

# **The opposite of History: valuing the arts**

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For my father  
Donald Henderson Archer  
1916 – 1970  
and my brother  
Douglas Gordon Archer  
1943 – 1976  
Too soon, too late.

*Minimal, incoherent fragments:  
The opposite of History, creator of ruins,  
Out of your ruins you have made creations.<sup>1</sup>*

Let me begin with the familiar story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Pindar called Orpheus 'the father of song'. His wife Eurydice is bitten on the foot by a serpent, and dies. Her husband's grief moves even the god of the underworld. Hades agrees that Orpheus can take Eurydice back. The bargain has a condition: Orpheus must not look back to see if she is following him. But he does look back. The irredeemable loss of Eurydice is not the end of Orpheus's suffering. Returned to the world, he renounces the company of women. Increasingly, he is solitary. His own death is bloody. He is assaulted and torn apart by the maenads, female followers of Dionysius. Their screeching drowns out the sound of his music; thus they defeat the creatures that come to his aid. His head and his lyre, still singing mournful songs, float down the Hebrus to the island of Lesbos.

There have been many reinterpretations of this story: in opera, in poetry, in the visual arts and in film. My purpose in recalling it here is to draw out some themes that still resonate in discussions of the arts. This is a parable about the power of music. Orpheus' performance affects all of creation: it entrances wild animals; it causes trees to move and rocks to soften; it arrests streams in their flow. His gift is associated with other powers: he is a seer, an astrologer, and a physician. The arts, in other words, are closely bound up with religion, law and the sciences. And as the circumstances of his violent death demonstrate, the arts are also implicated in politics.

Translated to the contemporary policy environment of targets and performance indicators, this is a story about the impact of the arts. Orpheus is a star performer whose repertoire appeals to a broad, diverse demographic; the effects of his performance are measurable and immediate; the long-term benefits are transferable across domains. But, I suggest, Orpheus lacked faith in his own gifts: why else did he look back?

I

## Valuing the arts

This lecture engages with some recent developments in the debates about value and the arts. Although there are particular anxieties about this in Australia, the definition and measurement of the impacts of the arts and culture has preoccupied arts advocates and policy makers internationally. Recent reports published in the United States and the United Kingdom take these debates in a new direction. They identify the limitations of methodologies that attempt to capture 'instrumental' benefits and argue that new conceptual and empirical work is needed which focuses on 'intrinsic' values. As the report published by the think tank Demos concluded:

There are, then, problems with the instrumental argument for culture both because the evidence is weak, and because of the systemic effects that the concentration on outcomes and impacts has produced. With an ever growing body of evidence we seem to have lost sight of two things: one, that data is not knowledge; and two, that even the best objective data fails to account fully for why culture should be funded. The value of culture cannot be adequately expressed in terms of statistics. Audience numbers and gallery visitor profiles give an impoverished picture of how culture enriches us.<sup>2</sup>

Research commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and conducted by the RAND Corporation in the United States comes to a similar conclusion. Because arts advocates increasingly rely on quantitative measurement of costs and benefits and empirical evidence of impacts to provide rationales for public support, this research addressed the need 'to articulate the public and private benefits of involvement in the arts'.<sup>3</sup> Their 2004 report, *Gifts of the Muse*, evaluates existing empirical and theoretical studies of both the economic and the social impacts of arts participation. It draws attention to methodological and analytical weaknesses, particularly the tendency to ignore opportunity costs. The authors argue that the case for the arts needs to be supported by research that accounts for intrinsic benefits and that takes a broader view of public benefits.

Many arts advocates are uncomfortable with an exclusive reliance on instrumental arguments but are also reluctant to emphasize the intrinsic aspects of the arts experience lest such arguments fail to resonate with funders. The problem with this reluctance is that it ignores two important facts: intrinsic benefits are the principal reason individuals participate in the arts, and the intrinsic effects can produce public benefits of their own.<sup>4</sup>

This new emphasis on what artists, arts organisations and cultural institutions actually do—stage performances, display art works, publish—and what motivates people to participate in arts and culture has shifted attention to the inadequacies of existing vocabularies to capture the value of involvement in the arts. Since funding of arts practitioners and not-for-profit organisations is now often linked to community benefits, such as interventions with groups at risk, improved health and wellbeing, and increased levels of trust and social cohesion, research on impacts needs to be able to demonstrate how particular programs and projects add value to public investment.

## Sustaining Culture: the role of performing arts centres<sup>5</sup>

Together with colleagues at Griffith and industry partners, I am undertaking research on the role of performing arts centres in providing enriching arts experiences, engaging with local and regional communities, supporting industry development and promoting public conversation about the value of the performing arts. This work is in its very early stages. However, some of the features of our approach can be outlined here. Our work will use network analysis to describe the heterogeneous experiences and impacts of arts involvement among audiences, performers and producers, publicists and advocates, policymakers and business interests. Key outcomes will include the development of more nuanced language to describe the value of the arts to its various publics.

Our methodologies are designed to avoid the ‘three fallacies’ described by Paul DiMaggio as: homogeneity of ‘treatment’, homogeneity of effects and linearity of effects.<sup>6</sup> Though performing arts centres present the appearance of being monolithic ‘culture bunkers’, it is important to differentiate the variety of activities and programs that they undertake. Performing arts centres manage venues and derive most of their revenue from non-government sources, principally ticket sales. ‘Performing arts’ refers to programming and repertoire, performers and companies, audiences, ancillary staff, public education programs, industry development, advocacy and marketing, partnerships with community and business organisations and with other cultural institutions. Impact measurement needs to be sensitive to these dimensions, because the effects of exposure will vary across them. An audience experience that includes pre-performance talks and an opportunity to meet performers will produce different effects from attendance alone. Nor are effects and impacts homogeneous. Some are hidden; some are produced through interaction with other factors; some desirable outcomes are dependent on intervening events. Finally, more exposure does not necessarily increase impact. Though there is evidence that sustained involvement increases individuals’ capacities to convert their arts experience to cultural and social capital, it is also true that some increases in supply result in diminishing returns. As the menu of arts experiences has diversified as a result of new technologies, many consumers have become ‘omnivores’,<sup>7</sup> sampling a wide variety of tastes. In those circumstances, a repertoire that plays it safe (assuming a loyal following of ‘univores’ with narrow tastes) may lose audiences.

Both the RAND and Demos reports identify the inability of (numerical and statistical) languages derived from economics and the social sciences to describe ‘intrinsic’ values. They share a view that we lack a public language to describe the affective and subjective experience of the encounter with a work of art. They also agree that this is an arena where ‘experts’ have failed to provide a framework for a strong justification for the arts. The RAND report sees this failure as stemming from the decline of the humanist paradigm and the modernist isolation of art from life. The Demos report summarises the difficulties of articulating ‘value’:

Those arguing that culture has an intrinsic value, and deserves funding on that account, face media hostility and charges of mystification. They are attacked for being ‘elitist’ and for neglecting issues of access and accessibility. But they have a further problem: they have lost the vocabulary to make their case. The post-modern questioning of concepts such as beauty, truth, delight, transcendence and the like, coupled with the insight that these ideas are temporally and geographically specific, have made using them in debate an embarrassment at best, contemptible at worst. The use of the word ‘culture’ itself now begs the immediate response ‘whose culture?’ All judgements have become relative, suspect and tainted.<sup>8</sup>

These remarks overlook the fact that judgements of cultural value have long been matters of dispute. The relation of ‘art’ to ‘reality’ has been understood in different ways within and across cultures. The assumption that the arts’ impacts are benign and that aesthetic experience produces only positive benefits does not bear much scrutiny. Indeed, the dubious nineteenth-century ‘civilising mission’ for culture has also served as a guarantee for later dismissals of the arts as ‘merely aesthetic’. Aesthetic experience is not only uplifting and inspirational; art can disgust and disturb, incite hatred as well as pity, fear as well as compassion. The notion that its cathartic effect calms the passions and restores reason is comforting but contested. An individual’s love of the arts can co-exist with cruel indifference to human suffering.

I have taken the title of this lecture from Octavio Paz's homage to the American artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972). Paz sets the work of creativity and imagination against the destructive force of 'History'. This statement doubtless reflects his own disillusionment with socialist states, but the image also recalls Walter Benjamin's reflection on Paul Klee's painting, 'Angelus Novus' (1910). Benjamin supposes that from the angel's perspective, history is 'a single catastrophe', rather than, as it appears to us, 'a chain of events'. The angel cannot 'make whole what has been smashed' because the storm of progress 'propels him into the future to which his back is turned'.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, Cornell creates from the ruins. His boxes are

Monuments to every moment,  
refuse of every moment, used:  
cages for infinity.

Paz's description of the operations of creativity hinges on the notion of contingency. Cornell's visions are constructed by bringing unlikely elements into a relationship. Though Cornell uses found objects and Paz words, both work in a space between the material world and the realm of the mind, between objects and apparitions—the space of metaphor. In Cornell's boxes, 'things hurry away from their names'.

The actual worlds that each inhabited could not have been more different. Cornell lived with his mother and brother Robert, who had cerebral palsy. His life was structured by daily forays between his home on Utopia Parkway, Queens, and the streets of Manhattan. He was not a recluse: he enjoyed the company of others from the art world, including Andy Warhol, Susan Sontag and Yoko Ono. Paz's family went into exile following Zapata's assassination. He fought in the Spanish Civil War and later became Mexico's ambassador to India. In 1990, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His interpretation of Cornell's work exemplifies his own ideas about creativity:

Between what I see and what I say  
Between what I say and what I keep silent  
Between what I keep silent and what I dream  
Between what I dream and what I forget:  
Poetry.<sup>10</sup>

Though his language is poetic, Paz's praise of Cornell's work is an instance of one of the commonest ways of valuing the arts. It attributes a special status to the creative artist. Despite Degas' declaration (cited in 'Objects and Apparitions'), that 'One has to commit a painting the way one commits a crime', the artist differs from the criminal in one important respect: however boldly or stealthily a crime is committed, the criminal's success depends upon his leaving no trace of himself at the scene. The artist's signature, on the other hand, has come to be critical to both the economic and cultural value of a work.

Let me now explore questions of value through two examples. This discussion will highlight how aesthetic experience crosses boundaries between private enjoyment (thought of in terms of intimate relationships but also in terms of property) and public benefit. I will conclude with some comments on the creation of cultural value.

## Strange Commodities

Cultural economists have turned their attention to the art market, assessing investment in art against the share and property markets, analysing the operation of art auctions, and estimating the value of tangible and intangible assets. I want to use Joseph Cornell's work to discuss the relationship between the art world and the market, and to consider in what ways the art object might be considered a 'commodity'. The particular value that attaches to the art object has to do with the contexts of its production and circulation, with the reputation of the artist and with what intermediaries and collectors invest in the object.

Cornell, best known for his boxes, began exhibiting his work in 1932. He also made 'dossiers', compilations of material on performers and artists as diverse as the nineteenth-century ballerina Fanny Cerrito, opera singers Guiditta Pasta and Maria Malibran, actresses Eleonora Duse and Claire Bloom, and his friend the Surrealist Marcel Duchamp. His work is widely displayed in public collections and has been popular with gallery visitors, especially in recent years. He was not trained as an artist. In fact, he was a salesman, who sold fabric in the garment district. He was also a flâneur—a stroller who walked the streets of Manhattan, observing people and the spectacle of consumer culture. Cornell was fascinated by the glamour of department stores, the theatre and the cinema. But opera was his great love. At night, he worked in his cellar, constructing his boxes. His materials are commonplace objects bought in dime stores, bookshops and souvenir shops. He worked with part objects: buttons and vials, photographs, maps, toys, and simple mechanical devices.

These objects represent the allure of commodity culture. Cornell was entranced by it. His boxes preserved it and located it in a history of popular culture. He called the boxes 'poetic theatres'. Their design and arrangement recall the proscenium, the cabinet of curiosities and the diorama, nineteenth-century technologies that organised and represented new knowledge in the arts and sciences.

Most significantly the boxes were gifts, given to their subjects, to strangers and to children. Though he sold his work to dealers and galleries, for Cornell as for Wallace Stevens, there was pleasure in merely circulating. He made things to amuse his brother, and left toys on his doorstep for the neighbourhood children. Some he handed over personally to the celebrities he so admired. Mostly these gifts were returned. Greta Garbo's rejection was especially hurtful: he destroyed the box he had made for her. Even worse, one young starlet stole some of his work. A children's preview was organised for his last show in 1972, with the works displayed at child height. Chocolate cake was served, and as they left the young visitors were given signed posters from the show.

Twenty years later, two young men sorting family memorabilia found one of these posters. Above the artist's signature was a handwritten note: 'I love this. You will love this'. The recipient was the sister, now dead, of one of the men. He gave the poster to his friend, a fan of Cornell's work, inscribing it: 'A gift of a gift'. In 1995, Jonathan Safran Foer saw the poster in his friend's studio.<sup>11</sup> Foer, a literary celebrity since the appearance of *Everything is Illuminated* (2002) and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), was at that time an unknown. He was captivated by the poster, and began to research Cornell's life and work. The outcome of his excitement was an anthology, *A Convergence of Birds: Original Fiction and Poetry Inspired by Joseph Cornell*, published in 2001. Twenty writers, including laureate Robert Pinsky, answered his request for contributions. The book also included fifty colour plates of the Bird Boxes. As the publicity puts it:

Cornell's boxes demand our rapt attention, they invite us to peer inside, to perceive dimension and texture—but above all, they call on us to 'respond'. The literary works presented here do not only engage in a dialogue with the Bird Boxes—they demand that the reader inject themselves as a third voice in a conversation that seeks out the real within the imaginary and the fantastical within the everyday.<sup>12</sup>

In his study *The World of the Gift*, Jacques Godbout counters Baudelaire's claim that art is 'pure commodity', arguing the production and distribution of works of art participate in a gift system. Where exchange in the market is based on equivalence, 'the gift is not a thing, it is a social connection'.<sup>13</sup> The art object exhibits a number of features that define it as a 'strange commodity'. The artist ideally creates a product without regard to the buyer, who cannot modify the product but must respect its integrity. The production process is made visible in talk about, and documentation of, the artefact. In acquiring a 'work', the buyer participates in the artistic community and endorses its values. Finally, the exchange of the object involves a 'supplement' that has no monetary equivalent, but has to do with the regard in which the work and the artist are held.<sup>14</sup>

According to Godbout's account, the gift exchange has three phases: to give, to receive, and to reciprocate. A gift is given in order that the recipient receives something else, in addition to the gift:

Where the gift is concerned, goods circulate in the service of ties. Any exchange of goods or services with no guarantee of recompense in order to create, nourish or recreate social bonds between people is a gift.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the commercial exchange, which is immediate, the phases of the gift exchange extend over time. Cornell's offerings to Garbo and others failed. But Octavio Paz and Jonathan Safran Foer received his gifts. In Paz's case, what was received was recognition of the value of his own work through its perceived resemblance to his own vision. Foer merely 'loved' it, and found others who could participate in his pleasure. Readers' reviews on the Amazon site suggest that the 'loop' of the gift is extending.

## Public Conversations

There has been a great deal of academic debate and public concern about the decline of the public sphere, conceived of in civic-republican terms as a space of deliberation where participants set aside their private interests to promote the common good.<sup>16</sup> In egalitarian, multicultural societies the terms of participation in such deliberation have come into question.<sup>17</sup> One of the outcomes of these debates is an increasing acceptance of the notion that there are multiple public spheres, and the issue then becomes how boundaries are drawn around them. A further line of inquiry, and the one that interests me here, concerns how deliberation occurs (that is whose voices are heard) and what issues are deemed admissible. This has been a central question for feminist scholars.<sup>18</sup> Much of my own work has been concerned with problems of voice and representation. In particular, I have examined the ways women's writing can be seen as an expansion of the sphere of deliberation, providing a platform for claims to citizen rights and democratic participation. More recently, I have been interested in how the museum and the space of the exhibition can be seen to participate in networks of publicity. This work takes account of curatorial and artistic practice, catalogue essays and reviews, and visitor responses. It draws on 'performative' theories of publicity to include a wide spectrum of forms of communicative action, and to recognize the 'dispersal of the agon'.<sup>19</sup>

In 2002 the Jewish Museum in Melbourne mounted an exhibition, *Art as witness to human memory*, featuring works by Lauren Berkowitz and Chris Barry (Krystyna Marczak). Temporary exhibitions occupy adjacent galleries, opposite each other at the top of a staircase that leads to the permanent exhibition at the Museum. To enter the permanent exhibition, which represents the secular and religious dimensions of Jewish life, the visitor crosses a lintel and passes a small painting representing the horror of the Holocaust. This painting owes something to the work of Hieronymus Bosch.

The exhibition's title refers to, perhaps even prescribes, a moral or ethical disposition: 'witness' and 'survivor' delineate moral standpoints from which the Holocaust can be spoken about. Berkowitz's *Salt and Honey* was installed in the black-walled gallery on the left. Small glass dishes containing oil, salt and honey were arranged on two large, low circular plinths, lit from above. These objects stand in for Jewish culture and identity. In the right hand gallery, where the ceiling, walls and floor were all painted white, Barry's large, monochromatic photographs were ranged on the walls. *Atonement* comprises two suites of images: 'The Jewish Cemetery at Lodz' and 'Polsky Zloty Jesein' (Polish Autumn). 'Polsky Zloty Jesein', arranged in rows, occupied the walls to the visitor's left; 'The Jewish Cemetery at Lodz' was to the right.

These photographs were taken when Barry, the daughter of post war immigrants who came to Australia in 1950, visited Poland for the first time in 1992. Two earlier suites of images, *Lost in Translation* and *Displaced Objects*, explored the experience of migration, family history and belonging.<sup>20</sup> These included images of the new Poland, with neon and the other signs of commercial Western culture. By contrast, *Atonement* reflects the bleak twentieth century history of Poland. The landscape represented in Barry's photographs is primarily a cityscape, and the Poland we see here is the nation twice occupied in the twentieth century, first by the Nazis and subsequently by the Soviets.

'The Jewish Cemetery at Lodz' commemorates the Jews who were sent to the camps and those who died in the ghetto. It is also a reminder of the civil society that Jewish commerce created, and of the social and familial networks destroyed by the threat of German occupation. The flourishing commercial and civic culture of the late nineteenth century, indexed to the cemetery, is confronted by the images in 'Polsky Zloty Jesein' of the country that survived the Soviet occupation. Here we see the remnants of nineteenth-century civic architecture, and the tenements and deserted plazas of modernity. The streets, doorways and windows bear no sign of life, of the interactions and exchanges that sustain civil society.

Photographs are the trace of a subject that was once present. Their power depends on the play of presence and absence. Many visitors to *Atonement* were shocked by its absences. No Jews were represented here, only Poles. There was no representation of the death camps, though this cemetery was part of the Lodz ghetto. The crowded graves have no visitors, but drifts of autumn leaves signify melancholia and time passing. The cityscapes and countryside are empty, the doorways and window frames blank. The streets lead nowhere. These images are interspersed with portraits of two children and their father. Barry's camera registers time passing.

Gillian Rose, whose mother's family was annihilated in the ghetto, also visited Poland in 1992. Here is her account of what she saw:

I was in a land of martyred people, which harbours in its midst still more martyred people – the Jews. No – the Jews are not *harboured*, but expelled into the borderless cemetery in the air, for the soil of death camps is cursed not consecrated ground...From the tower of the Mariacki Church...night and day, on every hour, the air vibrates with the plangent tones of the trumpeter.... Four times, once to each corner of the tower, this herald of martyrdom doles out his fatal music, so that, wherever you are, you hear the foreboding and fatal echo of his remorseless courses of ruin.<sup>21</sup>

These photographs represent loss, but the space of the exhibition brings to light another dimension of Polish history: the antagonism between Jews and Poles. The space of the gallery, and the separation and opposition of the suites of images, recognise differences grounded in faith traditions, ethnic identities and history. These differences are a source of antagonism and distrust, and in the context of the museum, some visitors saw the installation as a provocation, a reassertion of that history. Many of the visitors to this exhibition were themselves survivors or the descendents of survivors. The image of the little girl, with flowers woven in her luminous blonde hair, seemed an affront to some viewers, including the museum's volunteer guides. Others, including one professional reviewer, dismissed the power of these images as an appeal to nostalgia. However, the two suites of images are also linked through the repetition of motifs—the autumnal leaves, and the architectural lines of tombs and buildings. The classical appearance of the buildings and the classical arrangement of the installation itself tie the two suites together, through the notion of the city.

*Atonement* elicits responses on different levels: it calls forth emotion, but it also engages contemplation. As Susan Sontag puts it, in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, photographs of suffering must move us beyond remembrance to thinking; they must engage our reason, our conscience and desire or love.<sup>22</sup> In this way they connect us to others. Gillian Rose's essays elaborate a politics of representation by developing a method which she calls 'reading aporetically'. This method of reading does not aim to resolve or reduce the 'aporia', the 'broken middle'.<sup>23</sup> In place of oppositions, it installs analogy as a means to communicate across differences, but not to mend them. Analogy expresses the gap, but does not prejudice the logic of the relationship between or among differences.

## Shared culture

In the 1970s and 1980s publishers like Virago reissued works by women writers that had long been out of print. This project not only recovered a 'lost' culture but it stimulated creative and scholarly work.<sup>24</sup> Publishers developed lists and commissioned new work. In the last decades of the twentieth century every bookshop allocated space to 'women's writing' and specialist bookshops appeared in many cities (including Brisbane). This story can be repeated for other communities that became visible in mainstream culture through similar initiatives. This enterprise promoted the public value of diversity.

The language of sustainability, developed by environmentalists but now widely used in other domains, has an application in the arts. It provides us with a way of talking about the continuation and adaptation of traditions, and about the benefits of diversity. Reinterpretations of narratives, reworkings of conventions and rearrangements of musical forms, as well as the appropriation of elements from other sources are the basis of cultural resilience, renewal and innovation. The open circulation of cultural resources encourages and enhances creativity. The philosopher Donald Davidson has shown how this works:

Davidson lets us think of the history of language, and thus of culture, as Darwin taught us to think of the history of a coral reef...This analogy lets us think of 'our language'—that is, of the science and culture of twentieth century Europe—as something that took shape as the result of a number of sheer contingencies. Our language and our culture are as much a contingency, as much a result of thousands of small mutations finding niches (and millions of others finding no niches), as are the orchids and the anthropoids.<sup>25</sup>

I want to return to Orpheus and Eurydice to illustrate this point. The essential elements of this story have survived over centuries, but they have taken hold in very different ways. A history of its transformations allows us to see that, far from being immutable and unchanging, tradition is a triumph of adaptation.

Let me review some of the myth's 'small mutations'. In the visual arts, iconic images of Orpheus associate him with his lyre. Eurydice is often not included, which may support the view that the love story itself is an example of a hybridisation, and that the story of Eurydice was a later addition to the



myth. Nor is the theme of love and devotion unvarying. In Albrecht Dürer's etching, 'Death of Orpheus' (1494), there is an explicit reference to homosexuality, a factor that complicates the maenad's motives.

In Rainer Maria Rilke's 'Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes', the Romantic interest in death accords Eurydice's experience a central place:

But now she walked beside the graceful god,  
her steps constricted by the trailing graveclothes,  
uncertain, gentle, and without impatience.  
She was deep within herself, like a woman heavy  
with child, and did not see the man in front,  
or the path ascending steeply into life.  
Deep within herself. Being dead  
fulfilled her beyond fulfillment. Like a fruit  
suffused with its own mystery and sweetness,  
she was filled with her vast death, which was so new,  
she could not understand that it had happened.  
.....  
And when abruptly,  
the god put out his hand to stop her, saying,  
with sorrow in his voice: He has turned round –  
she could not understand, and softly answered  
*Who?*<sup>26</sup>

The American poet Louise Glück also imagines the journey from Eurydice's perspective. She makes trust the key to the narrative. Convention has it that Eurydice's doubts cause Orpheus to look back. In Glück's poem the faithlessness resides in him:

Only for a moment  
when the dark of the underworld settled around her again  
(gentle, respectful),  
only for a moment could  
an image of earth's beauty  
reach her again, beauty  
for which she grieved.

But to live with human faithlessness  
Is another matter.<sup>27</sup>

In opera, Christoph Glück's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, first performed in Vienna in 1762, continues to be staged regularly. Originally, Orpheus was a role for a castrato, but the part was also sung by a high tenor or a female alto. The recording we heard earlier was sung by the countertenor, Andreas Scholl. Perhaps the most surprising modern mutation is Marcel Camus' film, *Orfeu Negro*<sup>28</sup>. It set the love story against Rio's Carnival. The best selling soundtrack introduced samba to an international audience. The jazz musicians Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd later released covers and generated the amazing popularity of bossa nova. *Orfeu Negro* both conserves a tradition and makes something new.

The sheer contingency that Donald Davidson describes has been multiplied by new technologies. The Internet provides niches for new and diverse forms to flourish. However, the potential for the net to stimulate innovation and creativity may be stifled by what Lawrence Lessig has called 'property fundamentalism'.<sup>29</sup> The power of media corporations like Disney has been increased by legislation passed in the US Congress that extends the term of existing copyrights to a maximum of ninety-five years. In Lessig's view, this and other changes gravely undermine the progress of knowledge and innovation that copyright was originally intended to protect. It diminishes the public domain, and guarantees that vast amounts of 'Dark Content' (material that would otherwise go out of copyright, and be freely accessible) will disappear forever. The creation of cultural value requires the protection of the public domain so that new forms of creativity can find a niche and new publics can emerge. The logic of the imagination maybe the opposite of the historian's reason, but creativity cannot exist independently of history.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This translation of Octavio Paz's poem, 'Objects and Apparitions', was made by Paz and Elizabeth Bishop. It appears in Elizabeth Bishop 1991, *Complete Poems*, London: Chatto and Windus, 275-76.
- <sup>2</sup> John Holden 2004, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of government policy*, London: Demos, 21.
- <sup>3</sup> Kevin F. McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras and Arthur Brooks 2004, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*, Santa Monica: RAND, iii.
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid*, 68.
- <sup>5</sup> An ARC funded Linkage project 2005-2008. Griffith researchers: Kay Ferres, Malcolm Alexander, Patrick Buckridge, Penny Bundy, Bruce Burton, David Ellison, Wendy Keys, John O'Toole, Ian Woodward and David Adair. Industry partners: Queensland Performing Arts Centre, The Opera House, Sydney, The Arts Centre, Melbourne and the Festival Centre, Adelaide.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul DiMaggio 2002, 'Prospectus', *Taking the Measure of Culture*, A Meeting at the Centre for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Princeton University, June 7-8. Papers available at [www.princeton.edu/~artspol](http://www.princeton.edu/~artspol).
- <sup>7</sup> Richard Petersen and M.Kern 1996, 'Changing highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore', *American Sociological Review*, 61,900-907; Richard Petersen and A. Simkus 1992, 'How musical tastes mark occupational status groups', in M. Lamont and M. Fournier (eds), *Cultivating Differences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 152-186.
- <sup>8</sup> McCarthy et al, 23.
- <sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin 2003, 'On the concept of history', in *Selected Writings*, Vol 4: 1938-1940, trans Harry Zohn, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Benjamin bought the painting in 1920.
- <sup>10</sup> Octavio Paz 1976, 'Ars poetica'.
- <sup>11</sup> Foer tells this story in the introduction to *A Convergence of Birds*, Distributed Art Publishers, 2001.
- <sup>12</sup> 'Book Description', from Amazon website: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- <sup>13</sup> Jacques T. Godbout 1998, *The World of the Gift*, trans. Donald Winkler, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 7.
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid*. 82-85. See also Kay Ferres 2000, 'Fleshed by the pen: writing and reading gender', in Jane Crisp, Kay Ferres and Gillian Swanson, *Deciphering Culture: ordinary curiosities and subjective narratives*, London, Routledge: 53-67.
- <sup>15</sup> *ibid*. 20.
- <sup>16</sup> This work was galvanised by the appearance in English of Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. See Craig Calhoun (ed) 1997, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press.
- <sup>17</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander 2001, 'Theorizing the "Modes of Incorporation": Assimilation, Hyphenation, and Multiculturalism as Varieties of Civil Participation', *Sociological Theory*, 19.3: 237-249.
- <sup>18</sup> Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Jane Mansbridge and Iris Marion Young have been central figures in the development of feminist work about justice and the recognition of difference.
- <sup>19</sup> Mustafa Emirbayer and Mimi Sheller 1999, 'Publics in History', *Theory and Society*, 28: 155.
- <sup>20</sup> Kay Ferres 2000, 'A sentiment as certain as remembrance: photography, loss and belonging', *Deciphering Culture*, 118-132.
- <sup>21</sup> Gillian Rose 1995, *Love's Work*, London: Chatto and Windus, 9-10.
- <sup>22</sup> Susan Sontag 2003, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, London: Hamish Hamilton.
- <sup>23</sup> Gillian Rose 1996, 'Athens and Jerusalem: a tale of three cities', in *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation*, Cambridge University Press, 10.
- <sup>24</sup> Including my own work on Rosa Praed and Kay Ferres (ed) 1993, *The Time to Write: Australian Women Writers 1890-1930*, Ringwood: Penguin.
- <sup>25</sup> Richard Rorty 1989, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, 16.
- <sup>26</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke wrote and revised this poem in 1904. This translation appears in Gillian Slovo 1997, *Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country*, London: Abacus, 159, 209.
- <sup>27</sup> Louise Glück 1999, 'Eurydice', *Vita Nova*, New York: The Ecco Press, 26.
- <sup>28</sup> *Orfeu Negro* 1958 dir. Marcel Camus, writ. Jacques Viot (adapt. Viot and Camus from 'Orfeu da Conceicao' by Vinicius de Moraes) cine. Jean Bourgoïn. Music Antonio Carlos Jobin and Louis Bonfá.
- <sup>29</sup> Lawrence Lessig 2004, *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity*, New York: Penguin, 261.