Creativity, Communication and Cultural Value

Keith Negus and Michael Pickering

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Preface

It is hard to avoid the term creativity. It is one of the most used and abused of terms – at one moment invoked to praise a specific technical skill, at another uttered in the most vague and casual manner. In any newspaper or magazine we pick up, we are able to read about the creative work of film directors, actresses, novelists, musicians, singers and all manner of celebrities. Now a staple byword of the discourse of advertising, we're told about creative promotions and campaigns, and about the personnel awarded for their creative contributions to the industry. The term is used by teachers in their encouragement of children to express themselves, expand and grow, and by management consultants seeking to stimulate lateral thinking at work with the aim of improving company profitability. Scientists are trained to follow set procedures and methods, but cannot properly explain how they have come up with a model or theorem in these terms and so resort to notions of creative inspiration. The term creativity is deployed in so many different contexts, and with reference to so many different activities, that we may well ask if it has not been drained of any valid meaning or any useful critical application.

It is because we feel that the term is still worth thinking with, despite sometimes appearing as another specious item of jargon, that we have written this book. One of our aims is to counter both fallacious and opportunistic uses of it. There are of course certain words which historically have acquired so much ideological baggage that they are no longer of any valid or acceptable use in contemporary society, but we don't feel that creativity is one of these. It certainly carries baggage. Indeed, it comes to us laden with a host of meanings, connotations and applications which are regularly imported into a range of discourses, institutions and settings. In one sense, this is indicative of its importance. Yet, while the value and significance of the term are routinely noted, its conceptual status is frequently taken as an unquestioned commonplace. It is often assumed to be self-evident that we know what creativity is, or at least we do when we meet it. This assumption needs challenging. The term has been used in a variety of ways to describe many diverse actions and activities. More often than not, it is used vaguely and imprecisely, and sometimes in quite contradictory ways. The result usually mystifies more than it clarifies. This is not only the case with its use in contemporary mundane discourse; it is often casually introduced into cultural analysis and cultural policy debates as an uncritically received idea, bringing with it all manner of implications. In this way creativity is a dominant category, but a residual concept.

In this book we hope to clear some of the accumulated debris surrounding the notion of creativity and work towards a more refined understanding of it as a

concept. We want to encourage a reflexive approach to its conceptual use, whether this is in academic research, intellectual critique, cultural policy or everyday social practice. We start by tracing some of the varying meanings of notions of creativity as these have developed over time, indicating both continuities and transformations. In the course of the book as a whole, we highlight how the meaning of creativity is integrally tied to changing historical processes, technologies and social conditions, and conceptions of individual and society. It is precisely because of such connections that the attribution of 'creative' to a social activity or humanly produced artefact necessarily implies value judgements. Recognition of this is often evaded or denied, as if the worth is assumed to be self-evident, yet we cannot use the term creativity or creative without implying judgement and discrimination. So, following from this, it not only becomes necessary to ask questions about the criteria whereby something, someone or some action is valued as creative. We also need to consider the changing circumstances within which certain creative labels and attributions (and not others) become possible, and the consequences of this for the evaluative process itself. Throughout the following chapters we discuss how the term creativity is used in a descriptive way – but also, significantly, how creativity is used as a way of according cultural value.

Our aim is not to present a singular model of creativity, nor have we set ourselves the unnecessary, and ultimately futile reductive task of defining what creativity might be. Instead, our intentions are both broader and more modest, and we hope, more valuable for being so. We want to encourage a critical approach to the term and an awareness of the legacies that it carries with it. We want to ask what creativity means in conceptual and philosophical terms. So, for example, our opening chapter traces the etymology of the term within what has been a very influential Judaeo-Christian tradition of thought – from divine creation to human creation. But we also want to ask what people mean (and what experiences they refer to) when they talk about creativity. This is why our second chapter follows by immediately exploring how we might understand various creative experiences (some of which seem to defy rational explanation through language, as if words are not enough to capture what's at stake in this experience) and how these relate to human experience more broadly. Our argument is that creativity is a process which brings experience into meaning and significance, and helps it attain communicative value.

We've tried to understand the relation between expression, communication and experience by developing an approach which can conceive of creativity as both ordinary and exceptional. The creative act involves a lot of often unacknowledged hard graft. Much time and energy is put into acquiring and perfecting a skill until the moment is reached of being at one with the activity – when the creative act seems to take on a life of its own. This is the instant when the singer becomes the song, the playwright or actress becomes the character, the artist becomes the painting. It is this aspect which often inspires awe. It can certainly be magical. But there's no reason why it should be treated as mysterious or unfathomable.

In attempting to assert and retain the magical quality of many creative experiences, while also trying to avoid mystifying them, we're presenting a series of critical reflections on creativity, organised around a number of key themes. These themes are signalled in the chapter headings and we hope that the word chosen makes this clear in each particular case. An awareness of these themes is signally important, not only conceptually and theoretically – but also practically. Many creative artists are daily grappling with how certain types of creativity are recognised and rewarded by industries; how they play within or seek to challenge conventions and traditions; how they are constrained or overtly oppressed by divisions of class, gender or race; and how many musicians, painters, novelists are esteemed for their exceptionality – or the exceptionality of at least some of what they produce. The special character of certain creative acts and artworks ultimately leads to the notion of genius, a concept which informs the self-understanding and strategies of artists as much as it impacts upon the critical assessments of what artists do and have done.

In exploring these themes we distinguish between the different meanings of creativity, as they have developed historically and grown in the breadth of their application and reference. In doing this we're able to see the retention of a spiritual dimension within the term. The significance of this is often neglected in contemporary discussion, but for us it points to an abiding source of value in the popular conception of creativity, even as the semantic range of that conception has widened and become secularised. The continuance of this dimension of meaning within the term may run in conflict with other dimensions, but it remains indicative of what is at stake in its currency.

As the meaning of creativity has changed, and as various interests have contested this meaning, there has been a movement away from what have been labelled elitist conceptions of creative exclusivity towards a more inclusive consideration of creativity in its more pervasive forms. This shift has not eradicated the apparent dichotomy. There are two important reasons why swinging to the polar opposite of exclusive notions is unhelpful. First, it encourages an all-too-easy abandonment of the question of exceptionality. Second, the endurance of a spiritual dimension of creativity tends to be dismissed or overlooked when numerous everyday activities are endowed with creative significance.

Whether we call it spiritual or affective, or see it as a form of imaginative engagement when people are 'taken out of themselves' by an artwork or cultural product, doesn't matter too much. What matters is that this engagement is of great importance to them. It answers a felt need that is perhaps not otherwise satisfied. It remains relevant when people are quickened, lifted up or enchanted by what they see, hear or read in an artistic or cultural product. The experience of this may then be related to exceptionality simply because their feelings are not normally stimulated and engaged in this way, not made to seem so connected with what lies beyond them because of the mundane sway of convention and routine. Caricaturing

this experience may be necessary when it becomes aesthetically precious, socially pretentious or takes the form of tiresome attention-seeking. But such instances should not diminish its value, actual or potential, in creativity's range of significance.

This aspect of creativity's value is closely related to a sense of what is new for people. While innovation may be strikingly apparent within a particular artistic field, how new is new, and how successful any innovation may be, are questions that can only be decided in specific cases, and sometimes only with hindsight. Likewise, what is new to particular people is always contingent on who they are and where they are located. For reasons such as this, the relative distinctions between innovation and novelty are shifting and fluid. They should be seen as existing on a continuum along which processes of discovery operate both ways, moving between novelty and innovation in a wide range of distances and shifts from one or the other. A similar approach could be adopted to the vexed questions of authenticity and contrivance, not to mention the various other categories of evaluation and judgement which are in habitual aesthetic use. Throughout this book we shall be arguing that it's the relations *between* categories that count, not the gulfs and apparent boundaries between them.

One of our central motifs is the idea that creativity involves the communication of experience, a dynamic which can take on various forms and characteristics and which certainly does not imply a sender/receiver or encoding/decoding model of communication. The act of creation involves grappling with the conventions, traditions, media and institutional conditions through which any experience can be given communicative form. The creative act also entails a will to communicate outwards from self to others, from particular to general, from local to universal. We're not suggesting that this is the only way of approaching creativity. However, for us, the value of approaching creativity in terms of the communication of experience is that it enables us to counter text-based and artist-centred approaches to creativity at the same time as challenging any assumption that creativity is solely about an act of appreciation or interpretation. It enables us to keep in mind creativity as a relational process – the communication is as much between artistic creator and viewer, reader or listener as it is with other artistic creators and creations that are encountered via the accumulated artefacts and forms of various traditions and generic conventions.

To end our opening passage on a more personal note, this book started life as a series of conversations in the pubs of Leicestershire, sometime in the middle of the 1990s. There were no institutional imperatives driving our initial discussions – perversely, it might seem, we were winding down at the end of a working day. What animated our talk was an interest in and frustration with much that we'd been reading about the terms creative and creativity. It was some time before these dialogues suggested a book, and only comparatively recently that the book took on any coherent form or structure. It has been written in the spaces (or, probably more accurately, the cracks) between other projects, and between the day-to-day

demands of academic jobs and family life. Writing the book has occasionally been a frustrating experience, as we've searched for a way to clarify our first muddled thoughts on an issue or to argue our case with greater coherence. At the same time, it has benefited from being co-written, as we've honed each other's prose and pooled our knowledge. We're very aware that this book is neither a definitive nor a conclusive final say on the subject – and we wouldn't wish it to be taken as such. Our hope is that what we've written will provoke and encourage further thinking, dialogue and critical debate about an activity and process central to our humanity. We dedicate the book to our children – Lucy, Joseph and Oscar – who have continually shown, in their imaginative encounters with the peculiarities of the world, the mark of their own creative responses and impulses.

1

Creation

A tangled web of meanings and associations has grown up around the word creativity. These threads link together conceptions of the elevated and the mundane, the exceptional and the ordinary. They are a legacy of the term's etymological development which are usually ignored, but are highly significant. They are important elements in the range of characteristics that have been attached to the term creativity.

It has often only been either the elevated and exceptional, or the everyday and ordinary, which have been highlighted. One confers on the term a rarefied and occasionally mystical air, the other can make the word seem commonplace and even banal. Rarely have the links between both these senses of the term creativity been retained and explored.

We seek to recover the power inherent in the term for bringing the elevated and the mundane into conjunction, and for illuminating how the exceptional and the ordinary feed off each other. In this chapter we begin exploring these connections and tensions by tracing the changing meanings of the term creativity within an influential western trajectory of thought. In doing this, we highlight the legacies that are carried into contemporary discussions and the false dichotomies and practical dynamics they produce.

From Creation to Creativity

Although most religions have some type of creation myth, the contemporary western concept of creativity can be traced back through a Judaeo-Christian tradition of thought to ideas about the divine creation of the physical and human world (Boorstin, 1992; Williams, 1976). The strength of this tradition made the emergence of its secularised meanings a slow and protracted process. The term changed only gradually from its earlier, exclusively cosmological reference, as in divine creation, bringing the world itself and the creatures within it into being, with the ancillary term creature deriving from the same etymological stem. Expansion of the sense of the term began in the

sixteenth century, particularly in relation to processes of making by people. Its modern meanings emerge from this new humanist emphasis, the earliest tendency to which can be traced in Renaissance theory. Nevertheless, the prior cosmological reference remained powerful enough for human artistic creation to be at times unfavourably compared with nature as the external manifestation of divine creation, or for the word to be used pejoratively to indicate falseness and contrivance.

Consequently, the transfer of the attribution of creative power from God to Man, with a characteristically male monopoly of reference to transgender human energies and abilities, was both hesitant, because of the obvious danger of blasphemy, and intermixed, as in the idea of the revelatory powers of art, disclosing to human wonder the hand of the Almighty, or of art as an allegory of divine inspiration. The span of this long transfer of meaning is suggested by Donne's conception of poetry as 'counterfeit Creation' and, two hundred years later, Shelley's stress, in his *Defence of Poetry*, on the capacity of poetry to 'create anew the universe after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration'. By the late nineteenth century, Shakespeare's 'poetic creativity' could be explicitly named as such, given an expressivist gloss and described as 'spontaneous flow' (Ward, 1875, Vol. 1: 506), for these aspects of the term had by then become established and distinctively modern. They would not have been available to Shakespeare himself, who used the earlier form of 'creation' to denote something false, as in that 'dagger of the mind' proceeding 'from the heat-oppressed brain' in *Macbeth*, or in the twinned questions posed in *The Comedy of Errors*: 'Are you a God? Would you create me new?' Such confinement of use was necessary because the modern sense of the word only began to gain in significance from the later seventeenth century onwards.

This specifically modern significance came about through its consciously validating association with art. By the time of the Romantics, the term's positive human value was assured, though strong threads of its earliest meanings were retained, with artistic activity carrying with it associations of something magical or metaphysical, and with creativity exclusively manifest in the poet as, in some guises, a sort of messenger from God or, in others, an intensely perceptive spirit able to elevate our seeing to a superior plane of reality. For example, the German Romantic poet and novelist, Novalis, valued artistic creation for being 'as much an end in itself as the divine creation of the universe, and one as original and as grounded on itself as the other: because the two are one, and God reveals himself in the poet as he gives himself corporeal form in the visible universe' (cited in Taylor, 1985: 230). This is a view which easily slides into pantheism, as a metaphysical reconciliation of God, world and human beings, but it is through ideas of poetic and artistic inspiration that the older meanings of the word 'creative' have proved resilient, even

as the terms 'creation' and 'creativity' have themselves been more radically changed. The earliest example (1728) of an explicit connection of imaginative human creation with a noumenal source, in the mythological personification of an artistically inspiring goddess, mingles earlier and later senses together in one rolling phrase: 'companion of the Muse, Creative Power, Imagination' (Williams, 1976: 73). The reference to imagination is a specifically modern emphasis, while its companion connects back to the idea of some other-worldly assistance in the creative process.

The idea of a transcendent muse has for a long time seemed decidedly dated, with all the resonance of a mannered literary conceit, yet the conception of divine inspiration in the act of writing poetry remained a remarkably strong, even if less than central, element in modernism. The characteristic effect has been to play down the act of writing itself, as a deliberately learned and practised craft. This is a point to which we shall return but, as an example, it can be detected in Yeats's description of the act of poetic creation – 'I made it out of a mouthful of air' – as if his own shaping mind had been absent from the activity of composition. A poem for Yeats was 'self-begotten'. It would be wrong to suppose that this way of accounting for the act of poetic creation is merely an enchanting legacy of the Celtic Twilight. Throughout the twentieth century, when the term 'creativity' became established as denoting the faculty to which the verb 'create' relates as a process, these earlier associations continued to be invoked as a very active and more than residual sense of the term. In his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life', Baudelaire wrote of the way in which, for the 'true artist', the 'ideal execution' becomes 'unconscious' and 'flowing' (1972: 407–8). Similarly, John Lennon distinguished between the songs that he composed simply because a new album had to be produced, and the 'real music…the music of the spheres, the music that surpasses understanding…I'm just a channel…I transcribe it like a medium' (Waters, 1988). The composer, John Taverner, uses the same metaphor, and refers to 'auditory visions' when he feels that music is being dictated to him (Barber, 1999).

These descriptions of creative inspiration derive from the conception of it that grew to prominence during the Romantic period. This accommodated both the notion of being spoken through, used as a mouthpiece of the muse, and an emphasis on individual imagination and feeling, for it was through such faculties that authentic self-expression was felt to flow. More significantly, it was through imagination and feeling that the artist connected with the impulse of Nature, with the spirit, as Wordsworth felt it, that is deeply interfused in all living things and impels all objects of our thought. Allowing this impulse, this hidden current of life, to speak through us came to define the human act of creation for Romantic thinkers, with the artist become an emissary of the divine. The creative artist looked inward for a sense of providential order,

harmony and moral significance, and strived to be in tune with Nature in order to experience life to its fullest and most complete. The connection backwards was with the sense of creation involving some metaphysical force, as in the divine ordination of the world and all in existence within it. But this force was now located within the individual human being, becoming the object of personal spiritual search for those seeking the wellspring of truth and beauty.

This organicist notion of creativity has had a powerful influence over the whole modern period, including among those who broke with Romanticism or developed aesthetic values counter to its central tenets. It distinguishes the artist as someone whose 'inner' voice emerges from self-exploration, and whose expressive power derives from imaginative depth. Artistic creativity has become synonymous with this sense of exploration and expressive power. As a form of radical subjectivism, it neglects other modes of creativity, such as the creativity sparked by dialogue and collaboration, or the creativity inherent in popular cultural traditions. Its influence over the development of the trend towards subject-centredness in modern culture, along with the accompanying ideal of authenticity, should not be underestimated.

The Romantic poet's spiritual communion with Nature co-existed of course with physical energies and carnal pleasures, with ritual worship at the shrine of the sexual body. In a line that runs from Rousseau to 1960s counterculture, sensuality was valorised as a source of spiritual fulfilment, so reinforcing the puritanical distrust of artists as morally suspect, if not already damned. The greatest influence of the Romantic conception of artistic creativity has nevertheless been through its strong sense of expression as conjuring something forth, giving form to what is inchoate, and bringing an inner voice or vision into being. When this happens, expression involves a much fuller realisation of human potential, and so produces a defining moment in our lives. Our individual lives are shaped and fulfilled by such moments, in what is taken as a realisation of the particular originality lying within us.

Changing ideas about creativity have thus become integrally wrapped up in the modern sense of individuality. This is perhaps why the term creativity is invariably used in the singular, for the highest form of creative practice is generally assumed to be realised in the individual artist, rather than in any openly manifest form of collective production. Throughout the modern period, art has been regarded as the consummate expression of individual selfhood, shaping and bringing into shape a distinctive sense of the world and of the artist within it. In its particular manifestations, this is what critics understand and praise as the achievement of artistic vision. Such achievement illustrates how, in its modern, secularised conception, creativity retains key links with notions of spirituality and spiritual life that are far from being merely residual. Art in this non-mimetic formulation becomes a locus of spirituality that is alternative to formal religion yet cognate with it. Indeed, in some versions it becomes a

substitute for religion in recompense for loss of faith or materialist values which are thereby disavowed.

From the Romantics onwards, loss of religious faith or antipathy to the values of industrial capitalism could generate a need for escape from the realities of material life. The sense of artistic creativity offered a spiritual alternative to what was seen as an aesthetically debased, socially hostile, money-grubbing world where goodness, love and beauty were fleeting. So, for example, William Morris wrote of young men of his generation having grown up during a period of dull bourgeois philistinism and so being 'forced to turn back on ourselves', for 'only in ourselves and the world of art and literature was there any hope' (Thompson, 1977: 14). Art and literature remained a continuing source of refuge from the mundane realities of the street, the factory and the counting house. It is the opposition between them that underlies the pathos of Yeats's lines of retrospective self-assessment:

> Players and painted stage took all my love,
> And not those things that they were emblems of.

The tension between mystical ideal and mundane life – or put another way, between poetic representation and prosaic reality – is central to modern conceptions of art and creativity. Indeed, it is the contrast between the metaphysical and the material, the elevated and the profane, which make the concept of creativity both fascinating and frustrating.

We want to argue that an informed understanding of this can be reached by attempting to reintegrate both the exceptional and pervasive meanings of the term. Three sets of issues accompany this attempt. Each of them follow, in different ways, from the inherited meanings and associations of the term which derive from its historical development.

First, any effort to articulate the experience of the creative process pushes us to the edge of what words can say. It inevitably involves having to bridge the gap between the sensational experience of creating – whether a song, poem or painting – and the necessity of translating an understanding of that experience into language that can be communicated to others. The endurance of this gap is perhaps unavoidable, since those acts of creativity in which someone is immersed and at one with the act itself are quite distinct from subsequent, relatively self-conscious efforts to describe what the creative process involves. This is why we often look to metaphorical forms of expression in referring to the phenomenological experience of creating and it is why certain creative experiences are rendered in a pseudo-religious or non-rational manner. Yet because creativity is always achieved within quite specific social, historical and political circumstances, we should at least be cautious about making or accepting any grand generalisations about this or any aspect of the creative process.

A second issue concerns the opposition between that which is felt to be merely produced and that which is experienced as truly inspired, which in turn informs the valuation of the creative product itself. For example, some novels, films and popular songs have enjoyed considerable critical and commercial success that has subsequently proved ephemeral, whilst others, often less recognised initially, have endured and become 'classics'. The novels of Zola, the recordings of Robert Johnson, and the soundtracks to 1970s blaxploitation movies are cases in point, where their methods of production have retrospectively been re-assessed as more creative and inspired than had been recognised in contemporary judgements of the time, or where an earlier local recognition of their creative character has subsequently become more universally acknowledged. Regardless of the processes through which these shifts occur, the reasons for its occurrence and the evaluative principles applied are what generally go uninspected. The emphasis has been far more on certain kinds of art which possess a transcendental quality, any reference to which is generally the point at which analysis begins to evaporate.

This kind of distinction has at times been confounded with another of a much longer lineage, being manifest, for example, in the different aesthetic appreciation of poetry in Plato and Aristotle. The retention of an opposition between the claim that art represents a 'superior reality' and the denigration of it as 'mere romance' or 'inferior' fiction (pulp, trash or whatever) is, as Raymond Williams pointed out, a logical development of the theory of art as imitation, which can be traced back to its appearance in the ancient Greek classics (Williams, 1961: 27). The disparagement of artistic or literary work as social or historical observation is, by contrast, specifically modern, and from the nineteenth century was tied up with the development of positivism in the social sciences and of objectivism as a major aim of historiography. These negative evaluations run in counterpoint to the expressivist conception of creativity, as a sort of shadow inheritance. A sceptical regard of the use of literary sources still applies in professional historical practice, despite the insightful explanatory uses to which they have been put, and the recent attention paid, in meta-historical commentary to the use of rhetorical devices, tropes and narrative emplotments in actual historical writing.

A third and related point, following from the previous ones, is the way in which the idea of creative activity has retained an integral distinction between a type of inspired, 'real' or 'authentic' creativity and a more routine, self-conscious, manipulative and false sense of the term. This dichotomy is apparent on the one hand in the appeal to the spontaneity of creativity in reference to Shakespeare's work or in Lennon's reflections on his 'transcription' of 'real music', and on the other in its contrast with material produced as a result of the contractual obligations to deliver a new dramatic script or songs for the next album. It can be found, formulated in different ways, throughout

the history of the concept and its gradual process of secularisation, or quasi-secularisation. This process led to the shift of emphasis onto human capacity, with its accompanying transfer of originality, of bringing into existence, from God to the human imagination.

Between Enlightenment and Romanticism

Though it was only realised in retrospect, the full accomplishment of this transfer of the capacity for creation marked a decisive break. Among its various repercussions, the relation between creativity and selfhood, and the rise of innovation as a distinct cultural value, are of enormous significance. They are both connected with the sense of originality, and with the realisation of a way of seeing, making or saying that is recognised as different from what has come before. Ideas about creativity have become integral to a modern sense of individuality and subjectivity, innovation and newness.

At the heart of these conceptions lies another dichotomy, one which becomes manifest in the conflict between imagination and reason. Romanticism's identification of the source of human creativity in the imagination was a reaction against the Enlightenment's championing of reason as the supreme human faculty. For the Romantics, the Enlightenment's claims for the sovereignty of reason raised the prospect of an instrumental secularity lacking in the moral or spiritual dimension necessary for personal fulfilment and cultural nourishment. Romanticism located this dimension in the creative imagination. The free, wakeful play of the imagination, it was felt, provided a life-enhancing presence in the process of being that would provide the appropriate balance to a secularised, utilitarian society, a force that would break the cold, clinical fetters of rationalism and instrumental approaches to knowledge.

The creative imagination became exalted as a human and aesthetic value precisely because the faculty of self-making and its perceived relation to self-produced cultures was felt to be inhibited, at the start of the modern period, by the newly established stance of intellectual disengagement, neutrality and calculation. It was because this stance was seen to lend vital support to scientific rationality and the means-end rationale of industrial capitalism that the creative imagination became revered as a way of realising a 'heightened, more vibrant quality of life' (Taylor, 1989: 372).

During the nineteenth century, the value assigned to the creative imagination in western societies gained in strength as a response to a crisis of faith and the gradual decline of religion as a significant source of meaning, insight and belief. Yet neither Nature as the external world nor the sense of 'nature within' have been able to offer a replacement of this source in the way the

Romantics believed. The Romantic argument has been that science has de-spiritualised Nature as the external world, robbing it of its mystery and magic, while industrial capitalism has tamed and now threatens to destroy it. While we can no longer be innocently attuned to Nature as a source of unquestionable moral good, an enduring spiritual need for art and art-making runs parallel to the desire for an integrated relationship to the natural world. It is partly because of this that ecological and environmental issues have become a rallying point of recent social movements. At the same time, Nature, construed in either sense, is no longer the locus of the creative imagination in the same way as it was for the Romantic movement.

The locus may have changed, but the value hasn't. The creative imagination continues to exert a strong pull against rationalistic modes of thought and action. It is commonly recognised that the twin traditions of the Enlightenment and Romanticism have guided us in quite contrary directions. What is not so commonly recognised is that their profound influence over the past two centuries lies also in attempts somehow to reconcile them, to draw on the powers of *both* disengaged reason and the creative imagination. So much of modern culture swings back and forth between them, but moving towards ways of resolving the tensions between them is also characteristically modern, even if the impetus towards such a reconciliation comes originally from Romanticism.

The Romantic vision of integration and wholeness conceived of spiritual and intellectual fulfilment as one. This has proved widely influential. So, for example, Marx's ideal of the all-round person embodied the central values of Romantic humanism. William Morris, likewise, fiercely opposed Victorian middle-class individualism while maintaining an intense interest in a free, full life in conscious pursuit of its broadest creative potential. The aspiration to full consciousness and all-roundness in life has remained in circulation ever since. It certainly informed Adorno's critique of the negative consequences of Enlightenment thought, and his polemics against the use of culture for propaganda and by the culture industry. It was his hope – briefly glimpsed perhaps in the work of Beethoven and Schoenberg – of a union of subject/object, individual/totality that informed his despair at the way such possibilities are impeded by modern forms of commercial culture. Today, people may feel sceptical of the Romantic ideals of a spiritualised nature and of self-completion through art, but because of loss of faith in both God and science, they continue to aspire to expressive wholeness, or to this in combination with deliberative rationality. Creativity would not have developed and maintained its largely positive connotations in the modern period without this continuing aspiration.

The aim of self-creation requires appropriate models, and chief among these is art. The link forged between artistic creation and self-discovery or self-making remains important as an alternative resource to religious faith, or to