foci and

terminologies may be disparate, closer inspection reveals that both Steiner and Sellars have tapped into the purpose and potential of creativity. Their legacy not only speaks to the importance of the creative voice but reveals in theory and practice how artistic collaboration contributes solutions that address modern concerns of humankind. Beginning with Steiner's philosophical ideas behind Anthroposophy as the foundation, this paper will reveal connections to Sellars' practice in the performing arts. Rudolf Steiner's views regarding the arts and creativity are echoed in Peter Sellars' ideas about theatre and highlighted in his artistic creations.

To assist the reader it is necessary to begin with setting up some parameters for creativity itself before getting into Steiner and Sellars. Then, starting with a brief background of Rudolf Steiner and an introduction to his philosophy, this paper will look at Steiner's spiritual emphasis. From the spiritual, the bridge into specific involvement regarding the arts, creativity and drama will be established with a culmination into civic action. Out of one aspect of Steiner's social engagement the research leads into the development of the head, heart and hand model - elements of which will run through the course of the paper in various configurations and demonstrate the Steiner/Sellars connection. After some of Steiner's foundational elements have been laid out, the reader will be introduced to Peter Sellars. From that point on we will Steiner's ideas will alternate with how they are echoed or realized in Sellars' vision. A section on the theatre of Ancient Greece will magnify the Steiner/Sellars relationship specifically in the areas of civic responsibility and politics. This will be followed up by a fairly recent example of a Sellars' production to demonstrate in a contemporary practice what has been covered in

theory. The collaborative nature of Steiner's and Sellars' work will be next. The paper will conclude with some forecasts of the future made by Steiner, predictions from Sellars and his contemporaries, as well as how some of the principles covered are enlivened in my own theatrical experiences, practice and ideas surrounding creativity.

### **Creativity**

What is creativity? It is difficult to define or limit the term creativity. It is as elusive as the process of creating. There are many roads that branch out from the creative tree. Innovation, invention and advancement in any field bubble up from the well of inspiration which is at the heart of creativity. Much of what is experienced via the physical senses are gifts from creativity, not to mention the dreams, inexplicable knowing, and communications that come to us from our subconscious. Creativity may manifest in something as simple as the personal way an individual expresses him or herself.

The Merriam-Webster Lerner's Dictionary defines creativity as "the ability to make new things or think of new ideas." Though normally associated with the arts, creativity also has to do with behavior and the definition can be expanded to include expression in any and all forms (Dissanayake 33). In his book *Creativity – Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes certain traits shared by creative individuals and the various ways in which the creativity may be used. In addition to expressing original ideas, creative individuals may open up new ways of thinking that lead to discoveries that are initially known only to them but that change their fields and social culture (Csikszentmihalyi 25-26).

These latter definitions by Dissanayake and Csikszentmihalyi are more in line with the subject of this paper. Their far reaching implications and inclusivity more directly relate to Steiner and Sellars. For our purposes the focus will not be solely on what is being created, but the reasons behind the creative impulse and how it is being used as seen in the work of Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars. This commonality is what binds Sellars to Steiner and all of us to each other.

### **Rudolf Steiner**

Who was Rudolf Steiner? Born in 1861 in the small town of Kraljevec, Hungary (modern day Croatia) Steiner's life spanned the First World War and ended in 1925. His parents were German speaking but of Austrian decent and because of this, during his upbringing Rudolf was viewed as a bit of an outsider (Lachman 5). This outsider status will continue to appear throughout Steiner's life and in the reactions to his ideas. Coming from a land of diverse cultures and having a background influenced by mixed nationalities, however, allowed him to experience the world initially as a rich canvas of different ethnic groups living and working together peacefully (Lachman 5). This, too, would affect Steiner's life and its impact is evidenced in his work.

However, the events of the First World War would expose Steiner to views that opposed peace and threatened survival. The events within his country and the world would provide him with a profound experience of the antithesis to cooperative relationships. Knowing firsthand in his youth the possibility of fellowship and camaraderie and then in adulthood the destruction that results when humankind turned away from cooperation, Steiner was poised to define the

importance of collaboration between Eastern and Western ideas, mysticism and materialism (Lachman 6).

The contrast so diametrically opposed between love and hate would have a long and lasting effect on Steiner as he worked toward uncovering the causes behind human understanding and behavior. In fact, Steiner's main callings throughout his life would be to uncover how all things were connected as well as exploring the limits of the knowledge of humankind (Lachman 11). Steiner would pursue these two threads and eventually find within them the basis for his own philosophy.

### **Anthroposophy**

The name of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy, Anthroposophy, comes from the Greek words "Anthropo" meaning human and "Sophia" meaning wisdom. When put together, Anthroposophy designates the wisdom of man. Steiner believed that within humankind's wisdom lay eternal truths. Through the development of his philosophy these truths would be revealed and the human race would glimpse its true identity (Lachman 227).

Steiner found his way to his own philosophy beginning at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the teachings of Madame Helena Blavatsky, Theosophy, and the Theosophical Society.

Theosophy refers to the wisdom of the divine. Steiner gave his first lecture to Berlin's theosophical membership on September 22, 1900 (Lachman 124).

Steiner and the Theosophists had common ground in a shared interest in the spiritual qualities of life. For Steiner, this spirituality was separate from organized religion. The “conscious soul” he was seeking to develop was not possible within established doctrines but necessary, Steiner felt, for the modern age (Lachman 199). With this idea the Theosophists would agree.

However, it didn’t take long for Steiner’s relationship with Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society to become strained. Where their paths would diverge would be how the practical world fit within the spiritual. Steiner did not see the spiritual as separate from the practical. To overcome the existing separation he would delve into physical reality to discover within it the world of ideas (Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography 118). As early as 1907, Steiner began to realize that the Theosophists were too narrowly focused on the spiritual world with the world of the senses viewed as merely temporal (Lachman 159). Steiner, on the other hand, realized that humankind could come to know the spiritual through the sensorial world and that creative imagination was one way in to this knowledge (Lachman 159).

It is somewhat ironic that Steiner’s philosophy would offer the wisdom of *man* as its moniker. It was Steiner’s ideas about the place of *spirituality* in the world at large that first drew him to the Theosophical Society, and ultimately led him to develop his philosophy of Anthroposophy. In this new philosophy the spiritual element would be the engine behind all that Steiner engaged in. Steiner went so far as to view Anthroposophia as an actual spiritual being unto itself (Lachman 211).



### **Anthroposophy and the Arts**

It was also through his work and lectures for the Theosophical Society that he met his second wife, Marie von Sivers, who would expose in Steiner a deep appreciation for the arts (Lachman 159). This appreciation was the first step in Steiner's development toward the connection between the arts and spirituality. From this point on the arts would become a cornerstone in Steiner's own philosophy (Lachman 158).

Steiner felt that a true artist was on the path toward a living spirit because the artist transforms what is physical (Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography 128). "Art is a realm where the spirit is transferred into the sense-perceptible world (Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography 128)." Through Anthroposophy, humankind would discover the spiritual within the physical and one of the vehicles that would facilitate that mission would be the arts.

The arts would take a leading role in the development of Anthroposophy in a number of ways. "Anthroposophy strives to foster, in every possible way, the artistic element (Steiner 15)." In return the creativity that grew out of Anthroposophy would facilitate its growth. Artistic breath and expression gave Anthroposophy a freedom without which it would not survive (Steiner 5). The creative expression of Anthroposophical ideas would extend into diverse fields such as performance, architecture, medicine, and education. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, Steiner began to sense that through the integration of collaborative works of art, humankind could not only access spiritual growth but also transform society (Lachman 159).

### The Societal Dimension

The integration of the arts into society's development is most evident in the institution of education created by Steiner. Waldorf Education is an educational system with arts and creativity, as well as social responsibility integrated into its curriculum. The Waldorf educational model was created as a direct result of Anthroposophical theories and their growing popularity during Steiner's lifetime. Within Waldorf Education, Steiner's philosophy of a three part nature to the spirit of man based on thinking, feeling, and willing is clearest (Lachman 194).

Creatively there are three divisions or periods within the developing child/student as well. They are: from ages 7 to 14 the imagination rules; from 14 to 21 inspiration rules; and from the age of 21 on, intuition takes over (Lachman 196). The result and integration of the three phases results in a whole individual with a true place in society (Lachman 196). Interestingly, the German writer, Goethe, whose work had great influence on Steiner, believed that thinking, feeling and willing were three components necessary for artists to discover the hidden secrets (Lachman 179).

Concerning Anthroposophy and Waldorf the three parts of the human being are broken down as follows: thinking lives in the head - home to ideas; feeling lives in the heart – home to artistic expression; willing lives in the limbs – home to active doing. The three capacities also connected man's physical body to his soul and to society (Lachman 188). Within the societal structure the break down is translated as: the thinking within the head produces culture and

creativity which equals freedom; the feeling within the heart produces politics and human rights which equal equality; and the willing within the hands produces brotherhood and community and equals economics (Lachman 189).

As we shall see, it is within the various threefold premises that Steiner's theory and Sellars' practice are most aligned. In theory Steiner believed that the cognitive side of man could be maintained alongside a genuinely artistic one and provided the possibility of wholeness in humankind (Steiner 5). The head, heart, and hand were integral to Rudolf Steiner's view of the human being and society. Peter Sellars draws from this triad and demonstrates their potential in the practice of his artistic expression and work in the theatre.

### **Peter Sellars**

Born in Pittsburg, PA in 1957 Sellars was influenced by, and brought together, strands of Eastern and Western thinking (a similarity shared with Steiner) to define his own creative voice. He would be exposed to puppetry as a youth as an apprentice at a local theatre, spend a year in Paris after graduating high school and graduate from Harvard University (Delgado 377). He lived for a time in Japan where he became obsessed with Noh Drama and Grand Kabuki Theatre in Tokyo (Shevtsova and Innes 210). Sellars would spend some time in Shanghai, China where he was introduced to the Kunsho Opera performance style of combining theatre, dance, singing and acrobatics (Shevtsova and Innes 211). He also worked briefly at the National Theatre of the Deaf (Shevtsova and Innes 211). As a result, Sellars was primed for looking at different ways of communicating effectively and broadly within the theatrical arts and incorporating different

styles into a collaborative whole. His work integrates theatre with movement, song and speech, combining words or musical notes with gesture and movement to create a comprehensive unity (Shevtsova and Innes 211).

### **Outsiders and Partners**

As a result of the multi-cultural influences in their young adult lives, Steiner and Sellars were (whether internally or externally) outsiders. In Sellars' case, being an outsider manifested in a new perspective and allowed for new and unexpected interaction (Delgado 381). The same can be said about Steiner. As previously stated, new ideas and perspectives are some of the ingredients found in creativity and creative thinkers. These very ingredients compounded with backgrounds of diverse influences also contribute to the outsider status shared by Steiner and Sellars.

They simply were listening to their own inner voice. Steiner may simply have been ahead of his time. He confronted ideas of the time that were so ingrained that any concepts other than the status quo were considered impossible (Steiner, *Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography* 294). Known as the "enfant terrible" of his generation, Sellars' has radically restaged the time and setting of classics of theatre to define a new function and tradition (Billington 221). Going against the flow and into a new direction is the path and challenge of the creative genius. Outsiders are those who in time may become known as trailblazers. On the opening page of *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to His Life and Work*, Gary Lachman quotes Steiner as saying "Those who go their own way, as I do, will certainly be subjected to many misunderstandings." Neither Steiner

nor Sellars shied away from the differences in which they are, how they perceive the world, or their pursuit of truth.

The pursuit of profound and universal truths can be an exploration into the spiritual aspect of humankind. Confronting differences and dichotomies may be the way into discovering the spiritual, one of the great commonalities between Steiner and Sellars.

### **Spirituality**

There is evidence of the spiritual/artistic connection dating back to ancient Greece. In the introduction to Steiner's *The Arts and Their Mission*, Virginia Moore points out that Plato believed that pure art was aligned with the divine and of intrinsic worth (vii). We are familiar with the expression used to describe a relationship that is platonic as referring to one that has taken the intimate, physical aspects out of the equation of a friendship. From the perspective of a Platonic tradition regarding the arts, what is real and true in life is also separated from the physical, bodily responses (Dissanayake 27). The focus is on what is ephemeral. For Plato, the arts revealed spiritual truths about life and existence that were behind and elevated above the physical senses.

Steiner would go his own way in breaking off from the Theosophical Society because he saw a connection to, and a way in to, the spiritual through the physical. Delving into the physical to reveal what lies beyond it was important to Steiner and he used the arts as a mode of connecting the dots. For Steiner, art represents the realization in humankind that there is

something more and that physicality is not the complete picture of humanness (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 43). For him, the arts stood alongside and equal to the seriousness of scientific pursuits and religious experience (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 46). In placing art as the bridge between what is known (or can be known) to physical man and everything else that is part of the human experience but cannot be explained by science or religion, Steiner elevates the purpose of creative expression (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 45). In fact, knowledge acquired through artistic endeavors provides a deeper understanding between science and religion, and a direct path to the divine is taken up in the process of poetic creation (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 109).

Steiner sees art itself as a spiritual being expressing itself through individual artists and the creative process (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 135). Language, too, is an expression originating in spiritual man (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 58). Therefore, poetry leads and influences the other art forms (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 58). It follows then that theatre as the spoken presentation of the written word speaks directly from the spiritual. However, the artist's role in creating is not simply to produce examples of the divine on the earthly plane, but to actually lift the world into the spiritual sphere (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 60).

The spiritual component of life is a driving force behind Rudolf Steiner's beliefs. The creative impulse itself comes out of the spiritual world (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 17). By 1913 Steiner knew that the purpose of Anthroposophy was to bring awareness of the spiritual within

humankind, and that art could facilitate this goal (Lachman 177). His concept of all true art is the infusion and restoration, within the nature of physicality, of the divine-spiritual which contains within it the forces necessary to create (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 43).

Steiner used the arts and creativity to reveal and emphasize a connection to society. Through the role of the actor the connection is accomplished. The actor's job is one way to bring voice to the spiritual being of art and when looked at in that way, the actor is performing a selfless act. Steiner reinforces this premise with his belief that the archetype of acting was selflessness, and that the performance of an actor was not an expression of the self but an expression of humankind (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 141).

With this understanding humankind could gain insight into the forces at work on the individual and society and extend that understanding outward directly affecting community, country, and the entire planet. This line of influence on society will be expanded by Steiner as we shall see later in this paper. It is a line of influence expanded even further by Sellars, taken head on in the practice and presentation of his production *The Children of Heracles*. This example is provided further on in this paper as well.

But first let us trace Sellars' path and connection between the physical world through the artistic and into the spiritual. It is a path that parallels Steiner's.

In our world today, any mention of spirituality immediately brings a certain level of discomfort, at least to most Westerners' sensibilities. This may have to do with our inability to separate spirituality from specific religious beliefs, the desire to raise spirituality to a level of sacredness that is separate from human experience or the fundamental separation of church and state that our government is built upon. However, the spirituality that Sellars addresses in his approach and creativity is very much grounded in everyday life regardless of religious or political persuasion, conflict or disagreement.

Though revealing the unknowns may lead to misunderstandings, embracing the questions and difference of opinions, can also lead to a coming together and a shared experience of theatre today that carries within it the spiritual. In the introduction of Robert Auletta's *The Persians* by *Aeschylus*, Sellars states that "...the task (of theatre) is the communication of the totality of human experience, in layers upon layers; it brushes with mortality and immortality, with the visible and invisible (Sellars 2)."

Misunderstandings do not necessarily represent a negative quality. On the contrary they may be the impetus to seeing what lies past the physical manifestation or relationship. Multiple individuals coming together and sharing any experience will have different reactions, points of view, conclusions. That is life and part of the everyday goes on in the world. Steiner understood this and Sellars' theatre provides for it. In so doing, Sellars believes that a constant truth comes to the forefront (Moyers).



The ever present, eternal truths make relevant not only Sellars' presentations, but humankind's existence, connecting the extraordinary to ordinary life. Sellars believes in taking the familiar, the natural, the realistic and transforming it poetically to reveal a deeper truth (Shevtsova and Innes 221). That deeper truth is spiritual and Sellars gets to it like Steiner, through the physical presentation of theatre.

Technical devices used in the physical world point toward the spiritual. Sellars' art utilizes the collaboration of sound and lights and other technical elements along with the performance elements, overlapping the senses, to intentionally evoke and support what is hidden (Shevtsova and Innes 222). A theatrical experience for Sellars is an example of a kind of spirituality that can be experienced in everyday life (Marranca and Sellars 44). For him it is less about seeing and more about feeling. This could be because Sellars views theatre as an art form that is opposed to materialism (Delgado 381). He sees theatre and art as sacred and spiritual and as counteracting the imbalance of materialism that is promoted on and by television (Shevtsova and Innes 214).

Sellars intentionally provokes by allowing contradictions to exist. Sellars believes that the truths of life can be found in the questions, in the unknown and misunderstood, and that theatre is a reflection of this (Shevtsova and Innes 230). There is conflict and dramatic tension in theatre. Beyond the conflict, Sellars' work encompasses the visible and invisible, the present with the imagined, confusion with understanding (Delgado 382). Just as Steiner believed that behind the physical the eternal is present, Sellars exposes through the material he chooses how

truths from classic works/periods remain true in contemporary society. Theatre is the convergence of generations, of centuries, of the voices of ancestors with this moment (Marranca and Sellars 50).

Reminiscent of Steiner's belief that art is a spiritual being, Sellars believes that plays are alive. He approaches the text as a living, breathing being unto itself (Delgado 381). Again echoing Steiner, Sellars insists that the actor's performance does not express the individual ego, but that other voices are speaking through the artist on stage (Marranca and Sellars 44). Here, again, we have the voices of others being made manifest through theatre and art and artists, communicating to a new generation in a way that is innately spiritual and ritualistic (Shevtsova and Innes 220).

There is a long standing history for the strong spiritual element found within Peter Sellars work. Bonnie Marranca places Sellars alongside avant-garde artists such as John Cage, Steve Reich, Meredith Monk and Laurie Anderson, believing that the spiritual component found in their works is a tradition of American art based in the transcendentalism of Walt Whitman and Gertrude Stein (Marranca and Sellars 45). Sellars addresses this head on when he states: "For me, art is about the things that are immeasurable, that cannot be quantified and that happen across a generation (Shevtsova and Innes 218)."

Steiner and Sellars share more than just a spiritual component in their views of the arts. Both are concerned with how the spiritual element in the arts can translate into social relationships, politics and ultimately into action for the betterment of humankind.

### **Civic Responsibility**

The issues of individual freedoms and autonomy informed Rudolf Steiner's life, the development of his philosophy, and the role of the arts and creativity. Rudolf Steiner felt that the question of freedom is the driving force behind every aspect of modernity (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 39). The confusion and chaos that were prevalent during his life and characterized the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century no doubt contributed to that belief.

Coming out of a period of so much loss of life and destruction, Steiner had to address the issue of war. Specifically regarding the dramatic arts he proposed that the reason that drama was created was to portray the uselessness of man fighting man (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 152). This can be defined in two ways: man fighting another; and man fighting himself. Steiner felt the arts address both struggles. Steiner placed the arts at the center of the expression of the striving for freedom, as well as the solution for resolving the confusion surrounding inner versus outer freedom (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 39). The issue is individual and societal with one effecting and relying on the other. The impulse to create, the impulse that compels one to action comes from within and Steiner equates these impulses with spiritual-divine moral impulses (Steiner, *Rudolf Steiner, An Autobiography* 290). He saw the act of creativity as the

product of an inner freedom and believed that outer freedom must be complemented with inner freedom in society (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 67). This is a total freedom.

The action of honoring and expressing one's own creative impulse works to tap into the individual's internal freedom, providing a view into the climate of the times while also potentially contributing to external change. Steiner would define total freedom as a divine freedom that was complete and true in the individual's self-knowledge and self-actualization, contributing to the external world's laws yet separate from the external world (Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, *An Autobiography* 119). The example he provided as proof in support of a divine freedom was that throughout history, regardless of what was destroyed by nature or man, the individual strives for and celebrates in creating it again (Steiner, Rudolf Steiner, *An Autobiography* 119).

Externally Steiner saw the arts potentiality as both a player in and mirror of global relations and history. He believed Anthroposophy had to be a player within the world at large. If Steiner's ambitious vision was realized, his philosophy would facilitate the societal restructuring he felt was needed (Lachman 187). The arts would play a vital part in the restructuring and Steiner viewed humankind's placement of the arts within the framework of civilization as one of his primary concerns (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 15).

Within the placement of the arts in society one can determine the concerns, cares and needs of a group of people as well as what they thought about their lives and one another. Steiner's

views were influenced by the German philosopher/dramatist Friedrich Schiller belief that "...if people are ever to solve the problem of politics in practice, they will have to approach it through the problem of the aesthetic, because it is only through beauty that individuals make their way to freedom (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 58)."

The arts hold within them, therefore, a realization of problems, challenges and their solutions. Steiner's theory that the arts provided potential change and metamorphosis for society is perhaps his most important contribution to the creative fields (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 57). Within the arts, Steiner placed the dramatic arts as perhaps the most specific demonstration of an art to action correlation. Drama, for Steiner, is the artistic form where the divine rises up within human bodies, giving free reign to the will and transforming Man into an instrument of action (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 40). This is one area that Steiner and Sellars meet head on.

Peter Sellars takes Steiner's theory of artistic contribution to societal metamorphosis as one of the missions of theatre and applies it directly to his work. He knows that superficial fixes will not provide real change. Sellars' defines real change as transformation (Marranca and Sellars 42). For transformation to take place a slow evolution is required over time. Theatre is both the impetus for and the forum in which lasting change can happen.

Sellars' theatre is part of the transfer process. One reason this is the case is because Sellars' theatre speaks from and to the heart. Theatre offers an extensive wealth of reflection and rich

experience from which to draw. Within that treasure trove is a cumulative compassion and lasting wisdom to be mined. Social standards and political structures are transitory, but art and artists have the luxury and obligation to reach beyond time and pass on profound truths from one generation to the next (Marranca and Sellars 51). The experience of a theatrical piece can plant the seed in a society and allow it to deeply take root (Marranca and Sellars 42). Within that process and movement forward, progress and profound transformation takes place by circumventing the divisions within society that tend to keep us separated.

Much like a town hall meeting, the theatre brings people together in a public meeting space where opposing scientific, spiritual and political agendas mingle. Here is the ground where mosque, synagogue, church and temple can come together to acknowledge the spiritual aspect of human life that is without the divisive doctrine for scholastic theologians to debate or organized religion and politicians to warp or misuse (Marranca and Sellars 44). Providing that meeting place the theatre can ignite understanding and acceptance among people that overflows into daily life. The ability to address spiritual issues and to articulate them equally, along with the freedom to pursue and express one's own spirituality is the foundation of democracy (Marranca and Sellars 45). Everything that entails can be found in theatre, the arts and creativity. Providing a space for awareness and expression is crucial for true democratic principles to live and breathe.

In Ancient Greece we see the origins of how theatre played a part in the democratic process. Plato believed that knowledge was acquired from an inclusive, comprehensive and ongoing

discourse (Billington 226). Greek theatre is a representation of that type of dialogue. The Greek concepts of theatre echo a democratic structure by providing a listening space where a cross section of society is present on stage and off, and where they can be witnessed and experienced (Marranca and Sellars 53).

The democratic impulse within Greek presentation is so strong that it is reflected in its architecture. Within the amphitheater there is a seat for everyone and a single voice from the performance area is heard by the thousands of citizens the structure accommodates (Marranca and Sellars 37). In this way, theatre is the podium from which a diverse cross section of the community is represented. As such, theatre becomes the place where voices not usually heard from can provide information needed for the election process (Marranca and Sellars 37). In this way Greek theatre was directly woven into the fabric of government and democracy, and could realize its purpose to care for and maintain democracy (Marranca and Sellars 36).

Greek presentation established theatre's function to serve the basic, human need for engagement. Creating a truly public space, theatre became a forum for a level playing field within society (Marranca and Sellars 37). Inclusive to all regardless of class or status, point of view or experience, the cross section represented expands the experience of life through interaction. In the classic works of Euripides or Shakespeare, the epic nature of life is presented, offering a barometer for what it means to be human across time (Marranca and Sellars 49). In the microcosm and in the macrocosm, theatre brings different people together. Because theatre is a collaborative art form, it provides the collective understanding necessary

to comprehend the needs of society (Billington 226). Historically, therefore, all theatre can be viewed as a cornerstone of social interaction as well as a pillar for democratic institutions.

The arts have a long history of involvement in social justice and politics in the United States as well. In many ways, the impulse behind creativity, the arts and theatre is ignited by the human instinct for what is right and true. Historically, the center of artistic practice was social justice (Shevtsova and Innes 209). Sellars pin points this center in the United States during the Civil Rights movement. He defines the singing and rising of voices, and events like the march to Selma, as ethical performance (Marranca and Sellars 45). This was certainly a time when creativity, social injustice, and social action overlap. It is a time where the heart expressing itself affected the social consciousness. Sellars describes it as a time when "...expressive language being itself an act of liberation (Marranca and Sellars 45)." The legacy of the connection between artistic practice, governing, and the public's involvement stemming from the arena of Greek theatre continues with Peter Sellars.

Individual, communal, spiritual and governing realities find direct and contemporary applications via Sellars' creativity and are springboards into the work. Sellars has been described as a theatrical director who uses the technical stage devices to write poetry (Shewey 272). This is fitting since he subscribes to the Aristotelian premise that poetry is greater than history due to the fact that history merely regurgitates the facts, and poetry anticipates what may become reality (Marranca and Sellars 48). Sellars and his work are courageous and brave enough to confront the fine line of the elusive present between the known past and the



potentiality of the future. He states “Theatre should be hard. It should shake you up and speak truth to power (Moyers).” Doing so allows Sellars to break through the spiritual, political and social lethargy of the day and also have direct actionable impact (Marranca and Sellars 52).

He begins his approach from the belief that art is about the question: Why do we live together (Moyers)? His work provides questions, not the answers, for his audiences. Sellars’ theatre is not autocratic in that it doesn’t impose his point of view, his solutions. A Sellars’ presentation is a vehicle for including, trusting and respecting the intelligence and compassion and conclusions of those living inside and outside of the walls of the performance venue. His theatre equals true democracy by incorporating the authenticity of agreement and disagreement, and the sharing and embracing (on stage and off) of the total reality of life (Delgado 381).

In being a reflection of life, Sellars’ theatre must be inclusive and comprehensive, pertinent and impactful. His approach allows for and insists upon the varying opinions, conflicts and non sequiturs to exist (Billington 231). There may be the illusion of cooperation in the facades of everyday life, but Sellars uncovers what is really happening underneath in the minds, hearts and actions of society. Sellars’ does not sanitize or manipulate the underlying truths to present a pretty package. The differing points of view that create tension in society must remain onstage, are acknowledged by and reflected within the audience (Billington 231). This is the only way for the theatre to mean something in modern society. The goal is to allow people to think for themselves and create a discourse that is alive and pertinent to the world outside the theatre (Shevtsova and Innes 214-215).

Only when the individual is involved and the interaction is authentic, can a broader, political effectiveness result. Much like the Greek theatre, inviting everyone to have a say opens the discussion. Not only does this benefit the actual work, but it takes the event and breaks the confines of a tunnel vision approach. Sellars invites participation to allow the artistic work to expand and the narrowness of modern day experience can be counteracted (Moyers).

If honesty is encouraged then a real dialogue can take place. According to Sellars what the information is and how it is received is part of his theatre's mission (Billington 237). To him theatre's job is providing a vehicle for public information (Sellars 3). This is a thoughtful process. The exchange must be honest from what is being presented, why it is being presented and how it is offered.

When intelligence is utilized to address issues of the heart and this informs the theatrical presentation, the resulting action into the society can be full and complete. Theatre becomes the place for real conversation and fills the void of a lack of discussion between members of a community (Shevtsova and Innes 216). Once that kind of dialogue has taken place, truths and realities begin to surface and the community is empowered. When that happens action can be taken that is political but the action is informed with truth and compassion. Art and politics are linked because Sellars work exposes truth (Moyers).

In addition to the potential political outreach of a Sellars presentation, the experience produces both a personal, humanizing touch and enlightenment. Sellars addresses the social necessity for a feeling of community by creating work that is for and by the very members of that community (Moyers). This is a first step in finding one's voice which is a crucial ingredient for developing into a citizen of the world. Sellars' ultimate desire for an audience is that the experience will work as a primer for a global consciousness (Shewey 267). Sellars' goal for an awareness of the world is deeper and more compassionate than a thirty second media clip or figures and statistics on a page (Billington 237).

Of utmost concern for Sellars, beyond the artistic and political, is the human experience of interaction and the resulting understanding that takes place. A Sellars' presentation isn't about the text or content or meaning on the page but the interaction and human contact (Billington 233). Unlike television, theatre is a participatory event. Sellars' theatre can be seen as the opposite of spectacle, placing the human being front and center (Shevtsova and Innes 219). Sellars uses theatre as balm. It is a cure away from the virtual toward intimacy, touch, human validation and witnessing (Delgado 390). Theatre is not a numbers game, but with the model of Greek theatre as Sellars' guide, it functions within his art to address democratic principles and provide society with a far reaching legacy of hope (Billington 237).

It is within Peter Sellars' motivation for expressing his creativity that a legacy of hope is evident. His desire for the citizens of the world to be connected is his motivation. There is an ongoing hope in addressing and eliminating false, manmade and ego driven differences. In addition

there is hope in embracing the beauty of variety and celebrating our similarities that can be found in his work. This can be seen initially during Sellars time as Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Theatre Festival. He changed the structure from a World's Fair mentality of separating pavilions and venues in isolated areas to create a festival in the spirit of all people on one planet. Once at the helm, Sellars immediately made certain that the festivals under his leadership were not about borders or flags, but about people and what cuts through the divisions and artificial separations (Moyers).

Sellars was able to tackle the idea of borders once again when he re-staged *The Children of Heracles* by Euripides. The legacy of hope was exemplified by focusing on the central idea of the material - what it means to be "other" and the treatment of foreigners. Once again under Peter Sellars' direction past, present and future collide and the essence of spiritual, political, and social responsibility reverberates in practice.

The play deals with how one group views another. First performed in June of 2004, Sellars used the material to confront the global issue of nationalism and immigration by focusing how the situation manifested in several different cities throughout Europe. It was subsequently performed in the United States in Boston. Returning to a classic of Greek theatre which, as has been previously mentioned, provides a larger historical perspective, Sellars is able to interrupt current perceptions (and misperceptions) and extend the debate beyond specific headlines of the day (Marranca and Sellars 42). The reinterpretation would involve refugees, local officials and government dignitaries, as well as outside writers and immigrants from the surrounding

communities of where the play was performed (Marranca and Sellars 39). Looking at a range of microcosmic experiences would shed light on the macrocosmic issues.

The idea to mount the production began following the events of 9/11 and the subsequent Muslim backlash (Marranca and Sellars 38). Here was an extreme local event that had global implications. The production of *The Children of Heracles* would provide insight by reflecting the challenges surrounding immigrants around the world back to what was happening in the U.S. Sellars saw a disturbing and escalating disconnect between the melting pot origins of his homeland and the developing warped attitudes toward foreigners. He saw the United States, which was created by immigrants, becoming anti-immigration (Marranca and Sellars 38).

The structure of the production would include many parts including: local pre-production rehearsals involving actors and non-actors; a pre-show family style cooking period where community leaders, business organizations, human rights advocates, lawmakers and average citizens and non-citizens prepared the meal; curtain speeches by different segments of the population present and represented on stage and off; and finally the post show discussion followed by the “breaking of bread” over the community dinner that had been previously prepared (Marranca and Sellars 39-40). Integrating the evening would assert Sellars’ view that theatre and creativity are acts against uniformity and homogenization (Delgado 391). *The Children of Heracles* provided the perfect vehicle for this assertion.

The production borrowed from the Greek ideal of theatre as a participatory experience. During the pre-show curtain speeches and at appropriate intervals during the performance, intimate details about life experiences from all sides of the immigration dilemma were shared by the individual family members involved. Sellars created a place for actual testimony from different segments of the community within and outside of the parameters of the play providing the audience direct involvement versus observation with no voice (Marranca and Sellars 38).

The inclusion of a variety of voices and images was also apparent inside the construct of the play itself. Sellars is blind, non-traditional, and multiracial in his casting choices so that what is seen on stage represents the planet's peoples (Shewey 269). What is being seen subtly reflects and addresses the very idea of integration. This approach highlights how we are alike in the bigger picture while allowing for differences within the individual ethnicities to reveal themselves as well (Shewey 270).

Sellars' production of *The Children of Heracles* is presented in such a way that issues specific to a particular place are addressed while also shedding light on universal challenges regarding immigration that other nations and the world as a whole are facing. Under Sellars' creative vision, the human element is again at the forefront which allows people to see themselves in others and ideally apply the same sensitivity and respect back home to individual, everyday circumstances. If successful, audiences in the U.S. would have an added benefit that would look back at why the re-staging of *The Children of Heracles* was devised in the first place and

restore the origins of this country. Sellars intended the experience to provide a mirror to view immigration as a source of creativity and accomplishment in the United States (Delgado 389).

The far reaching implications of *The Children of Heracles* was possible by its wholeness and integration of intellectual ideas, the compassion of the heart, the subsequent actions/reactions of the individuals participating in the creative process. "So, the arc of *The Children of Heracles* was from the private dinner before, to the public shared meal at the end; and the arc of transformation it was tracing could only be made possible by art (Shevtsova and Innes 217)." This is an example of collaboration at its finest.

### **Collaboration**

Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars share a collaborative outlook. The arts are the perfect vessel to bring together the streams of intellectual thinking, the spiritual and the physical action present in the creative process and move outward into society. It is in the collaboration of these elements that Steiner and Sellars are joined. Both gentlemen are creative in the use and depth of their knowledge. Both possess a spirituality that is centered in their hearts. And both combine those elements to create civic responsibility and change.

Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy is by its very nature collaborative. To tackle all that the wisdom of man encompasses, Anthroposophy reaches out into many fields to find underlying commonalities, how they influence one another, how they are distinct and how they are connected. That is collaboration. Throughout his work, Steiner emphasized the ancient

mysteries for their inseparability of the true (science) from the good (morality) and the beautiful (art) (Monges and Moore ix). Within the arts, one can see into a totality of humankind, a kind of evolutionary collaboration. Steiner places the arts as the barometer of Man's actions in history through which the development of human consciousness could be traced (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 36). Since Steiner sees the spirit as the underlying consistency in everything, the collaboration that he emphasizes supports that view. Spiritual evolution stems from the collaboration between science, religion and art (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 57). He would extend the collaborative view to creative endeavors and saw it manifest in the arts.

Within any individual work of art, Steiner sees a reflection of the sum of its parts and related this back to the human being within society. The totality of a work of art encompasses a whole world in much the same way as the individual is tied to the whole world (Steiner, *Art as Spiritual Activity* 275). The arts contain everything within the creative process.

The individual who is creating is involved in the process. The physical surroundings influence the individual and are the tools used to create. How the tools are used, combined and interpreted give voice to the imagination as a translation of the ephemeral into the shape for others to experience. Steiner believed that the spiritual surrounds us and lives in the artistic producing the human need to enliven concepts and translate the physical manifestations around us back into artistic color and form (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 42).



Again it is when Steiner addresses the elements of the theatrical realm that he provides a roadmap of sorts for Sellars to follow. It is through the color, form, beat, rhythm, sound and imagination that the words of poetry in drama become more than simply the content understood by the intellect, and expand to connect individual soul to individual soul and to the universal (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 113).

Sellars work lives in collaboration and the artistic capability of combining knowledge and spirit and extending the action into the universality of human experience. He begins the collaborative process by using whatever devices and contributions are necessary to trigger the philosophical and spiritual points the material may offer (Shewey 272). Sellars uses all the technical elements and crafts that are part of a theatrical production such as costumes, lights, sound and music. He does so not to create an attractive or impressive work that others may praise, although that may be one result.

Sellars' objective is to inform and support the whole piece, move away from critical analysis and discourse. Sellars' work moves from reflection to interaction to transformation, change and resolution by placing the audience at the heart of the experience and part of the collaborative process (Marranca and Sellars 47).

Sellars extends the collaboration out into the world so that what has been created continues creating after the curtain falls. Sellars' theatre and its cross-disciplinarian possibilities provide the multi-faceted human spirit with the outlet to express its totality (Shewey 278). However,

his collaborative process invites more than theatre talents to the party. Sellars' collaboration involves the artistic forms as well as the cultures and life experiences of those involved (Shevtsova and Innes 223). The creation represents a true totality over time where individuals meet, interact and witness what evolves. Being a part of this totality the audience has taken on its expression. He farms the fertile ground of creativity and its expression by insisting that he, the actors, technicians, and most importantly the audience, all meet the level of the challenges within the piece (Shewey 275). In this way, Sellars relates the creation of the work to the actual performance each night and to the real experiences of life occurring inside and outside of the theatre.

### **Looking Ahead**

Some of Rudolf Steiner's observations of the world and predictions for the future still hold true today. He saw the modern era as an opportunity to look at the material world through spiritual eyes. The arts could facilitate that purpose into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond. He felt that the arts are capable of revealing the spiritual totality of life through the fusion of the physical and spiritual within artistic creation (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 111). According to Steiner the world had become exclusively obsessed with explanations found in nature and a scientific approach. He was convinced that this approach led to a "less brilliant life practice" and the remedy for this would come from imagination, inspiration and intuition (Steiner, *The Arts and Their Mission* 53). In addition, because of Steiner's innovative way of looking at the world through the lens of Anthroposophy, future generations of artists would be influenced and

inspired in their work. Steiner's ideas and theories remain a source of inspiration for artists today (Lachman 231).

Peter Sellars would agree with Steiner's conviction that a world without creativity and the arts would have detrimental results. Sellars finds evidence in Europe and America of an increasingly fragile, intolerant and self-centered society as a result of the elimination of culture from the public's daily life (Delgado 385-386). Culture is the natural byproduct of human interaction. Sellars poses the question "Why do we live together?" and suggests that if there is a reason for choosing to live in close proximity to one another, that reason is to create culture (Moyers). The arts, creativity, spirituality, and the advancement of civilization rely on the pools of culture and vice versa. "In what way is the culture transformed through a moment of spiritual aspiration and accomplishment which creates a body of art that leaves its mark and creates a culture where questions can be opened (Marranca and Sellars 47)?" Progress may be found in the answers to those questions.

The exploration of the arts is an outlet for the answers to rise to the surface. We need the outlets and the interaction those outlets provide to create, receive, and express beauty and meaning in our lives. Ellen Dissanayake agrees that the emotional outlets that creativity and the arts provide are necessary components within a functioning society without which "a serious psychological deprivation" exists (Dissanayake xviii-xix). She further states that "social systems that disdain or discount beauty, form, mystery, meaning, value, and quality – whether in art or in life – are depriving their members of human requirements as fundamental as those

for food, warmth, and shelter (Dissanayake xx).” In addition, Sellars feels that our society suffers from a denial of an interior life which leads to feelings of inadequacy and that through his theatre, the arts and creativity, the interior life is acknowledged and honored (Moyers).

What does the future hold then for the arts and creativity in today’s society? In what specific ways can the wisdom of the past meet the challenges of the present to collectively offer changes that address today’s needs and concerns? Sellars and his contemporaries provide some insight.

One suggestion would be the elimination of the segmentation that exists within the art community. Labels such as mainstream, avant-garde, commercial, independent, professional or non-trained no longer apply and are no longer mutually exclusive. There needs to be a balance today where artists can be creative and still have something to say that is pertinent and valued and reaches the largest, most diverse audiences (Shewey 281).

Integration of diversity is essential to Sellars and he strives for and attains it in both his audiences and among the production team. He accomplishes diversification with an emphasis on technical incorporation and interdisciplinary, multicultural collaboration because it represents the reality of the world and offers new potentials for the direction of theatre in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Marranca and Sellars 47-48). However, he cautions that the human element must have an equal presence in the equation as we become more advanced in technological wizardry. In the midst of a bombardment of technology, we must listen to and learn to

understand the heart (Sellars, Foreword xii). It is in the human connection of the heart that we are truly connected to one another and to the past, the present and the future.

Another way the theatre can contribute to the future is by embracing and applying the lessons contained in its own historical canon to current realities. Theatre can encompass the past, take place in the present, and can predict and affect the future as well. There lies within a theatrical experience untapped potential for a deeper, more far reaching, balance in the outlook of the work and a solid foundation from which to draw parallels to life (Billington 238). From the overview that theatre throughout the ages provides, we gain new perspectives that are based on an enormous case study.

Sellars' theatre is simultaneously part of a new direction in the theatre arts while contributing to the overall historical case study. His theatre is based on shared childhoods, a mutual past and future, and the questions we ask of ourselves within a society comprised of multiple cultures (Marranca and Sellars 39). This was true of the ancient Greek theatre and it is why Sellars look to those works to illustrate this point now and into the future.

In looking back Sellars' interpretations remain current and contribute to new directions around the corner. As much as Greek theatre was invested in the physical life of its citizens and addressing pertinent issues of that time, it also looked forward. Just because a play is from a specific period doesn't necessarily mean that it is stuck there and must remain a period piece. The Greeks illuminated universal themes by looking at and beyond the issues of the day

(Marranca and Sellars 48). Bonnie Marranca points out that there is a need today for really creative, imaginative theatrical works so as to not reduce the theatre to merely a copy of reality (Marranca and Sellars 48). Ancient Greek theatre asks higher questions with an elevated language and this, too, is the aspiration of Sellars' theatre (Marranca and Sellars 48).

Others in the contemporary theatre world have similar aspirations for the place and power of theatre today. Anne Bogart of the SITI Company believes that we cannot just look at ourselves. Theatre must look at the universal questions and by doing so, art and politics combine to give today's theatre relevancy (Shewey 277). Des McAnuff, a Tony Award winner and Artistic Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, echoes the need for relevancy on stage. For him theatre artists must demand that important issues appear on its stages so that the next generation are engaged and encouraged to think (Shewey 278). McAnuff believes not only does the current climate in theatre insist on it, but also that the future relies on it (Shewey 278).

### **Adding my voice to the mix**

The future relies on expanding the definition of creativity to encompass more than a specialty of the fine arts to reveal the breath and influence of creativity on humankind. My work as a student and professional in the creative arts has provided a perspective from which to observe how my voice is compatible with the ideas expressed thus far. As a performing arts teacher and creativity advocate, my own ideas have aligned me with Steiner's principles and join me as a collaborator with Sellars. My first hand experience contributes to the conversation as to the

power and place of creativity in the humankind and will follow spiritual, collaborative and social streams of thought.

Creativity is the meeting place between what is know and what is unknown. As humans we have an innate desire to learn, develop and evolve as beings. This is seen from the earliest reaching that is behind learning to walk (movement,) to talk (communication,) to think (intellectual) and interact within the world. That reaching is closely associated with the mysterious and miraculous workings behind the creation of the Cosmos. Human creativity is equally mysterious and miraculous.

Where scientific explanations fall short, a certain amount of faith is necessary. Faith is necessary to believe in a science that says the Universe is infinite and expanding, even though we may not be able to entirely comprehend what that means. Science has shown that what looks and feels to be solid is in reality only different molecules bouncing off of other molecules or energy vibrating at varying speeds creating different densities. We accept it as fact though it is hard to believe. That acceptance is a kind of practical faith incorporated into everyday life. Faith may also be necessary when it comes to the leaps necessary to explain how the whole creation of the Cosmos started in the first place, what was there before, and what exists on the other side of life.

Creative expression is intimately connected to the same hidden reality behind the everyday realities. The creativity comes from the same source energy behind the whisper that

transforms a seed into a fruit. It is the same impulse extending in all directions out into the furthest reaches of space. It shares the same makeup of faith that lets us know we are part of the physical world but also part of what remains unseen and is inexplicable.

The Fine Arts in all its forms – performing, visual, or written, are the highly specialized manifestation of the creative impulse. Much like the Olympic Games are considered the pinnacle in humankind's physical achievement in the arena of sports (a creative accomplishment within athletics,) a mastery of the various expressive art forms is the disciplined result of the creatively artistic individual. The creative impulse acknowledged and given expression may become the lauded works of an artistic genius. However, the underlying creative impulse is the same as that behind the individual whose expression takes a path other than the fine arts. What is important to recognize is the shared initial spark that leads the individual to their unique expression, regardless of field or form, regardless of whether or not the output is deemed valuable, sophisticated, new or virtuosic.

The lack of recognition, understanding and respect of the creative impulse and the enormity of what it holds within it, leads to two of the main challenges facing the creative arts. When creativity is narrowly defined as an expression within the field of the fine arts ( and not as an engine behind advancement in other fields), the arts become isolated and insulated from what is considered necessary (and appreciated) in society.



The first point of evidence is the attitude held by the mainstream toward the arts as being specialized and separate to the point of being elitist. The second point of evidence at the other end of the spectrum is the view of the arts as recreational entertainment and, beyond that, insignificant fluff. There is culpability within the art circles themselves, dating back to the Modernism Movements of the 1920s to 1950s, that perpetuated the elevation of the arts to the point of snobbery and economic classism. Egotistical forces that need to create an idolized platform from which only those with a certain breeding, education, and bank account can stand have warped the purpose of the arts from a communicative universality to an impotent status symbol. From a complicit contribution to an “emperor’s new clothes” mentality that only sensational, offensive, or complex expressions have any worth; to the outrageous financial investment needed to participate as an audience member, the “1 percent” has so dictated the conversation that the rest of society no longer (or rarely) has a relationship with the arts in any meaningful way.

The frustration over this reality has led to the view of the arts as unnecessary and disposable. One need only look to the program cutbacks within the visual and performing arts at every level of education right up to the small percentage of funds allocated in our national budget to see the pervasiveness of this attitude. Since only the rich can afford a lifestyle that incorporates the arts, and since a small percentage of individuals “make it big” in an artistic career, nurturing the creative impulse pays the price and is sacrificed.

What needs to be understood and defended is that providing the space for creative expression has value beyond the expressive arts and reaches into various fields to which we all contribute and from which we reap the benefits. It is the creative impulse that must be viewed as of the utmost importance and a part of the whole of human development. Just as athletic programs receive support even though a small percentage will participate in an Olympic Games or make it to the “big leagues,” physical activity is recognized as a central component to life and development. The creative impulse must be held in a similar regard and esteem.

The creative impulse is where the focus of the debate lies and creativity must not be hijacked by an exclusive and solely specialized view (via the fine arts) or one that would exile creativity as the source of mere entertainment or recreation. Creativity is not a gift bestowed by kings to a select few, nor is it a supplement. It is the main meal in a feast from which it is everyone’s right to partake.

Evidence of the vastness of creative expression points out that the creative impulse is central to humankind’s existence. Taking into consideration all the multitudes of form and expression from cooking to child rearing, farming innovations to medical discoveries, design to architecture, reveals all exponential potentiality of creativity. Within each and every category there are unlimited possibilities. Each field reflects the totality of the macrocosm in its microcosm.

All the colors of the figurative rainbow, and the names of those colors, where and how the colors are used taps into the creative urge. The urge to come into form of each individual is reflected in what we are drawn to. The creative urge manifests in how we dress, speak, write, fight, celebrate, relax, travel, treat ourselves, each other, and the planet. How history evolves, how one advancement or development effects another is interconnected across generations and centuries. Movements over time contain influence or residue from our ancestors back to the original movement from the past to the present and into future. That is the true World Wide Web!

None of it would exist without the creative impulse, creativity, and its unstoppable need to come to fruition. There is an awe and extraordinary scope to the totality of creativity that when considered deserves reverence and parallels to creation itself. Nothing less would be appropriate since creativity and all that it entails is the human expression of that drop of divinity. Creativity promises freedom and choice that can move mountains. Within each human and available at any time, creativity is our birthright. More than that, creativity is an invisible strand in our DNA and behind the makeup of that very DNA.

Creativity is each individual's statement of presence. The expression at its simplest and most complex says "I am here," "I have something to say," "I have something that *needs* to be expressed." Creative expression is a voice within that needs to be honored, listened to and given release. That voice is there in infancy and continues throughout the process of life. The voice is a call to action; indeed, creativity is *the* calling and *the* right of life.

To be aligned with one's inner voice and to pursue its expression and share that with another is authentic connection. The communication that springs from clear individuality and truth is the most profound, effective, and fulfilling exchange possible. True communion, community, and freedom are the result. A society that values and encourages that kind of exchange and freedom is democracy in action.

We are each a lens into the multiple gifts of choice and purpose that exist to reveal for each other the total capacity of creativity, of intelligence, of love, of humankind. Each expression plays a part in the whole, is connected to the whole, and expands the whole. Creativity is too big to be contained in just one special individual or group of individuals, or labeled in one form, field or style. Creativity cannot be owned, it can only be expressed. Creativity is the healthy flow of expression outward and unobstructed.

Creativity pervades every culture and civilization around the globe. Creative expression defines what is unique among various peoples within the countries of the world and at the same time connects us. We may not speak the same spoken word but what transcends any obstacles of speech are the forms that expression takes in revealing who a person or group of people is as well as displaying new facets of creativity. Perhaps the universality of creativity is most easily identified via the visual and performing arts. The language of music, dance, and visual art can be understood and appreciated regardless of one's nationality or the nationality of origin of the creator(s). But the universality of creativity extends far beyond simply the visual and

performing arts. Experiencing architecture and style from foreign lands, or new tastes of other cuisines are just a few of the joys and rewards of travel. We crave what is new, not for its own sake, but to experience throughout our lives the “first time” excitement that we encounter in our youth. Somewhere within us we need those first tastes. More than simply a new experience, these events in our life uncover hidden potentials of what more may be out there and bring us face to face with creativity from outside ourselves. In doing so, exposure to creativity from without introduces us to our own creativity within. Consciously at some level we recognize our own ability to create when we experience the creativity of others. We also appreciate the hidden mystery, sensitivity and courage that are tied to the product and the act of creativity. Those qualities inherent in creativity and its expression are binding agents that contribute to the universality of the creativity. They connect people of differing histories and economic, educational and religious backgrounds.

In the process of collaboration the internal workings of creativity are active in an outward participation and exchange between others. The individual, inner conversation is expressed and married with other voices. The dialogue becomes multiplied, challenged and debated, which shapes the resulting output in ways impossible to anticipate and unique to the contributions of the individuals involved. The unknown concluding forms of collaboration are as mysterious as the origin of a solitary expression of creativity. What they will be and from where they originate are not traceable and impossible to pinpoint. However, the mystery behind creativity is brought to the forefront and addressed head on between any two (or more) collaborators involved in the creative process.

The mystery of that exchange is a link between the collaborators and the creative spirit and the mystery is an equal partner in the process. It is through collaboration that we see the inner workings of creativity. However, within collaboration, an experiment is being performed on and with a live, shape-shifting organism of energy that is creativity. The energy vibrating between individuals in the process of creating is the ephemeral body of the creative impulse giving birth to itself.

For the creative individual, the collaborative process is a highly charged, exhilarating experience. It brings the individuals involved face to face with their inner most expression of self in communion with others. The process pushes the individuals to deeper inward exploration. Necessary risks are taken and vulnerability results from the communal witnessing. The individuals involved gain from the process a more dynamic conviction and stronger connection to oneself, the ensemble, the creative impulse and the created form as well. The collaborative process is a trial by fire that strengthens, purifies, and distills the creative process with the potential of forming a higher concentration of creativity and intensified relationships at its conclusion. Finding your creative voice and then transforming that voice into a new language in concert with another, that is shared and understood with others still, joins creativity to collaboration and back to creativity in an unending circular spiral of consciousness.

Whether collaborating or creating, there is dual or heightened consciousness that occurs while in the process of doing or viewing creativity. In the autobiography *Blood Memory*, Martha

Graham has addressed the consciousness of being in the middle of a performance, simultaneously consumed by the physical choreography while present in the emotional journey of the dance and noticing the intricate wood grain of the stage floorboards beneath her feet. In a production of *Angels in America* I myself have experienced the spiritual implications of wrestling with an angel along with the pain of breaking a finger as I fell from a platform and hearing the gasping, then applauding audience as the outer world crashed into the world onstage and the scene continued.

In the viewing process, a person can be aware of the cinema and the other audience members surrounding him or her, and yet be completely taken in by what is being projected on a screen to the extent that, whether through fits of laughter or tears, a catharsis takes place. A writer can so capture in a fictionalized story the real experience of loss and grief that a mother one year beyond the loss of her son can, in reading the play or sitting in the third row watching it, take another step in her own healing journey. Though one step removed, observing a creative expression or act is joined to the collaborative process and what the creative doer experiences.

Within a creative act and the subsequent experience of it a transformation and transference takes place. If you have ever stood speechless before a work of art, been transported by a poem or moved by a musical phrase, awestruck by an athletic feat, inspired by a building or an Italian feast, then you have been touched by creativity. Being on the receiving end of a creative act can pierce your heart, raise the hair on the back of your neck, lift your spirit, or change your mind.

Different expressions of creativity provide different audiences with palpable and all consuming reactions. Why and how is that possible? We recognize the greatness that is possible and identify that same seed which lies within us. Could it be that in the exchange between the act and the recipient there is a palpable transmission that causes a shift in human capacities? The answer is "YES!" How else can one explain standing before Michelangelo's David on the one hand, or amongst a stadium of spectators witnessing the completion of the Hail Mary pass on the other, and being moved to tears or cheers, unconsciously rising to the tips of one's toes or having one's knees buckle and collapsing to the ground? One gets to experience the comprehensive totality of the power of creativity, the heightened consciousness mentioned above (perhaps for only a brief) while in the company and expression of creativity. We recognize creativity's greatness in ourselves and each other as we catch our breath alone or shoulder to shoulder in its presence. As a result boundaries dissolve and fullness is experienced that leaves us more understanding, compassionate and closer to life and our fellow man.

Transformation within the individual translates into changes in society. Countries have been changed by the social and political acts of their people after being inspired by the works of artists and leaders alike. Time and time again creativity is the impetus that brings awareness to issues of social concern from involvement to fundraisers to relief efforts. Underneath the talents and abilities of creative individuals is often found a communal heart of compassion. Creative works can move from the mind to stages or pages or canvases and create movements



in the fabric of society to influence the next generation and continue the process. The cycle of creativity is endless.

Creativity and the creative impulse cannot be held down, cannot be limited. It contains infinite possibilities, infinite forms, and infinite expression. We come from this unlimited pool, are a reflection of it, contain it within us, and contribute to it with limitless potential. Creative expression and creative results provide a look into the mystery of this miracle. Creativity is the revelation that there are spaces and places within all experience that are touched by a divine spring unknown to us. The creative experience and its output allow us to get close to this great magical mystery and approach our true collective nature.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Some of my fondest, most memorable moments as a child involved creativity and its expression. I would venture that I am not alone in that. Starting with early recollections of music and color and developing into shared afternoons playing and creating worlds with my sisters and friends, the snapshots of my youth seem to always have left the deepest impression when instigated by and infused with creativity.

Beginning with mimicking the creations I saw around me on a daily basis from the preparations surrounding a holiday meal to watching my parents' skills as tailors create clothing from the everyday to the fantastic to "putting on a show" of my own for the neighborhood, the connection I had with creativity provided the greatest, most lasting bonds with friends and

family. I became socialized, learned how to lead and follow, communicate and express myself in ways that had valuable, lifelong tools built within the experiences. These experiences continue to contribute to my life with great impact.

Following the creative lead of my childhood developed a sensitivity and appreciation of others, and allowed me to see into the heart and soul of life and the people in it. This expanded over time and interacting with creativity has defined my path.

As a student, it was the creative leanings of the curriculum at various points along the way that gave me the safe harbor to find my voice, my sexuality, and political views based in equality.

The courage to express who I am fully regardless of what my culture or society had defined for me ultimately was founded in and nurtured by creativity.

As a performer I discovered the power of addressing issues such as civil rights, interracial marriage, rape, abortion, illness and loss happening in the world but not yet addressed in my family or community. Through creative production political red tape and resistance was circumvented stimulating a change in the hearts and minds of the people in and around my life. I recently participated in a created ritual that had the power to transform a loud, competitive, tailgating crowd into a silent meditative prayer group acknowledging the Lockerbie and 9/11 events, honoring the victims and allowing a path away from hate toward healing.

As a teacher involved in encouraging creative self-expression, I have been witness to young men and women who did not fit in to the traditional models of education or athletic prowess or familial relations move from depression and hopelessness to excitement for a future they now could see. I have received the thanks and testimony of parents, whose child had attempted suicide because of an inability to interact with others. I have had the privilege of watching the light reignite in children's eyes thanks to the camaraderie and interaction of new friends acquired through the participation in a creative exercise.

Thanks to the relentless insistence of creative individuals and their work, prejudice and fear directed toward communism, cancer, the AIDS epidemic, different religions, and social injustice has been lessened with the advancements in political relations, medical innovations and social acceptance due in part to exposing ignorance with the enlightening torch of creativity. These are but a few examples that demonstrate the power and importance of creativity.

On the walls of The Kennedy Center there are quotes by John F. Kennedy that capture the place of creativity in the world as well as the contributions of creative individuals such as Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars: "There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts. The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age of Lorenzo De Medici was also the age of Leonardo Da Vinci, the age of Elizabeth also the age of Shakespeare, and the new frontier for which I campaign in public life, can also be a new frontier for American art." On another wall a visionary quote:

“To further the appreciation of culture among all the people, to increase respect for the creative individual, to widen participation by all the processes and fulfillments of art – this is one of the fascinating challenges of these days.” Though they come from a different place and time, Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars are collaborators in the realization of that vision.

The goodly contribution that creativity provides throughout society and toward humankind’s health and advancement continues. The door to a new way of thinking that was opened by Rudolf Steiner and walked through by Peter Sellars can be a blueprint for us to follow. We all contribute to the whole and participate in the creative dance. What must continue is the joining of the creative voices of art theorists and practitioners, advocates, activists, and leaders from the past and present to reinforce the necessity of creativity. Understanding the place of creativity and its incorporation into the discord as one of the main pillars of a functioning society may well be the next phase in human evolution.

“We are called to this planet to do the impossible, every day (Marranca and Sellars 50).” One way we can accomplish this is through our creativity. By expanding what creativity can be and its purpose for humankind we will honor not only Rudolf Steiner and Peter Sellars, but our ancestors, ourselves and our future.

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