

The San Miguel Artist Project: A Grounded Theory of "The Emergence of Wonder"

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Key words:
creativity; art;
emergence;
wonder; grounded
theory
methodology;
phenomenology

Abstract: This article employs classical grounded theory methodology to explain the creative process of artists. Two integrally connected core variables are identified: emergence and wonder. Wonder represents the experience that motivates and sustains the creation of works of art, and emergence the process by which the sense of wonder is progressively embodied in the content and form of the work. The theory describes a number of distinct phases, including the experience of *wonder*, *immersion* in artistic practice, *conceiving* a specific work or project, *composing* the work, *presenting* the work for an actual or potential audience, and finally *moving-on*. These phases involve a dynamic stream of recursive processes—sketching, refining, connecting, channeling, and assessing—that ultimately facilitate the emergence of wonder in artistic works.

The theory of the emergence of wonder also appears to apply to the research processes of both grounded theory methodology and phenomenology, suggesting that these two research methodologies are more similar and have more in common with the artistic creative process than is commonly acknowledged.

Table of Contents

- [1. Studying the Creative Process of Artists](#)
- [2. Emergence of Wonder: The Core Variable](#)
- [3. Elements and Phases of Emergence of Wonder](#)
 - [3.1 Contextual variables—Wonder and immersion](#)
 - [3.2 Process variables—Conceiving, composing, presenting & moving-on](#)
- [4. Significant Variables and Related Questions](#)
- [5. Literature Review and Directions for Future Research](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[References](#)

[Author](#)

[Citation](#)

1. Studying the Creative Process of Artists

"There's that feeling that you get when you see something that you don't understand the origin of: *wonderment*. It brings about a kind of innocence, and I love that. I love to witness it. I love to be part of making those moments happen."

SWOON, a Brooklyn Street Artist (RYZIK, 2014, p.AR1)

What is it that artists are experiencing and doing when they create their work? How do they describe and interpret their own creative process? What can we learn about the general nature of creativity from their first-person accounts of their experience? And what would be the best approach for investigating this complex process? These were the questions that guided this grounded theory study of the creative process of artists. [1]

As the researcher I was particularly interested in what practicing artists had to say about their own creative process, and I wanted to develop a theoretical understanding grounded in their experience and practice. The two research methods that were most applicable were phenomenology and grounded theory (CRESWELL, 2007, pp.57-68): Both methods emphasize open inquiry as free as possible from researcher bias, allowing theoretical insights to emerge from the data rather than being imposed from a pre-defined body of knowledge. They both also study human interactions and psycho-social processes in the natural context of lived experience, ensuring the applicability of insights to the actual practice of participants in a defined domain of life. And they both are focused on developing conceptual insight into what is essential or core to the experience or process in question (GLASER, 1978, pp.93-100; VAN MANEN, 1990, pp.8-11). The difference is that phenomenology focuses on *understanding the essential structures and meaning* of an experience, action, or way of being, whereas grounded theory methodology (GTM) focuses on *generating a theory about the process* involved in resolving problems in a specific domain of life. Both appear to be well suited to the study of the creative process of artists. The process includes modes of consciousness and ways of being that lend themselves to phenomenological analysis, as well as well-defined phases of a psycho-social process that lend themselves to GTM. [2]

In the end I chose GTM as the primary approach to the study of the creative process of artists for several reasons: 1. its focus on theory generation, which was a specific theoretical interest for this study; 2. its method of comparative analysis, specifically theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method, appeared to be a powerful way to generate generalizable insights, hypotheses, and theory from empirical data (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1999 [1967]), pp.35-43, 45-77, 105-115); and 3. value placed on the emergence (as opposed to the forcing) of conceptual categories and hypotheses from (interview) data. Both

phenomenology and GTM require bracketing of theoretical pre-conceptions to allow conceptual insights to emerge from the data, but GLASER particularly emphasized the importance of emergence vs. forcing as a fundamental principle of the GTM (GLASER, 1978, pp.2-12; 2004, §40-50; KELLE, 2005; SIMMONS, 2011). [3]

This third point relating to creative emergence proved to be of surprising and unexpected importance in this study, where it was also identified as the foundational concept for how artists create their original works. The similarity between the creative process of artists and the creative process of theory generation and insight in GTM and phenomenology further suggested points of complementarity between the two research approaches. [4]

The study included interviews of approximately 20 artists, working primarily in the community of San Miguel, Mexico with a few additional interviews in the greater Chicago area. San Miguel is a UNESCO national heritage site with a strong cultural history and robust community of artists, making it an ideal setting to study the process of creating art. [5]

I explained to each artist that the general purpose of the study was to better understand the process by which they create their work, grounding the study in their first person accounts. The artists understood it was to be an academic study and that their names and responses would be anonymous and confidential. They were also given the opportunity to review the write up of the study prior to its publication, for feedback both on content relating to their work and on the resulting theory. [6]

I used an intensive interviewing approach as described by Kathy CHARMAZ (2010 [2006], pp.25-35). This approach emphasized open-ended questions with follow up prompts to encourage participants to go deeper into the specifics of the processes and experiences they were describing. The approach was well suited to this study in that "both grounded theory methods and intensive interviewing are open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted" (p.28). [7]

The intensive interviewing was often supplemented with direct observation of the artist's completed work. Many of the interviews were conducted in the artist's studio or workplace where there was direct access to the works about which the artists were speaking. This allowed for very detailed, experientially grounded discussions of how the artist went about conceiving and creating specific works. The combined approach of intensive interviewing and direct observation thus provided a level of depth of analysis which was well suited to this study. [8]

The interviews began with an open-ended grand tour question asking how they go about creating their work, giving them free rein to explore any facet they chose. The interview process followed classical GTM, allowing the direction of the interview to emerge based on the artist's responses. There were no pre-defined criteria regarding which arts or artists to include in the study. All the artistic areas

that were eventually included in the study emerged through the grounded theory method of theoretical sampling; with theoretical insights from initial interviews suggesting subsequent areas and questions to flesh out the emergent theory (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1999 [1967], pp.101-115). In the end the artistic areas covered in the study included painting, photography, poetry, fiction, instrumental music, song writing and performing, acting, film making, mixed-media arts, sculpture, art education, and found art. [9]

Interviews were transcribed and coded, with related memos generated after each interview. The resulting core constructs and related variables were developed following classical GTM, resulting in the final grounded theory described in the following sections. [10]

Section 2 describes the core variable which defines the theory—the emergence of wonder. It involves an analysis of the dynamic by which an artist's initial experience of wonderment emerges and becomes embodied in the content and form of the artist's work. Section 3 analyzes the elements and phases of the theory, including wonder, immersion, conceiving, composing, presenting, and moving-on: Section 3.1 analyzes the contextual variables of wonder and immersion that characterize all artistic activity. Section 3.2 focuses on the phases of the process for creating specific works of art: conceiving, composing, presenting, and moving-on. Section 4 addresses significant variables and related questions that pertain to differences and similarities across the various artistic media. Questions regarding the relationship of image and narrative in the various art forms and the influence of the audience in the emergent process of live performance are among the topics discussed. Section 5 provides a literature review and directions for future research, situating the current study in the broader academic and cultural discussion of the nature of the artistic creative process. [11]

2. Emergence of Wonder: The Core Variable

GTM asks the fundamental question (GLASER, 1978, pp.93-109): What factor or variable best explains the various challenges or problems that characterize a given domain of life? From the accounts of artists interviewed in this study, the core variable that best explains how artists work is the principle of *emergence of wonder*. The principle of emergence postulates that artists facilitate the emergence of their work rather than force a work to fit a preconceived intention. They bring to bear their know-how of domain-specific knowledge and technique in the arts with a basic life attitude of openness to a sense of wonder. This attitude provides the context from which creative artistic works emerge. This openness gives rise to moments of being wonderstruck that provide the inspiration for specific works. That spark is transformed into a conception for the work and is then channeled and transformed through the process of composition where it becomes embodied in an artistic work. If the composition is successful, the sense of wonder embodied in the work evokes the experience for the artist and for others, representing the final emergence of the work from the experience from which it originated. [12]

In a sense these constructs of emergence and wonder represent independent core variables, in that they each have distinctive characteristics. One is a process, and the other is an experience or way of being. But in the analysis of the creative process of the artists in this study, it became clear that both these variables are essential to adequately explain the creative process. The process essentially involves the emergence of something unexpected and novel, which requires that the artist remain open to the flow of experience in the creative process rather than trying to force a pre-defined result. At the same time, the receptivity to the experience of wonder throughout the creative process represents the central challenge and source of joy and inspiration that guides the work to completion. Both aspects are thus core to the creative process. Without the experience of novelty associated with emergence, and without the sustained experience and transformation of the experience of wonder, there is no art. [13]

The creative process itself is thus a process of transformation, in which the initial sense of wonder emerges through the experience and actions of the artist into a new manifestation in the embodied work. This of course is the case when the work is successful and fulfills its intended purpose. When the work fails to sustain a sense of wonder, particularly for the artist but also for potential audiences, it is then abandoned and the artist moves on. [14]

The meaning of "emergence" includes the notions of "coming forth, issuing from concealment, obscurity, or confinement" as well as being "the result of an evolutionary process." It also refers to "an unforeseen occurrence; a state of things unexpectedly arising," from the Latin verb *emergere*—"arising from."¹ [15]

This sense of the work issuing from concealment and obscurity and being part of an evolutionary process was evidenced in the narratives of all the artists. They described ideas for specific works as arising from obscure and unexpected sources, and composing as a process of being open to how the work was evolving and revealing itself. The sense of the surprising or unexpected was described as one of the delights of the creative process, and contributed to the sense of sustained wonder that characterized successful works. [16]

Emergence thus best describes the way in which a work literally comes into being through its own internal dynamic, with the artist serving more as a channel for its coming forth than as an agent that makes it happen. One can describe emergence as the self-realization of the work, in which the artist establishes a relationship and channels the work from initial notion or conception to final manifestation. This is admittedly an awkward way of speaking, reminiscent of HEGEL's account of the dialectical process by which notions progressively actualize their inherent potential through the emergence of partial, conflicting perspectives into a unified, coherent totality (BAILLIE, 1967, pp.32-33). HEGEL viewed this process as the manifestation of spirit in human experience and history, operating according to principles of "emergent evolution" (LICHTHEIM,

1 Oxford English Dictionary (OED) Online, December 2014, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61129?redirectedFrom=emergence> [Accessed: January 23, 2015].

1967, p.xxv). Several artists in the study spoke in similar terms of a channeling of spirit—which became one of the defining properties of the composing phase of the creative process. [17]

This process of being receptive to the wonder of spirit is another way of characterizing the creative process of artists. Wonder is a mode of being and experiencing, rather than a specific set of actions or a defined phase of a process *per se*. It includes the properties of being open to experience, and specifically to the vitality and mystery of the moment. A painter and a writer in the study explicitly described their process as a channeling of spirit beyond their conscious will or intention. A poet in the study expressed the view (shared by many others) of an experience of WOW! that motivates his work, and the importance of being open to the possibility of such moments in the way that a child is open to novelty and surprise in each new experience. [18]

The verb "wonder" is defined in the OED as feeling or being "affected with wonder; to be struck with surprise or astonishment, to marvel;" and also as a more reflective process: "To ask oneself in wonderment; to feel some doubt or curiosity (*how, whether, why*, etc.); to be desirous to know or learn."² [19]

Wonder is thus a blending of intense emotional experiences of admiration, surprise, astonishment, and amazement, as well the expression of more reflective qualities of curiosity, questioning, and doubt. It encompasses a spectrum of emotional and cognitive experiences of surprising, unexpected, and often uplifting and inexplicable aspects of reality and human existence. [20]

The artists in the study consistently referred to a sense of wonder that inspired ideas for specific works or projects. This included a range of experiences including: curiosity; fascination with an intriguing question or puzzle; seeing something as though for the first time; appreciation of beauty or the sublime; a sense of enchantment with an image, concept, or story; experiences of awe, majesty, and mystery associated with spiritual experience. [21]

One painter was reminded of the theologian Rudolph OTTO who wrote about the sense of the holy as an experience of awe and fascination with the ultimate power and mystery at the center of life. Quoting from this interview:

"Otto called it the experience of the 'mysterium tremendum et fascinatum.'³ I don't apply the term God to this, as some do. He describes it as a numinous reality that we can experience—a form of transcendent consciousness. I believe that when I am able to access this reality the consciousness flows through me and guides my work." [22]

2 OED Online, December 2014, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/229938?rskey=nhZwxD&result=3&isAdvanced=false> [Accessed: January 23, 2015].

3 OTTO describes powerful and intense feelings that are associated with the experience of mystery, power, and fascination found in both religion and art. These feelings range from tranquility to intense excitement and frenzy, including feelings of awe, dread, overpowering majesty, intense energy and urgency, and a sense of fascination and wonderment (1958 [1917], pp.12-40).

The term wonder captures this range of experiences at the core of the creative process, as does the notion of being wonderstruck by a specific experience or happening that provides the inspiration for a specific work. These focal moments of being wonderstruck serve as the catalyst for creative work. They provide the spark from which emerges the conception, composition, and presentation of the work. Without these moments of wonder there is no creative process and no artistic work gets created. [23]

The challenge of artistic creativity is to be able to access these inspirational moments and then to craft a work that embodies and transforms that experience into an original work. The experience of wonder sparks the inspirational process of conceiving the work; it is transformed through the process of composing into a sustained expression of wonder embodied in a specific artistic medium; and finally it is communicated to the artist and to others who in turn experience it as embodied in the completed work. In all these respects, emergent wonder is the focal concern and interest that guides the creative process. [24]

At the same time, the artist is not passive in this process. This process includes immersion in the practice and knowledge related to mastery of artistic technique, and the ability to engage in the experience and practices required to conceive, compose, and present original works of art. Clarifying the properties and relationships among these elements and phases provides substance to the theory and the basis for explaining how the relevant variables interact to facilitate the emergence of the final work. [25]

3. Elements and Phases of Emergence of Wonder

The theory of emergence of wonder as developed in this study is multifaceted and involves a number of distinct phases, including the experience of wonder, immersion in artistic practice, conceiving a specific work or project, composing the work, presenting the work for an actual or potential audience, and finally moving-on to further experiences of wonder and immersion. The variables of wonder and immersion are considered as contextual variables, as they define the context for the emergence of specific works. The variables of conceiving, composing, and presenting are considered as specific phases that define the process of creating a specific work. And the phase of moving-on marks the completion or abandonment of the work and an opening to new experiences of creative emergence and opportunities for further immersion in artistic practice. [26]

As the following analysis indicates, these variables define a sequence of phases leading from initial experiences of wonder to completion of a work, but within each phase there are various recurrent sub-processes and dynamics. For example the experience of wonder is a contextual variable in the theory, but it also manifests itself as an essential aspect of forming a conception for a work. The experience of *being wonderstruck* by a specific event or happening initiates the process of conceiving a specific work. Likewise immersion is both a contextual variable that prepares the process for an emergent work, and also a property of composing the work. In the final analysis, the theory is best

characterized as a dynamic stream of recursive processes that occur in a spiral-like manner, rather than as a strictly linear process. The linear sequence of phases is still helpful in clarifying the broad outline of the creative process, with the understanding that there are specific processes that recur within each of the phases. [27]

To clarify the various dynamic aspects of the theory of creative emergence in this section of the article, the main processes or variables in the theory will be underlined when they are introduced in the text, and the recurrent sub-processes or dynamic properties identified in *italics*. [28]

3.1 Contextual variables—Wonder and immersion

The experience of wonder as a contextual variable has already been described in the discussion of the core variable of the grounded theory. It includes this capacity for *childlike openness to experience* and the experience of novelty, and it also includes moments of *being wonderstruck* that provide the inspiration for conceiving an original work. These inspirational moments are described by one photographer as epiphanies that motivate the artist to take a particular photo or which one experiences in the viewing of a successful photograph. Likewise another poet describes a moment of seeing a man rise from a wheel chair after an all-night pilgrimage to a church in San Miguel, and walking the last several hundred yards to enter the church. The pilgrimage itself was a spectacle of wonder, and the moment of being wonderstruck by this single act of courage gave rise to her poem. [29]

At the same time, wonder is not simply a passive act of responsiveness to the mystery of life; it is also an *active state of questioning and speculation* about the meaning of an experience. It has both an affective and a cognitive quality that inspires creative thought as well as artistic expression. It gives rise to the thought of writing the poem or taking the photograph or painting the portrait and engaging in the question of how to express that sense of wonder that inspires the work. This active mode of questioning and speculation leads to the activities of *sketching and refining* that give form to the work and that characterizes the various phases of conceiving, composing, and presenting the final work. [30]

Many artists interviewed described periods in which they could not access this state of wonder and the related states of childlike openness, epiphany, questioning and speculation. These were periods where their lives were characterized by financial pressures, relationship issues, and generally periods of anxiety, depression, or routine that blocked access to this way of experiencing life. A combination of persistence in the face of adversity and a deep yearning to engage in the creative process were the decisive factors that enabled them to move through these uncreative periods. One artist who was also an accomplished art educator indicated that it was not talent that differentiated the artists who persisted in creative work, but rather a yearning to immerse themselves in the creative process. The theory of emergent wonder suggests that the yearning to access this deeply fulfilling state is what enables artists to move

through the periods of creative drought and to re-engage in creating original works.⁴ [31]

Creative emergence begins with wonder, but it also requires *immersion* in artistic practice in order to result in the creation of original art work. Most all the artists interviewed referenced a time, usually in childhood, when they were first exposed to some form of art and where they experienced this sense of wonder. In one case it was a painter's first experience at the age of seven of a VAN GOGH painting in a museum in New York. It was spellbinding and evoked a yearning to re-create what he saw there. Another artist described a similar experience viewing the paintings of the Dutch masters and being enthralled with the effects they were able to create. A novelist spoke of her devouring a book of fairy tales at the age of seven and being hooked on the desire to write fiction for the rest of her life. The writer and performer Patti SMITH, whose biography, "Just Kids," I happened to read during the course of this study, described her initial experience of wonder at the age of twelve viewing the art of Picasso at the Museum of Art in Philadelphia (2010, p.11). Her story vividly depicted this common theme of how a powerful childhood experience can naturally flow into a lifelong yearning and immersion in artistic practice. [32]

Immersion includes at least two aspects or dimensions: *playful engagement* with a preferred artistic media *and deliberate practice* to deepen and broaden knowledge and technical expertise. The dimension of playful engagement is inherent in all phases of the creative process and is characterized by childlike openness, spontaneity, vitality, positivity and flow. Artists described the experience of losing themselves in the creative process, losing all sense of time, and being fully immersed in doing the work. They described their work as nurturing and fulfilling, and in several cases as healing and therapeutic. This positive experience of playful engagement was an invariant aspect of the creative process, going against the myth of the tortured artist (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2007 [1996], pp.16-20). [33]

It is an interesting question to what extent natural talent figures in this process of immersion in deliberate practice (GLADWELL, 2011 [2008], pp.35-68); certainly some level of ability is required to feel an evolving sense of mastery. But in speaking with art educators, it was not simply a matter of talent that led to this immersing. There was a quality of persistence in the pursuit of mastery; and deeper than that, a yearning to engage in the process for the sheer pleasure of learning and growing in mastery. Immersion thus appears as a natural extension of wonder, including the fascination with being able to re-create images and stories and the extension of child-like play into the more disciplined yet equally pleasurable activities of disciplined practice and learning.⁵ [34]

4 The process of following deep personal yearnings into engagement has also been identified as a key dynamic in transformational learning. See the results of the GTM study in WRIGHT (2008) and in WRIGHT and WRIGHT (2013, pp.41-87).

5 The notion of play as a fundamental principle of creative living and the individual's "fundamental project of being" is also emphasized in existential-phenomenological studies of creative living (MEDLOCK, 1986, pp.66-71, 198-203, 237-243; SARTRE, 1953, pp.103-107, 236-241; WRIGHT & WRIGHT, 2012, pp.50-51, 73-76).

Immersion involves this dedication to developing mastery that culminates in experiences of unconscious competence (HOWELL, 1982, pp.29-33). Artists in the study most often spoke of developing technique during their process of learning, but rarely in the process of creating an original work. At that point they were applying technique to create and refine desired effects, with a sense of total immersion in the process that precluded reflection on the conscious application of technique. They did reference the conscious focus on technique when refining the work, but for the most part technical skill was an implicit aspect of the process that was embodied in the craft of composing. [35]

The situation is analogous to speaking a language and engaging in conversation. The focus of the fluent speaker is the topic at hand and the process of communicating; the words come to the speakers as they express their thoughts, feelings, requests, etc. This facility presumes a context of immersion in the language and fluidity of expression drawing on implicit linguistic knowledge and skill. Creative emergence can be seen here as a natural feature of all conversation, suggesting an extension of the current theory to a more general theory of human communication (GADAMER, 1993 [1960], pp.383ff.). [36]

3.2 Process variables—Conceiving, composing, presenting & moving-on

The aspects of conceiving, composing, presenting a work and moving-on are conceived in this theory as phases of a unified process. They emerge out of the context of wonder and immersion, and they explain the specific process by which original works come into being. [37]

Conceiving involves the sub-processes of *being wonderstruck*, *sketching*, *refining*, and *clicking*. The initial sense of wonder becomes focused during the conceiving phase of the process. These focal moments spark the intention to create new work. One poet described the moment in which his granddaughter asked him about how to draw shadows. The question enthralled him, and it became the starting point for an idea for a poem. Another writer saw a film about a character who wore a watch that spoke to him, but he couldn't hear it. This led her to wonder what if he could communicate with objects, leading to her idea for a novel. A painter recalled hearing a Talmudic legend from his grandfather about 36 just men who were required to maintain justice in the world, and it became the inspiration for a new art project. [38]

Being wonderstruck leads to exploring the possibility of creating a work. This takes the form of *sketching* the idea, the plot line, the contours of the painting, the melody or chorus of the song, the initial movement of a piece of music or dance, etc. *Sketching* applies to all the artistic media, and involves the exploration of the initial idea in a specific artistic medium. The artist sketches the idea to see if it holds up, if it has the right elements to be worth the investment of time and energy and resources to create a work. The sketching is generally open-ended, exploring different aspects of the possible work to assess its viability. [39]

Sketching flows into *refining*, which is a more analytic process of assessing the merits of the concept as it is emerging. Do the sketches work? What pieces might be missing to make the work cohere as a unified whole. What is the right mix of characters for the play or novel? What instruments are needed to complete the sound we want for this musical piece? A dialectical interplay of sketching and refining goes on to test the possibilities of proceeding further. [40]

The culmination of refining is the experience of *clicking*. This is the experience where everything seems to fall into place. It is an intuitive sense, an intuitive knowing, that everything seems to fit. It often can't be clearly conceptualized and stated in so many words, but there is a sense that the conception feels right and that the refinements are leading toward a coherent whole. [41]

This process of conceiving with the properties of being wonderstruck, sketching, refining, and clicking can also take place directly during the phase of composing. This is what happens in the case improvisation, where the conceiving of the work actually blends into the composing process. In this case conceiving becomes a moment in the composing process, rather than a distinct and separate phase. Jazz composition often has this quality, where the conception of the work is not predefined and the coherence of form emerges through the interactions of the performers. One musician in the study also described her process of composing as a process of improvisation in which she begins with a single word and related image, and then dives into the process of composing the work. Sketching, refining, and clicking can thus appear as elements in composing as well as conceiving, where the conception of the work emerges through the composition itself. [42]

In other cases, conceiving is a discrete phase in which the artist explores possibilities to determine if there is enough substance in the initial wonderstriking concept to support the project of creating an original work. Painters and writers in this study typically engaged in preliminary sketching and refining to flesh out the concept before committing to the full work, though there was considerable variation among painters regarding this continuum between improvisation and deliberate preparation prior to composing the work. Screen writers, directors, and film producers also typically engaged in a discrete proof of concept process prior to committing to the production of the work. Creating a novel or a film requires a substantial investment in time, effort, and often money, making this conceiving phase a necessary step to ensure commitment to investing in the larger creative project. At some point the decision is made to proceed or not. This is the moment when things need to click in order to establish the intention to do the full work. [43]

Conceiving results in a defined concept for the work, with varying degrees of analytic precision. But it is ultimately not an analytical process. The defining feature of conceiving is rather like the act of intercourse and impregnation. The moment of wonderstriking is the moment of WOW! in which the inspiration comes to life. It is embodied, embedded in the inner consciousness of the artist, and begins to take on a life of its own. [44]

The sexual imagery was not explicitly referenced in the interviews with the artists. But in the analysis of the data it was clear that conceiving was a deeply felt sense rather than a conceptual act. One actor described the process of embodying the character she played, suggesting this notion of embodiment as a fundamental aspect of the process. Similar references to embodiment of the idea for a work were suggested by painters and photographers working with the materials of their craft. And though there were no dancers included in this study, the notion of embodiment is obvious in that medium. Thus the imagery of embodiment and being wonderstruck, as though penetrated by spirit, clearly suggested the sexual imagery associated with the notion of conception. [45]

Composing is the process of elaborating and realizing the initial or emerging conception of the work and physically bringing it into being. It includes the properties or aspects of *connecting*, *integrating*, *channeling*, *refining*, and *clicking*. [46]

Connecting is a process of establishing an intimate connection with the intended "object" or emerging work. This relationship begins in the sketching phase of conceiving, which is itself a precursor of composing the work. Sketching and exploring possibilities can be characterized as the dating phase of the relationship; composing represents engagement and commitment. It can be a consuming passion, deeply felt caring, or intense interest that drives the engagement of the artist in the composing of the work. This deeply felt emotional connection with the work literally brings the work into being. It includes the love of the process which is experienced as flowing engagement, as well as the love for the emerging object as it comes to realization in the composition of the work. [47]

One Mexican sculptor described in a filmed interview how his deep caring took form in the composing of an elaborate artistic project. He was commissioned to sculpt each participant in his home village in Oaxaca, and engaged the inhabitants in composing the work.⁶ These were individuals who were unemployed and impoverished, and the project became a source of meaningful work and self-affirmation. Another well-known writer spoke of the importance of giving voice through his novels to disenfranchised Mexican families living in border towns near the US. And a number of painters and writers spoke of the emotional depth of their relationship with the images, figures, characters, and stories embedded in their works. [48]

This aspect of intimate connection with the process and object is present throughout all the phases of creative emergence. It is present in child-like play in its most creative aspects, and is an aspect of the experience of wonder in all its facets. It begins to develop in the conceiving of a specific project, where the relationship is often charged with an emotional intensity that sparks the engagement in the conceiving process. And it often reaches the heights of intensity in those arts where the presenting phase involves live performance in

6 This was the project of Alexandro SANTIAGO, a renowned contemporary sculptor. He was not formally interviewed, but I had the opportunity to speak with a gallery owner in San Miguel who was authorized to display his work and who shared a film of SANTIAGO's creative process on this project.

front of an audience. In theater the relationship of the playwright to the work is embodied in the relationship of the actor to the character, and in turn the relationship of the audience to the character as embodied by the actor—all participating in a shared, intimate, emotionally intense experience. [49]

This multifaceted process of intimate connection underscores the point that creative emergence is not strictly linear. Aspects such as *being wonderstruck* and *intimate connecting* occur throughout all phases of the process, demonstrating that they are more recursive processes that occur at many points in the process rather than strict phases as such. Experiences of wonder and connecting continually come into play, as do sketching, refining and clicking, with their specific forms and functions changing slightly based on the context. [50]

It is also important to recognize that wonder, immersion, conceiving, composing, presenting, and moving-on are all taking place throughout the lifelong process of immersion in the practice of art. These processes define the moment-by-moment creative process even in situations where the artist is simply playing with ideas and not committing to create a formal work. The current study focuses on the process of creating specific works, but the data clearly indicate that these phases are present across the continuum from spontaneous play to deliberate practice to the creation of specific artistic works. One artist-educator described a fascination with artistic technique that led to his lifelong involvement in creating and teaching art. Learning to create a specific effect in the course of deliberate practice can itself become the experience of wonder that becomes the catalyst for creating original works. [51]

A second key aspect of composing is the *integrating* of artistic know-how and technique with emotional knowing and expression. However much the work may emerge for the artist, the artist also needs to apply words to the page, paint to the canvass, or musical notes to the score to physically bring the work into being. As indicated earlier, this physical application of know-how or technique is largely implicit, but also involves many moments of conscious choice where the artist chooses a direction for the work. This process involves an integrative application of emotional knowing and practical know-how developed through the contextual process of immersion in the field of practice. One composer eloquently described how the notes played on his guitar transformed the emotion that was guiding the composition, giving rise to new feelings and new progressions in a continuous interplay of technical execution and emotion. This interplay of technical execution and emotion simply flowed when everything was clicking. [52]

As important as technical mastery is to creating original works, there is also a danger in over-emphasizing technique at the expense of the creative emergence of wonder. The work can become at best a showcase for the artist's talent and ego and at worst the reduction of art to an easily replicated formula. The art then becomes a commodity based on a technique that becomes popular, rather than an expression of the qualities of openness, connection, spontaneity, and wonder that lead to genuine creative emergence. The work of the artist Thomas

KINKADE is an example of how work can become a replicable commodity⁷, and a number of artists in the study expressed the concern about how market considerations can pressure them to repeat a specific style that sells rather than explore new areas of creativity. As one painter summed up the issue, at a certain point the artist needs to become less focused on mastery of the craft in order to become an artist. [53]

The experience of deep, emotional connecting to the work and integrating technical know-how into the creative flow gives rise to the third important aspect of composing: the process of *channeling*. It involves the channeling of images and stories from sources that are generally outside the focal conscious intention of the artist. These images, stories, tones, rhythms, and movements come to the artist in the process of composing, rather than being willed into being by conscious intention. [54]

The term channeling appears to be the best concept to describe this process. It has the connotation of serving as a conduit to communicate ideas, feelings, images and sensations. In this respect the artist is more a vehicle for the expression of stories and images rather than the source. As the artist mentioned above described the process: "good art is not about the ego of the artist; it is about being a channel for expressing a larger consciousness that flows through me." Another writer describes literally channeling the conversations of spirit guides that he contacts through meditation, and the story he writes is in his view the transcription of their conversations. [55]

This experience of channeling the work rather than actually being the source of the work was frequently expressed, indicating that images and stories come to the artist from a contextual consciousness that is variously described as: 1. the individual unconscious relating to the artist's life experiences and personal memories; 2. a collective unconscious relating to symbols and images from the history of art, culture, and our collective social experience; or 3. a transpersonal consciousness that has a spiritual dimension. The theory of creative emergence does not imply any specific theory regarding the nature of this contextual consciousness. It simply states that composing in the arts includes a process of channeling images and stories from sources that are outside of our usual, everyday field of focal awareness. [56]

The fourth and fifth dimensions or aspects of composing are *refining* and *clicking*, essentially identical to what was described in the phase of conceiving. Refining involves the reference to the principle workability implicit in the question: is everything working toward the emergence of a coherent final work? For

7 Jerry SALTZ, noted art critic and columnist with New York magazine, commented in an obituary of Thomas KINKADE: "Art ... isn't about the biggest market share or the best sales. If that were true, then Thomas Kinkade would be the greatest artist who ever lived." He goes on to comment: "The reason the art world doesn't respond to Kinkade is that none—not one—of his ideas about subject matter, surface, color, composition, touch, scale, form or skill is remotely original. They're all cliché and already told ... [They are] unoriginal, rote things done in his perfectly conventional, balanced, people-pleasing way ... whose meanings are hidden from no one, whose appeal is not to vex or disturb, to produce doubt or newness" (SALTZ, 2012, n.p.).

everything to work, the emergent work needs to fulfill the emerging conception, sustain a sense of engagement and wonder for the artist as well as for prospective audiences, and have a sense of coherence that makes the work both aesthetically and intellectually satisfying. This process of refining involves analytic thought, and thus is a complement to the intuitive process of channeling, but it still relies on the emotional sense of clicking for its final validation. In the end, the criteria for what works is a felt sense of what is right, rather than a conceptually precise statement that the work met defined criteria. [57]

The next phase of creative emergence is presenting the work to an audience. It involves the processes of *assessing and performing*. Assessing occurs at various points throughout the process and especially during the phase of presenting the work to an audience. It involves taking the perspective of the "other" to make sure that the piece works from the audience perspective. [58]

Assessing begins with the process of the artist stepping back and viewing the work. Does it sustain interest and a sense of wonder? Does it have emotional grab? Is it technically sound? Is there a sense of aesthetic coherence? If the work does not satisfy the artist in these ways, it requires further composition and refining. Assessing thus occurs periodically and even continually throughout the composing phases, as moments of reflective assessment of the process and movement toward fulfillment. It is directly associated with the process of refining as the artist continues to assess the workability and coherence of the emergent work. [59]

Assessing comes to focus as the work is presented to others. Does the work effectively communicate the sense of wonder to the other? Does the reader "get it?" Is the listener deeply moved by the music? Does the photograph sustain the viewer's interest over time, or does the viewer quickly lose interest in it after a few days of viewing? Writers often request feedback on their initial drafts or share them with writing partners to assess how the work is emerging. Photographers share their photos with others to assess responses before finally presenting them in a gallery. This aspect of presenting is most clearly demonstrated in the performing arts where the work is performed before a live audience. Rehearsals and preliminary performances are used to assess the emerging result of the work. Feedback sessions with audiences are used to further refine the final product. Throughout the course of the run of a play the review of director notes serve to further refine the presentation. [60]

The second aspect of presenting is the actual *performing* of the work. This looks different for performing arts versus other art forms. For the novelist, the performing is actually the reader's reading of the completed work. It is the reader's engagement with the work and the experience of what is expressed and communicated to the reader. This highlights the communicative aspect of creative emergence, that the work is both an expression of an original conception and experience of wonder, as well as a communication of that experience to oneself and to others. The experience evoked in oneself and others represents the final

phase of creative emergence of the work, in that the final meaning and evaluation of the work rests in the experience of the work. [61]

In the case of performing arts such as acting, dance, poetry reading, storytelling, and instrumental and vocal musical performances, the performer embodies the completed work in the performance. In this respect the dynamics of composing discussed above are also present in performing, where the performer brings everything that was developed in the composing phase into the live performance. This includes the embodiment of the experience of intimate connection with the subject, the integration of technique and emotion, channeling of the character, song, story, or movement, the refinement of the expression so that everything clicks! [62]

The final phase of creative emergence is *moving-on*. This can occur at two points in the creative process: when the work has been successfully completed or when it is abandoned at some point in the process because it is judged by the artist as not working—i.e. to not embody the quality of emergent wonder that is the fulfillment of the work. In the latter case, moving-on is the natural response of the artist who has lost interest or connection to the work and is no longer able to successfully serve as a channel for the emergent work. [63]

Moving-on also characterizes the successful completion of the work and fulfillment of the creative process. Artists typically described their "completed" works as incorporating a significant level of open-endedness and ambiguity, leaving the work open to further interpretation and reflection. The poet Paul VALERY (1972) is quoted as saying that a poem is never truly completed, but simply abandoned. This suggests that in a sense a specific artistic work is simply a segment of the artists' (and the receptive audience's) ongoing engagement in the experience of wonder, and that one work leaves off to create an opening for further creative experience. This sentiment is reflected in the artists' experience of their own lifelong immersion in the creative process, where moving-on is a natural transition phase to re-engagement with new work. [64]

4. Significant Variables and Related Questions

One surprising finding of this research was the fact that there was relatively little evidence of variation in the process of creative emergence based on artistic medium or area. It turned out that there were far more similarities than differences across the various art forms. [65]

One variable that initially appeared to be significant was the distinction between narrative and image. Painting and photography clearly focused on images, while novels and plays focused on stories. But it became clear very quickly that each of the painters' images had a story associated with it, just as each of the writers' stories were filled with images. One painter mentioned above had completed a series of watercolors called "life frames," each of which was based on a story of deep personal meaning. Likewise a novelist described his process of channeling an entire world of fantasy that simply presented itself to him in the process of

meditation. A poet described a scene of a religious procession through the streets of San Miguel on Palm Sunday as though it were a photograph, while a photographer recounts her photographic image as a story of a festival. [66]

The point is that narrative and image were inextricably linked throughout the process of creative emergence, no matter what art form. An art educator and sculptor included in this study described a graduate level art program she created at a Chicago university that emphasized the similarities of constructs across all the arts. She described how the notions of meter, rhythm, tone, image, story, movement, and gesture were applicable in all art forms. The artists in the program explored new art forms outside their specialty areas, and found their creativity enriched in all areas. [67]

Interestingly, she got the inspiration for her work from teaching inner city children about history. She discovered that using multiple artistic media enabled them to better understand and appreciate the content she was presenting, and enabled them to engage far more deeply in the material than through traditional academic methods. This has important implications for future research and practice in the area of arts education. [68]

While there are commonalities regarding emergence of wonder across artistic media, there are also significant variables that influence how the process unfolds. One such variable is the presence of a live audience in the performing arts. [69]

In the performing arts such as theater, musical performance, dance, storytelling, poetry reading, etc. there is a heightened sense of connection with the audience and the sense that the audience directly affects the emergent work. For painters, photographers, and writers, there is a certain distance between the creative process and the audience experience. In many cases, when a work is finally installed and presented to an audience, the artist has already moved on to other projects. Thus the audience response is less immediate, but nonetheless essential to the process of creative emergence. [70]

One actor in the study described the audience as an essential aspect of the emergent work. For her, each performance of a play was in some respects a performance of a different work, with differences in audience response affecting the way in which the work emerged. Likewise she described the moment of going on stage at the beginning of the process as almost a spiritual experience, not unlike accessing the meditative spaces described above in the process of composing. She described simply trusting the process and letting go to what was about to emerge as she stepped on stage—a paradoxical moment of both terror and inner calm in which she surrendered to the work (BOGART, 2007, pp.34-35). [71]

The experience of relationship to audience emerged as another important variable, with the performing artists providing a heightened sense of this connection that was often less intensely experienced in other media. On the other hand, writers who choose to perform their stories on stage, a new and popular

form of expression, experienced the same need to have the audience to connect with their stories as did professional actors. [72]

Another significant variable was the extent to which the art was primarily a vehicle for self-expression versus a medium to communicate a certain world view with the audience. On one extreme were the artists who saw their work as essentially acts of authentic self-expression and who cared little for the effect of the work on the audience. [73]

One poet describes his process as focused on his authentic experience and expression, without consideration of its impact on the reader. He expressed concern about compromising his own authentic expression by focusing on how the reader might hear or interpret this work. [74]

Several painters described the importance of painting for themselves and what they found meaningful, and not being particularly concerned about how the public might experience or interpret their work. They considered it a plus, of course, if the work did move an audience in some significant way, but they saw that as an unpredictable variable over which they had no control. Nor did they consider the audience response as an essential factor in defining the meaning of the work. It was considered an extrinsic event rather than an intrinsic property of the emergence of wonder. [75]

On the other end of this continuum were those whose work was fundamentally an effort to reach a specific audience and to communicate a specific message. For these artists the assessing phase was extremely important in clarifying potential audience responses and determining whether the work effectively communicated what was desired. For them, the audience response was part of the *raison d'être* of the work. [76]

One writer and storyteller described her process as repeatedly considering how her work would be understood and interpreted by readers. She shared her work with other writers to get their feedback—in effect presenting the work to a potential critical audience as part of the composing process. For her, the intelligibility of the writing for her prospective audience was considered essential to creative emergence of the work. [77]

It appeared that novelists, screenwriters, playwrights, and performing artists were generally more likely to focus on the audience response as an essential feature of creative emergence. Their work was more a discursive process of communication, though it certainly included authentic self-expression. Visual artists and poets were more likely to focus on the expressive dimension of the process, though the communicative aspect of their work was always a relevant consideration. [78]

Another important variable was whether the artistic process focused on creating commercially successful work. When commercial success was important to the artist, the audience response was considered essential. But this focus raised the

issue of whether the artist was creating primarily for the market versus engaging in the "purer" process of creative emergence described in this study. Several commercially successful artists discussed the tension between creating for the market versus creating for oneself. [79]

One painter described the experience of being trapped into painting a particular genre of painting because it sold well, long after he had lost interest in creating original work in that genre. In that case the painting became more of a business and he was producing product, rather than participating in a genuine process of emergent wonder. [80]

A photographer described the sharp contrast between her work as a commercial graphic designer and her work as an independent artist. In the first case, she described numerous situations where the originality and creativity of the work needed to be compromised in order to ensure that nothing would offend potential clients. The resulting "sanitation" of the work for the market destroyed much of the personal satisfaction and fulfillment she derived from the work. She looked to her independent artistic work as something she found renewing and spiritual fulfilling. In these cases, artists reported that the over-emphasis on audience response and market success can become a detriment to creative emergence, and can destroy it altogether. [81]

This is not to say that commercial success and emergence of wonder are inherently incompatible. On the contrary, one of the most fulfilling aspects of performance is when the work not only resonates with what matters deeply to the artist, but also resonates in a similar way with various audiences. In this case authentic self-expression and communication are complementary, and the work is realized at a deeper and broader level than would be the case if it were only moving to the artist. This point is most clear in the case of performing artists, as described above, where self-expression and audience response are most directly related. [82]

5. Literature Review and Directions for Future Research

The current study is a substantive theory of the creative process in relation to the arts, and does not purport to be a general theory of creativity (GLASER, 1978, pp.142-157). There are significant differences between creativity in the arts and other more cognitively oriented domains of creative thinking and problem solving (DE BONO, 1992, p.4). Yet there are indications that emergence of wonder is relevant to other domains beyond the arts. PLATO presented the thesis that wonder was the origin of philosophical thinking (BOLLERT, 2001), and HEIDEGGER makes a similar claim in his phenomenological analysis of the state of wonder (STONE, 2006). The contemporary scholar Jesse PRINZ, drawing on philosophy, aesthetics, psychology, and cognitive neuroscience and other disciplines makes the case that wonder is the pivotal emotion in art and believes that "in the wonder that art provokes ... the interaction between mind and the world is brought into central focus (WASHBURN, 2014). PRINZ's forthcoming book, "Works of Wonder: A Theory of Art" promises to further elaborate this

central function of wonder in art, morality, and human experience. And of particular relevance to the current study, the principles of emergence and wonder are features of grounded theory generation (GLASER, 1978, pp.2-12), suggesting applications to cognitive processes associated with problem solving and theory generation in the social sciences. [83]

In summarizing 50 years of creativity research, MAYER identifies three broad areas of focus for studies—people, process, and products (1999, p.450). The current study is best positioned in the research literature as a contextual study of process, focusing on the social, cultural, and evolutionary contexts of creative work in authentic environments (pp.455-456, pp.458-459). Contextual theories include analysis of individual processes within the context of domains of practice and fields of interaction with others engaged in these domains (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 1999, pp.313-314; GARDNER, 1999, pp.116-124; LEHRER, 2012, Chs. 6, 8). They place importance not only on the inner psychological processes of individuals engaged in creative activity, but also on the relationship between the producer/creator and the audiences of created works (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 1999, p.314). CSIKSZENTMIHALYI argues that we cannot even define creativity except with reference to domains of expertise in culturally embedded fields of practice in which artists create their work and audiences and critics evaluate it (pp.315-321). His studies focus on creativity with a capital "C" involving innovation that changes the entire field of practice within a specific domain and field of practice. But his findings are equally valid for artists engaged in creativity with a small "c," creating original work within a domain but not necessarily transforming the practice of the domain itself. In either case, the emergence of wonder in the arts appears to require a field of practice in relationship to which the participating artist is engaged and from which she draws inspiration, direction, and techniques to create original works. [84]

Studies of contextual frameworks for creativity help to explain the dynamics of the emergence of wonder. The immersion in artistic work can be viewed as participation in life worlds and domains of practice that extend as broadly and as deeply as the level of the artist's awareness and engagement. Participation in this experiential field helps to explain the experience of channeling sources of wonder emerging from somewhere beyond oneself, rather than from conscious intention or an act of will. [85]

Creativity research has also demonstrated the powerful influence of the social-culture context and influences of significant others on the artistic work of individuals (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2007 [1996], Chs.2, 6; LEHRER, 2012, Chs.6, 8). The experiences of openness and receptivity to relationships, cultural context, and emergent material appears to include this appreciation and sensitivity to both one's own subjective and inter-subjective experience and the historically defined artistic milieu. The latter includes the themes, perspectives, world views, techniques, and methods embedded in domains of practice and the mastery of those techniques associated with lifelong learning and practice. [86]

Phenomenological studies of the contextual nature of consciousness and modes of experiencing shed further light on this process of emergence of wonder. Analysis of the figure-ground nature of consciousness analyzed in *gestalt* psychology and related phenomenological studies indicate the ways in which lively focal figures and dynamic vitality forms emerge in experience against a background of potential meaning contexts or "worlds" (GURWITSCH, 1964, pp.105-153, 309-375; JAMES, 1950 [1890], pp.249-261; MAY, 1967a [1958], pp.55-65; POLSTER & POLSTER, 1974, pp.28-50; STERN, 2010, pp.3-17). Especially relevant are the phenomenological studies that further clarify the essential structure and meaning of the experience of wonder (BARNACLE, 2001; BOLLERT, 2001; BUTLER, 1998; GOBLE, 2014; HOVE, 2014; NATANSON, 1974, pp.5-13; ROSELLI, 2010; STONE, 2006; VAN MANEN, 2002). [87]

GADAMER's phenomenological study of aesthetic experience clarifies the essential structure and dynamics of play as a fundamental dimension of the creative process (1993 [1960], pp.101-129). His analysis suggests that play is more than the contextual source of creativity, as we observed in the analysis of wonder and immersion, and actually defines the essential being of the work. In this view, play defines a structure and form of presence which guides the artist in composing and performing the work and the audience in experiencing it. [88]

Research on personal authenticity further clarifies how the principle of emergence is an aspect of personal creativity and living fully in the present moment. Rollo MAY defines existence as a process of emergence (1967b [1958], p.12), and Carl ROGERS describes how emergence is a defining quality of becoming a unique individual (2004 [1961], pp.107-124). Research in humanistic and positive psychology has helped to further clarify the central role of creative emergence in all aspects of authentic self-expression and development with clear relevance to the theory of emergence of wonder (HODGINS & KNEE, 2002; KERNIS & GOLDMAN, 2006; MASLOW, 1968 [1962], pp.135-149; MEDLOCK, 2012; ROGERS, 2004 [1961]; WRIGHT & WRIGHT, 2013, pp.221-240; ZIMMERMAN, 1986, pp.133ff.). [89]

Psychoanalytic studies of the creative process add further depth to our understanding of this process, emphasizing the importance of connection with unconscious primary process material as a source of inspiration and direction for creative work (KRIS, 1999 [1952]). Studies of meditative states of consciousness and channeling shed further light on aspects of this inner-directed work as a source of creative inspiration and emergence of wonder (KLIMO, 1998, pp.365-384; LYNCH, 2013). [90]

The question of what motivates creativity in the arts and elsewhere has received considerable attention in the research literature (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2007 [1996]; 1999; FORGEARD & MECKLENBURG, 2013). There is a general consensus, supported by the current study that creative activity is intrinsically motivating—that is, that individuals engage in it for the pure pleasure of engagement without concern about extrinsic rewards. All of the artists included in the current study expressed this intrinsic value as their primary motivation, often

saying that they could not imagine their lives without this being an essential part of it. In this respect, their work is inherently a defining feature of their authentic selves. [91]

Studies in humanistic psychology, positive psychology, interpersonal neurobiology, and neuroscience further emphasize the important link between positive emotions and creativity. They distinguish between negative attitudes associated with defensiveness and the protection of established ways of being, knowing, and acting, with the positive emotions associated with love, connectedness, and creativity (CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, 2007 [1996], pp.16-20; FREDERICKSON, 2009, pp.54-74). These studies are confirming the insights of humanistic psychology regarding the relationship between openness to experience and an orientation toward growth and self-actualization as essential to personal creativity and authenticity (MASLOW, 1968 [1962], pp.135-149; OSHO, 1999, pp.108-135; ROGERS, 2004 [1961], pp.163-196). [92]

Recent research in neuroscience and interpersonal neurobiology are also clarifying the dynamics of emotional knowing as an emergent process. DAMASIO (2010, pp.108-129) describes a contextual field of implicit emotional awareness that monitors the state of the organism and the field of interaction between self and the world. Explicit feelings emerge out of this context and enable the individual to orient to what is most important and personally meaningful in the field of awareness. Daniel STERN (2010) describes "vitality forms" in the flow of experience that provide the individual with a felt sense of movement and intention operating at any given moment. Conscious feelings such as the feeling of wonder and the emotional knowing when something "clicks" are emergent from an implicit emotional knowing that is operating at each moment that the artist is engaged in the creative process (FOSHA, 2009, pp.178-180; STERN, 2010, pp.75-98). [93]

In addition to the motivations related to authentic self-expression and positive experiences, there is a growing interest in the importance of pro-social motivations for engaging in artistic work. FORGEARD and MECKLENBURG (2013) propose a theory of mutual reciprocal influence that adds a neglected dimension of the creative process—the motivation to influence or affect others and the reciprocal influence of others on the creative process itself. They identify four key pro-social processes that are often identified as motivating artistic activity (pp.6-8): 1. creating positive emotional states, 2. fostering communication, empathy, and connection with others, 3. uncovering new knowledge and problem-solving, and 4. challenging others to think in more complex and challenging ways. [94]

All four of these motivations are implicit in the theory of emergence of wonder. These include the motivation to create and sustain a positive emotional state of wonder for both the artist and the audience; fostering communication and connection with others; uncovering new areas of emotional knowing and self-reflection; and challenging both the artist and audience to experience the complexity and mystery associated with emergence and wonder. [95]

Studies of implicit knowing also shed light on the role of technical know-how in the creative process (CHAPMAN, 2009; POLANYI, 1962 [1958], pp.49-65). POLANYI observes that skill development has a *gestalt* quality that includes both a focal awareness of the specific skill and a subsidiary awareness of the meaning context within which the skill is executed. In the experience of emergence of wonder, this subsidiary contextual awareness is critical in that it accounts for how an artistic work emerges from the sense or feel of the whole toward which each part is oriented. This feel for the coherence of the total piece is both an emotional knowing and a practical knowing that is largely implicit during the creative process, and which comes to consciousness at moments of reflective awareness as the artist notices whether things are clicking or not. [96]

The literature on creativity also places importance on the analytic skills of explicit knowing. Critical thinking and analytic reflection come into play particularly in the moments where something problematic arises in the process (CHAFFEE, 1998, pp.87-109; DEWEY, 1997 [1910], pp.9-13). A certain plot line doesn't seem to be quite working. The melody doesn't seem to flow at a given point. The rhythm is a bit off. These problematic features trigger conscious reflection and moments of adjustment in the creative flow. The consciousness in this case is primarily cognitive and oriented toward effective problem solving. This is the crux of the sub-process of refining during the conceiving and composing of artistic works. In the case of the arts, the criterion of effective resolution of the problem is emotional or aesthetic knowing, where the solution has the felt sense of clicking. This emotional knowing is also evidenced in that aha moments of insight and intuitive knowing in the sciences and practical arts, suggesting that the process of emergence of wonder may well apply to these areas as well. [97]

Further study of emergence of wonder in other domains beyond the arts will help to establish a broader formal theory of the creative process. There are clear indications that the experiences of wonder and immersion apply generally across other domains of creative practice, and the specific phases of conceiving, composing, presenting, and moving-on apply directly in the fields of science, and specifically in the practice of grounded theory methodology. There are also indications that these elements and phases of creative emergence apply to all the various ways in which we come to know about ourselves and our world. Theories of interpretation in the areas of the social sciences and the arts emphasize the emergent quality of understanding (GADAMER, 1993 [1960], pp.362-379; WEINSHEIMER, 1985, pp.4-9). Likewise theories regarding the nature of dialogue and dialogical thinking emphasize this open-ended and emergent quality of thought—all of which suggests important commonalities across domains (BOHM, 1996, 1999 [1985]). [98]

Linguistic theories in cognitive science underscore the importance of aesthetic categories such as image and metaphor underlying all forms of conceptual thought (LAKOFF, 2002, pp.2-23; LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1999, pp.45-73). Contemporary studies in aesthetic theory emphasize the interactive features of narrative and image in human experience and culture (MITCHELL, 1986, pp.42-52, 1994, pp.1-8). And studies of individuals' personal life-narratives emphasize

the experience of emergent coherence as a consistent theme and meaning-orientation in individual lives (BELLIN, 2012; McADAMS, 1990; MEDLOCK, 2012). [99]

These various fields of research all suggest that a unified formal theory of emergence of wonder is an important and potentially fruitful area for further inquiry. Explorations of the nature of creative thinking across various domains, the nature of dialogue and dialectical thinking, and the nature of authentic self-emergence are all important focal points for expanding on the current theory. Hopefully the current study of emergence of wonder in the arts, and the application of the GT method of constant comparison and theoretical sampling to other areas beyond the arts, can help further our understanding and facilitation of emergence of wonder in a wide variety of cultural domains. [100]

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Odis SIMMONS for his mentorship, guidance, and invaluable feedback throughout each phase of the grounded theory methodology for this project. I also want to acknowledge Drs. Bob and Judith WRIGHT, founders and head faculty of the Wright Graduate University, for demonstrating the explanatory power and practical value of GTM in support of student and faculty learning and research. I especially want to thank my wife Stephanie MEDLOCK for her support in the writing and editing of the final manuscript, and independently for her work as a novelist that so well demonstrates the emergence of wonder. And finally I want to thank the many artists who were part of this study, whose artistic work and related insights and reflections so profoundly contributed to my understanding and appreciation of the creative process.

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Citation

Medlock, Gordon (2015). The San Miguel Artist Project: A Grounded Theory of "The Emergence of Wonder" [100 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(2), Art. 5,
<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs150256>.